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English

## Humanistic perspectives in Mulk Raj Anand's Coolie

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Manisha

## Abstract:-

It is an established fact that Mulk Raj Anand is a humanist to the core who has contributed a lot in the field of literature by producing a number of literary works with a streak of humanism. His novels, *Untouchable*, and *Coolie* are important contribution in this direction as *untouchable* has been hailed as an epic of misery because of Bakha, the main protagonist, who is pitted against the social forces of society in the form of untouchability. *Munoo*, in *Coolie*, whose tragic tale ends in his miserable death, is also the victim of cruel system prevalent in the society. For the characters like these, Anand has deep rooted sympathy and compassion as his outlook is totally humanistic and full of compassion.

**Key-words :** Humanism, Zeal, Propaganda, Society, Exploitation.

There is no doubt that Mulk Raj Anand has produced vast body of literature that has won him international name and fame in the arena of English literature on account of his profound human significance. His novels, short stories and other writings have grown out of life. When we read Anand's literary works we find these literary productions by him as a record of people who have direct relationship with society. Anand's novels bring the readers in to a close and fresh relationship with life. His writings have got an endless fascination for the readers because a streak of humanism runs through these works.

Mulk Raj Anand has been labeled as a humanist by different scholars and critics as he opines that humanism is the key which is needed to open the heart, mind and soul of the people. It is because Anand was deeply and profoundly influenced by Karl Marx, Guru Nanak Dev and Mahatma Gandhi who followed the footprints of these visionary personalities in his literary works. It is crystal clear that Anand is a committed novelist towards the problems and predicaments of individuals as well as social problems rampant in the society. Through a minute analysis of his writings, one can observe the fact that he has left no stone unturned in propagating his humanistic philosophy through his writings.

As a delineator of Indian social life, Mulk Raj Anand's sympathy is with the common masses who are the victims of an oppressive and cruel system. In fact, he is the leader of the down-trodden and his heart bleeds for many underdogs of Indian social life like untouchables, coolies and working class people. His aim has always been to bring out what is essentially human in them by fusing the psychological realism of the contemporary Indian society. In almost every novel written by Anand, he explores his

concern for the poor and down-trodden, protest against the injustice inflicted upon them.

Mulk Raj Anand's novel, *Coolie* is a powerful exploration of social protest where he deals with suffering, predicaments and hardships of coolies, and viewed from humanistic perspectives the present novel can be interpreted as a record of endless miseries in the lives of coolies. There are various critics who hail *coolie* as a post-colonial document dealing with the aftermaths of colonial rule of British people in India. *Coolie* delineates beautifully the tragic tale of *Munoo*, the main protagonist, an orphan village boy from Bilaspur, in the Kangra Hill, who sets out in search of a livelihood. His tragic tale records his experiences as a domestic servant in an urban middle class family in Sham Nagar, where he is ill-treated, abused and accused by the house-owner.

The present novel opens with the inhuman and ill-treatment of *Munoo* who is not treated well by his aunt *Gujri* and his uncle *Daya ram*. Even his native village is also not free from the corrupt influence of capitalistic and feudalistic exploitation, and he has to leave his village in utter disgust and disappointment. He leaves his village and his first encounter with the urban world is in the house of *Babu Nathoo Ram*, an accountant at imperial bank. With the passage of time, the beauty and purity of his innocence is destroyed as he is abused by his mistress, *Bibi Uttam Kaur* who humiliates him all the times.

*Munoo* leaves this city, and moves to *Daultapur*, and from there to *Bombay*. Master-servant relationship is one of the leading concerns in the present novel as *Munoo* is treated well by *Prabha*, but his wife *Parvati* ill-treats *Munoo* in a ruthless manner. *Prabh Dayal* is ruined by treachery of his partner and the cruelty of *Todarmal*. The factory is sold, and *Munoo* seeks work as a coolie in the market of *Daultapur*. Here, the coolies are beaten and are made to carry excessively heavy loads, and are turned out of jobs at the whims of the traders. *Munoo* escapes in the hope of a better future in *Bombay* where dreams were fulfilled. *Munoo* finds a job in *Sir George White's Cotton Mills* and is exposed to the full force of industrial and colonial exploitation. The British regime is very much unfavourable towards the labourers who are paid very low wages and are made to work day and night. The ill-paid, ill-housed, undernourished and bullied labourers are broken, both in body and soul.

The final act of *Munoo's* tragedy commences when *Mrs. Mainwaring*, whose car knocks him down, takes him to *Shimla* as her servant. She makes her boy-servant, as her rickshaw puller, and there are also some hints that he is exploited sexually too. A deep rooted feeling of inferiority

self-attested  
Manisha