

Social Thoughts of Mulk Raj Anand & R.K.Narayan

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Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan are two great name of Indian English Literature. Although they are contemporary, they represent two different strata of society. Both are doyens of their class. They use same language but their approach and treatment are varied. One writes for masses and other for classes. Whereas Anand is regarded as a committed writer and prefers to all himself a humanist, Narayan is acclaimed as a detached observer of life and has its limitations as well. In other words we may say that every novelist, gives us in his novels his own personal idiosyncratic vision of the world. The mind of man is a complex phenomenon. It acts and reacts to the events and the situation around him. It all depends how one develops his mind right from ones childhood. The writings of Anand and Narayan sufficiently prove this.

It is found that both great novelists gave Indian English distinctive forms, unique themes, remarkable subject and original craftsmanship. They both wrote their novels on variety of Indians as well as other subjects, they tried their best to throw light on various aspects on Indian society and various phases of Indian life. Their novels are original conception of their social, moral and spiritual visions. Though they are different in their subject matter one is purely a social novelist dealing with the life of the underdogs in Indian society and the other is a moral thinker dealing with several human radiance based on the effect of wealth, sex and love. Both novelists deem to agree with Hardy's observation that: *It is better for a writer to know a little bit of the world Remarkably well than a great part of the world remarkably Little.*

And I think both succeed in this mission remarkably well than any other novelist of Indian English writing. Anand deals with the misery and wretchedness of the poor and their struggle for a better life. Almost all his novels are a variation on the same theme and are intended to bring home to the reader the plight of the over-burdened peasant who is powerless to fight superstition and social convention and is baulked at less to fight superstition and social convention and is baulked at every step in his aspirations for a better life. In a statement in his Apology of Heroism on his evolution as an artist, Anand says: ".....**as my media as a writer were the memory and imagination, and the substance of my work, the whole man and whole gamut of human relationships, rather than only one single part of it.**" Later in the same book he asserts: ".....Just as I desire a total and truly human view of the whole man, in order that a completely new kind of revolutionary human may arise, so I have been inclined to stress the need for a truly humanist art commensurate with the needs of our time. Anand has all along written novels and short stories with a view to teaching men "to recognize the fundamental principles of human living and exercise vigilance in regard to the real enemies of freedom and socialism. He has been conscious of the need of coolies and the other suppressed members of society, to human dignity and self-awareness in view of the abjectness, apathy and despair in which they are sunk."

But Anand's heavy emphasis on the quality of art stands in the way of his attainment as a novelist; for obtrusive propaganda makes his novels suffer in quality. However, Anand "sees life in the raw and exposes it mercilessly, flesh, wounds, blood and all.... Shedding sentimentalism and writes with a fine touch of scorn of social and economic inequalities. Anand's man is rebellious and anxious to redeem the world

from its misery and pain. His humanism “does not therefore rest on a Divine Sanction, as does the mystical humanism of Gandhi or Tagore....but puts its faith in the creative imagination of and, in his capacity to transform himself.....(and) raise himself to tremendous heights of dignity.” This is the saving feature of Anand's art; he is quite definite in his aims as a humanist. And this is also the reason why he leaves severely alone questions relating to man's relationship with himself and his God. Anand himself thinks differently:

Untouchable is favoured by most people in spite of prolixity, The Big Heart is a more mature book and has deeper implications as tragedy or rather as a part of tragic view of life.

The object of proletarian humanism is to reconstruct the complete human personality and free it from the distorting and dismemberment to which it has been subjected in class society. In the India of today, class-ridden as it is, the artist whose primary concern is with the political man, will not be able to escape being a proletarian humanist and cannot be indifferent to the lot of the hungry millions. Food is a primary requisite of human dignity; hunger debases and dehumanises man. That is why hunger is the major theme of his large number of novels.

If Mulk Raj Anand is a 'committed artist, R.K. Narayan may be described as a novelist of the middle class as engaged in a struggle “to extricate themselves...from the automatism of the past.” Though not vehicles of mass propaganda, his novels also depict the breakdown of feudal society and express the changed ideas concerning the family as a unit and the conflict between old and new. But Narayan is more concerned with the analysis of the character of the individual in his course through life. Vasu in *The Man-eater of Malgudi* and Raju in *The Guide* are examples. In both novels the character of Vasu and that of Raju are determined by their actions. They rise from humble beginnings to ill-gotten affluence and are overwhelmed by disaster through over-confidence and self-deception.

Though Narayan is a 'moral analyst', yet the emphasis in his novels is not on man's relations to himself. Actually, there are no Indo-Anglian novels entirely devoted to a study of human destiny and of the human predicament. No Indo-Anglian novel looks at the world as a basically sick society. This is because in India unlike in Europe or America, writers have not begun to face a crisis of culture; nor do they deeply involve themselves in the confusions and anxieties which beset their counterparts in Europe. Only when the writer is faced with uncertainty, irrationality and an oppressive sense of the sickness of society, will he turn to the psyche of the individual and make an exploration of man's hidden motivation to find meaning in life. Narayan expounded his literary credit to William Walsh in the following words:

My main concern is with human character – a central character from whose point of view the world is seen, and who tries to get over the difficult situation, or succumbs to it, or fights it in his own setting.....A man thinks he wants to do something and it may turn as something else.

The Indo-Anglian novelists by and large writes in the classical tradition and makes a search for an integrated view of man's identity, his place in the society he belongs to and the social values within he works out his destiny. It is high time for Indo-Anglian fiction to be regarded as literature and evaluated as such by critics.

It is quite in the fitness of things that we Indian too should realize the importance and worth of Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan, the two great sons of mother India, who have so worthily enriched the field of Indo-Anglian fiction by their meritorious works. Foreign critics like Jack Lindsay and Graham Greene have taken appreciative notices of these writers.

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