

ISSN 0976-8165

*The Criterion*



# *The Criterion*

An International Journal in English

Bi - Monthly Refereed & Indexed Open Access eJournal

April 2014 Vol. 5, Issue- 2

5<sup>th</sup> Year of Open Access

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## **Dalit Voices: A Comparative Study of the Novels of Mulk Raj Anand and Richard Wright**

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This paper aims to evaluate fictional publication of Mulk Raj Anand and Richard Wright from the perspective of social justice and liberation. Anand is marked by a heartiest desire to probe India's marginalized people, while Wright related with logic and artistic temperament for Blacks as social and Psychological humanity. Both novelist believes in human equality and mutual respect, Their humanism manifests itself in a realistic Sketch of the situation by oppressed masses, suffering various types of disability, discrimination and alienation.

Anand's humanism was the natural outcome of his childhood experiences with synthesis of western thought in novel, "Man is the measure of al things". The simmering anger and impatience that one often feels in his works, are the product of his passion for social justice and human dignity. Anand have been influenced by Marxian thinking and approaches to social reality. His disaffection with religion and his scant respect to superstitions with fears are parallel with Marxism. His socialist and modernist conception about modern India is without doubt an echo of Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru.

Richard Wright resembles Anand in most of his characteristics as a writer. He too is a committed artist with a missionary zeal for the restoration of dignity to his people. He has succeeded in creating credible characters, substantive stories and enthralling with absorbing plots. While Anand doesn't conceals his sensation and political posturing on occasion, Wright merely shows contradiction and leaves it to the reader to make his own Judgment or inference. Where Wright wants to indicate the arrogance and imperialism of the American, he takes recourse to the ironic or satiric mode.

K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar has devoted a Chapter to Mulk Raj Anand. The writer pays a rich tribute to Anand for his portrayals as outcome of his personal knowledge and experience of such out castes in his life, and identification with their lot. He declares 'Untouchable' as most compact and artistic, 'Coolie' as most extensive in time and 'two leaves and a bud' as the most effective piece of sarcasm and satire. Iyengar comments the terrific intensity and concentration of the 'Big Heart' and Anand's familiarity with the treated themes. Later, he expressed appreciation of the Anand for autobiographical strand, secure of history and narrative power critical comments on "Private life of a Indian Prince". He further aids the Anand's remarkable quality as vitality and sense of actuality. Iyengar's critics is quite perceptive and unbiased in his book, 'The elephant and the lotus': A study of the Novels of Mulk Raj Anand. Lindsay compliments that Anand has ability to command a philosophic detachment from his subject and

characters. In his attempt to harmonize the eastern and western traditions and scores a credible victory in novels such as 'The Big Heart', 'Untouchable' and 'The Road' are visible. C.B. Narasimhiah in his book, 'The swan and the Eagle' has given a critical analysis on Anand's Novels, namely 'Untouchable', 'Coolie' and 'The Big heart'. He says that Anand predicted social institutions as deterrents to the natural growth of the individual and society.

There is an enormous amount of criticism on Richard Wright too. Charles Larson, in his book titled 'The Emergence of African American Fiction (1971) Written Richard's Novel about Community with character and situation. The article of Anne Tibble in editorial book 'Modern Black Novelist: Collection of Critical Essays' depicts that Wright in pre-occupied with the moral conflict of values and a trying to shift them and show them as the perennial challenge to the role.

There is no dearth of journal articles and essays on Wright and Anand. This paper is forced to make a selection and confine it to the recent over. Anand has been reviewed by a good number of Indian and foreign critics. The artistic failure of Anand was pointed out even by neutral and scholarly critics; both foreign and Indian have a basis in his works. While it is different to agree with Mrs. Mukherjee in regard to some of her changes, one has to concede that Anand oversteps his limits when his humanist impulse gets the better of his artistic temper: All credit should be given to Anand a critics have never failed to point out, for his pioneering efforts and fighting qualities so evident in his introduction of an persistence with the marginalized and outcast people in his fictional works, not withstanding an orchestrated propaganda against him.

Wright, on the other hand, has had a fair critical review. There has been hardly any adverse or deliberately maligning propaganda against his works, barring perhaps the controversy over his alleged denigration of the American's attitude. His artistic excellences, range of his language and style, grasp of Blacks culture, history and ethics, have all been meticulously observed and praised by critics and Scholars.

The interpretation of Anand's ultimate goal through critical analysis of Novels may be understood as Sketch of the stark reality of poverty and feelings from ruling society. Compassion or Yoga is projected as an effective way of combating social evils such as casteism class conflict, exploitation, alienation and social stratification, There is however, a hint to collective action or bold personal decision geared to making a dent the citadel of out molded thought, pattern and actions.

Reading the novels of Anand and Wright and making an analysis, one cannot fail to perceive the underlying ideology. The contradictions caused by capitalism are discernible in every third world reality. Anand and Wright are aware of these inequalities with the subtle and intangible causes underlying origin. Freedoms as a process are need to experience in all oppressed community of the world. This process may have the special cultural hues and historical trapping of a particular nation; the general assumption and basic thrust are common. A liberationist writer has a corresponding philosophy or vision as Anand illustrates in his works.

Wright has time and again voiced his concern for the liberation of his fellow Africans and has articulated their motives and goals in writing.

It is widely accepted that Anand present his view of Indian society and its maladies through his Skills of characterization. It is no exaggeration to Say that he is a character novelist. His protagonists are invariably drawn from the underside of society the voiceless and marginalized sections of India. It is in this sense that we attribute 'heroism' to the central characters of his novels. Anand Certainly made a revolutionary departure from the existing practice and from the concept laid down by classical philosophers. All his protagonists are tragic heroes in their own right, but their tragedy is not merely Personal but Symbolic of the tragic situation of large part of Indian population.

In Anand's very first novel, 'Untouchable', Bakha, the sweeper boy is the protagonist. He belongs to the lowest rungs of the caste-hierarchy that existed in the Punjab. Hence, Anand in this novel has set himself the task of exposing the darker, heinous and diabolical aspects of the caste system perpetrated by the Hindus. Anand does this by probing the consciousness of this marginal caste of society. Anand has paid meticulous attention to every detail of Bakha's life as he goes about his daily chores, he hasn't failed to indicate his heartiest anguish and search for his own identity Anand no doubt emphatically depicts to eke out from routine of cleaning latrines, sweeping and begging in life of Bakha and his aliens.

Bakha is form between two worlds, one illusory fashioned by his acute imagination and other, the grim reality of his nameless existence. All the insults heaped on him like 'fire that was a smoldering rage in his soul' The question he poses to himself in his depth of depression is: "Why was all this?". I anand makes Bakha go through a painless process of introspection and self confrontation. Bakha is depressed, but not desperate. His consciousness of pathetic predicament strengthens will to fight against his oppression. It may be argued that after all, Bakha too is a prisoner and victim of his self Pitying, self recrimination and meekness. He is more act upon than acting, a passive victim of fate and of the system that annihilates him and the likes of him. But one cannot fail to perceive that Bakha is a die-hard optimist. He is still confident of a better future if only Gandhi's idealism and much vaunted mechanization and modernization of the fact, lqbal Nath Sarashar could eventually remove the stigma and the social ostracism of the untouchables and rehabilitate them as equal citizens of India.

In 'Collie', Munoo become symbolic of the unequal class relationships sharpened by the capitalist system with the underlying hop of a crisis and an alternative. Munoo belongs to the kshatriya caste but on account of poverty and its attendant disabilities he is driver from pillar to post in a search of better life. The very flexibility and suppleness of his youth body lend strength to his character at once dignified and proud of his caste and minimal education. Of course, "he was an orphan whom nobody wanted except for the purpose of exploiting him" Anand has more over portrayed striking parallels and contrasts in his study of human nature under the impact of capitalist values of self aggrandizement, profiteering, selfishness and dishonesty.

In the third phase of his careers as a novelist, Anand seems to have developed a philosophical outlook, towards many socio-political issues that is in daily life. The later novels represent social and economic realities in wider framework of human destiny as we find in “The Road”. The novel sheds light on the novelist’s change perspective on social reality prevailing in India. Ananda also raises question of human suffering due to the defect of the social system, but almost “deliberately refrains from affirming the human right to bend society to his needs and desires”. This novel expresses not so much Anand’s zeal for revolutionary socialism as his anguish and pain at continuous suffering of Indian people in the name of caste and creed. He believes that immoral practice can be eradicated only educating the people. However, he does not go to the extent of advocating for the overall modernization of the social system. We cannot overlook Bikhu’s participation with two opposing faces. One led by landlord Thakur Singh and the other one led by Lambardar Dhoolising. The focus shifts to exposing those inhuman practices need convention to which some people are still clinging because their will for vested interests. This novel reveals vast changes in intervening years not in the temper of nation but also in the Psychology about caste system. The marginal caste has become much more assertive and conscious of their places in the Social system.

Anand is more concerned only with the livelihood Problem of untouchables but never tries to go into depth of their present Mystery in this novel. Anand has hit at the central theme of the liberation praxis. Affirmation of life for the suffering masses underscores the needs for sacrifice and struggle aimed to establishment of a new society upholding life and pro-people values. The gap between the real and ideal in life spells the difference between succeeders and others who face apparent defeat.

The while world dominates the political and social life in all the Richard Wright’s novels depicts never ending struggle that a black faces when growing up in United states, Wright Black Boy, Native Son, Rite of passage and the long Dream are all bound by the common theme of self realization. In all four books, the climax occurs when a black youth realize his position in society and the ugly future that lies ahead of him.

Wright’s portrayal of characters, specially the main characters, is consistent and convincing. In his efficacious autobiography, Black Boy, Wright manifests what it is like to desire such simple Para Phernalia. From a very early age and for much of his life thereafter, Richard experiences chronic physical hunger. “Hunger stole upon me slowly that at first I was not aware of what hunger really meant. Hunger had always been more or less at my elbow when I played, but now I began to wake up at night to find hunger standing at my bedside, staring at me gauntly.”<sup>11</sup> Because hunger has always been a part of Richard’s lifestyle, he cannot even imagine eating meat every day.

Another thing that Contributes to Richard’s emotional hunger is the subject of black and whites. “I wanted to understand these two sets of people who lived side by side and never touched, it seemed, except in violence”<sup>12</sup> Richard desired to be able to speak his mind and not to

be tormented by the whites. The process of achieving self-realization is marked by all the verbal and physical battle that the main characters in Wright's book must fight. He makes clear what all his characters experience, When he writes in *Black Boy*:

"I had never in my life been abused by whites, but I had already become as conditioned to their existence as though I had been the victim of a thousand lynchings"<sup>13</sup>.

The powerful presence of whites in a black boy is embedded since birth but emerges clearly during the period of self-realization for the black youth. In *Native Son*, the main character, Bigger Thomas, lives in one room apartment with his family at Chicago. Bigger sees whites through hate and Jealousy filled eyes and feelings of inferiority to marginal society. But in a moment of fear and hysteria, Bigger commits a murder that alters his life forever. Bigger knows that he is limited by society, but he does not possess the resources to combat the injustice he experiences. His mother moving out of their rat-infested apartment Bigger has no significant education, skills, or talents. He also lacks confidence and determination, He really feels that he is worthless in the white man's world Bigger's life is full of hatred, coldness and isolation. Emotional isolation dominates his life and separates him from the other characters of Richard's Novels. Bigger shows his pessimistic view on his life when he says to his lawyer at the end of novel.

"I wanted to do things. But everything I wanted to do I couldn't. I wanted to do what the white boys in school did. Some of them went to college. Some of them went to the army. But I could never go"<sup>14</sup>. The naïve Wright does not recognize the impact of color on his later life. Hatred is common for the feisty young Wright. Wright has the ambition, desire and interest that Bigger lacks. These qualities help Wright reach self-understanding after he does make sense of the society surrounding him. Wright chooses to plow on against the hideous institutions of Prejudice. His full self-realization is reached when he is able to gain insight into the hideous institutions of Prejudice. His full self-realization is reached when he is able to gain insight into his own life and how it connects with the society. He is able to make connections between his mother's strict nature and the threatening white society. He understands that the bitter social oppression causes the ignorance of his society.

There are strong similarities and subtle differences in the manner both these novelists approach characterization. It is quite evident that both depend on their characters, in order to narrate the story and to build the plot and action with the cause effect logical structure. Anand's protagonists are drawn invariably from the oppressed sections of the society. While individuality is not sacrificed, one cannot miss out this intention of projecting them as people whose lives and struggles with artistic expression. Even as types, his protagonists have their individual personality which makes them credible and real. Wright delineates his protagonist as strongly personalized character more often than not idiosyncratic and therefore unique. While there is an unavoidable ring of monotony in the characters of Anand, Wright delights the readers with a refreshing range and novelty in choice of characters. Of course, Anand is constrained by his



fictional purpose to confine himself to a narrow spectrum of individuals. But Wright, although limited by his deliberate choice to the Black community and its experiences, has nonetheless produced characters who move live and have their being in the artistically evoked the same milieu of the particular novel. However, Anand displays his creative fecundity in filling his canvas with myriad minor characters. Anand has used characters with extreme caution and subtle literary narrative techniques in order to perform the goal, Wright has his share of the propagandist mechanism subtly pressed into service through the narration or commentary of characters. He has in particular a Wiseman in every novel who affects the authorial voice that present a same view point, offers wise alternatives or drives home a traditional saying or aphorism in order to instill a sense of the clan into some key characters. Anand however tends to impose his opinions quite overtly on his central characters thus doing harm to their authenticity and credibility. Wright avoids this pitfall and therefore his protagonists cannot be put into neat categories. Achebe's heroes are all life like and seal and almost defy the illusion of fiction.

Thus, both these novelists have sought to drive home their own perceptions of freedom and societal transformation conditioned by their own socio-political and cultural backgrounds. And both have exercised caution and restraint in not overdoing this and in allowing this motif to operate as an undertone and as a subtle, and subdued aspiration simmering in the subconscious of the heroes in their work. Certainly this unconscious yearning for freedom at different levels can be interpreted as the partially internalized and articulated aspiration in the race, caste class or tribe for which Anand and Wright have become spokesman.

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