



PORTRAYAL OF THE MARGINALIZED CLASS IN MULK RAJ ANAND'S NOVEL *COOLIE*

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ABSTRACT

Through the fictional works, Anand has given a voice to the voiceless marginalized lot in the society. He writes about the oppressed, suppressed, exploited and humiliated people who face social, political, economic and cultural exclusion. In *Coolie* (1936), Mulk Raj Anand dramatizes the tragic life of the marginalized class i.e. the poor in the society. It is a suffering saga of Munoo who performs variegated jobs as a domestic servant, coolie, and rickshaw puller for sustenance. He struggles in the life for food, shelter, identity and sympathy and finally dies of consumption. The poor are often looked down upon by the rich as worthless, having no existence and significance as human beings. The marginalized often suffer at the hands of cruel forces in the society and have no identity of theirs. In the novel, the miserable coolies like Munoo and the like represent the margin and the capitalist and evil forces stand for the center. Throughout the novel, Munoo faces humiliation and oppression. In the novel his uncle, Daya Ram, masters—Babu Nathu Ram and his wife, Ganpat, Chimta Sahib and many others have only contempt for Munoo. They slap, abuse and kick him. Through Munoo, Anand brings out the pathetic life of the poor. *Coolie*, though written before approximately ninety years ago, proves its relevance and authenticity in the present context that witnesses a vast gap between 'the haves' and 'the have-nots' in the society and the failure to bridge the gap between these two classes.

Keywords: Mulk Raj Anand, coolies, marginalization, marginalized, exploitation.

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INTRODUCTION

Mulk Raj Anand was one of the major Indo-Anglian novelists who received world-wide acclaim, recognition and readership for his writings. Through his profuse literary output his writings Anand emerged as voice of the voiceless and the marginalized. Characters who are marginalized by caste or class people his major novels. The untouchable sweepers, downtrodden coolies, the debt ridden farmers, pitiable laborers, victimized

women play prominent role in Anand's fictional world. He has selected real people as heroes whom he knew intimately during childhood. They are marginalized in one way or the other. He writes about, their life, problems, sufferings and their struggle for existence and identity. Anand voiced those dregs of the society who were deprived of socio-economic opportunities for their sustenance and became victims of social, cultural, economic and political exclusion. He enacts the tragic life of the

oppressed through novels especially *Untouchable*, *Coolie*, *Two Leaves and a Bud*, *The Road*, *The Big Heat* and *The Old Woman and the Cow*.

Portrayal of Marginalized Class in *Coolie*

Soon after *Untouchable*, Anand wrote *Coolie* in 1936. Through *Untouchable*, Anand voiced the sufferings of marginalized caste and in *Coolie*; he dealt with tragic life of the marginalized class i.e. the poor. *Coolie* narrates the story of an orphan Munoo who is imaginative sensitive and hardworking. But he is also starved of affection and harassed by the society. He does not belong to marginalized caste like Bakha. Being poor, Munoo belongs to marginalized class of the society. The poor are always marginalized by the rich and so is Munoo. The novel follows the misfortunes of hill-boy Munoo. Bakha feels that his caste is responsible for all his problems. Munoo feels that his poverty is the root cause of all his troubles. Most of the novels of Anand begin with the character and so does *Coolie*. The novel begins with the shrill soprano of Munoo's aunt resounding through the valleys:

Munoo ohe Munoo oh Mundu! (*Coolie*, 1)

Munoo's journey starts from a small village in Kangra valley where he lives with his uncle and aunt after death of his parents. Considering Munoo as a burden, his uncle forcefully brings him to Shampur to make him work as a servant at Babu's house. From here, Munoo's journey of endless suffering begins. In many ways Munoo's life goes parallel with that of Gangu in *Two Leaves and a Bud*. Gangu undertakes a willful journey to Aassam to earn a living. In Munoo's case he is forced to work. Buta in *Two Leaves and a Bud* gives false promises to Gangu about better and happy life with good wages and fair treatment by the masters. In *Coolie*, Munoo's uncle also makes false promise to him. His uncle Ramnath promises:

"You will be looked after here. You will get plenty to eat in this home. And the Babu said he would pay us three rupees a month. Don't forget to do your best for the masters. You are their servant and they are kind people" (*Coolie* 14)

As Gangu's dreams get shattered after reaching tea estate in Assam, so does Munoo's. When Munoo confronts reality, he finds situation contradictory to

the promises given by his uncle. He is neither treated properly nor fed sufficiently. He has to sleep in corners of kitchen. Anand describes:

"Overnight Munoo had lain huddled up in a corner of the kitchen of Babu Nathoo Ram's house. He had a disturbed night, for he had been overtired and sleep does not come to the weary. And he had been given a ragged, old brown blanket which was not in spite of the big ventilator like rents in its sparse length and breadth. His tunic had become sodden with sweat. The mosquitoes had whined in his ears all night and bitten him several times. A swarm of flies had buzzed about noisily and irritated him by setting on his face continually." (14)

The worst thing that Munoo suffers from is rebuking nature of Bibiji, the wife of Babu Nathoo Ram. He is continually abused, warned and threatened with a copious flow of words. Munoo is humiliated with a series of words like 'you eater of your masters' 'shameless brute' 'dog' 'vulgar stupid hillboy' 'an utter brute' 'a savage' 'son of bitch' 'unveiled brute' 'monkey' 'owl'. Munoo is continually abused in the as Bakha in *Untouchable*. Bakha is illtreated due to his marginalized caste being an untouchable where Munoo receives subhuman treatment due to his marginalized class. Munoo and Bakha both suffer due to their marginalized status. Very soon Munoo understands his position. When Munoo having impish curiosity to see various new things in the house enters the sitting room, Bibiji objects: "what right has he to be in the sitting room? ...What right has he to join the laughter of his superiors?"(22). Munoo has been warned not to enter other rooms unless he is wanted. Whenever Munoo leaves kitchen and enters other rooms, he is warned of his position and his poverty.

"Your place is here in the kitchen. You must not enter the sports of the Chota Babu and the children. You must get on quickly with work in the house. There is no time to lose...We have employed you not to delay the work in the house but to help to get it done. Since you are being paid a good wage more money than you ever saw in your whole life in the village, more money, in

fact, than your mother or father ever saw. It would be worthwhile for you to do little work for it." (23)

Bakha suffers due to his caste; Munoo suffers due to his class, due to his poverty and low status due to his poverty. Despite continual nagging by Bibiji, he does every work. No sooner does he finish one work than he is ordered for another one by Bibiji. Even after doing every work, he is fed properly. Bibiji being an orthodox Hindu observes and maintains her notions of purity. Munoo suffers from the notions of 'pollution' and 'touch' like Bakha though he is not from low caste. The way bread is thrown towards Bakha, Munoo is also served food in similar manner by Bibiji. Anand writes:

"On his return Bibiji gave him two chapattis and a spoonful of lentils and vegetables. He had to eat on his hands, being considered too low in status to be allowed to eat off the utensils. The insult stung him."(32)

The treatment at Babu's house transforms Munoo from an energetic child to a slave. He had become a servant who should do the work, all the odd jobs, someone to be abused and even beaten. Munoo loses his innocence and his own identity. Apart from being a servant, Munoo had no other identity of his. He questions his identity:

"What am I—Munoo?" he asked himself as he lay wrapped in his blanket early one morning. "I am Munoo, Babu Nathoo Ram's servant" the answer came to his mind...It did not occur to him to ask himself what he was apart from being a servant. His identity he took for granted, and the relationship between Babu Nathoo Ram, who wore black boots and himself Munoo, who went about barefoot, was to him like sunshine and sunset, inevitable, unquestionable." (34)

His whole life is a wild pursuit for identity but remains a rigmorale till the end and he dies sunsung and unnoticed.

While portraying the heroes of marginalized caste or class, Anand juxtaposes them with the opposite pole. He talks about the polarity, the difference and the gap that these two poles have. The servants like Munoo represent one pole

and people like Babu, the masters represent the other one. Munoo being poor cannot be compared with Babu who is his master as well as rich. There has always been a wide gap between the two classes—the poor and the rich and the poor are always marginalized by the rich. Very soon he becomes conscious of this fact. He introspects about the reason of his suffering:

"I am a Kshatriya and I am poor, and Varma, a *Bramhin* is a servant boy, a menial because he is poor. No, caste does not matter. The Babus are like sahib-logs, and all servants look alike. There must be only two kinds of people in the world, the rich and the poor." (56)

His poverty becomes a barrier for Munoo from involvement with the rich. He is continually warned of his low status owing to his humility and servitude. He is warned of his position. He is even warned to keep distance. The poor are often considered by the rich as worthless, having no existence and significance as human beings. In the novel *Daya Ram*, his uncle Babu Nathoo Ram and his wife, Ganpat, Chimta Sahib and many others have only contempt for Munoo. They slap, abuse and kick him. Anand believes that poverty is a cruel evil and cruelty is itself a terrible evil. The novel indicates Anand's trust that pain is a brute fact in the world and that it is not inescapable provided man views and treats his fellow men as his equals regardless of their economic and social status.

Munoo suffers throughout the novel. In his village, he receives step son treatment by his uncle and aunt. Later at Babu Nathoo Ram's house in Shampur he suffers a series of pain, agony and miseries. He is constantly abused and beaten by Babu, his wife Bibiji. He is given overwork. Munoo's body gets absolutely exhausted by the evening. He is not given sufficient food supplement. To get food from his uncle when Munoo goes to his uncle's room, Munoo is mercilessly beaten and kicked out. Munoo feels violently insulted, when he relieves himself at their kitchen doorstep after not finding any suitable place. His mistress berates and curses him:

"Vay, are you eater of your masters! Vay, you shameless brute! You pig! You dog!" The storm

burst on his head as, hearing no response to her call, she appeared at the door, saw him, and unable to bear the sight, withdrew. Vay, you shameless, shameless, vulgar, stupid hill boy! May the vessel of your life never float in the sea of existence! May you die! What have you done! Why didn't you ask me where to go? May you fade away! May you burn! We didn't know we were taking on an animal in our employ, an utter brute, a savage! What will the Sahib think who pass by our doors every morning and afternoon! The Babuji has his prestige to keep up with the Sahibs. Hai! What a horrible, horrible mess he has made outside my door! (17)

Unbearable torture makes Munoo to run away and come to a pickle factory in Daulatpur. Here also he is beaten and abused. Here he starts working as a coolie to help his kind master Prabha who brings him to his pickle factory. Somehow he escapes and comes to Bombay. In Bombay, he joins a cotton factory as a coolie. His sufferings aggravates here. Unbearable circumstances in the factory and riots in the city of Bombay make him run from place to place for safety. During his attempts of running he is dashed by a car of Mrs. Mainwaring, a Eurasian lady, who brings him to Simla in injured state not because of sympathy but she needed a supple bodied young servant. In Simla, he has to work as riksha-pullar coolie for the lady. Incessant work and undernourishment in past months bring illness to him. At last, Munoo dies of consumption.

Through *Coolie*, Anand portrays a picture of society that gives a subhuman treatment to the poor. It brings out their miserable and pathetic life full of pains, sorrows and agonies; their struggle for existence of life which is often controlled by the rich in the society. Anand through his novels becomes a voice of such marginalized voiceless poor, and oppressed coolies who become a victim of the social structure—a structure that divides the people between the poor and the rich. He condemns such society where majority of the marginalized lot are exploited and die of hunger. He expresses his ideals about the society for the underdogs:

I hope for a world in which the obvious primary degradation of poverty has been completely removed. So that man can have enough food, clothing and shelter to group

up as strong and healthy human beings, physically and mentally and pro-create a fine race to people the universe, in the place of those stunted, subnormal, miserable millions, tortured by starvation, disease, unemployment and war, who have been the background of my life. I want this for all men and women, irrespective of race, colour or creed, with special provisions for planned health and housing facilities for the backward and extra special provisions for the care of the very old and the very young. (qtd. in Prasad 95)

Coolie is the tragedy of Munoo, an orphan, who moves from place to place in search of livelihood, driven by hunger, till he finally meets with his doom. The novel presents a chain of adventures in a picaresque manner. But orphan Munoo the hero is not rouge. He is only the victim of world's rogueries. His search for bread, in a world where poor man's flesh and blood is treated as cheaper than bread, makes him restless and it forces him to move from place to place and finally fall into the clutches of death. Munoo is made to pass through diverse situations- as a domestic servant in an urban middle-class family, as a worker in a small pickle factory and as a *Coolie* fighting for work in the city market in Daulatpur, as laborer in a cotton mill in Bombay and as rickshaw *Coolie* in Shimla. In the words of C.D. Narasimhaiah, "The situations Anand creates are convincing on the whole and reveal aspects of life till now generally kept out of fiction as though is tabooed from it" (*The Sword and the Eagle*, 119).

The social authenticity is additionally seen in the poor state of Indian workers. Anand plotted out that the starvation of Munoo is one of the humorous remarks on the farming based country like India. Munoo has been grabbed by Seth Prabha Dayal who has arrived at claim a pickle manufacturing plant in Daulatpur. Here Munoo is bolstered well on entry, and Mulk Raj Anand unexpectedly comments: "It was the most sumptuous meal he had eaten since the feast on the death anniversary of his father and mother, which his aunt had given three months before he left the hills." (67). Anand explores the miserable condition and relationship of master and servant like that

which existed between Nathoo Ram and Munoo or between Mr. W.P. England and Nathoo Ram. He censures all relationships that are inhuman, unhealthy and meanly submissive. Philip Henderson observes: *Coolie* takes us into a world in which the comradeship of man for man exists only among the very poorest people; with nothing to hope for their common humanity is all they possess (*The Novel Today* 256).

Anand is passionately concerned with the villages, with the cruel poverty and the cruelties of caste, with orphans, untouchables, and urban laborers. He writes in an angry reformist way, like a less funny Dickens and a more emotional Wells. In this connection, Saros Cowasjee writes:

What Munoo suffers at the hands of his master is no more than what he suffers at the hands of fellow workers as downtrodden as himself who are capable of cruelty and callousness born out of a savage struggle for survival. *Coolie* is an epic of misery giving us a heart-rending real account of the suffering and misery of the poor like Munoo. The poor are the victims of social, colonial, capitalistic, and communal exploitation and Anand's picture of the Indian poor and their suffering is both pathetic and realistic (*So Many Freedoms* 40).

Coolie is hardly less poetic than *Untouchable*. A deep current of compassion and pathos runs through both these novels. Munoo's remarks on his own life are the clear instance of pathetic and compassionate statement.

We belong to suffering! We belong to suffering! (*Coolie*, 198)

Munoo passes through his journey of life, before achieving his destiny, which is merely survival. With regard to *Coolie*, M. K. Naik observes:

The central theme of the novel is the tragic denial to a simple landless peasant of the fundamental right to happiness. The terrible destiny of being a victim of exploitation is indeed Munoo's dubious birthright. Industrialism and capitalism are not the only forces that exploit Munoo. Communalism also lends its evil hand. The

fires of communal hatred are further fanned by politicians (*Essays on Indian Writing in English*, 64).

The social panorama against which Munoo moves, also gives the novelist an opportunity to deal with the issues such as relationship between the Indian and the British in pre-independence days. Misery and exploitation go hand in hand as do the moments of joy and happiness. Treatment given to Munoo by Seth Prabha Dayal and his high-souled wife, kind hearted friendship with Hari, kind treatment given to Munoo by Mrs. Mainwaring when he is ill, are the moments of silver lining in the dark clouds of his life. The theme of the exploitation of the marginalized and underprivileged is presented in great depth and the picture is drawn with vividness. With its scene shifting from the Kangra hills down to the plains of Bombay and back to the Punjab hills with its crowded canvas, the novel covers all the classes of society from the landless peasant to the aristocratic Anglo-Indian and British. This wide and varied spectacle of human suffering has almost an epic quality.

The picture of the dust and squalor in which the factory workers live, is unsparing in its detail. Perhaps the 'finest touch is the scene where Munoo and Hari with his family are seeking a night's shelter on the crowded pavements of Bombay. The mystery is explained by a half-naked woman who sits mourning there and tells them: "My husband died there last night. Hari responded typically of the situation. He has attained the release, he tells her, and we will rest in her place" (*Coolie*, 216).

Anand describes the real situation in the novel. The scene dealing with Munoo's life in the industrial slums of Bombay offer a graphic account of the working of the capitalist system. The factory is an intolerable inferno with unbearable heat radiating from the tin sheets, the continuous wild hum of the machine, the monotony of the work, the threat of impending danger and above all the inhuman attitude of the employer. The *Coolies* working under such conditions degenerate into moving corpses with fear fixed on their brows.

Munoo, Hari and other *Coolies* continue to work in the factory suffering patiently all the exploitations and murders committed by their

employers. But the crowded dwellings, dirty latrines, regular cuttings made from the low pay given to them on one pretext or another and the dismissal of Ratan, who has been a member of the trade union, compel the Trade Union leaders to be active in the cause of laborers. Soon Munoo hears the speeches made by the leaders of Red Flag Union.

Particularly Munoo is impressed by Sauda's speech:

"There are only two kinds of people in the world; the rich and the poor, and between the two there is no connection. The rich and the powerful, the magnificent and the glorious, whose opulence is built on robbery and theft and open warfare, are honored and admired by the whole world and by themselves. You, the meek and the gentle, wretches that you are, swindled out of your rights, and broken in body and soul, you are respected by no one, and you do not respect yourselves." (233)

Sauda's speech reminds Munoo that long ago at Sham Nagar, he too has had similar thought about the rich and the poor. With the fiery speeches of the leaders of Red Flag Union, the situation turns dangerous for the factory owners. So they cleverly convert the labor meeting into a Hindu-Muslim communal riot. Munoo realizes the danger and takes to his heels. As he runs up Malabar Hill to escape the hectic police action, he is knocked down by the motor car of an Anglo-Indian lady, Mrs. Mainwaring. The final act of Munoo's tragedy begins when she takes him to Simla, as she wants a servant. Here Munoo has a deep-rooted feeling of inferiority to the superior people who lived in bungalows and wore Angrezi clothes.

Mrs. Mainwaring feels compassion for the wounded boy and takes him to Simla, where she wants to go. She, as narrated by Anand, is a woman of vast pretensions and no morals. In Simla, Munoo is employed as a servant in her house and he used to pull her in a rickshaw up and down the road. *Coolie* is an affirmation of life in its fullness expressed through the zest for life and human communion which characterizes its child-protagonist Munoo who has: Essential solitude of the soul, that difference which he had succeeded in shattering by his passion and enthusiasm for work and entering

the lives of others, by the natural love he felt for others. The tragic denial of life for Munoo is caused by his poverty, which is the sole cause of his tragedy. Death is in a way unreal for him, because he has experienced his essential oneness with the whole of the universe, and in death the tide of his life only reaches back to the "deeps" where the artificial compartments of this world vanish and all life is one.

What Anand writes is true for both Munoo and Bakha: Man results in these present circumstances world bare and goes out of it exposed, and he doesn't divert his merchandise with him on his midsection (249). It is best to travel light; Munoo is conceived to kick the bucket in the slopes. Here Anand looks to inspire pity towards the hopeless predicament of a subaltern in our general public. Through him Anand has centered consideration on the pitiable predicament of a huge number of subalterns in India who are workers, enduring, keeping and passing on from severity and not able to bear on the weight of deep rooted sufferings. Through him, Anand has moved the still, small voice of humankind against the merciless abuse of the underdogs of our general public. His acknowledgment of the presence of the two warring classes, viz., the rich and poor, and the unlucky deficiency of nexus between the two, delineates the crux of the Marxist thought. Forlorn, alone, cut off from society, removed, from the wild nature and floating like a straw, he tries to rescue his past a little bit at a time for as long as he can recollect. He loses his identity, his place, his companions, his kith and kin, his innocence and even his feeling of time and understanding of reality. He is not calm; he feels fretful, debilitated lastly hushed into obscurity, a poor subaltern as he may be.

In *Coolie*, the characters serve to top off the canvas and complete Anand's scene of Indian social life—coolies in the grain business of Daultapur, the wiped out and dejected asphalt tenants of Bombay, the specialists in the cotton factory and so forth. There here is a despicable record of the affliction and wretchedness of Munoo in the distinctive periods of his life. The moving record of Munoo mirrors the route in which poor people are abused and abused. Consider this moving depiction:

A skinny man, the bones of whose skeleton were secured a disabled bunch, dragged himself by the edge of the street, beforehand close to the wheels of passing triumphs, asking with a wail, and half metallic from gathering: O' man, issue me a piece. (253)

The narration style which Anand has received is exceptionally extraordinary. In communicating the profound sentiments of human heart, Anand's style was awesome having melodious force and magnificence. He advances the substances of life in sayings. The first reason of the effortless and expectation of his writing style is that he never tries to make his straightforward things sound puzzling. In portrayal or in dialogue in English, he has unmistakably 'Indian shading'. He attains to this impact by emphasis, the quickness with which modifier is heaped upon descriptive word and by the increasing of feeling as the aggregate aftereffect of both. Words signifying regard, for example, Huzoor, Sarkar, Maharaj, Sahib, are utilized as a part of a complimentary sense in an unconventionally Indian manner.

Being an ardent admirer of humanism, humanistic fervor runs as a red string all through his books. Sympathy for the poor and underdog is a real strain in his treatment of his subjects. This is his message of comfort to the affliction mankind. In *Coolie*, Munoo's catastrophe has a general advance. The vital nobility and guiltlessness of person is not the protest of the rich and advanced high societies. That the men from lower social classes and financial foundations just as meriting these human properties is gotten out *Coolie* by demonstrating the challenging of these misery men to dare to dream. The fiction of Anand is to a great extent practical. Social authenticity is a prevailing strain of his books. They express his logic of authenticity and naturalism. They additionally express his fantasies. Consequently three things – authenticity, naturalism and social authenticity get blended in his fictions. The most imperative essayist in the new wave of authenticity that cleared over Indian writing in the nineteen twenties and nineteen thirties was Mulk Raj Anand. As befits the desires of a social realist, he picked the novel as his medium, and it was the novel

which was to stay prevailing type of writing for Indo-Anglian authors up to the present time. Anand's initial and best- books are intentional endeavors to uncover the misery of the lower standings and classes of India. They are undisguised in their supplication for social change, and are inspired by serious outrage and compassion. The designs of the books change, yet the hidden example is uniform: the obliteration of a human exploited person in India who, notwithstanding his great will, his honesty and his goals to a superior life, is fiercely annihilated by the financial framework that is barbaric, whether in its conventional medieval manifestation of a position framework or in its later appearance as 'imperialistic free enterprise'. Anand's books are a long way from immaculate as gems, yet their enthusiastic authenticity is capturing in an effective, if unrefined way, and they stay impulsive perusing right up 'til the present time.

Coolie is composed in the vein of a practical fiction. The strong unavoidable issues facing everyone have been reiterated here. The figment of reality or hopeless life in *Coolie* is made by starkly reasonable portrayal. It is extraordinary reality in India that a vagrant is all the time abused by his uncle and is tossed into the occupied stream of life even as a youngster. This brain science is the first stroke of authenticity of the novel. *Coolie* is the transcript of life; there are occasions which have exactness and photographic authenticity. Anand's perception is cognizant and sharp. He portrays scenes with undeterred constancy to the soul of reality. The photo of earth and griminess in which the assembly line laborers live, is finished with unsparing point of interest and authenticity of a naturalist.

Mulk Raj Anand states that "Craftsmanship is forever's purpose". He is a realist whose social vision was molded by time, place and the circumstances of the contemporary period. Anand is an essayist with a mission to put an end to bad faith, savagery, cold-heartedness, dichotomy and unfairness winning in the public arena. His written work is for the individuals. Anand once said; What is essayist on the off chance that he is not the blazing voice of the individuals, who, through his own particular torments, urges magnifications, by

understanding the agonies, dissatisfactions, yearnings of others, and by developing his nascent forces of articulation, transmutes in craftsmanship all inclination, all idea, all experience – accordingly, turning into the singe of new vision in any given circumstance.

In *Untouchable* and *Coolie*, Bakha and Munoo are epic saints of affliction. Alternate characters in these books face terrible and hopeless conditions due to their social foundation and monetary reliance. The female characters in both the books make a very forsaken perusing. The books of Anand present an anecdotal world inhabited by a striking assortment of characters, covering a wide range of Indian social and political world. The social authenticity in *Coolie* is brought together by the strongly human identity of the saint, who experiences this world like a pole of affection lighting it up and determining the visually impaired disarray of human connections. From the earliest starting point of the novel, we see Munoo attempting to connect with the world much in the same route as Bakha in *Untouchable*. Munoo effortlessly rises above position of contemplation and considers just the two vital classes of humanity, "those who are well off and the less wealthy". These words are not only polemical but Munoo has also understood their truth through torment till the end of his life. Anand finishes up the novel on a tragic note:

"But in the early hours of one unreal, white night he passed away—the tide of his life having reached back to the deeps "(282)

The realistic picture of poor Indians where mass suffer from the exploitation is truly depicted by Mulk Raj Anand in *Coolie*. Anand being an author of the marginalized people has significantly managed the towns, with the compelling neediness, with vagrants, untouchables and urban workers. He took upon himself the errand of assaulting social pomposity and bias. The Indian life that he depicts in his books is that of outcastes, laborers, the discouraged and persecuted ones of the society. Anand has, says the noted writer P.K. Singh, incredible sympathy toward down-trodden individuals of India and his books subsequently toss light on the existing torments and dilemmas of

'the poor' (*Mulk Raj Anand and the Dalits* 89). His books present minute pictures of Indian society, with uncommon center on the predicaments of poor individuals. Anand's early books bargain with the hopelessness and the wretchedness of the pounded and abused individuals and their battle for a better life. The present exploration article is an endeavor to study how a few social issues and angles will be reflected in Mulk Raj Anand's '*Untouchable*'.

K.R.Srinivas Iyengar, in his *Indo-Anglian Literature* (1943) renamed as *Indian Writing in English* (1962) has expressed his views extensively on Anand's novels. He considers *Untouchable* as the most compact and satisfying work and *Coolie* is the most extensive in space and time. He pays a rich tribute to Anand for having chosen to paint, in his works, the predicament and plight of the bottom dogs in Indian society and for having done it spontaneously without any self-conscious display of proletarianism. He considers vitality and sense of actuality as the remarkable quality of Anand.

While assessing the novel and the writer impartially, Saros Cowasjee says: "Coolie needs to be examined in some detail, not only because it received ecstatic praise from reviewers and Anand's literary friends and firmly established his position as "one of the most interesting revolutionary writers of our time," but also because it is his most representative work and has within it the germs of much of his strength and weaknesses as a novelist." (*Coolie: An Appraisal* 10)

Since *Coolie* represents a social reality, it has been criticized by some critics as piece of propaganda like other novels of Anand. R.K.Dhawan quotes Anand's views vis-à-vis the criticism on *Coolie*. Anand says:

"Nobody in the many languages into which *Coolie* has gone has suggested that it is propaganda, except some Indian critics who ...regard contemporary themes, especially from the lower depths, as extra-literary material... And oddly enough, they take refuge behind the categories of Western academic criticism and dismiss anything about raw life as 'naturalism' or 'realism' or 'social realism'. They will accept Tolstoy

and Dickens and Hardy, but should an Indian try to portray the peasants of India, or slum children, or the maid servants, you are written off as a 'communist propagandist.'" (qtd. in *The Thirties Movement and Coolie* 55)

Dhawan regards *Coolie* as 'perhaps the best of Anand's novels; it is contemporary, naturalistic, topical and in harmony with the prevailing English literary mood'.

Conclusion

Through *Coolie*, Anand portrays a picture of society that gives a subhuman treatment to the poor. It brings out their miserable and pathetic life full of pains, sorrows and agonies; their struggle for existence of life which is often controlled by the rich in the society. Anand is against such social structure that divides the people between the poor and the rich. He condemns such society where majority of the marginalized lot are exploited and die of hunger. Munoo's journey of life starts with suffering and ends with suffering. Anand's humanistic concern for the underdogs of the society through *Coolie* validates his belief in the dictum of 'arts for life's sake.'

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