

Equal by Law, Unequal by Caste: The Role of Social Resistance in the Select Novels of Mulk Raj Anand

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ABSTRACT

This research article explores the theme of untouchability as depicted in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* and *The Road*, focusing on the social and psychological oppression of the lower castes in traditional Hindu society. The caste system, rooted in Hindu scriptures, divides society into four main categories, with the "untouchables" or lower castes subjected to severe discrimination and exploitation. In *Untouchable* (1935), the protagonist Bakha, a sweeper, faces harsh social restrictions, including being denied access to public resources like water, and is reliant on the higher castes for survival. The novel critiques the ritualistic purification practices that perpetuate the marginalization of outcastes, as well as the exploitation of women and the hypocrisy of religious figures. In *The Road* (1961), while some progress has been made, the outcastes still suffer economic exploitation and social inequality in a rural Indian village. Both works highlight the ingrained nature of untouchability, the ignorance of the oppressed, and the inability of lower castes to challenge their fate due to financial dependence on landlords. Through these narratives, Anand critiques the moral failings of the caste system, the exploitation of the oppressed, and the failure of religious and social institutions to address these injustices.

Key Words: Mulk Raj Anand, Untouchable, The Road, Coolie, Indian Fiction, Social Resistance, Social Exploitation, Social Criticism, Untouchability And Caste Discrimination

"Man's fate, today, is no longer in the hands of the gods," but is often in conflict with the evil in other men..." (Anand 4).

The concept of untouchability gets its origin from the Hindu religion according to which the society is divided into four major parts: the Brahmins, the Kshatriya, the Vaishyas and the Sutras. The Hindu Scriptures state that the Brahmins were born from the head of the Lord Brahma, God of Creation. So they hold the supreme position in the society. The Kshatriya descended from the heart, the Vaishyas from the stomach and the Sutras from the feet. The Kshatriya being of the royal blood, the Vaishyas doing commercial undertakings and the Sutras representing the working class, the society stands class oriented from time immemorial. The original intention behind this caste system might be to bring about a well-ordered society in which different functions may be taken up by different classes of people. But in course of time, because of one's emphasizing superiority permanently over the other, the society as well as the individual gets deteriorated and all sorts of exploitation and ill treatment come to stay. Saros Cowasjee observes: "The Hindu religion is responsible for this fiendish segregation of

humanity” (Cowasjee 15). In fact, the practice of untouchability in the Hindu society, according to G.S.Ghurye, arises out of the “ideas of ceremonial purity. First applied to the aboriginal Sutras in connection with the sacrificial ritual and expanded and extended to other groups because of the theoretical impurity of certain occupation” (Ghurye 124). Thus the Untouchables taking their origin from the Sutras, gradually become excommunicated from the society and hold no place in the so called caste system.

Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* is the result of his reaction against the curse of untouchability in the traditional Hindu society during the Gandhian era, whereas *The Road* graphically portrays the slightly changed conditions of the outcastes during the early nineteen sixties. Though the practice of untouchability has now been legally banned and the government has initiated job opportunities for these suppressed people other than sweeping and working in the fields, in the villages still The caste Hindu is armed with the feeling of six thousand years of social and class superiority a feeling which refuses to accept the fact that the Untouchable is a human being, but insists on treating him like a sub human creature, to be ignored or bullied or exploited as the occasion demands. (Naik 29)

In *Untouchable*, the high caste Hindus do not allow the outcastes to use the nearby brook, because by their touch the brook would be polluted. They cannot draw water directly from the well and so they are to wait patiently for some caste Hindu who by chance may come there, and then request him to draw and pour water into their pitchers, Anand describes their cry for water, the essential need of man, when a sepoy crosses them: Oh, Maharaj! Maharaj! Won’t you draw us some water, please? We beg you. We have been waiting here a long time, We will be grateful,’ shouted the chorus of voices as they pressed towards him, some standing up, bending and joining their palm in beggary, others twisting their lips in various attitudes of servile appeal and abject humility as they remained seated, separate. (*Untouchable* 30)

The sweepers are dependent on the bounty of the caste Hindus not only for water but for their daily food also. In the afternoons, Bakha, his brother Rakha and his sister Sohini have to go to collect bread from the houses of the silversmiths and from the barracks. Bakha cries like a beggar; “The sweeper has come for bread, mother! The sweeper has come for the bread” (*Untouchable* 76). He patiently waits, till the woman of the house comes out and gives him something. When at last the woman does make her appearance, she only throws at him rudely a couple of chapattis from the balcony. Besides getting the rotten food, Bakha invites curses from the high-born ladies for the defilement that is done by his sitting on the doorsteps. In sharp contrast to this, the same lady is extremely solicitous towards a sadhu who is also begging for food. She offers him in great politeness delicious food with hot vegetable curries with the request that he accept it. Veena Singh comments; “The basic necessities of life, like food and water, are used as powerful symbols to delineate the relationship between the caste Hindus and the Untouchables. The caste Hindus uses them as weapons to humiliate the Untouchables and erode their sense of self-respect” (Singh 125).

As the society considers these outcastes to be impure forever, it insists on a ceremonial purification, whenever the pollution takes place. The caste Hindus believe that the purification can be performed by bathing and conducting special poojas with sacrificial fire or by touching

a Muslim which is the shortest cut to cancel the pollution. According to Premila Paul, “The custom of touching a Muslim to redress an unholy touch not only sounds comic but also reveals the absurdity of the whole system” (15). In *The Road* Chaudhri Thakur Singh, highest of the village by caste and rank, bitterly reports to the priest, Pandit Suraj Mani that the stones of the Shiva’s sacred hill have been broken by the Untouchables for the construction of the road. The priest appeases him suggesting, “Then we can hold the yajna, if you folk can collect enough ghee to burn, so that the incense can rise to heaven and Indar Bhagwan can send down a storm to wash off the road!” (*The Road* 3).

In *Untouchable*, when Bakha wants to buy cigarettes from a pan-shop, the shopkeeper points to him a spot on the ground near him to place his coin. Then he sprinkles water on the coin to purify it and puts it into his cash box. The cigarettes are thrown to Bakha “as a butcher might throw a bone to an insistent dog sniffing round the corner of his shop” (*Untouchable* 48). Likewise, the jelab is a recast away from the confectioner to Bakha as a cricket ball. The sweepers while walking along the road have to shout: “Posh, posh, sweeper coming, posh, posh, sweeper coming, posh, posh, sweeper coming!” (*Untouchable* 57) in order that the caste Hindus may save themselves from pollution through physical contact with an Untouchable. But unfortunately Bakha once fails to make this cry and slightly dashes against a high caste Hindu. Polluted by his touch, as anyhow he is to bathe and purify himself, the man gives him a sharp, clear slap.

The outcastes are strictly restricted from entering the temple, though they are also Hindus by birth, to them the temple is “a secret, a hidden mystery” (*Untouchable* 67). In *The Road*, the caste Hindus threatens Laxmi, mother of Bhikhu, not to enter the shrine and she very abjectly accepts her lot. The high caste Hindus brains wash the low- born people with their hugger-mugger Vedantic principles. Pandit Suraj Mani says; “And people suffer enough for the guilts of the past. To be sure, they ought to suffer before they can rise to a higher caste in the next life or recognize the divine. The temple teaches them Dharm. They cannot enter the house of God” (*The Road* 37). In the words of Veena Singh, religion is “another means of exploiting the Untouchables and of widening the gap between them and the caste Hindus” (Singh 126).

The orthodox Hindus revere the priests and sadhus who appear to be holy, but in fact are lustful, epicurean and hypocrites and in no way are virtuous or pious models to be followed. Pandit Suraj Mani in *The Road* gets his meals in the Brahmin’s houses. He stealthily looks at the contours of Rukmani’s figure with the lustfulness of his old age, when she pours water into his brass jug. Staring at women’s behind is his favorite’s habit. He wants to be seen naked by the village women, after he finishes his bath. He is highly pretentious, when he accepts the mangoes from Dhooli Singh which are touched by the Untouchables. Further, he praises Dhooli Singh as “a true Karma-Yogi” (*The Road* 72) whom he has so far hated for his dealings with the chamars.

Jagdish Shivpuri says: “If the rich are cruel, the priests have always provoked them to be crueler” (Shivpuri 212). Pandit Suraj Mani indirectly encourages the caste Hindu boys, Sajnu and Lachman who are going to threaten the Untouchables to vacate the huts, since the

land on which their huts stand belongs to them: “To be sure, if you are convinced of the rightness of your resolve, you can inflict what punishment you like upon them: The God Krishan advised Arjun to fight if the cause be just...” (*The Road* 39). But the boys go too far and burn down the huts of the Untouchables. They lose their belongings in the fire. Laxmi’s beloved goat whose milk she sells for her daily bread gets burnt alive. Anand explicitly describes the intensity of the suffering caused by the fire: “The old woman, absorbed in the dumbness of bereaved wonder, had heard the isolated wails of the other women of her caste, as they sat below here, huddled together, with their children crying through fear and thirst and clutching at their head clothes, tunics and skirts” (*The Road* 40). Moreover, two doves and one Neem tree are swallowed up by the leaping flames. It is the priest who is indirectly responsible for this sudden disaster. But he never bothers about the pathetic plight of the homeless Untouchables. Rather, he satisfies himself that he has not suggested to the two boys the direct action of setting fire to the huts.

Bhikhu in *The Road* is a great admirer of the poet Kabir, who upholds the dignity of labour in his verses. When he is troubled by the caste’ superiors for his brisk association with the construction of the road, he is “determined to build the road whether they should help or not” (*The Road* 7). Bakha and Bhikhu believe in their work. They are exceedingly enthusiastic in fulfilling their assigned duty. By their duteousness, they try to seek their own recognition. But their heartfelt services to the society remain unapproved. And so Bhakha and Bhikhu face an endless monotony, until the former listens to the encouraging words of Gandhi and the latter runaway to Delhi on the road he himself has built to soothe his wounded heart and to build up his own identity as a human being which is new to him.

In addition to their being exploited in the name of God and caste, they are suppressed economically by the privileged classes, they are destined to be under poverty and to work without wages. And so they are fully dependent on the upper caste people for anything and everything. So the servility would go on ceaselessly. The various economic factors that govern the state of the Untouchables are to be observed in relation to the life of the two heroes, Bakha and Bhikhu. “You, the poor and the humble, you, the meek and the gentle, wretches that you axe, swindled out of your rights, and broken in body and soul, you are respected by no one, and you do not respect yourselves” (*Coolie* 223).

In *The Road* Govardhan is a typical Indian village with all its rural background. Thakur Singh is the head of the Panchayat, He is the owner of twenty acres of land. The outcastes of the village are working in his fields in return for grain. When they go to work for the construction of *The Road* which will link the village of Govardhan with the nearby town and will be useful for milk transportation, Thakur Singh shouts at the Untouchables, Bhikhu and his mother, Laxmi: “Wait both of you, thieves of daylight! This village was a trust reposed in my family by the Gods, And you have defiled it by robbing the stone from the quarry...” (*The Road* 8). Also he curses Dhooli Singh, the caste Hindu for encouraging the Untouchables who work on the road. But Dhooli Singh defends the Untouchables saying... you think the village is happy. But these Chamars think differently, with no land and work for only four months of the year” (*The Road* 23). And Dhooli Singh is threatened that he cannot live in the village with his own caste brotherhood, if he goes on helping these outcastes financially. Provoked to anger,

Dhooli Singh finally says: “I am already condemned by our Panchayat.... But I know that while the men of our brotherhood eat a little, many of these Chamars don’t even have bread with pickle twice a day” (*The Road* 23).

The high caste Hindus do not involve themselves in the work not only because they do not like to touch the stones broken by the Untouchables but because they cannot bear to see the low caste people earning money by working on government jobs like installation of pylons for electric wires. Further, if the road is completed, as Dhooli Singh says: “...the milk of the village will be born to the city, and more cash will come to the folk.... it is only roads and roads and more roads, and Bijli that will bring prosperity!” (*The Road* 21). So the high caste people fear that the wages in cash and the economical benefits would break the clutches of the slavery and make the Untouchables aware of their right to a comfortable life and the need to rebel. Anand narrates that the chamary out share working with a hope that “through their work on the road they would earn enough money and then go seek work elsewhere” (*The Road* 11).

The caste people are always aware of their economic status and they try to maintain it, at any cost. If the poor grow prosperous and wealthy, then there would be no question of rank in the society on the basis of money values. Only this imperialistic attitude turns the caste Hindus to look upon the Untouchables meanly and torture them with abusive words sadistically. Thakur Singh is possessed by such feeling, when he murmurs: Today, they are taking the bread out of our mouths. By breaking the stones with the help of Dhooli Singh, they hope to ingratiate themselves with the Sarkar and earn money so that they can buy the status of the twice born. Already they have more money than is good for them. And we have less and less (*The Road* 18)

His anger gets intensified, when the **Untouchables** go on continually working on the road, in spite of the caste people’s threats. The new Block Development Officer, Diwan Roop Krishan and the Engineer, Tulsi Ram suggests that they would need at least twenty men for the work to be finished before the rains. But now only seven chamars are engaged in the road making. Dhooli Singh spirits them with his simulative words: “There are two kinds of men: those of few words, who do the work and are deep in their hearts: and those who do much talk and do the work only because they can calculate the cash. This road is a new thing to be built without big wages. But it will beatest for us all” (*The Road* 21).

The caste Hindus will join the work, if the government gives them five rupees per day, because they should be superior to the outcastes in getting wages by which their status would be preserved unaffected. Thakur Singh, unable to digest these things, goes too far: “I will bring our kith and kin from all the villages around after the harvest is threshed! I will have the mischief maker Dhooli Singh outcasted!” (*The Road* 3).

The government’s ban on the untouchability, the upliftment of the downtrodden folk through employment opportunities, apart from their working in the fields and enabling them to get all the facilities are viewed cynically by the high caste people. So the head of the Panchayat, Thakur Singh who ought to be just and fair to the low caste people criticizes the government’s policies wickedly. Thousands of years of their supremacy in the hierarchy would not allow them to think of the Untouchables growing equal to them in terms of economy. Money will

affect a considerable change in the daily routine of the Untouchables' ordinary submissive way of life. Thakur Singh shouts at Dhooli Singh; "Ours was a self sufficient village before the Afsars of the Sarkar began to come interfering here. And these Chamars worked for us! And now these Chamar boys are earning wages and walking on the heart of our whole caste brotherhood..." (*The Road* 22). Later, he complains that the Untouchables, their field workers, listen to no one nowadays. Sajnu, son of Thakur Singh, accuses Dhooli Singh that he finds easy labour from the Untouchables and thus he pleases the Sarkar. Thakur Singh hints at the government's support for the out castes and its impact upon the public in his talks to Sajnu: Son, this Sarkar is for the low ones, not for us landlords . . . All over Delhi town, they do nothing else but discuss the way, and how the Harijans must be protected against the higher castes. In former days, conversation in the trains and cook shops turned on the rains and drought and work. But, today, the lowliness it bloated and yawn... (*The Road* 89)

In *Coolie* (1936) Anand shows his concern for the savagely neglected, despised and maltreated poor with an angry lack of vegetation. Munoo, a poor orphan hill-boy, verdant and innocent, underfed and ill-treated by his aunt, leaves the native village to find work and see the world. The very first encounter with reality shatters his dreams. Employed in the house of Bank Clerk, Munoo with his in born naïve gaiety amuses and entertains the employer's daughter by dancing like a monkey for her, but is interfered by the shrewish and vindictive house wife who ruthlessly destroys his happiness by making him realize his position in the world; 'Tie had no right to join the laughter of his superiors. He was to be a slave, a servant who should do the work, all the odd jobs, someone to be abused, even beaten' (*Coolie* 34).

The novel is a forthright condemnation of a system which has, for ages, killed human dignity and warped the man, hideous monster called caste that has seized Indian life in its strangling grasp and we have come to accept snobbery, the hypocrisy, insularity and stratification of society based on ideas of high and low, thus making a mockery of the great teachings of our holy scriptures that we chant on all auspicious occasions.

The charm of the book lies in Munoo's innocence in his 4' naïve warm- heartedness, his love and comradeship, his irrepressible curiosity and zest for life". He has an instinctive urge to live, to go on doing something in order to avoid starving. The Bombay scene with toiling, suffering, struggling, starving masses is at once vivid and realistic, where Munoo, an insignificant part of the millions of half-bed and half-clad workers is "no more than a speck in this tide of humanity", and it is precisely for this reason that the story does not end here and the author transport him to the holiday resort where he gains his identity, *Coolie*, is a "cosmic painting of the lives of thousands of orphans, their health running down 'through the hour glass time'. The novel is a treatise on social evil at its sundry levels and phases" (Triveni 67).

Anand's, *Coolie* and *Untouchable*, he protest against social evils. In *Untouchable* the novelist deals with the caste system. The message of the novel is: "A man is man and he is born equal to all other men". Bakha should not be considered dirt because he cleans dirt In *Coolie*, Anand's canvas expands, and through Munoo he draws our attention to poverty-stricken and neglected people. Munoo wants to live decently, but in the scheme of things he has no place. In defiance, he cries out: "I want to live, I want to know, I want to know".

The novel *Coolie* speaks of the socio-economic exploitation and the tribulation of an individual in class-ridden society; at first he worked as a domestic servant in, the house of Babu Nathu Ram, the sub-accountant of the Imperial Bank, Sham Nagar, where life becomes an unrelenting misery at the hands of his vindictive mistress. From there he runs away to Daulatpur where he worked as a labourer in a pickle factory and a coolie in a vegetable market. When his benefactor and boss, Prabha Dayal is swindled by the goat-faced Ganapat, he moves to Bombay with the help of an elephant- driver with hopes for a bright future. He finds employment as a coolie in Sir George White cotton mills.

Anand's *Untouchable* is a social novel it is concerned with the injustice and exploitation to which the other section enjoying a higher status in the social hierarchy subjects one large section of the Hindu society. The novel is about the life of Untouchables who have been the victims of social injustice, oppression and exploitation. It deals not merely with the life and suffering of one individual Untouchable, Bakha. But through Bakha, it presents before a gigantic problem of the Hindu society. In this manner, the novel is another attempt of Anand's habit of studying the particular through the general. Anand in *Untouchable* says that the introduction of flush system will give relief to Untouchable from the exploitations.

The *Coolie* against the atrocities of the management under the leadership of the communists. But this is diverted into a communal riot from where Munoo escapes to run over by the chevrolet of Mrs. Mainwaring and to be taken to Simla. He starts life as a page-boy and rickshaw-puller all his energy being exhausted at Bombay, the strain of rickshaw-pulling sucks his blood and he dies of consumption.

Munoo represents a class and not an individual. He is an archetype of the class for whom poverty is a matter of everyday life. In it they live and breathe and die. The coolie is under paid, over worked and over ill-treated. They are not mindful of the unjust social order which suppress them. They take poverty and oppression for granted and it makes them at sometimes stone hearted. If Munoo's uncle Dayaram acts cruelty it is because of his love for money, fear of poverty and of the sense of inferiority of being a peon. He avows that he has neither sympathy nor food for his nephew.

The unfair gradation of the society destroys Munoo's dream of a happy future. He wishes to become a medical man like the Chota Babu or at least a bank employee like the Burra Babu of Sham Nagar. But poverty shatters all those unrealized dreams. He wonders whether it is education or dress. It is money that matters. He understands that there were many more poor people in the world than the rich. Anand shows the reaction of the "haves" towards the "have-nots" and the cause.

Poverty makes Munoo undergoes oppression, humiliation and degradation at the hands of his vindictive mistress in the Sham Nagar house hold. Money bars the common understanding between human beings. Bibi Uttamkaur is notable to understand that her servant boy too has dignity of his own. She makes him appear sheepishly before the eyes of everyone for having relieved near her door step. The servants are not allowed to use even the lavatory of their masters. There was a separate one for the servant class.

The servant class should not enjoy any pleasure. It is not only that the servants have no liberty to eat the food of their choice. Like dogs, they should eat whatever is thrown to them. Only nabobs can that privilege. “Why don’t you eat what is given you? Are you the son of nabob that you turn your nose up at turnip?” (Coolie 34) shouts Babu Nathu Ram, the only privilege they can enjoy is work, limitless work. The place and position given to the servant by their masters is well explicit in the sharp tongue at the Bibiji. Your place in here in the kitchen, you must not enter the sports of the Chotta Babu and the children...since you are being paid a good wage, more money, than you ever saw in your whole life in the village more money than your mother or father ever saw. It would be good for you to do a little work for it.

In *Untouchable*, Anand describes one day in Bakha’s life in Autumn. It begins in the early hours of the day and by the time dusk approaches, the author has been able to create round is hero (an eighteen year old boy) a spiritual crisis such proportion that it seems to seize the whole Indian subcontinent. Anand “exemplifies the problem of untouchability, the treatment of the latrine cleaning class condemned to isolation and deprivation as handlers of excrement, he exposes this as a social evil and suggests its remedy” (Williams 31). Bakha starts the work just out of the bed without even having a little hot water to warm his throat. Hence after completing five rounds of cleaning the latrines, he returns home with the hope of getting something hot to drink. But there is no tea not even water. Hence his sister Sohini takes a pitcher and goes in search of water.

Bakha, the protagonist of the novel, is a dedicated worker. He begins his duty even before dawn at the rude command of his father. The most beautiful aspect of Bakha is that is very dutiful. While his father has often fabricated some sickness for himself to escape doing his sweeping work, Bakha avoids all such alibis accompanying idleness and goes about with strength and vitality. His relevance for work makes him a Gandhian disciple without knowing it. But the society pays no credit to his devotion to duty. Cigarettes are flung at him as a bone in flung at an insistent sniffing dog, Jebeis are thrown at him, like the wastes thrown at a big and thin paper-like Pancake (given as food to the sweeper) flies down to him like a kit from the third floor. Wherever Bakha goes, he is belittled with such words as ‘defiled’ and ‘polluted’. The privileged caste Hindu asserts their superiority over the outcastes by inflicting pain to them. They state arrogantly: “They ought to be wiped off the structure of the earth! The mental depression of all Untouchables finds its expression in Bakha’s agonized interrogation: “What have I done to deserve all this?” (133).

In *Coolie*, Anand expressed his profound humanism and how the poor menial earns the hatred of everyone for the reason for being a servant. The Indian peasant is born, lives and dies in poverty. Since the Indian under dogs have no one to fight for their cause, they become objects to be beaten, thrashed, ill- treated.

Munoo is a typical example for this. The humiliation reaches its peak when Munoo sits for his meals. He had to eat his food with hands, being considered low in status to be allowed to eat off the utensils. The insult stung him. He could swallow his food. But age long servitude makes him accept his position as a servant. His aspiration to grow up dies and he wishes to remain a servant, a perfect servant “Anand he pronounced himself again that he would be a

good servant. A perfect model of a servant”.

The evil of untouchability has deep roots in the Hindu society. It trifles the healthy growth of a considerable section of Indian community for centuries. It forms the central theme of Mulk Raj Anand's novel *Untouchable*. Realizing the enormous injustice one to Untouchables, Gandhiji generously called them harijans' or 'the men of God' and denounced untouchability as a graves in (Gupta24). He has vividly depicted in his novel *Untouchable* the miserable life of these unfortunate Untouchables.

Bakha is a hero of the novel *Untouchable*. He has become a universal figure. He is a symbol of under-dog one day of Bakha's life means all the days in the lives of all Bakhas, the sweepers. The novel depicts realistically the outcaste's colony. "The very fact that colony is termed 'as out caste colony' reveals that the privileged folk are totally indifferent to the welfare of its inhabitants" (Paul 14).

The outcaste colony is situated in a distance both from the city where the upper caste Hindus live and also from the barracks in the cantonment area. It has mud walled cottage huddled together in two rows. There live the scavengers, the leather workers, the washer man, the barbers, and the water carriers and other outcastes. The surroundings of this colony are very dirty. The absence of proper drainage system gives out the most offensive smell. Bakha lives with his family in a one-roomed cottage, dark and dirty. It is entirely unfit for human habitation. It is in this single dirty room they all sleep, cook and store the tools of their occupation. All the outcastes in the novel except Bakha have a corrupting and polluting influence of their surroundings on them. Rakha is a true representative of the caste and he is so dirty- Bakha, his brother cannot bear to eat from the same bowl with him.

In *Coolie* the pickle factory is well portrayed by Anand as well as the portrayal of the surroundings of the outcaste colony in *Untouchable*. The pickle factory of Prabha does not have a very healthy look. The outhouse of the factory, which sank like a pit in to the bowels of the earth, was strange, dark and airless. Prabha never acts like a master, he acts like on inferior to Ganapat who is the son of a richman and ill-treats the coolies even beats them with logs of wood. He is further harassed by the next door Todarmal. Often he has to bribe them with jams and pickles to earn their favour. Ganapat spits Prabha, 'you belong to the street and there you shall go'. After Prabha has left for wills, Munoo's life a change to the position of coolie from that of a servant though there is not much difference between the two.

With Bubbling hope for a happy future, Munoo leaves Daulatpur for Bombay with the help of elephant driver. To his utter dismay Bombay unfurls itself to be a land of cruel contrasts. Dreams shattered the painful realization of the elephant-driver's words rings in his ear. "The bigger city is to the sons of Adam... You have to pay even for the breath that you breathe" (117).

"*Coolie* doesn't need special pleading. It sweeps the read era long on the curve of ills essential force... as well as its fundamentalism" (18). This toilsome work tells severely on Munoo's health and he dies in consumption. His death at the age of sixteen is intended to focus attention on the injustices of society and ills of the economic system. Munoo's tragedy seems

to be Anand's plea for the reform of humanism could be the only answer to his problem in the protest social set-up. The novel highlights the need for restoration of compassion to the world lost in industrialism, capitalism and communalism.

In *Untouchable* Bakha being an Untouchable, to avoid pollution by touch, the confectioner throws the packet of jelebis, like a cricket-ball, for Bakha to catch. His assistant stands ready to splash some water on the four annas piece thrown by him. The roots of such segregation are rigidly detailed by Lakha, Bakha's father, to exist in organized religion as illustrated above. It is religion, he says, "which prevents them from touching us" (Untouchable 91). The Untouchables have to depend on the mercy of caste Hindus for their daily supply for water. Because, the caste Hindus, think if the Untouchables touch the well, it will pollute the water.

Bakha becomes happy with the sweetmeat in his hand "Overjoyed his possession, he forget to call out posh, posh, sweeper coming" (Gupta 26) and accidentally touch a caste Hindu. "For this, he earns much abuse from the public and a slap from the man he has polluted. As the crowd gather around Bakha, humiliating him and abusing him for his carelessness, he realizes for the first time that society ostracizes him for a moral behaviour which he will never, be able to breakdown" (Sharma 28). Now Bakha is careful to announce his movement. The scene of the cruel crowd and the man who hit him flashes before his mind. All on a sudden he realizes his position in the world.

".....For them I am a sweeper -

Untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable!

That's the world I am an Untouchable!" (Niven 51)

Yet another insult awaits him. He reaches the temple courtyard. It is full of all manners of men and women singing and chanting the several names of Gods. Bakha is unable to suppress his curiosity. He goes to near the temple door and catches just a glimpse of the dark sanctuary and its idols. But the next moment he is stunned to hear the priest shout 'polluted; polluted'. The whole crowd takes up the cue and starts shouting the same words. Bakha feels nervous.

Now another priest shouts from near the temple that he too been polluted, not severely. He has been defiled by contact Sohini, Bakha's sister. Bakha manages to take Sohini away from the courtyard. She tells him how the priest had made improper to her when she was cleaning the latrine. Bakha is serious. He feels like going to and killing the priest. But Sohini restrains him. She persuades him to get out quietly from them.

It appears that Bakha has to live on insults. He goes to fetch food, then, an orthodox house wife scolds him and throws some chapattis down from the fourth store of the building. An old woman throws a loaf of bread to him from the upper window of her house as if he were a dog. In the evening, there is a free fight after the hockey-match. A stone hurts a little boy. Bakha takes him to his home. But instead of thanking him, his mother abuses him for having polluted her child and her home. Bakha turns humiliated and crestfallen like a kicked dog. The anguish of all Untouchables finds its expression in Bakha's agonized interrogation. "What

I have done to deserve all this?"

"Dogs" is the name that normally comes to the mind of the privileged folk to identify the outcasts. The "touching incident" reveals the horror of being on Untouchable. The people who gather around Bakha shoot abuses by calling him, low caste vermin" "swine", "cock-eyed son of a bow-legged scorpion", "dog", "brute", dirty dog", son of a birth", off spring of a pig", (53-55). These abusive words actually reveal their polluted mind.

In this sensitive portrayal of an individual, Mulk Raj Anand displays his penetrating thought and human attitude in understanding the grim realities of the social life in India, It is a revolutionary novel in the sense that it has an outcaste as its chief protagonist, Anand's turning to the evil of caste system even at the very start of his writing career is understandable because it answers to his need to create in readers an urgent awareness of the dehumanizing social evil, to stir the springs of tenderness in them, and to rally them for the removal of these evils in order that a desirable or a just social order may come in to being. It is significant that this Indian novel in English first appeared at a time when social reformers in India were engaged in an earnest effort to remove casteism and untouchability.

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