



Modernity in Mulk Raj Anand and His Novels

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Today Salman Rushdie is credited with popularizing Indian writing in English. But 70 years earlier Anand had pioneered the writing of Indian literature which was accessible to English speaking world. And unlike Rushdie his works were inspired and informed by the lives of real people in unglamorous situations, warts and all. In addition his writings demonstrate a keen desire for political change and social transformation that remained with him throughout his life. The best tribute that readers could pay Mulk Raj Anand would be to read his novels and be inspired by the dedication and commitment he had.

Anand brought everything new to the IndoAnglian novel, new matter, new technique, new style and new approach. It is thus that Anand interprets Indian material in terms of a new universalism and combines all that is best in both east and west. He evolves something new in his work.

The recitalist oriental manner of storytelling gave place to the western dramatic technique of fiction in the novels of Anand. He carried the tradition of Tagore, Premchand, Bankim Chandra and Sharat Chandra to heights unheard of before and brought the form of novel in line with the latest developments in England and Europe.

In human tendencies are inherent in all societies be it western or eastern, civilized or uncivilized. The need of the hour is a bent in mind and attitudinal change. People should be highly emphatic so as to realize the sufferings of others. The 21st century is considered as the century of scientific and technological growth. This growth will trigger chaos, disruption, war, starvation, rise of crime and disease if humanistic values are not properly practised.

Untouchable and Coolie are the only novels in which Anand has presented the realistic picture especially problems and exploitations of teenagers of early decades of 20th century in India to reveal the social background with the unique observation of social reformer. Anand doesn't recognize pure art or art for art's sake, but he believes in the social significance of literature. He believes that literature must serve society, solve their problems and guide them. Many problems of India obstruct her progress, integrity and solidarity. Even after 72 years of independence many basic problems have not been solved. Anand has made these problems known to west. Like other novelists, he doesn't export the exotic India through his fiction. It is the real India with all her ugliness, squalor, dirt and pathos that shows in novel after novel with artistic success.

'Death of a Hero' the novel is full of imaginative touches in spite of the fact that it is a piece from history. Communal hatred and violence which Anand fervently deprecates here are inherent in the historical situation which the story is built. It creates a new myth, a modern myth that bears on the present day national resurgence in India. It deals with the life and death of the Kashmiri Hero Maqboolsherwani. Death of a Hero is truly an epic of modern India covering events which are fresh in national memory.

Riemenschneider describes, 'Death of a Hero' as the most satisfying artistic achievement.



In Lament on the Death of 'Master of Arts' Anand's main purpose in writing this novel is to expose the futility of modern education which offers degrees, but not always jobs. He brings this out successfully by giving a realistic picture of Nur's respected efforts and failures to get a job. In this novel Anand described horrid consequences of system of education. Gama exclaims, what is there in education brother waste of time' 2

Anand's humanism is inspired by broad democratic ideals such as liberty, secularism, and religious tolerance. 'In Death of a Hero' we find in the name of religion Pakistani indulge in all manner of violence, loot, kill, and women and destroy even holy places.

The most important principle of Anand's humanism is found in the old women and the cow.

We find his strong plea for the recognition and acceptance of women's rights in it. Women need to be treated on an equal footing with men is the main tenet of Anand's humanism.

In 21st century we must understand each other humanness and cultivate the arts through which we may achieve the universal basis for no war, against stupidity, malice, aforesight and meanness of mind.

Encyclopedia Britannica defines 'The attitude of mind which attaches primary importance to man and to his faculties, affairs, temporal aspirations and well being'.

As a naturalistic humanist, Anand rejects all supernatural thoughts, as sheer myths no longer tenable in modern scientific age. He refuses to believe in God, religion or the ideas of heaven and hell or rebirth. Anand only God is man however low in the present structure of hierarchical society, his man is potentially creative and has a bright future.

'Only by extending the range of our sympathies to all human beings and by concentrating on all that exalts them that we can rescue the disinherited from the morass of superstition and poverty in which they are stepped'. Anand also interprets casteism as a social crime against humanity because it has evil effects on human kind. In the present situation we also find casteism in the society.

Modern feature of the novel search for identity is also found in most of Anand's novels. In this way we find modernity in Mulk Raj Anand and His Novels.

Works cited:-

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