

A Study on Indianness in the Novels of Mulk Raj Anand

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Abstract

This paper analyses among the Indo-Anglian novelists writing in India, Mulk Raj Anand is one of the few writers having, what he would like to call, “certain hunches about the novel”. Even though he has not enunciated an elaborate theory of the novel, it is possible to see in his numerous letters, essays, and lectures the gradual evolution of an idea of the novel.

The novel form to Anand has been a vehicle for conveying his deepest concern for the human predicament in the contemporary India. And one can see in his fictional idea an indisputable relationship between form and content.

Key words: Jamadar, Spoy, Havildar, Huzoor, Khaki, Nirvana, Maya, Desi, Sahib, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sudra, Panchayat, Girja, Ghar.

Introduction:

The novel, as a piece of art, interprets life. Novel is directly concerned with life. The important thing in a novel is the novelist's point of view, which he has derived from his experiences of men and things. Every novel may be said to rest upon a certain view of the world and to present a general philosophy of life

The word '**Novel**' is of Italian origin. It comes from the word "**Novella**", which means **a new form**: Its history may be said to start in 1740, with the publication of **Richardson's 'Pameela'**. **Daniel Defoe's 'Robinson Crusoe'** is considered by some as the first novel. Along with the Richardson and Defoe, Fielding, Smollett, Stern and Goldsmith developed this genre to its present form. The novel grew to astonishing heights in the hands of the Victorian novelists like **Thackeray, Charles Dickens, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy**. It is, today, the most prominent literary form.

Anand's Idea of The Novel:

Among the Indo-Anglian novelists writing in India, Mulk Raj Anand is one of the few writers having, what he would like to call, and "certain hunches about the novel". Even though he has not enunciated an elaborate theory of the novel, it is possible to see in his numerous letters, essays, and lectures the gradual evolution of an idea of the novel. The novel form to Anand has been a vehicle for conveying his deepest concern for the human predicament in the contemporary India. And one can see in his fictional idea an indisputable relationship between form and content.

The Literary Output of Mulk Raj Anand:

Mulk Raj Anand was born in **Peshawar on December 12, 1905**. His father **Lal Chand Anand** was a **craftsman in Amritsar**. His mother **Ishwar Kaur** came from central Punjab. Indianness is a theme too difficult to expound in the course of the paper. Indian culture is of special significance to us, because it is still a living factor in the life of nearly one – seventh of the total human race. This culture rose approximately five thousand years ago and it gradually developed and was enriched in subsequent centuries and it has come down to us as a rich human legacy.

"Coolie" exhibits Indianness even through its language. Marks of Indianness are clear in morphology, phonology, syntax and style. Let us first consider the morphological aspect: '—Wallah' is a class maintaining derivational suffix (in Indian English).

For example :

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Rickshaw + wallahs -- richshaw-wallah
(Noun) (Noun)

Congress + wallahs -- Congress-wallah

In **Coolie**, Mulk Raj Anand has used some compound words (mainly nominal compounds) or hybrids where the marks of Indianness are clear:

Double + roti -- double-roti
(English word) (Indian word)
(hybrid)

mai + bap -- mai-bap
(Indian word)(Indian word)
(hybrid)

‘—ji’ and ‘—sahib’ are ‘bound morphemes’ by character. These are two fertile Indian suffixes in operation in this novel:

Bibi + ji - Bibiji
Pahlwan+ji - Pahlwanji
Major+sahib - Majorsahib

‘Indian English’ allows a large body of vocabulary (words and phrases) from Indian languages. For example:

<i>Word/Phrases</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Hakim	- Native doctor
Bastis	- Colony
Babu	- A learned man
Chota	- Small
Izzat	- Respect/Prestige
Mar	- Hit
Mai-bap	- Mother-father

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Vilayat - Foreign land; mainly used
for England

Surka bacha - Son of a pig.

‘Indian English’ is known for ‘code switching’ and ‘code-mixing’. India is a multi-cultural and multi-lingual country. Here people often tend to mix up their codes in their conversation.

Untouchable (1935) is Mulk Raj Anand’s most artistically satisfying novel. The novel depicts a day in Bakha’s life. Bakha, the 18 years old boy is one the sons of Lakha, the Jamadar of the sweepers. *Untouchable* exposes class-based society of India.

A large number of Indian words pass into ‘Indian English’ register. We may cite a few of them from *Untouchable*.

Jamadar, sepoy, havildar, huzoor, khaki, nirvana, maya, desi, sahib, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra, panachayat, Girja ghar, etc.,

There are some typically Indian affixes which go into the derivation of Indian English Vocabulary – Wallahs, -- ji, and – sahib is the widely used class maintaining derivational **suffixes:**

Tonga+ wallah - tongawallah

Congress + wallah - Congresswallah

Pahlwan + ji - Pahlwanji

Bibi + ji - Bibiji

Gandhi + ji - Gandhiji

Native Consciousness in Anand’s Short Stories:

We come across interesting manifestations of native consciousness in the short stories of Mulk Raj Anand, which gets ostensibly materialized in the themes, specific situations and typical characters that form an integral part of the fictional world of his short stories. His short stories faithfully depict the socio-political ethos that evolved during the years of the nationalist movement, particularly during the 1930’s along with his sensitivity and reactions to it. With the rise of native consciousness, it was natural for the language of fiction to undergo a process of experimentation.

The generic term ‘Indianism’ thus refers to a tendency of the Indian writer in English to interpolate his English with lexical borrowings, loan transitions or other formal features.

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Indianism is the soul of Indian literature and its major dimension. Being one of the foremost figures of Indian literary movement in English and also a strong supporter of Indian English as a necessary medium for expressing something which is distinctly Indian, Anand has profusely employed Indianisms.

The folk motifs in Anand's novels have not received adequate critical attention. The folk element is undoubtedly a significant aspect of Anand's art and in a large measure defines his Indian roots. The tales of "Raja Rasalu" and "Heer Ranjha", for instance, and songs depicting the variety and vitality of Punjab rural culture are integral to Anand's depiction of peasant life. The spirit of joy in the love and adoration of nature, the intense attachment to land, the spirit of service and sacrifice embodied in the folk heroes, and the element of dour resistance to tyranny constitute the focal points of folk tradition. Anand also is conscious of some of the negative aspects of folk life.

Encounter with dark passion:

Private Life of an Indian Prince (1953) is one of Anand's most subtle and fascinating novels. In its historical and political context, the novel faithfully depicts the tense relationship between the Prince, Maharaja Ashok Kumar of Shampur—a small hill-state somewhere along the borders of Tibet and Nepal—and his contented subjects, which eventually provokes a revolt in the state, and which encourages the new Government of India (after 1947) to compel the prince to sign the Instrument of Accession.

Conclusion:

The decayed aspects of Indian tradition gave rise to a social critic like Mulk Raj Anand to expose the evils in society. His attention is focused on caste, problems of the poor, the village folk and the peasants. His social criticism created awareness in the minds of the rulers, who have recognized his concern for the weaker section of society by introducing various welfare measures and awarding him with the Sahithiya Academy Fellow-ship.

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