

# Unethical Coalescence of Religion, State Apparatus and Capitalism in Mulk Raj Anand's Novels

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**Abstract -** *Dr. Mulk Raj Anand's works, which center on the class's struggle to make ends meet and the ways in which the upper class and well-to-do members of society exploit and deny them any possibilities, represent the Dalit and subaltern class of Dr. Mulk Raj Anand's period in India realistically and compassionately. Mulk Raj Anand, a novelist who is passionate about social justice, has written a number of works on the topic. His works have had a significant impact on the growth of Indian writing in English. Simply put, Anand's art is permeated with a voice that is insistent and strong yet muffled by the constraining fabric of tradition and convention.*

**Keyword -** Religion, State, Capitalism, Mulk Raj Anand's and Novels

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## INTRODUCTION

English-language author of Indian descent Mulk Raj Anand, who lived from 12 December 1905 to 28 September 2004, is renowned for his depictions of the lowest castes in conventional Indian culture. He is considered a pioneer of Indo-Anglian fiction along with R. K. Narayan, Ahmad Ali, and Raja Rao as one of the first English-language writers from India to reach a worldwide readership. Due to their incisive portrayals of oppressed people and careful consideration of poverty, exploitation, and catastrophe, Anand's novels and short stories are regarded as modern Indian English literary masterpieces. His anti-imperialist novel *Untouchable* (1935), as well as other works like *Coolie* (1936) and *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), raised awareness of India's poor people.

Anand received the Padma Bhushan and was admitted into the Sahitya Academy for his exceptional contributions to society and the literary world. His standing in society was greatly influenced by Buddhism's teachings on mercy and compassion, Saint Kabir and Guru Nanak's support of brotherhood and rejection of caste hierarchy, as well as Nehru and others' advocacy of peaceful coexistence. According to S. C. Harrax, Anand's writings are "Socio-Political Messianic Novels."

Dr. Harish Raizada thinks of him as a writer who is really a social worker. He was a prophet and a significant character in literary history. He was able to provide a new viewpoint on social work because to his honesty, integrity, humility, and unwavering devotion to his mission. Being chosen as a Fellow to the Sahitya,

Lalitkala, and Sangeet Natak academies was a huge distinction for him. He adopted a little community at the end of his life, established a school and a clinic, and sacrificed everything for its success (Tandon 72–9). Mulk Raj Anand is an appropriate topic for this investigation as a result.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Yadav, Shashi. (2014)** In his book *Untouchable*, Mulk Raj Anand illuminates the pains and sufferings that upper caste Hindus imposed on the untouchables. The problem of untouchability is still present in society today. *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand is shorter than his previous books. The protagonist of the 1935 book *Untouchable* is Bakha, a sweeper child. The effects of new influences resonate inside the 18-year-old Bakha, son of Lakha, the jamadar of sweepers, who was born in the 20th century.

**Dar, Nisar. (2018)** The paper discusses subalterns and their subalternity, which is a hotly debated topic throughout the Indian Subcontinent, particularly in the Union of India, due to the latter's oppression of the lower castes and subalterns in both traditional and contemporary Indian society. *Untouchable* offers a great entry point for the Indian-English author to explore the subaltern realm. It expresses optimism for both untouchable Hindus and India, introducing Gandhi's ideology of raising awareness in an attempt to abolish the caste system and the hierarchical structure of Indian culture. They are frequent victims and oppressive because they lack the resources and influence to challenge the dominance of the higher

classes. They are unable to find the words to publicly describe their situation and who they are. These lower-class people have very little opportunities to better their lot in life since they are judged by the higher class, which eliminates opportunities for them to advance their position via education, awareness, and equal rights.

**Jefreen, Fiza. (2017)** The authors of Eugene O'Neill's *Hairy Ape* and Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* both depicted the characters' sensitivity, pains, and inner struggles. Due to the upper-class society's dehumanization of the lower class in order to repress and rule them, both Bakha and Yank have identity crises. This study aims to demonstrate how hegemonic pressures force the oppressed to go on a journey in quest of their own identities. The two oppressed characters feel fragmented and eventually come to the realization that they are not part of the human race. Both Bakha and Yank had erroneous ideas about who they were at first. By imitating the individuals that ruled over his class, Bakha tried to discover who he was, while Yank pretended to be a member of the mechanical society. This research demonstrates how the hegemonic structure of society subjugates the oppressed and compels them to begin battling for their identities via the use of the examples of Bakha and Yank.

**Eyre, Angela. (2019)** *The Sword and The Sickle* by Mulk Raj Anand (1942) tells the story of a historical revolt in Oudh in 1921–1922. In his 2014 book *The Lives of Others*, Neel Mukherjee alternates between telling the tale of a Calcutta bourgeois family and the Naxalite peasant rebellion that took place between 1967 and 1970. The historical movement is linked to the Maoist insurgencies of the present in an epilogue from 2012. Both books use literary devices to tie a past-tense narrative to the period in which the novels were written and published as well as to wider national and international influences. Due to these many layers, the reader's perspective and response to the question "who speaks for the village?" will influence the outcome. In order to examine how the novels were occasionally read through their global contexts—the relationship between colonial India and Britain in the case of *The Sword and The Sickle*—and discourses around terrorism in the case of *The Lives of Others*, this article takes into consideration reviews of the books that were written shortly after their publication. Some facets of the peasant tales were concealed by these interpretations. The portrayal of the political and economic issues that the peasants experience locally comes to light when comparing the two works.

#### MARGINALIZATION IN MULK RAJ ANAND'S UNTOUCHABLE

The prevalence of untouchability is one of the worst aspects of our culture. And it has a terrible impact on the oppressed people. They have been the focus of pervasive social discrimination from the beginning of humanity. The sorrow of untouchables who are denied access to education, particularly Vedic knowledge, is depicted in the "Manu Smriti," the Hindu code of law

and principles of domestic administration. Divides in society have destroyed the country and its cultural values. These divides have detrimental repercussions in a variety of sectors. Sanskrit is sometimes regarded as the most expressive language ever used. However, at the present, development has almost completely stopped. This is the only evidence we have of the harm caused by untouchability and other Indian customs. Perhaps for this reason, prominent Indian intellectuals like Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and R.N. Tagore have been vocal opponents of the caste system. The *Horizen*, a phrase used by Mahatma Gandhi to describe persons regarded as untouchable, meaning "the man of God" in its literal sense. Gandhi was obliged to sympathize with the pain of the oppressed, which drove him to say, "Do not want too reborn." I pray I don't have to reincarnate, but if I do, I hope it will be as an untouchable so I can experience their suffering and injustice and fight to end it for myself and others. I then begged, "Please let me be reincarnated not as a Brahmin, kshatriya, Vaishya, or sudra, but as an Atisudra."

In actuality, the Vedic and *Srimad Baghavad Gita* caste systems were designed to make society more manageable, not to create conflict between various social groupings. And instead of the other way around, man created these societal stratifications. If an anomalous occurrence results from societal divisions that must be bridged:

*"Believe me when I say that religion was made for man, not the other way around. Alter your religious beliefs if you want to achieve global cohesion and prosperity. No faith is legitimate if its adherents refuse you basic necessities like food, water, and access to its holy sites. No faith is worthy of the 'appellation' if it prevents its adherents from gaining an education and advancing materially."* -Dr. Ambedkar Wikipedia

The economics is not the novelist's main concern (unlike in *Coolie* by Munoo or *Two Leaves and a Bud* by Gangu). Nevertheless, non-market elements like feudalism in the *Untouchable*.

What kind of world are we creating, is it beginning to become clear to you? The hedonistic paradises that the earlier reformers envisioned are completely at odds with this ideal. You may expect to get crushed underfoot in this vicious and merciless environment that is rife with risk, treachery, and pain. Greater pain will be a part of our planet's future. 1984's George Orwell

People of many beliefs, cultures, and origins cannot live in peace, prosperity, or unity. The bulk of the population in our society is deprived of even the most basic needs, such as food, shelter, water, etc., since certain people in our society want to get their hands on everything. That is what inspired Mulk Raj Anand to write *Untouchable*. The journey of the underdog is a major motif in the novelist's work. He traveled and experienced the real world when he

was in India, and this is reflected in his work. He has seen how Hindu society is split between the downtrodden lower castes and the ruling class. He wanted to sit down and write about the friends he had once known. He claims, "All the heroes and other characters who had emerged in my writings were precious to me because they were the mirror of the real people." When I was young and first began writing about individuals and attempting to make sense of their lives, I was aware of this. Obviously, these weren't ghosts. Actually, they were my "flesh and blood." (Wikipedia) Anand exposes the hypocrisy, ostentation, and pride of the aristocratic class, showing how low they will go to achieve their objectives. Anand displays his fervent sympathy for the oppressed and helpless in the face of continued humiliation, persecution, and injustice without resorting to propaganda in his tale. As correctly stated by G. S. Balram Gupta:

"It's clear that Anand's humanistic concern for man as man, regardless of his socioeconomic status, informed his choice of theme for his debut book."

#### **PREDICTION OF THE MARGINALIZED IN SOME OF MULK RAJ ANAND'S SHORT STORIES**

Anand's study focuses on the underprivileged, including peasants, sepoys, women, and the working class in Indian society. He investigates subjects that earlier Indian writers may not have given adequate consideration to. He has taken on the challenging task of portraying pariahs and boys from the bottom as prominent parts in his works, playing an untouchable in *Untouchable*, a waif in *Coolie*, and an indentured worker as the protagonist in *Two Leaves and a Bird*. This is a perfect example of his ambition as a writer to give people without a voice a voice. These people represent the socioeconomic strata that are mired in a never-ending cycle of mistreatment and exploitation. His works reflect poverty, untouchability, the sati system, exploitation, repression, and other social problems. He also attacks the elite's pretentiousness, hypocrisy, and fabrications. He represents those who have never had their voices heard, including the untouchables and people who have endured unfair treatment for generations. He believes that a really great writer would stand out for the rights of the underprivileged and uneducated.

Anand portrays contemporary culture realistically in both his novels and short stories. His words are a sad reflection of the idea that people are treated on a par with inanimate things and animals. I examine his stories "Old Bapu," "The Barber's Trade Union," and "Lajwanti" in this study to comprehend his empathy for the poor and untouchable. Anand's sympathy for the Dalits and the poor makes him a fighter against societal issues and artificial barriers that unjustly divide

and demean individuals. His social concerns for the lower class are mirrored in these stories, which have earned global attention. He examines in detail the societal norms that render women and other oppressed groups helpless. He raises significant cultural and ethical issues for his viewers via his characters.

Anand's short story, "Old Bapu," portrays the cruel treatment a poor, untouchable worker received from the affluent owner of the farm he works on. The story starts in the middle of the 1930s. The story's primary character is Old Bapu. He's probably fifty, but since he's so underweight, he looks like he's seventy. He is raised by his uncle Dandu Ram after losing both of his parents when he was a little child, but finally gets kicked out. Old Bapu has been tormented and stripped of his half bigha of land by Dandu Ram, who has disowned him since he doesn't think Old Bapu is suitable for fieldwork. The hero is called Old Bapu because of his little stature. They refer to me as Old Bapu since I am older than them, he claims. (Anand 69). Adding to his grief, he laments that "the caste Hindu urchins have no respect for the untouchable's elders anyway." And their fathers wish to dump us all so that the crop after us may be fertilized (Anand 69). These claims provide an explanation for how individuals in the supposedly upper castes denigrate those in lower castes.

Old Bapu leaves his little hamlet of Shikopur, where he feels abandoned and alone, in search of work in the bigger metropolis of Gurgaon. He hopes to get hired by the business since he has prior experience working with contractor Sardar Ram Singh. After covering seven kilometers on foot, he arrives home and finds the contractor waiting outside. But the poor worker is all too familiar with the suffering of toil. He is too fearful to speak to the contractor face to face. He meekly asks for a job while holding his hands together in front of him. The contractor doesn't assist him; instead, all he does is criticize him. "Ohejaja, oldie!" Ram Singh shouts. The very worst mindset to bring to work! working half as hard for twice as much money. (Anand 72). He calls Old Bapu "a two-legged donkey," making fun of him. (Anand 72) Old Bapu accepts the coin the contractor throws his way with gratitude. The elderly guy, Bapu, is treated like a beggar. He decides to return to his homeland since he is so dejected. He makes a halt in front of a shop on the way home to examine his image in the mirror. "Don't break my glass by showing it your ugly old face," the shopkeeper cries at Old Bapu. He receives another public censure and rebuke (Anand 74).

In this caste-based Indian society, an untouchable is a person of inferior social status. It seems as if he were trash. An older untouchable could be embarrassed by a younger person born into a higher caste. Written after independence, "Old Bapu" is an honest social commentary. It also criticizes the Indian government for failing to assist the unemployed and the disadvantaged in finding employment. The casteist society inflicts horrifying brutality on those who are less fortunate and members of lower social groups without cause.

#### CASTE-CLASS DISCOURSES: UNETHICAL COALESCENCE OF RELIGION, STATE APPARATUS, AND CAPITALISM IN MULK RAJ ANAND'S UNTOUCHABLE AND COOLIE

In Anand's statements, humanistic values are evident. Instead of a theoretical knowledge of life, he possessed a practical one. He was a staunch Marxist. Despite the culminators' claims that Marxism was another religion with Marx as its prophet, the best thing about Marxism was that it was a scientific and logical approach to studying society. (Marx 22). Anand authored "social documents about a rather neglected country India" because he admired the logical methods of Marxism (Anand 9). His concentration is on a group of individuals who are "oppressed by a capricious landlordism" (Anand 9). In his 1935 book *Untouchable*, Marx strongly condemned capitalism, demonstrating the impact of Marxism. In *So Many Freedoms*, Saros Cowasjee also emphasizes this remarkable convergence of Marxism and Anand's writings.

Mahatma Gandhi served as Anand's second primary source of inspiration, and he often cited him in his writings. It seems as if he invents a unique kind of realistic poetry. He believes that all art is propaganda in some form. On March 26th, 1968, he said at a speech that "all art is propaganda." Ajanta's artwork is overtly Buddhist propaganda. The imagery from Ellora is blatantly Hindu in its meaning. According to Anand (p. 62), "The Western novel as a form of art defending humanity from the bourgeoisie." The emphasis of Mulk Raj Anand was on underrepresented populations. When K.R. Rao writes, "He merely presents a cross-section of Indian society through the national survey of the prevailing conditions in the twenties subordinates rather than highlights, the historical experience" (Rao 144), he is making an excellent observation. The struggle of the impoverished to survive is the major subject of Anand's writings. In his writings, landlords, loan sharks, and all of their innumerable allies are represented as followers of Satan. He is also affected by his prolonged time spent overseas and his larger network of friends and acquaintances. He claims in his justification of courage,

*... property being an economic, social, and political fact, that is to say the basis of the political power of the state, we find those constant shifts in the balance of power that*

*leave wrecks of people behind as the fade-outs of history cast shadows against the hazy backdrop of shifting global forces. (Anand 101-02)*

Mulk Raj Anand recognizes in the prologue to *Two Leaves and a Bud* that his work mostly concentrates on the lower classes. According to him:

*The underdogs, peasants, warriors, and workers of the globe were the folks I knew best. Whereas the pariah and the bottom - dogs had not been permitted to penetrate the hallowed gates of the book, in all their truth, my work broke new ground and constituted a break from the tradition of prior Indian Fiction. (Amar Nath Prasad 87)*

Mulk Raj Anand's pledge to champion the cause of the lowest and deserted of Indian society is recalled here when subaltern studies claim that all the voices in colonial history are the words of elites who marginalize the subaltern. In Anand's book *Coolie and Untouchable*, the phrases "untouchable" and "coolie" function as "Master signifiers" for the whole of the subaltern world. Within the canon of subaltern literature, these texts are the pioneering examples of their sort. Two major pillars that Mulk Raj Anand described as being generated from caste and class divisions serve as the foundation for hegemonic regimes. Caste and class differences prevent subalterns from obtaining essentials. Together with the caste system, the state and its civic infrastructure support the oppression of the lower classes. In *Indian Writing in English*, Mulk Raj Anand started the narrative from the bottom up at a time when Indian theorists were unfamiliar with the concept of subalternity.

#### MULK RAJ ANAND'S COOLIE AND TWO LEAVES AND A BUD HAVE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS

Mulk's setting Raj Anand is all of mankind. It is the defining element of his narrative and the entry point to his body of work. In an attempt to lessen pain and suffering, he has written novels and short stories about improving mankind. His theoretical intellectualism is given concrete form by characters like Munoo and Gangu from his novels "Coolie" and "Two Leaves and a Bud," who are rooted in the most enduring philosophy of our time, humanism. These characters also reveal the author's keen insight and compassionate understanding of human existence in social context. Anand illuminates such taboo topics as social hypocrisy and taboos, class exploitation and class warfare, social and economic injustice, and atrocities committed against the weak and disenfranchised as a sharp observer of human nature in the realistic fiction genre. He depicts individuals caught in the terrible web, attempting to escape, but eventually failing. They are despised by everyone, including caste Hindus, monks, tea growers, and villagers. The author has compassion

for those who are oppressed, including farmers, street cleaners, city workers, sepoys, and laborers.

In under three months, novelist Lawrence Wiskart and his editor at Lawrence & Wiskart published "Coolie" in 1936. One of Anand's finest works, according to many, was the book. 38 additional languages have had it translated. It is widely read and expresses the author's fury at society. It has received good ratings from academics, critics, and regular readers. The poetic chant that the tea leaf gatherers sing as they choose the ideal mixture of two leaves and a bud gives the book "Two Leaves and a Bud" its name. In "Two Leaves and a Bud," which is, in a way, an elaboration and amplification of the scenes and events related to the Bombay cotton mills in the earlier work, the bulk of the social difficulties addressed by Anand in "Coolie" are also depicted. Since it launches a vigorous attack on the dehumanizing effects of imperialism, capitalism, and its corollaries, such the exploitation and harassment of helpless workers, "Two Leaves and a Bud" is, in large part, a Coolie written in a heavier strain. Anand explores the lives of yet another class of society's outcasts in Coolie and Two Leaves and a Bud. A harsh indictment of the disastrous weakening of a poor farmer's fundamental human right to happiness may be found in the novel Coolie. Munoo and his fellow coolies are exploited by the forces of industry, capitalism, communism, and colonialism. Despite the novel's qualities, action and character are severely distorted by the protagonists' humanitarian sympathies. On the whole, it is impossible to avoid the impression that Gangu is presented as a genuine Indian job in order to support the author's thesis, despite Anand's attempts to be objective by illustrating how the British attitude toward the Indian can be imperialistic, as in the case of Reggie Hunt, or liberal, as in the case of Dr. de la Havre. The work's detailed picture of life on the plantation saves it.

### **Capitalism and Imperialism**

You may recognize Anand's literary criticisms of capitalism and imperialism by reading Coolie and Two Leaves and a Bud. India was seen as a viable location by British imperialists for implementing their own style of ruthless, exploitative capitalism. They profited the most by exploiting the distress of India's underclass. In a horrible case of exploitation, Munoo from Coolie and Gangu from Two Leaves and a Bud are both drained empty by money. The capitalism in Anand's writings has its origins in British imperialism. The Senecan maxim "Vivere militare est," to live is to fight, is more applicable to Indian peasants and tenants than to any other section of Indian society. The struggle of peasants and tenants for "daybreak and daily bread" is a major theme in all of Anand's writings.

In his tale, a trio of malevolent landlords, moneylenders, and lawyers are for the blood of the peasants. These social parasites put an unimaginable amount of strain on the vulnerable countryside. The coolies in the film Coolie, The Charter are made to recite a list of the most heinous instances of capitalist

exploitation by trade union leader Sauda. It asserts that the owners of the corporation are failing to address the requirements of the coolies, including acknowledging them as human beings rather than soulless machines and giving them options to make a livelihood without using bribes or borrowing money from dishonest sources. The charter perfectly captures Anand's societal criticism of capitalism's exploitation. The communal discontent brought on by the strike is another example of economic exploitation. Capitalists craftily produce communal violence using their financial clout since they are well aware that it cannot be fueled by tsshem. This incident effectively demonstrates the British industrialists' "divide and exploit" tactic.

### **Religious Fanaticism and Nationalism**

Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism are just a few of the main global faiths that have their roots in India. Muslims, Jews, and Christians all declare India their home. These religions will continue to exist long beyond human history as a whole, and they have had a significant influence on human progress. My countrymen, by and large, take our beliefs much too seriously. Without love, they were prepared to do everything for it, including vehemently advocate for it, write about it, engage in conflict over it, and even give their lives for it. This has made it very difficult for the country to work together and in peace. The violence that so often erupts on our streets in the pretext of religion reflects a contempt for the true thing. These arguments are typically started by those who have little interest in religion. Really nice explanation provided by Anand. Every argument made in the name of God, in his humanist viewpoint, is useless. He wants to steer Indian culture away from nationalism that is rooted in religious extremism. After reading Coolie Sauda's comment in the book, Munoo remembers having similar ideas about the wealthy and the poor many years ago in Sham Nagar. Red Alert The passionate remarks of union officials have put the factory owners in a potentially explosive situation. As a result, they deftly transform the union convention into a religious dispute between Muslims and Hindus. Munoo immediately takes off after sensing danger.

### **Casteism and Karma**

The extent to which Hindu society accepts casteism and karma frustrates Anand. He contends that the Christian doctrines of revelation, predestination, original sin, and human depravity should be rejected since they are impediments to progress. He mocks Islam's pointless rituals. He criticizes all faiths equally for the unease that has seeped in. He promotes humanism as the only authentic religion. He objects to holy rituals being reduced to meaningless ceremonies. Two Leaves and a Bud's story is set in the beautiful Assamese forest and highlights the appalling labor conditions in a nearby tea plantation. A ordinary farmer named Gangu is the story's protagonist, and he bravely faces

hardships including debt, famine, malaria, insults, and death without wallowing in self-pity. He answers with the Buddhist-like resignation of a Hindu when informed he must leave Croft Cooke's property: "It was only one more reward for the misdeeds of his past life."

Despite the fact that Anand does not share Gangu's superstitious beliefs or his belief that "to bring a piece of iron home on Monday was the sure sign of a future tragedy," which leads him to instruct his son Buddha to discard the nail he has joyfully picked up from the ground, Anand includes them in the book to give Gangu's portrayal of himself credibility. However, the author's interpretation of Gangu does not remain detached throughout. The poor coolies of high caste background who accept the Buta Ram in Two Leaves and a Bud because of his rank as a sardar and the fact that he has not been reduced to poverty as they have greeted him as Buta Ram despite the humiliation associated with his low caste. Munoo and Gangu of Coolie and Two Leaves and a Bud are compelled to accept and submit to barber caste members like Buta despite their ancestry as Khatriyas.

## CONCLUSION

Mulk Raj Anand is a pioneer in Indian literature published in English. The effectiveness with which novels convey concepts, feelings, and experiences has been assessed. Due to its unique aspects and traits, the English-language Indian novel warrants rigorous critical scrutiny, much like its equivalents in other languages. Indian English authors express their objectives and aspirations to the typical man via works that exhibit social concern, realism, and parallelism. As a result, they provide instances of cultural opinions on people. Mulk Raj Anand, the book's author, is a humanist with a great intellectual concern for humanity. Untouchable is a powerful account of subalterns who are suffering from socially built manacles.

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