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HUMANISM WITH EXPRESSIONISTIC VISION: A PRE-REQUISITE IN ANAND'S ART OF CHARACTERIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Mulk Raj Anand, through his rare fruitful bold experimentation and aesthetic sensibility, has made immense contribution to Indian as well as world literature. His choice of uncommon subjects and characters has been determined by his Dickensian humanistic philosophy. His fictional world consists of characters from various strata of society, from the lowest to the highest rungs in the hierarchy. Anand has portrayed these characters, who were once-were real men and women, with exceptional psychological insight. Mulk Raj Anand's aim is to help common man realize his existence in this world. Through his writings he suggests what he wants from his characters. That is why his fiction includes realistic portrayal of life with expressionistic vision. The purpose of this paper is to study Anand's Art of characterization in the light of his philosophy of humanism with expressionistic vision.

"the novels or short stories of Anand present a fictional world peopled by a striking variety of characters, covering wide area of India social and political scene, over a period of more than thirty years. Among the Indian novelists in English, it is perhaps Anand who gives us the most comprehensive picture of the English man in India during the colonial times" (M.K. Naik 5)

Anand is a great master of the art of character-creation and portrayal. Anand has not only humanised the English novel, he has also enlarged its scope by introducing new themes and an entirely new set of characters in it. Many of his characters have become immortal like those of Fielding, Dickens, Hardy and others. Anand's art of characterization follows the tradition of the East as well as of the West. That's why his art is known as 'twice born'. He has followed the traditional modes of structure, narration and characterization in his novels.

According to Anand, the aim of creative art is to influence 'connection' between one man and another, one group and another and finally between the individual and the world.

Thus the creative writer is able of transforming the values by which men must live. In this sense, Anand is a devoted writer. He does not believe in art for art's sake because it turns creative artists into mere escapists or complacent conformists. He believes that art is for, life's sake, for the sake of man, for enriching the quality of his life. Such an artist cannot avoid his responsibility to society. Anand firmly believes that the aim of art is to help man realize his own existence in this world. That is why we not only find realistic portrayal of life in his fiction but also expressionistic vision is there. Anand calls it 'desire image' of the author. Through his writings he suggests what he wants from his characters.

Anand's characters can be classified into categories of type and can be divided into three classes-the sufferer the oppressor and good men. The sufferer is generally the hero of the story, who suffers most in the story. For example, Munoo in 'Coolie' and 'Bakha' in 'Untouchable'. The oppressor class includes the people with selfish interests-such as the landlord, the money-lender, the shopkeeper, the priest and others. They always try to have the status quo, such as Chintia Sahib, Nadir Khan, the Sikh shopkeeper and others in 'Coolie' and Gulabo and Priest in 'untouchable'. The category of good men work for welfare of the workers and people. They emphasize on the need for sanitation, strive for better living conditions, for equal distribution of wealth, progress and believe in equality of all.

Anand's range of characters is not confined. His heroes usually belong to the lower class. But they are individuals, not types, demonstrating Anand's belief in human dignity and nobility. Also his characters are portrayed either good or bad-

either like Prabha Dayal or like Ganpat of 'Coolie'. Anand's character emerge as their author's mouth piece to project his philosophy of humanism. His characters are packed with his own convictions and beliefs.

Anand believes that the novel begins with character. He draws his characters from the real men and women whom he happens to know in actual life. They seem to be rare human beings to him, and he knows them fully well for a pretty long period. Speaking of his beginning as a novelist, Anand states that he felt interested in some people and they forced him to put them down in novels. His first novel, *Untouchable*, was based upon a sweeper boy, Bakha. He always admired the sweeper boy as a hero from his childhood "because he was physically like a god, played all the games superbly and could recite whole cantos from the epic poem Heer Ranjha of Waris shah...".(5) Anand wrote about real people like Bakha, Munoo, Gangu, Lal Singh, Birbal Singh, Gauri and others whom he knew quite closely in his early life. He incorporates these characters repeatedly in his writings. He portrayed these fictional characters artistically and imaginatively after the people with whom he chanced to live at one or the other stage of his life.

The range and scope of the novel, *Coolie*, is broader than that of Anand's earlier novel *Untouchable*, so also there is a much larger variety of characters. The canvas of the novel is a crowded one. Munoo is the chief character and the action is viewed through his eyes. Margaret Berry comments: the centre of consciousness is the novel, a pair of spectacles through which is surveyed the social life of India in all its misery and wretchedness. All other men and women, their morality and behaviour, their mode of thinking and speaking are evaluated in accordance with Munoo's reactions to them. (26)

Munoo is the hero of the novel and round him are grouped a number of characters which may be classified as (a) Individual characters, (b) Institutional characters and (c) Representational characters. Individual characters are less important than the central figure, but they have their own well marked personalities, such as Jimmie Thomas and Ganpat among the wicked, and Prabha Dayal among the Noble-hearted. Institutional characters are those who usually appear in groups, such as the village friends of Munoo, the servants of the rich men is Sham Nagar. Representational characters are also minor figures but their personalities are better defined, and they have their own point of view such as Sudha and Ratan, Mr. White, Daya Ram and Mrs. Mainwaring.

In the special Preface to the second Indian edition of *Two Leaves and a Bud* Anand writes:

All these heroes, as the other men and women who had

emerged in my novels and short stories, were dear to me, because they were the reflections of the real people I had known during my childhood and youth. And I was only repaying the debt of gratitude I owed them for much of the inspiration they had given me to mature into manhood, when I began to interpret their lives in my writing. They were not mere phantoms.... They were flesh of my flesh and blood of my blood, and obsessed me in the way in which certain human beings obsess on artist's soul. And I was doing no more than what a writer does when he seeks to interpret the truth from the realities of his life. (2)

Anand acknowledges that "the characters are taken from my intimate experience, but are transformed creatively from within-- often a lamb becomes a lion and a dove becomes a jackal. I rely on my subconscious life a good deal in my creative work, and allow my fantasy to play havoc with facts". (Cawasjee 14-15). Indeed, Anand puts a lot of his dream elements into his characters, thus making them strange creatures. About his character of Bakha, he writes "... I kept on dreaming about several strains in the central character of Bakha, almost as though I was moulding his personality and transmuting it from actuality into the hero of a nightmare. (Naik 5)

Anand believes that the author should have an inner desire to depict all the emotions and experiences within the lives of his characters such as sweetness, happiness, terror, sadness etc., Describing his own process of creating characters, Anand says

I had to go through their sufferings and little joys as my own. I had to become weak with their weaknesses. I had to become strong with the strength of their resilience. /, had to build up parallel worlds, to reflect, in my somewhat crooked mirror, since imitation of nature is not possible. (P. Mallikarjuna 21) '

Like many great novelists Anand is fully aware of the fact that when given full freedom to think, feel and act according to his own psychology, a character sometimes goes beyond the control of the author, and runs away with the narrative. While commenting briefly on his novel, 'Private Life of an Indian Prince', he remarks :

"Most writers know how a character in a novel sometimes takes control and runs away with the story. The author has been content to allow Dr. Shankar to take possession of the narrative, as well as become Sancho Panza to the Prince's Don Quixote. (Cawasjee 19)

Differing from the most of the Indian writers like Bankim Chand Chatterji, Sarat Chand Chatterji, Ratannath Sarshar and Rebindranath Tagore, Anand, perhaps under the influence of Rousseau, Gogol, Tolstoy and Gorky, believes that "even the so-called lowest dregs of humanity, living in utmost poverty, squalor and degradation, could become heroes of fiction" (Naik 6). This is the reason why he makes sweepers, coolies and the lowly like Bakha, Murioo, Gangu, Gauri, Lalu and others as the central figures of some of his best known books.

In fact, as a fiction writer, Anand is not so much concerned with any formal philosophy as with men and women. He emphatically states that he creates novels, not to expose his philosophy of humanism, but to portray human beings in their wholeness, with their interior as well as exterior life. Anand explains in a letter written to G.S. Balaram Gupta "I did not write tracts on humanism, but have written about human beings" (19)

Anand belongs to that class of artists who are campaigning tirelessly against falsity and hypocrisy, cruelty and insensitivity prevailed in society and also he strives to shield

love and compassion, and everything that goes into forming man's life happier and nobler.

In the light of the above statement, it can be said that Anand's fiction belongs to the category of the important books of the world. The artist as humanist is an artist who stands at the centre of the human experience, and derives his strength from it. Though he occasionally strays (faraway) away from it, Anand, at his best, stands firmly at this 'still centre.'

In conclusion we can say that characters in the novel should be given maximum freedom to express themselves so as to make the book both a convincing picture of life and artistically satisfying. But to achieve it, the novelist has to keep away his personality. By keeping himself aloof from his book, he is also able to avoid sentimentality which damage a work of art irreparably.

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