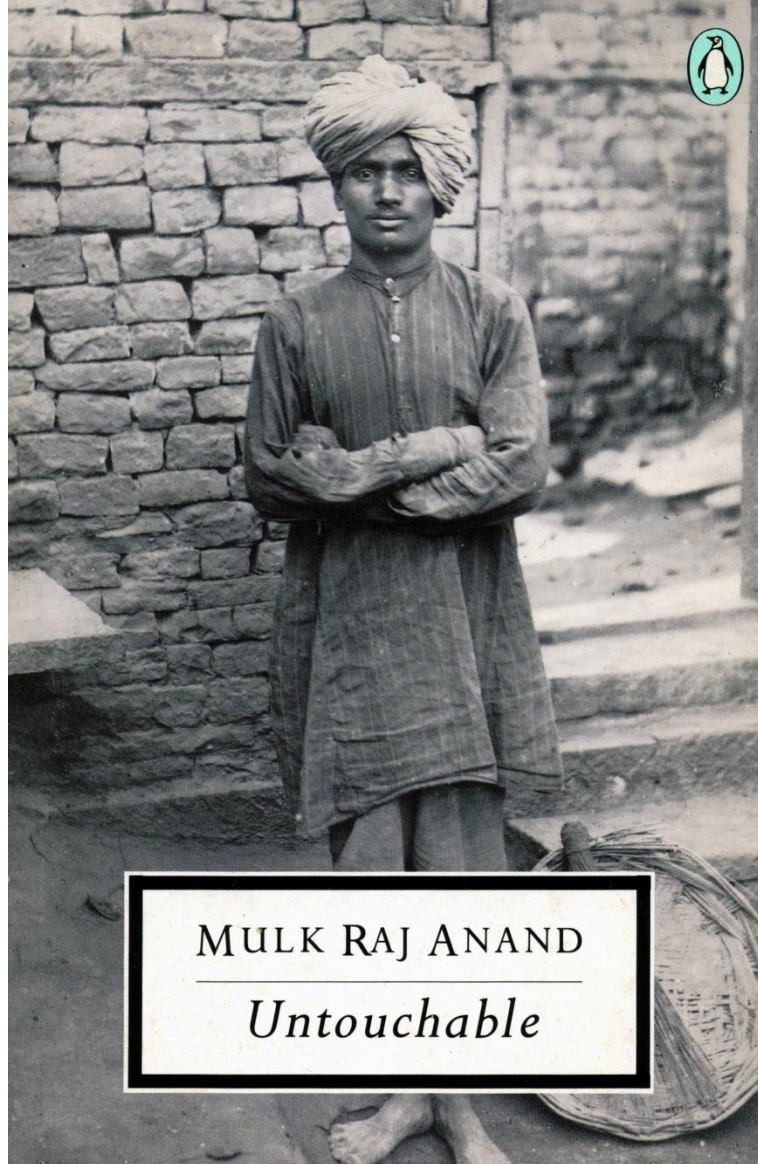


Exploring the Exploitation of the Young Adult in  
Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*

S. Prabu, Ph.D. Research Scholar and Dr. B. Karthikeyan



**Abstract**

Mulk Raj Anand is a socially committed author. He exposed the real suffering of the groundlings to the world. The aim of this paper is to bring out the social and realistic lives in early nineteenth century in which India struggled for independence. Further, it discusses the exploitation and brutal treatment of the low class people in the dominated society. The novel

depicts the image of untouchable sweeper. His name is Bhaka. He is ill-treated by the dominant class along with his sister Sohini. There are several occasions within the novel that reveal the stark and naked realities in the society. It presents the evil of untouchability and the want for radical sympathy. The reader can notice the humiliation and physical assault still as mental agonies of the untouchables throughout the novel. The equality has been denied to the low class in the name of caste in India. The high class people projected they only born from the head of the God and low class people from the feet of the God. But, God created all human beings as equal. Mulk Raj Anand gave strong voice against the untouchability through his writings.

**Keywords:** Exploitation, alienation, humiliation, social discrimination, human dignity, suppression.

### ***Untouchable***

*Untouchable* is a social novel which exposed the evil of Untouchability in India. The novel records the experiences of Bakha, who is eighteen-year-old sweeper boy within the course of single day. The sweeper boy, Bakha has the work to keep the general public latrines of the city clean. It is terribly tedious and punishing furthermore as degrading. The novel *Untouchable* shows Anand's sympathies on the unsuccessful person or the weaker section of the society in India. The social Alienation is the significant importance in *Untouchable*. Basically, social alienation is played a major role in Bhaka's life. In different words, Bakha is not completely different from the other individual. This is often the condition, which enables his social alienation to continue in his life. Social alienation exists within the type of a class structure relegates individuals to mounted roles. Anand's condemnation of the class structure is formed on the grounds that a system that labels individuals like Bakha as "Untouchable". It is unmoving in social alienation. Bhaka is literally exploited by the society while cleaning latrines. Sohini is the sister of Bakha. She is sexually exploited by the Brahmin but the dominant society made the people of that village to ignore the incident.

### **Exploitation of the Young Adult**

The primary theme of *Untouchable* is the exploitation of the young adult. Bakha is the protagonist of the novel. The elementary right of Bakha is denied, which is helpful to grow into respectable position in the society. Bakha's life is condemned from the starting point of his life as sweeper regardless his dream to transcend in to miserable existence. E.M. Forster points in 'Preface to *Untouchable*'. Bakha longs to travel to high school but he is aware of that an untouchable man travelling with the high class people to the school is impossible in society. So, he dumped up the dreams of him. If he has had protected childhood, he would have gone to high school and studied like different kids. Bakha detected the ardent, zealous look that lip up the tiny one's face. Once Bakha had "wept and cried to be allowed to travel to school" however he was told by his father that "schools were meant for the Babus, and not for the Bhangis." He had not understood the rationale. It is the education would have created them revolt against injustice. The mental object of the exploited is blissfulness for the exploiters.

H.M. Williams is all praise and admiration for the treatment of the latrine-cleaning category condemned to isolation and deprivation as handlers of excrement. "There are several occasions within the novel that reveal the stark and naked realities within the society." The untouchables are put-upon on such occasion that is ravished and their morale shattered into items. The well incident within the novel affectingly describes the real condition of the low

class people. However, these ill-omened individuals are taken by the high category tangible. Bakha's sister goes to the village well for taking water. She waits to incline touch water from the well, as she is not allowed near to the well for being untouchable. Ultimately, the village priest asks her to return to his house for cleaning. But, seeing no one around, he tries to molest her. The priest tries to seduce her and later blamed her in the public.

### **The Priest**

The priest unrepentantly indicts the innocent woman that she has defiled his faith. Bakha returns home urgently and tells his father Lakha concerning his insult and Sohini's molestation by the Pandit. He says; “They assume we tend to are mere dirt, as a result of we tend to clean their dirt”. If we tend to read the incident from humanitarian perspective, we may say which is correct. The untouchables are weak because the system prevailed by the wealthy people and justice is denied to them. We can see from the beginning of the novel that the lives of Bakha and his sister’s trouble for money, identity and social unrest.

### **Tragic Experiences**

On the fateful day the story of *Untouchable* takes place, Bakha features a series of distressing and even 'edifying' experiences. The primary theme is 'touching' episode. Bakha's frightened once, enjoying the style of Jebebi. He accidentally touches a caste Hindu man and suffered a lot because of the punishment given by the high class people and that 'defiled' man not hesitates to slap him in the public place. The folks gather there too find fault with Bakha. His protestations fall on deaf ears. After this, as he moves ahead, he is alert to his presence in a very public place and takes care to announce his approach.

The crowd's cruelty repeatedly returns to his mind. He painfully realizes his unenviable position of a sweeper boy. He does not have a stepparent. However, society itself appears to act as arduous step-mother as far as he is involved. All of them abused, abused, abused. “Why are we tending to invariably abused? As a result of we tend to are sweepers. As a result of we tend to are bit dung..... They [Muhammadans] do not mind touching United States..... It’s solely the Hindus, and also the outcastes UN agency aren't sweepers. For them I’m a sweeper, sweeper-untouchable! Untouchable! That is the word! Untouchable! Untouchable! I’m associate Untouchable.”

### **Treated Worse than a Slave**

The sweeper is worse off than a slave, for the slave could modify his master. The right is given to him to modify his duties and may even become free. However, the sweeper cannot escape from his work and wherever he is excluded from intercourse and also the consolation of his faith. He pollutes others when in an unclean situation but the people from high class pollute the people by appearing cleanly. Anand presents that a high class man is only clean out side but his inside is polluted like anything in his writings. This novel shows that even though the people born in different places and categories the blood which flows in their bodies are in same colour. The God created us equal but the human divided the people for their benefits and keep them as toy.

### **Continuing Atrocities**

The suffering of the supposedly low-class people still exists in India. The Girls like Sohini has been affected because of the high class people. They only go for work to support their unconditioned family but the high class and wealthy people used this opportunity and

spoiled their lives. People like Bhaka are suffering a lot even in 21<sup>st</sup> century because the cast system, which is still ruling our country and making cruel thoughts among the people. This cast system makes the high class people to deny work to them. The poor people have to depend on the wealthy man in many situations for yearning money. Even though they get the job, they are not allowed inside the houses of the upper class people. They stand outside of the upper class people's house and do work. The situation which is presented in the writings of Mulk Raj Anand perfectly matches with today's condition. Still, the equality is denied to the people in many villages.

The novel presents the harsh reality and the curse of Untouchability. The manifest plea within the novel is for the entire conclusion of Untouchability. Mulk Raj Anand has designed with the novel *Untouchable*, which is completely unique and articulates the abuse of exploited category through sheer sympathy within the traditionalist manner of the realist novel. Anand has been a good author and he is often compared to Dickens. There is clear ray of seeing India free from all dogmatism, insensitivity, and inequality discrimination, which is a continuous fantastic thing about equality and closeness. It could prevail in our country soon. The people from low class still long for complete equality. Even though they have the skills, they have been neglected and ill-treated by the upper class people in working places.

### **Fake Lines**

The intelligent people had created the fake lines in between the people and ruled them in those days. They told that as control over humanity but today the people strongly stand on those fake lines and say that the lines were truly created by the Gods. Mulk Raj Anand tried to break this disbelief through his writing but it is still grow like an Everest Mountain. The equality emerges when the fake lines are broken down by the people and start to think as all are kin and kith.

---

### **Works Cited**

- Anand, Mulka Raj. *Untouchable*. Pune: Mehta Publishing House, 2003, Page-5. Print.  
Foster, E.M. *Untouchable*: Penguin Edition: 01, 2011. Print.  
Rajeshwar, Mittapally: *Caste and Outcast: Dalit Masculinity in Arundati Roy's The God of Small Things*. 2017. XII. 2. Print.  
Robertson, R.T. *Untouchable as an Archetypal Novel*. Kakatiya journal of English study 2.1 (Spring 1977). Print.

---

### **S. PRABU**

Ph. D. Research Scholar  
Department of English  
Annamalai University

---

### **Dr. B. KARTHIKEYAN**

Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
Annamalai University