

Study on Representation of Dalit in Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable and Omprakash Valmiki

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Abstract – *Dalit Memoirs is a collection of essays written in the style of reminiscing about the essayist's past. As it is, it aids the Dalit readers in igniting their desire for change. Dalit authors believe that the most important character in their self-portraiture is the validity of experience. The basis for Dalit literature in Hindi was created by Valmiki's self-portrait. Joothan has been a pioneering Hindi life report with a personal - critical standpoint among the Dalits. "Joothan: A Dalit's Life" is claimed to have a voice with a diverse range of topics. The substance adds to Dalit history, and its depiction serves as a solace to oppressors. The first line of the poem critiques the location as well as the members of Valmiki's caste. The majority rule system in India has created an opportunity for Dalits to discuss their experiences. Despite what one would think, he shows the harsh reality vividly and underscores that India has failed to fully fulfil its obligations under the Indian constitution of independence. "Joothan" sarcastically criticises the constitution for its promissory note, raising Dalit voices demanding a place in the current society for their relatives. Mulk Raj Anand believes that a writer should be the fiery voice of the people and be able to present a fresh view of life, comprehending the hurts, frustrations, and goals of others, while speaking about the actual test of novelists the other caste sympathiser. It would be honing his nascent skills of expression, which transforms all emotions, ideas, and experiences into art. The topic of untouchables seems to have gone unaddressed in his book Untouchable. Undoubtedly, Raj Anand has expressed worry over the mistreatment of an oppressed class in Untouchable Mulk. He is, without a doubt, the untouchable caste's "fiery voice." However, if the writer's purpose is to turn words into prophesy, as Anand claims, the reader in Untouchable seems to overlook this question via the dramatisation of Bakha.*

Keywords – Dalit's, Untouchable, Representation

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INTRODUCTION

Omprakash Valmiki's Joothan and the Dalit Movement in India

Omprakash Valmiki, an accomplished Indian writer, has shown how the so-called "higher caste" in India oppresses and dominates the populace. The emphasis of this study is on how the upper caste controls the scheduled caste by many machinery such as custom, law, religion, culture, and language of the dominant group of individuals in power. In his work Joothan, the author includes a character from the category of minorities, labourers, and peasants. Omprakash, the protagonist, is forced to seed sugarcane on Fauz Sing's land despite the fact that his examination is coming. There are several evidences that support his muteness, which add to his sense of inferiority. Head teacher Kaliram's misbehaviour at school, working in Tyagi's home without pay, and keeping him out of extra-curricular

activities at school are instances. He gets mistreated in all of these circumstances. The term also captures Valmiki's community's anguish, humiliation, and poverty, which they not only had to depend on but also cherished. Valmiki describes how to gather, preserve, and consume Joothan in great detail. His recollections of being assigned to guard and drying Joothan from crows to chicken, as well as the anguish and humiliation he felt when he realised the dried and reprocessed Joothan burned him again many years later. On one level, this is an autobiographical description of Valmiki's life, from his birth and upbringing as an untouchable in newly independent India in the 1950s through his pleasure in being a Dalit today. Joothan is also a record of the state of those who are now often referred to be "erstwhile untouchable" or "exuntouchable."

The comment of Douglas Bom on Joothan encapsulates the topic of dominance in Indian

culture. According to his review of *Joothan Boom*, Valmiki highlights the rigidity of the caste system in India by saying, "One can somehow get past poverty and deprivation, but it is impossible to get past caste." This statement highlights the rigidity of the caste system in India, which has resulted in the socio-economic oppression of thousands across India over centuries simply because of the lesser caste to which they belong. The agony and poverty of the untouchable Chuhra people of Uttar Pradesh, to whom the author belongs, are expressed in this storey. The treatment meted out to scheduled castes was much harsher than that meted out to animals. Bom goes on to say:

Instead of following a straight pattern, the author goes from memory to memory, indicating how, despite the lengths he has travelled to become one of Dalit literature's most important writers, his present is terribly damaged by his past. Valmiki narrates his youth in the Uttar Pradesh hamlet of Barla. He describes the cruel treatment he received at school as a result of his status as an untouchable. He talks about the pain he went through when he requested to spend three days scrubbing the school courtyard instead of going to study class with his better caste peers.

Representation of Dalit in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*

Mulk Raj Anand was an English-language Indian author known for portraying the life of the lower castes in traditional Indian culture. He was one of the first India-based English authors to attain a worldwide following, with R.K.Narayanan, as one of the pioneers of indo-Anglican fiction. *Untouchable*, his first big work, was a terrifying depiction of the daily existence of a member of India's untouchable caste, released in 1935. He is a progressive writer for whom the book functions as a fight against society's faults. He sympathises with the downtrodden and underdogs. *Untouchable* follows Bakha, an 18-year-old bhagi kid, through his day. During the British occupation, a fictitious narrative takes place in an outcaste's colony outside of an unspecified town. The narrative is told by Bakha, a hardworking young man who, despite his dislike for him and his way of life, never disobeys his father. Bakha had worked in a British regiment's barracks and "had been taken in by the glitter of the 'white man's life.'" Bakha learned to mimic the Tommys via fusion, education, and hatred for his brother's dirt.

Bhangies are the lowest of the low castes, and their duty include cleaning latrines and sweeping streets. Because of the filthy nature of the bhangi's occupation, they are seen as unclean. They are, however, unable to maintain decent hygiene since they are not permitted to use the local well because their usage would contaminate it. For the sake of cleanliness, untouchables are not permitted to enter the shrine. The priest shouted, "polluted! polluted!" as Bakha peered through the glass. A throng quickly

gathered, and they all chastised Bakha, telling him that they would have to conduct a cleansing rite right now. "You scavenger, get off the stairs!" I'm leaving with you! "You've ruined our whole service!" yelled the crossed.

Bakha dashed down to the farmyard, where his sister awaited him.

"I have been polluted by touch," the priest declared, shocking him. This is an example of the other castes' duplicity in their treatment of the untouchables. Although the upper castes see them as unclean and force them to do all menial tasks, they are all open to sexual contact with them. It seems that the concept of impurity exists only when it serves the goals of the upper castes. Bakha seeks solace from the tragedy of his birth by conversing with a Christian missionary, listening to Mahatma Gandhi's speech about untouchability, and conversing with two educated Indians, but by the end of the book, Anand suggests that technology, in the form of the newly introduced flush toilet, may be his savior by eliminating the need for a caste of toilet cleaners.

Bakha is the capable son of lakha, the town of Bulandshahr's jamadar of all the sweepers. He is designed to depict society's untouchables; he is not an average scavenger who is nasty, boorish, and filthy. Bakha is the persecuted untouchable caste's representative. We sympathise with his plight as he is subjected to unfair treatment by the higher caste. He is adamant about getting an education. He is unable to enrol at a school since untouchables are not permitted to attend. So he pays two higher caste lads one rupee every lesson to instruct him. He is drawn to Mahatma Gandhi and Jesus Christ because of his suffering. The fact that sahibs and Mohammedans treat him as if he were a human person, but only higher caste hindus despise him irritates him.

They think we are mere dirt,

Because we clean their dirt,

It is the bakha term. The aspect in which bakha is portrayed makes an illuminating statement on the untouchability of relationships between the self and society. The colony is a gloomy, wet, and uninviting environment. The thatched mud cottages, which are arranged in two rows, are completely unsuitable for human habitation. Scavengers, leather workers, laundry man, barker, water-carriers, and grass-cutters all seem to be subhuman non-entities gathered together.

They should be willing to exist like worms in the gutter, only to be crushed by the upper caste. Bakha is an important aspect of India's social history. He is a victim of the untouchability belief. He is enraged by the human injustice that has

been meted out to him. Like the figure of Bakha, Dalits can only better their way of life or modify their perception of their own capabilities via education.

The Making of the Novel Untouchable

In his "Afterword," Anand explains how his book *Untouchable* came to be written and how it came to be in its current form. In a dedication to his beloved friend E.M. Foster, Anand says, "I could not have begun writing my first book, *Untouchable*, if I hadn't seen your own pity for the outcastes of India in your famous book." And, based on Forster's "preface" to *Untouchable*, we may be assured that this "renowned book" is none other than *The Passage to India*. Anand does not clarify, but as readers of *A Passage to India*, we believe Anand is referring to the pankhawala's prominence in the novel: "Almost nude, and superbly built... he possessed power and beauty that occasionally come to blossom in Indians of humble birth." When that weird species perishes and is declared untouchable, nature recalls the physical perfection she achieved elsewhere and sends forth a god - not many, but one here and there to show society how little their classifications impacted her." As he admits, Anand learned "the stream of consciousness" and literary methods from James Joyce. Furthermore, Anand benefited from Irish playwrights' plays about peasants, fisherman, and slum residents. Mahatma Gandhi, whose "editing (and) filtering" gave the work its final form, was another major influence on Anand. In appreciation of this, Anand dedicates the storey to Gandhi in subsequent editions. Anand had read Gandhi's tale about the sweeper child Ukha in *Young India*. Anand's hero Bakha, his father Lakha, and his brother Rakha all seem to be named after Ukha, an untouchable kid who served in Gandhi's household.

Private Memories and Trauma

Writers actively use the selection and combination of crucial events in their life while writing a self-portrait. These are my recollections. A considerable portion of the incidents chosen in Dalit memoirs are tragic occurrences. These may include situations that result in a single injury as well as ones that result in a group of injuries. The incidents that may be classified as individual injury and aggregate injury are discussed in the next few paragraphs. In these two autobiographies, the capacity that these occurrences fulfil will also be examined. Most dalit memoirs centre on a single injury, which starts with physical, mental, and emotional agony, as well as alienation via insults or shame. Almost of dalit memoirs centre on a single injury, which starts with physical, sensory, and emotional anguish caused by insults or humiliation. The two autobiographies chosen here, *Karukku* and *Joothan*, compare and contrast how, despite universalizing education and enshrining free education in the Constitution, there are still a number of informal exclusions that keep dalit children out of it. Almost all life stories include children as victims of

harm. The hurt is most intense, according to dalit texts, when the child leaves the home and finds that the dominant castes look at them with different eyes at school.

"Kids in school also grow familiar with the 'laws' of good behaviour... the norms of the request imposed by class control," wrote Louis Althusser famously of what children learn at school (Althusser 132). Unlike Althusser, who talked of children learning in a class-based society, dalit authors explain how they have struggled to be accepted into the world due of their caste. The disavowal of the word, respect, and the opportunity to be treated as a person are at the heart of these works, rather than the standards of "good behaviour." Bama narrates a painful incident at school in *Karukku*.

When the headmaster reprimands her, she is troubled not because she is unable to explain her innocence, but because she "was in misery as [she] had been disgraced and ridiculed in 37 front of the substantial number of students" (*Karukku* 16). Even in school, a lecturer urges "Harijan pupils" (19) to stand up without hesitation. The experiences gained at educational institutions have a different capability. It is here that the body and visibility of the storyteller are linked to the network from which they originate. When this corpse is discovered, it is investigated further. "It is, all things considered, your family vocation," Valmiki is ordered to clean the school (*Joothan* 4).

Caste and Untouchability

The Hindu dharma sastras (religious books) not only supported Varnashrama, but also enforced a number of social, political, economic, and religious limitations on the lower castes, thereby keeping the untouchables wholly reliant on those above them. They were only allowed to work in low-wage jobs. They resided outside the hamlet and subsisted on the upper caste's leftovers. Contact with the untouchables was deemed "polluting," and even their shadows were thought to be defiling. Untouchables having no access to public amenities such as wells, rivers, schools, roads, marketplaces, post offices, or courts, according to stories dating back to the early twentieth century. Even for the most basic needs, such as water, they are utterly reliant on the good will of the upper classes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study on the Making of the Novel *Untouchable*
2. To study on Representation of Dalit in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* and *omprakash valmiki*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The key sources for this subject include creative literature in English, Hindi, Malayalam, and Tamil. It is a well-researched study, but it also makes reference to a few of anthropological studies for a more complete picture. Related books and online sources from the fields of philosophy, sociology, human sciences, writing, and interviews make up secondary information. The body chapters would be separated into genres and also based on the language used.

DATA ANALYSIS

Anand as a Universal Traveller:

Anand travelled extensively and studied philosophy, literature, and art books. In the years after the publication of *Untouchable*, he became acquaintances with renowned English and international authors and poets such as Ernst Toller, Andre Malraux, Ralph Fox, Stephen Spender, Cuthbert Worsley, Ernest Hemingway, Dylan Thomas, Philip Henderson, and Edith Young. He crossed paths with T. S. Eliot, George Orwell, E. M. Forster, and Herbert Read as a member of the Bloomsbury Group.

Anand's Distance from Untouchables:

It's worth noting, though, the vast gap between Anand and the untouchables. 'The Dalit in India,' by Sagarika Ghose, is a historical description of the lowest caste's untouchability in India. Brahma, the Supreme Being, is said to be the source of the four major classes in Hinduism. Priests, soldiers, businessmen, and servants are among them, and they correspond to different sections of the Brahman's body. The untouchables are said to have been formed "from outside the creator's body, nearly as a separate species from Brahma's progeny." (84-85) While Anand's caste automatically disqualifies the book as a vehicle for the underclass to speak,' as Gayatri Spivak eloquently addresses in her 'A Critique of Postcolonial Reason' (1999), the author does not produce a work that highlights the untouchable caste's horrific circumstances. (Spivak 198-199).

Bakim Chandra's works were mostly romances, Tagore was primarily interested in the top and middle classes, Sarat Chandra in the lower-middle classes, and Munshi Premchand picked subjects from Uttar Pradesh's rural and lowly people. None of them were interested in writing realistic, naturalistic literature in the style of Balzac or Zola. K. R. Srinivasa Iyenger discusses Anand's themes:

"It was Anand's goal to go even below, to Sarat Chandra or Premchand, to convince the West that there was more to the Orient than Omar Khayyam, Tagore, or Kipling could infer." As a result, he

painted a waif like Munoo in 'Coolie,' an untouchable like Bakha, and an indentured like Ganga, and placed them at the heart of India's brutal and exploitative plan." (3)

Untouchable as a Sociological Document:

Untouchable is a sociological work that examines a variety of Hindu society's norms, traditions, and social ills in the 1930s. The untouchables resided in Kutcha, a single-roomed mud-walled house that served as a kitchen, bed room, sitting room, and a storage area for baskets and brooms. There was no suitable drainage system in place, and there was a horrible odour throughout. Not only were the Dalits destitute, ill-fed, and ill-clothed, but they were also sick and sickly. Bakha's mother died due to a lack of care, while his father suffered from asthma.

Central Idea of the Novel:

A day in the life of Bakha, a sweeper child, is depicted in the storey, and its influence on him is explored. In the style of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, it portrays numerous events that occur by giving us his stream of consciousness.' Bakha is the eighteen-year-old son of Jamadar and Lakha, who obtains a pair of breeches from an English soldier and attempts to be in 'fassun.' His labour of toilet cleaning starts as the day begins. In his job, he is reliable and productive. Sohini, Bakha's sister, goes to the village well to gather water; Kalinath, the temple's village priest, out of a particular favour, pulls water to fill Sohini's pail, feels drawn to her attractive physique, and drives the other away, suggesting that she clean the courtyard at his home later in the day.

When she arrives at his place, he makes inappropriate remarks to her, and she screams. He yells, "polluted, polluted," and a throng gathers. After suffering at the village temple and a caste Hindu whom he accidentally touched, Bakha arrives at that location, where he discovers Sohini standing with her face downward, being harassed by caste Hindus siding with Kalinath. Bakha was able to keep himself under control since he was aware of the thousands of years of servitude. Sohini is sent to go door-to-door collecting food. People toss breads at him as if he was a dog, and he receives insults there as well. "They believe we're just dirt because we clean their dirt," he says to his father when he goes home. 89 (UT)

Hardships of Dalits:

Dalits have been exposed to severe discrimination by Hindus from the upper castes. They were unable to get water from the community wells. Sohini, Gulabo, and other women had to wait hours for a pitcher of water,

which was generously provided by caste Hindus. They had to rely on them for their daily sustenance. Bakha is tossed a loaf of bread as if he were a dog as he goes to get food. When Bakha or any other untouchable came through the market, it was customary for him to scream 'posh, posh, sweeper coming'. Even the shadow of a Dalit should not be allowed to encroach on Hindu caste. Irony adds to the theme's effectiveness. "Untouchable is a stinging condemnation of Hindu civilization, and irony is the weapon of this accusation," argues M. K. Naik. (8)

CONCLUSION

The three works' depictions of Dalit awareness are genuine, avoiding many contentious problems. Ironically, the effort to eliminate the caste system and poverty from Indian communities began at the turn of the twentieth century with the rule of the British Empire, yet the split into classes continues to exist in independent India with increased power and authority. Using the medium of literature, Indian English authors are always attempting to give voice to the poor and lower classes in order to change the Dalit's situation. This effort may be dismissed as insignificant, but the representation of Dalit consciousness has shattered the foundations of societal stereotyping, causing people to reconsider the Dalit problem as a whole, allowing all classes of humanity to be treated with respect, sympathy, and fundamental rights.

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