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A Call for Humanism in Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*

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## Abstract

*This study explores Anand's Untouchable from the perspective of critical humanism. Main concern of this research is to analyze how we human beings and our practices are responsible for the suffering of others. Bakha shows himself against the caste based practice that reinforce the novel's appeal for critical humanism. In the novel, Havildar Charat Singh, Pandit Klainath and Colonel Huntchinson represent orthodox while protagonist Bakha carry critical perspective. This thesis has raised the issue of shifting nature of humanism from orthodox to critical humanism. By taking theoretical insights on critical Humanism as proposed by Edward Said, the study assesses that there are certain characters in every human being which make them act through human spirit regardless to their caste, creed, religious ideology and other such notions. Along with the change of whole history of knowledge the concept of humanism is also changed. Orthodox humanism has been changed into secular one. Thus, the critical standpoint of Bakha has marked the novel with critical humanistic appeal.*

Keywords: Critical humanism, Orthodox humanism, exclusion, castism, Untouchable, Inhumanity, Underdog, Plight, Outrage.

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## I. Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* and Issue of Humanism

From the ancient period to recent days human beings are facing innumerable crises. For the betterments of our lives we need to be self-critical and self-analytical. According to Said, "True humanism has been violated if not altogether discredited" (18). Critical humanism can be a tool to dismantle this hierarchy or structure and establish a true sense of humanism that looks at both 'we' and 'they' critically there by bringing them under a single rubric of 'human'. Akeel Bilgrami reveals in the "Foreword" to Said's *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* that critical humanism tries to answer the query of "How can a concern for all that is human be linked, not just contingently but necessarily, to this capacity for self-criticism?" (xi).

Said's theory of critical humanism can be used to remove the hindrance of orthodox humanism. It is a set of research practices that focus on the difficult task of understanding human cultural differences as the expressions of an underlying human nature. It questions one's self, providing space for other's culture, identity and ethnicity. It is a need at present to deal with the problem of hostility of the world with due regard to peace. This research helps to foreground the voice on behalf of critical humanism thereby appealing to understand a way to lessen the conflicts among human. This kind of studies help one to be critical of his/her identity in order to create peace and harmony in the world by respecting every culture and developing a critical humanistic perspective.

This research has adopted critical humanism to deal with proposed issues. It is not loaded with the politics of exclusion and Eurocentric concept rather it is a new frame of humanism that is critical humanism which is neither orthodox nor exclusive but it is more inclusive and critical. Humanism is the whole history of knowledge. Knowledge produced itself when human experience deals with different human

issues. Thus, the core concept of humanism too develops with the development of knowledge. Humanism talks about the things and activities that are directly and indirectly related with human and his/her endeavors. It is criticism that takes human as the means and measure of everything. This criticism delves deep into the analysis and interpretation of human potential and intellect. Thus, the core humanistic criticism is the ability of human being to make reason. Human must take the credit for the things that go right; they must be responsible for the things that go wrong. But the cognitive power of human doesn't seem to be addressing the human problems. In spite of, human beings tremendous progress in different fields humanism seems to be jaundiced politically, religiously, socially and culturally.

The general and earlier concept of humanism is politically biased, because it advocated nationalism as a great concern. Humanism concerns with the politics of politicizing that people and creating rumor of nationalism. Thus arousing enmity among people. In case of religion too humanism is debated. The humanism guided by religious concept can't be dispassionate.

Human beings are responsible to undermine other in the society. We are creating hierarchy where superior people's intention is always to undermine the inferior people in the name of caste and religions. At this sense cultural hierarchy is a means to dominate the people of another culture. Humanism is not universal and understood within the frame of boundaries and agencies. Thus, humanism is biased. It is prevalent all over the world and intensified in the name of humanism. Critical humanism tries to address the biased concept of orthodox humanism. It is need to blurs the gap between superiors and inferior. Humanistic concept from past is guided with European values, dominant culture, language and superstitions. As Saids' theory upon critical humanism helps to rescue human beings for moral blindness. It helps

person to judge everything from the insight of critical humanism. That is to say humanism is mostly loaded with European values, dominant culture, language and superstitions.

Humanistic criticism is needed at present to address the voice of silenced, to reveal the hidden and to resist the hegemony. Said's for this solution proposed new theory "Critical Humanism". His idea of critical humanism provides much more space to the culture of one's own as well as others. We are facing crises due to our ignorance upon another human beings. The world becomes only peaceful after one group of cultural community respect the cultures of others and provides. Much more space for the oppressed. Said giving the definition of new humanistic concept writes; "humanism as an attitude or practice that is often associated with very selective elites, be they religious, aristocratic, or educational, on the one hand, and on the other' with an attitude of stern opposite on sometimes stated, sometimes not, to the idea that humanism might or could be a democratic process producing a critical and progressively freer mind" (16).

Critical humanism proposed by Said errand the idea of critical standpoint to both the other as well one's own culture which only can create an ambience where one culture equally respects another and all the human issues or concerns get addressed in a right way.

The novel *Untouchables* Shows the problems that is related to human and his or her experience. Captures the protagonist, Bakha's lost self identity and his endeavours to establish himself as human being in the society where Hindus badly treats the people of outcastes. It is a novel set in the colony of out castes, it portrays the pathetic conditions of the people and their struggle for survival amidst breathtaking works, starvation, illness and degradation by the superior Hindu people.

Based on the experience of Bakha, 18 years old boy novel present the characters in such a way that they are always in a quest for true humanitarian behavior and the writer, Anand has vibrantly presented as the counter part of orthodox humanism in regard to cultural, religious and political issues and reinforces the novel as a quest for true humanism. But the kind of codes and behaviours of the characters in the face of existing rigid socio-cultural norms represent a new kind of humanistic view that is not ethnocentric and self congratulatory rather critical too.

Anand shows his protagonist, Bakha not weak but strong and able-bodied who is all enthusiastic and has his own set of dreams. His dreams varies from other outcastes. Anand represents Bakha as the spokesperson of critical humanism who challenges the biased upper orthodox nature of humanism that caste Hindus imposed upon the lower caste as their fate by birth.

Anand's first novel *Untouchable* is welcomed by a few critic but criticized by many pointing out their different critical responses related to the novel.

SarosCawasjee is the noted critic of Mulk Raj Anand. He notices the elements of supercilious criticism of society. In his book so many freedoms, he rightly observes:

*Untouchable*, however quickly cuts its way through superciliouscritism and established for itself a popularity that remains unnivalled for work of fiction by any Indian author. The novel covers the span from 1930 to 1940 when poverty, slaveryand the in human exploitation of the masses were at the peak. It was Gandhi who had waged a war against the forces behind these evils. The novel describes a single day in the life of the protagonist Bakha, a Scavenger boy. The entire action takes place within a period of less than twenty four hours. (87)

SarosCawasjee analyzes the novel as the powerful treatment to human spirit that

provides much opportunity for discussion of the violence upon one human by another human. Saroo Cowasjee has not only explained the sufferings of the *Untouchable* but also positively acknowledge the historical period of India at the time. Moreover, Cowasjee sees the novel from the socio-cultural perspectives in which the character Bakha is socially low caste. Most of the action of the novel takes place at an out caste colony and in the streets of the small town.

Another critic E.M. Forster viewed Anand's first novel as the realistic picture of society. His intensive criticism of this novel in his preface to *Untouchable* shows the aesthetic value. E.M. Forster writes:

It seems to me indescribably clean and I hesitate for words in which this can be conveyed. Avoiding the rhetoric and circumlocution, it has gone straight to the heart of its subject and purified it. The novel gained popularity among the Western readers slowly but surely. The preface written by E.M. Forster made them perceive its aesthetic value. Later it became so popular that it was translated into more than twenty languages. (54)

E.M. Forster examined the novel critically from the realistic perspective. He sees *Untouchable* as a novel which is vivid and is a moving one which makes the reader feel the kind of experience that characters are experiencing. Anand portrays a picture of *Untouchable* who is a sweeper boy. This character is the representative of all down trodden society in pre independence of India. 18 years old boy Bakha who is suffering because of his caste wants from others to respect him as human beings.

Anand exposes all this hypocrisy and double standard. Bakha, protagonist of this novel is a universal figure to show the oppression, injustice, humiliation to the whole community of the outcaste in India. Bakha symbolizes the exploitation and oppression which has been the fate of untouchables like him.

Another critic Nitesh Gupta highlighting the biased treatment from high caste Hindu society upon lower caste people he makes a following commentary:

His anguish and humiliation are not of his alone, but the suffering of whole out castes and underdogs. Deprived of hope and fed up with humiliations, Bakha have a difficult day. Like in the story of Good Samanitan, three options and placed in front of Bakha. First a Christian missionary, who invite him to join christianity so that the untouchability based on the caste can be removed. The second option he considers is the idea of sacrifice from Mahatma Gandhi, who came there to preach against the discrimination to the lower caste. The third option he considers as a solution to the entire problem is a flush system.

(37)

Here, Gupta has examined the novel critically that shakes our conscience. Gupta agrees with the fact that Anand criticizes the biased social injustice with his powerful words. He rips apart the hypocrisy of the powerful. Meaninglessness of worship and its uselessness when it is not practiced is stressed. The whole text remind ignorance of strength by the lower caste and the need for moral rejuvenation. The author surely viewed the *Untouchable* living in all of us. Citizens deprived of rights and burdens with obligations. The hurdle we have to over take and how the knowledge civilization and technology can make a better world. He tagged this novel as an utterly convincing one. He claims *Untouchable*, moving and utterly convincing.

In the same way, Atulsen, the prominent critic of Anand reads the novel *Untouchable* as the strongest memoir of the so-called *Untouchable* people. Regarding to the momentous role played by Bakha, Atulsen says:

Bakha doesn't like to do toilet cleaning. He wants to study and be a learned man. Much of the Novel's success lies in the revolutionary idea of education of

untouchables. But Bakha fears such a religious change even if that means equal treatment and opportunity to visit a church. After that Mahatma Gandhi comes to Bhaka's village and educates everyone on untouchability. Bakha loves to hear someone talking on behalf of people of his caste. In the concluding paragraphs, a person randomly comes into the scene and informs everyone about a machine that will clean faecal matter automatically, ending manual collection of excreta. (75)

Here, Atulsen has explained the novel *Untouchable* from the perspective of protagonist, Bakha. What he has experienced from his daily duty of toilet cleaning. In the novel, Anand takes the measure of acts of casual cruelty of kindness and lets the readers see the repercussion. This novel described the lower castes people's suffering because they are by birth outcaste. Anand had depicted the hypocrisy of the powerful people upon powerless. With the reference to these critical responses from various critics that reflect their own perception, it is worthwhile to explore.

Anand's appeal for critical humanism through the activities of his protagonist, Bhaka and the issue that the present research tends to prove through this dissertation. The novel is a fertile side to make a study of humanistic issues. It raises through the characters of two kinds. The character bring a confronting version of humanism it further to highlight the appeal of the novel for a critical humanism.

This thesis is divided in three chapters. The First chapter start with introduces the topic, shows the hypothesis and quotes different critic's views related to the novel. The - *Untouchable*-Italic second chapter makes an analysis of the text, *Untouchable* by taking theoretical insights on Critical Humanism as proposed by Edward Said. The last chapter includes the conclusion of the research.

## II. Quest for Human Identity in Anand's *Untouchable*

Anand's *Untouchable* shows two kind of characters. Characters who bears orthodox notion of humanism accepts their unjust situation as gift by birth. And protagonist, Bakha though he is by birth outcaste never assimilate this caste based rigid structure that undermine people in the name of religion and culture. Bakha's humanistic thinking and action makes him critical humanist. The novel also presents socio-cultural norms. In *Untouchable* counter to the existing cultural practice thinking it as inhuman practice. The character Bakha is always presented as someone who is trying to be behaved as human being but not as out caste one. Due to the prevailing practice of caste contamination, the protagonist of Anand's novel, *Untouchable* has to face countless numbers of hassles, harassments, alienation, inner agony and extreme disappointment. The caste based rigid structure of Indian society doesn't easily allow lower caste *Untouchable* people to achieve mobility. They are compelle to live in a static moment. They are subjected to menial works like cleaning latrines, dirty houses and these places which are polluted. The cast based structure watch the mobility and dynamism in the life of people.

*Untouchable* represents two kind of character. In the novel, PanditKalinath, Colonel Hutchinson and HavildarCharat Singh represents orthodox humanistic concept. These characters bears biased religious view assimilating the orthodox notion. Bakha's quest him for freedom push him be critical upon their orthodox nature of humanity. He is single character who challenge the organized evil practices being democratic and questioning the orthodox notion of culture.

Religious followers defines humanism form their biased view. They help to create disharmony in the society by accepting their orthodox notion. They neglect those people who are against their religious practice. They give no space for the

there's culture and identify. In the novel, *untouchable*, protagonist tries to find out the mystery of the Hindu deity entering himself inside the temple. He never felt himself as outcaste. But Brahmin who bears orthodox religious view can't bear the situation of low caste people's entering inside the temple. Orthodox nature of religion is expressed in the following lines, "A Brahmin sees Bakha on the steps and shouts at him for polluting the temple. While climbing down the steps his sister Shobini standing in the courtyard frightened and speechless" (57). Speaker's lines shows the Brahmin's increasing intolerance. It is his incapability to consider the low caste people as human and nothing will happen after the protagonist visit inside the temple.

Similarly, defining the concept of critical humanism and questioning the orthodox notion. Said writes, "The distinction between our goods and their evils, we represent a human culture but they represent violence and hatred. We are civilized, they are barbarians. Mixed in with all this supposition: on that their civilization is deeply opposed to ours" (8).

The orthodox notion of humanism and its one sided definition of what human's and what is cultured and civilized always creates a distinction 'we' and 'they'. The following lines exemplify facts regarding the biased religious concept of high caste people upon lower caste:

The high caste Brahmin feels that to praise the low caste is below his prestige. When the low caste praises him, he accepts the praise with reservation. When Bakha is sympathized, a soft smile lingered on his lips, the smile of a slave overjoyed at the condescension of his master, more akin to pride than to happiness. Ramcharan, a low caste boy feels proud of being even an illegitimate son, of a high caste Hindu father. All this happens due to their ignorance and lack of education. (144)

The Brahmin's attitude towards low caste develops a sense of biased concept among religion thereby creating a religious riot. Correspondingly taking about religious fanaticism. Said further comments on changing based of humanistic study and practice, "Religious fanaticism is religious fanaticism no matter who advocate or practice it. It is inexcusable to take as ours is better than yours" (51). The extreme beliefs or behaviour in linking to a religious concept creates a kind of hierarchy where human beings are treated as if they are not human or one set of beliefs neglects the other on the very basis of religion.

In the novel, Bakha thinks critically upon every incident he faced. His cognitive power gives him inner strength that he is unique character than other out castes. Though he is a sweeper, he knew, but he could not consciously accept that fact. Critical sense of inquiry always leads a person to be self critical and self analytical not being critical by collective passion rather develops a self critical ability which helps to challenge the inhuman practice as practiced by orthodox humanism. In the novel the speaker narrates the following lines:

He had begun to work at the Latrines at the age of six and resigned himself to the hereditary life of the craft, but he dreamed of becoming a Sahib. Several times he had felt the impulse to study on his own. Life at the Tommies' barracks had fired his imagination. And he often sat in his spare time and tried to feel how it felt to read. (31)

With Bakha, the central character, there are other characters who accept their suffering as gift by birth. But Bakha thought is critically. So his self always longing for humanitarian behaviours from every person he meet outside.

As defined by Said, orthodox humanism and its cultural practice which results into us versus-them creating a riot. In the novel *Untouchable*, protagonist,

Bakha's growing sense of self consciousness towards his social exploitation clarifies narrator's narration of the event that happened upon untouchable:

The verbal and physical abuse and humiliation which he faces creates sympathy for the low caste exploited and anger at the high caste exploiters. He wants the reader to listen to the untouchable's cry. Bakha's retreat at the temple shows his submission to the tradition and established norms, rather than the defeat of his sons. He becomes acutely conscious of his social exploitation. This awareness alienates him not only from the higher castes but also from his own caste. (145)

The activities of high caste Hindus is truly guided by orthodox cultural practice which net result is always to show the oppression, injustice, humiliation to the whole community of the outcastes in India.

Classical notion of humanism guided by loafsided interpretation relates a cultural hiererchy and makes a boundary where only akind of belief is found. One kind of cultural community always describes oneself from their own perspective creating a sense of us versus-them or by making a boundary between culture as well as caste. Caste system as a part of culture is a man made hierarchic schematization which always favours the orthodox humanism by making people enmity and causing the feeling of hatred and in humanity on the basis of lower and upper caste system. Regarding the concept of barrier and restriction as created by orthodox humanistic practice, Said problematize such notion and says, "Humanism is thought of as something very restricted and difficult, like a rather; austere club with rules that keep most people out and when some are allowed in a set of regulations disallowing anything that might expand the club's membership". Through this idea said is problematizing the concept of restriction like caste system where another or lower

caste is not allowed to entry in upper caste system which is the concept of orthodox humanism.

In *Untouchable*, lower castes people are suffering because they are by birth outcaste. Mulk Raj Anand had depicted the hypercrisy of the upper caste people. The novel's protagonist is Bakha who succeeds in occupying the central position in the novel. Throughout; the novel Bakha is a strong character. His uniqueness can smell from his self critical power than other characters in the novel. In one incident, by mistake Bakha touched a man who abuses him and says that he should have warned him of his approach. The defiant consciousness or the faint stirring of rebellion which has started in Bakha by the slapping incident began to take an articulate form.

Some of the characters in the novel represent the orthodox humanistic concept which paves way to the protagonist, Bakha be critical upon their orthodox nature of humanity. A few characters like Havildar Charat Singh, Pandit Kalinath and Colonel Hutchinson represent orthodox humanistic concept. Anand shows his concern over the organized evil in the society with the help of single, bold, energetic, protagonist, Bakha. It is the individual's quest for freedom in a social system of ruthless exploitation. Bakha as an *Untouchable* seeks his freedom in the feudal society with its unquestionable faith in the infallibility of caste discrimination with its hypocrisy, cruelty, deceit and inhumanity. We can observe Bakha's passive stand and bewilderment at the immensity of horror, hoping for a change. Caste system kills the human dignity by giving an unfair advantage to a certain class over the others on the basis of their birth.

Critical humanist, acknowledging to the problem that lies in the identity can make a platform or a situation in order to provide the models of co-existence by questioning on one's cultural identity. In the novel *Untouchable*, Anand has done his

level best. He picks out biased human treatment of the powerful upon powerless. Meaninglessness of worship and its uselessness. When it is not practices is stressed. It is also a small reminder of ignorance of strength by the lower caste and the need for moral rejuvenation. By introducing a young, energetic character, Bakha, Anand brings heart touching story. Bakha is a unique character than other outcastes. He vastly differs from other low caste men. He always seeks humanitarian behaviours. Writer reveal the deep-rooted social malice in the Indian society which made him to create Bakha. Youth's unique sensitiveness against the people of upper caste who thought merely touching him idegradation are clearly shown.

The activity of the high caste Hindu is truly guided by orthodox cultural practice which net result is always humiliation and undermined lower caste people. But at the same time Said advocates the critical humanistic practice which helps to set a society. Where cultures are inter twined. In the novel, *Untouchable*, the caste Hindu people keep themselves away even from the shadow of the untouchable. But of all persons, the priest Kali Nath knowingly touched Sohini, the girl from low caste. Some religious believers from which Bakha gets help and sympathy from Muslims, Christiane and sub-caste people like a washer man's son and Charat Singh.

Quest of Identity in Anand's *untouchable*, that author create the lower caste protagonist to pick out the reality of the society. Lower caste people are victims by upper caste Hindus who always wants to dominate and humiliate them in the name of caste. All lower caste accept their fate as *Untouchable* but Bakha is bold and self conscious people who search his identity as high caste hindu peoples. He never thought himself as lower caste untouchable. It is other lower caste people's lack of self critical power which hinder them to live life as Hindus. It is only protagonist, Bakha, who desire self respect from high caste Hindus.

Critical humanism must be rooted in the consciousness of people acknowledged through self understanding. If we rely on others idea at that time there will be the danger of guiding from other's perspective so being critical and self understanding is the motto of critical humanism which helps to rescue human being from arrogance and moral blindness as well as from the practice of identities given by those cultural pride. Similar to the idea as claimed above Said argues: "Humanism is about reading, it is about perspective, and in our work as humanists, it is about transitions from one realm, one area of human experience to another. It is also about the practice of identities other than those given by the flag or the national war of the moment." (80). Critical Humanism making people critical if his/her identity given by those culture and nation urged to free from blindness through self experience and self understanding. This concept of critical humanistic practice is somehow applicable to the activity of Bakha in the novel *Untouchable* where he argues, "That child: The liar! Let me come across him one day. He knew I was abused, abused, abused. Why are we always abused? The santryinspector and the sahib that day abused by faiher. They alwaysabuse us (43)."

Here, Bakha questioning on his own identity that was given by his low caste. In the novel *Untouchable*, Some of the people are kind. Bakha narrates; "But he is a Muhammadan. Theydon't mind touching us, the Muhammadans and the Sahibs. It is only the Hindus and theoutcastes who are not sweepers" (43). Being challenging this practice and being critical of his socio-cultural practice Bakhawants to established his own identity which is free from the identitygiven by other religious communities people.

Critical humanism as a harbinger helps to establish a co-existing culture which can truly be the model for perfect co-existence. Said defining critical humanism, and

its function deals with the idea of cultural co-existence and says: "Among these multicultural societies, there are, it is true, all sorts of inequities and disparities; but each national identity is fundamentally capable of acknowledging and coping with these problems if there are suitable models of co-existence (as opposed to partition) provided by humanist whose mission, I believe, is precisely to provide favours the idea of co-existence prompts one to establish that situation." Being a low caste Bakha is always presented as someone who is trying to be behaved as human being but not as outcaste one. What makes the character Bakha think differently from other outcastes? How all humans and our practices are responsible for the suffering of others? These are the critical thinking sprouting within Bakha which latter provides the model for harmony and co-existence. Similar to the idea of cultural co-existence, the activity and saying of Bakha also give such model: "Bakha saw himself pitied by the Mahatma in his mind's eye and consoled by him. It was such a halm, it was so comforting, the great man's sympathy! If only he could go and tell my father he sympathises with me in my sufferings, my father would at once take me back and be kind to me ever afterwards" (139).

Openness and unbiased is the motto through which humanism wants to lead human civilization in order to make cultural harmony by making people critical thereby not guiding from the mobilization rather helps to develop a critical sense of inquiry: critical sense of inquiry always leads a person to be self analytical by not being guided by the collective passion rather develops self critical ability which helps to challenge the in human practice as practiced by orthodox notion of humanism.

Language is obvious one of the biggest toll in creating discrepancies among human. The psychological and conceptual shaping of the human mind is directly or indirectly governed by language and literature too helps to reshape and reformulate the

thoughts and behaviour of the people. Said too in his book *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* argues:

In my understanding of its relevance today, humanism is not a way of consolidating and affirming what "we" have always known and felt, but rather a means of questioning, upsetting, and re-formulating so much of what is presented to us as commodified, packaged, uncontroversial and uncritically codified certainties, including these contained in the masterpieces heard under the rubric of the "the classic." (28)

Reformulation and reshaping of the thought that has been practiced by orthodox humanistic enterprise is possible through the medium of literature written with the sense of critical inquiry, by which it makes oneself as well as other being critical of one's self. In the novel, Bakha heard the Mahatma declaim, "I am an orthodox Hindu and I know that the Hindus are not sinful by nature; They are sunk in ignorance. All public wells, temples, roads, schools, sanatoriums, must be declared open to the untouchables. And, if you all profess to love me, give me a direct proof of your love by carrying on propaganda against the observance of untouchability. There be no compulsion or brute force in securing the end. Peacefully persuasion is the only means" (139) This declaim of Mahatma appeals for the harmony by questioning their identity and self and urge one to reformulate his/her identity as given by nation or culture. This sort of saying makes one to think of his/her identity that was posed as packaged identity. Here Gandhi too showing identity created due to its established practice.

Similar to the idea as mentioned above and literature's role for maintaining peace in this disputed world Said favours the idea of equality. He writes, "peace can't exist without equality; this is an intellectual value desperately in need of reiteration

demonstration and reinforcement. The seduction of the world itself-peace is that it is surrounded by indeed drenched in, the blandishment of approval, uncontroversial eulogizing, sentimental endorsement" (142). Here, Said favouring the idea of critical humanistic practice prompts it's practice which helps to bring peace in the world. And this type of practice can be found in the novel, *Untouchable*. Where protagonist, Bakha's humanistic practice really helps to establish society full of equality and peacefulness.

Critical humanism must be rooted in the consciousness of the people acknowledged through self understanding. This concept of critical humanistic practice is somehow applicable to the activity of Bakha in the novel *Untouchable*. Where he argues, "If only he could go and tell my father not to be hard on me! If only he could go and tell him how I have suffered; if only he could go and tell my father he sympathises with me in my sufferings, my father would at once take me back and be kind to me ever after wards" (139). Here, Bakha is questioning on his own identity that was given by his own caste. If we rely on other ideas at that time there will be danger of guiding from other's perspective so being critical and self understanding is the motto of critical humanism which helps to rescue human being from arrogance and moral blindness as well as from the practice of identities given by those cultural pride, nationalism and war.

Similar to the idea as claimed above. Said argues, "Humanism is about reading it is about perspective and in our work as humanist, it is about transition, from one realm, one area of human experience to another. It is also about the practice of ideantities other than those given by the flag or the national war of the moment" (80). Critical humanism makes people critical of his/her identity given by those cultures and nation push for freedom and blindness through self experience and self

understanding.

The primary purpose of the study is to analyze the individual's quest for human identity. And it also aims to analyze the biased treatment that we humans are doing towards human and its impact. Bakha's self-consciousness about his own social level and longing for human being makes him critical humanist. He is steady and efficient in his work. Bakha judged every incident he faced within a single day critically than other characters in the novel. Orthodox humanist who bears biased religious perspective never able to push, Bakha to assimilate their orthodox religion. It is protagonist's critical power to be self-critical. Present world is full of inequalities and disorder. This sort of hollowness has sprouted because of the lack of human compassion. Human feelings and emotions are disappearing because of the cultural riots. Cultural humanism as a harbinger helps to establish a co-existing culture which can truly be the model for the perfect co-existence.

Challenging the blind caste based practice and its orthodox religious base critical humanism always tends to questions such as ethos making and being critical of his or her identities which is maintained only by developing the critical sense of inquiry. Edward Said in his book *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* related to this critical idea says, "Those still clinging to it are falsifiers and reductivists, the fundamentalist and deniers whose doctrine must be criticized for what they leave out, denigrate, demonize and dehumanize on presumable humanistic ground." (47/48). The orthodox notion of caste system which has dehumanized, denigrate and demonize has been confronted by the critical humanistic practice. By practicing the critical sense critical humanism always tends to establish a humanistic platform that would help to affirm a cultural harmony there by not making the Chasm between high and low culture and practicing hierarchic schematization. In order to maintain the true

humanism and its practice one should criticize the evil practice of biased humanistic practice. In the novel, *Untouchable*, speaker narrates how Bakha is critical of caste system and its consequence of dehumanization. They have to clean different houses. The owners give them some bread to eat. This was their means to get their food. Bakha has to remain content with the rottis thrown at him by the high caste Hindus. The bread falls on the ground and he picks it up and wraps it in a duster with the other bread he has received. Caste based societies evil practices to dominate lower caste people leads. Bakha be self critical. In the novel *Untouchable*, Anand makes his protagonist by birth low caste to represent the humanistic appeal for self-critical. Bakha's father his sister and other low caste peoples accept their dominated condition as fate without self conscious. But it is only protagonist, Bakha who think critically.

In *Untouchable* the narrators narrates events one after another that protagonist Bakha faced within a single day. Anand's novel on humanism is highly noticeable. Anand conveys with precision urgency barely disguised fury what it might feel like to be one of India's untouchables. Bakha is a proud and attractive young man, but he is an outcaste in a system that is only now slowly changing and was as cruel and debilitating as apartheid. Into this recreation of one day in the life of this sweeper and latrine cleaner, Anand pours a vitality and richness of detail that have earned him acclaim as his country's greatest revealer of this 'other' India.

Using the tool of critical humanism to investigate Anand's novel *Untouchable*. The high caste Brahmin feels that to praise the low caste is below his prestige. Similarly it is weakness of other low caste characters who bears conventional view that they are by birth low caste and it is peaceful to accept. In the novel, *Untouchable*, Gulabo takes pride in being a mistress of a high caste Hindu. Similarly Lakha advise Bakha to bear the injustice with patience and fortitude in order to reborn into the

higher caste. Among these conventional character, Bakha is from new generation who thought from critical side with questioning the injustice that imposed upon low caste people by the high caste hindus upon them in social system. Analyzing the socio-historical condition of India at that time we hardly can found the bold, energetic and self conscious characters like Bakha. Anand brings the impact on him of the various events which take place within a single day in the life of Bakha.

Anand in the novel creates a self critical character Bakha to bring the critical humanistic thinking to quest human identity. He is longing for human behaviour amidst the superstitions, poverty, hunger and exploitation. He is wanting to live without being exploitation on from high caste hindus and even from his own lower caste who creates hierarchy of being superior then own fellow caste. Realistic picture of society where Bakha is the representatives of all down trodden society in pre-independence of India. Novel's scene belongs to a small, interior town of the punjab. The way society is criticized in the novel is not wholeheartedly acceptable. Bakha's longing for human being take place inside outcaste's colony and in the streets of the small town.

History of traditional humanism is full of exclusiveness. Though humanism is noted for its effort towards the establishment of equality, brotherhood, freedom tolerance and nationality but it has not been serve well since it doesn't give attention to the people of under privileged. Thus because of its trend to exclude where it became the instrumental tool to represent the elite and the high culture. The failure of humanism has been challenged by a new humanistic enterprise that fights against the exclusion inorder to sadditional speak from the position of margin. Whose aim was to give voice to the excluded and to fight against the politics of exclusion. This sort of vigilant concept in the fields of humanistic discourse is called critical humanism.

Traditional concept of humanism always lead to the dehumanization of men and women. So some critics and thinkers advocated for critical humanism which work's through self reflection and self experience "Humanism might or could be democratic processes producing a critical and progressively freer mind" (18).Critical humanism favouring the idea of cultural amalgamation always politicize the issue of humanism for inclusiveness.

It favours the idea that when a person of a culture has critical view about the other culture only then the milieu of respect for each other develops. Thus we must learn through self-experience and self criticism. By perceiving and acknowledging others culture one can be critical of own's cultural identity. In the novel *Untouchable*, the Bakha's activity to quest human identity in order to equate himself to the high caste hindus reflects his critical sense that he acknowledged through perceiving other's culture. Similarly critical humanism do tries its best to fight against cultural segregation and wants to create a cultural amalgamation through cultural inclusion. Said argues, "Every culture, everywhere, as I said above, is now going through a massive process of self definition, self-examination and self analysis, both with regard to the present and the past" (26).

Thus the ideas of cultural inclusiveness can be maintained if one become successful to examine and critique oneself. In the novel the activity of Bakha which narrator narrates, "It was a queer mixture of awe and romance, the alternation of his hatred for his own town and the love for the world to which he looked out" (69). The activity of the people towards him and their attempt to hesitate to give proper respect creates loneliness to Bakha. But life at Tommie's barracks where he received love, self respect lure him for cultural inclusiveness.

In opposition to the orthodox humanistic notion the novel towards its journey heads towards a new perspective of self inquiry that is critical humanistic practice. Bakha's quest for human identity after a jagged course of ups and downs, come to the solution or rather to the three solution, with which the novel closes. The first solution is that of Hutchinson, the salvationist missionary: Jesus Christ. But Bakha is touched at hearing that Christ receives all men irrespective of caste, he gets bored, because the missionary cannot tell him who Christ is. Then follows the second solution, with the effect of Crescendo: Gandhi. Gandhi too says that all Indians are equal, and the account he gives of a Brahmin doing sweeper's work goes straight to the boy's heart. Hard upon this comes the third solution, put into the mouth of a modernist poet. It is prosaic, straight forward and considered in the light of what has gone before in the novel, it is very convincing. Finally Bakha's self critical humanistic thinking opens his consciousness that no god is needed to rescue the untouchables, no vows of self-sacrifice and abnegation on the part of more fortunate Indians but simply and solely the flush system.

Critical sense of inquiry always leads a person to be self-critical and self-analytical not being guided by collective passion rather develops a self-critical ability which helps to challenge the inhuman practice as practiced by orthodox humanism. In the novel, Bakha speaks these words towards Charat Singh: "such kindness from the Havildar, who is a Hindu, and one of the most important men about the regiment." (99). These words of Bakha upon Charat Singh represent that even Hindu orthodox have some humanistic concept challenging the act of humiliation, suppression and by mocking at his Hindu orthodoxy.

Humanism at present has been an expert tradition by keeping the human concerns secret and turning it into anti-democratic and anti-intellectual form.

Humanism is in need of unmarking its ideology's dress by resisting the expert culture through critiquing. Said in this regard speaks, "At the heart of what I have been calling the government of resistance in humanism the first part of this being reception and regarding is critique and critique is always restlessly self clarifying in search of freedom, enlighten more agency and certainly not their opposites" (73). Critical self is evident in Bakha throughout the novel. He becomes critical to himself many times as well as feels open to others. It is really hard for one to come out from the pre-occupied truth of the orthodox humanism and co-operate with the new truth of humanism which in fact is lived and seen on the ground, Said in this regard writes; In effect, the empiricist illusion[...] is doubtless never so strong, as in cases like this, where direct confrontation with reality entails some difficulty even risk and for that reason deserve some credit" (82).

Bakha in the novel happens to confront the same kind of truths. When Bakha and his friends were playing game, meantime unknowingly they hurt the little boy who stood near the clothes between them and their enemies. All the boys rushed to him. Streams of blood were pouring from the back of his head. Bakha is carrying an orthodox truth that asks to fight one against another in order to strengthen the humanism of his own. No sooner he finds a new truth in the spot where the little boy fell unconscious. He gets an epiphany feeling of true humanism and picked the little boy in his arms and took him to the hall of his house. He helps the little boy to his best possible way. Meantime, Child's mother met Bakha face to face. Bakha was going to open his mouth and tell her what had happened. But she scolds Bakha saying, "Oh, you eater of your masters! what have you done? You have killed my son!," "Give him to me! Give me my child! You have defiled my house, besides wounding my son!" (14). Bakha handed over the child. He felt dejected, utterly miserable. He loved the child.

She hadn't even let him tell her how it all happened.

The society has been divided into higher and lower caste due to the hegemonic concept in humanitarian hierarchy. The higher caste's humanism keeps an ideology to rule over the people of lower caste. An ongoing oppression upon Bakha, that he understands the fact well in the novel, therefore he plans to dismantle the structure or tradition where he plans to help the little boy to his best possible way.

Said amplifies the paramount importance of discursive practice making direct connection with the base reality of the displaced people. Without bringing those into the contact of the mainstream and without proper assessment of their problems humanistic criticism will lag behind. Thus critical humanism tries to bring the voice of those who are incapable to stand by themselves. In doing so, Said argues, "The humanist must offer alternative now silenced or unavailable through the channels of communications controlled by a tiny number of new organizations." Bakha in the novel tries to voice the muted untouchables who are always the subjected knowledge, hidden within them. Therefore, Bakha wants to reveal these truths so he can come in front or to the mainstream.

The psychological and conceptual shape of the human mind is directly or indirectly governed by language. Thus the idea of language and literature too helps to reshape and reformulate the thought and behaviours of the people. Said too in his book *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* argues:

Humanism is not a way of consolidating and affirming what "we have always known and felt but rather a means of questioning, upsetting and reformulating so much what is presented to us as commoditized, packaged [ . . . ] including those contained in the masterpieces herded and under the rubric of "the classics. (28)

Reformulation and reshaping of the thought that has been practiced by orthodox humanistic enterprise is possible through the medium of literature written with the sense of critical inquiry, by which it makes oneself as well as others being critical of one's self. In the novel, Bakha cried in exasperation, "Unlucky, unlucky, day! what have I done to deserve all this?" (110). The quest of human identity and favoritisms to the liberation also acclaims. Said's notion of humanism as liberation, shift from text to actualized site private to public, silence to the application and utterance of search, justice and liberation. He writes:

Humanism, I think is the means, perhaps, the consciousness we have for providing that kind of finally antinomian or oppositional analysis between the space of words and their various origin and deployment in physical and social place from the text to actualized site of either appropriation or resistance to transmission to reading and interpretation from private to public from silence to explication and utterance, and mortality all of its occurring in the world, on the ground of daily life and history and hopes, and the search for knowledge and justice and then perhaps also for liberation. (83)

Bakha exercises his knowledge to help for justice and liberation for himself and other of his caste. Anand presents Bakha into a story and his life as story itself that helps to bring his issues to the Humanitarian institutions. In spite of his tender and immature knowledge he filled with the sense that help was on the way.

Said's theoretical insight upon critical humanism gives priority for the peace in the world. According to Said, "Peace can't exist without equality, this is an intellectual value desperately in need of reiteration, demonstration and reinforcement. The seduction of the world itself-peace is that it is surrounded by, indeed drenched in, the blandishments of approval, uncontroversial eulogizing, sentimental endorsement:"

(142) This humanistic concept helps to bring peace in the world. For the betterment of society and to bring peace it is necessary to establish equality. In the novel there is lack of equality between the higher and lower caste people. Higher caste people are ready to accept the praise but they hesitate to admire the good deeds of lower caste.

Anand criticizes the social injustice. He realizes the wickedness of the society in which he is placed. They consider touching a human being like him as a malediction and touching a dirty bull like the one he has seen just then had a benediction. Bakha throughout the novel presents himself as the opposite part of the evil practices. He is trying to show himself as a critical humanist. He is consciously an able person to face the orthodox nature of human beings. However, his limited means and the circumstance literally force him to beg for the food. In front of the Hindu's orthodoxy, Sadhu received fresh cooked food but threw a stale and dry bread to the Bakha. Critical humanism appeals to be open and self-critical to develop self-critical ability. Bakha judged every incident he faced critically. His critical self always longed for the betterment of humanity.

### III. Anand's Vision of Humanism

The idea of critical humanism appear to solve the inherent problems of orthodox humanism. Orthodox humanism creates the unjust situation that is not able to blur the gap or it is unable to address the problem of one part to the other.

The major findings of this research is to describe how Anand is able to provide humanistic vision through novel *Untouchable*. Anand highlights the condition of inhumanity faced by them in the society. Humanism is needed to address the human problems. But it only gives priority to the dominant culture, language and religion. It is mostly influenced with European values. But critical humanism as proposed by Said can be used to solve human problems. It urges people to be open and develops self-critical ability.

*Untouchable* covers the event of a single day in the life of the low caste boy Bakha, in the town of Bulashah. Bakha recognizes with a shock his social position. It illuminates the inner walls of his mind. He realizes that though he possesses like any human being, head and heart and flesh and blood, he is in the eyes of the world untouchable. He realizes the wickedness of the society in which he is placed. So-called high caste people keep themselves away even from the shadow of the untouchable. This is the orthodox nature of humanism that helps to undermine others.

*Untouchable* highlights the caste-based rigid structure of society. Upper caste people imposed their orthodox humanistic treatment upon lower caste people in the name of religion and culture. Their domination is challenged by the protagonist, Bakha. He carries out critical concepts. Though others accepted their dominated condition as a gift of God, it is Bakha who thought everything that he faced from a critical side. His cognitive power to judge every incident he faced from a critical side makes him a critical humanist.

Bakha's uniqueness in front of high caste Hindu religious orthodoxy makes him an extraordinary character. Bakha tears the curtain of humanism. By this he blurs the culture of hierarchy between low and high culture. His self-ability to judge every incident counterprovides him religion does not count as Christian, Hindu, rather humanism stands a head of such categorization and he becomes able to see himself as a human more than a low caste or untouchable. The riot of religion fueled by orthodox humanism in the novel is encountered by Bakha alone teaching others to be critical about what ideology they are blindly carrying with them needs a critical examination. Therefore the ability to appeal to universal human ideals, across the difference of hierarchical caste system and different religious groups has been the focused issues of the novel.

Caste based practice is reviewed and renewed so as to make it a part of humanism. The novel also steps to disrupt the discrimination of higher caste Hindus upon the lower caste and discrimination within the same caste creating higher and lower as a means for the orthodox humanists to make a division among people. Caste system as a concept fires people to close their door to the people from another caste. Upper caste Hindus who are taught in the name of religion that people beyond their religion and caste are non-people; are once forced to think in such ideology in a critical way. Bakha in the novel despite his birth within the low caste is presented as a strong person who neglects. Orthodox religion and caste system that only quest for human identity that the spokesman for critical humanism. This kind of thought and his action throughout the novel pushes him towards humanism.

At last Anand's handling of the problem of untouchability through Bakha shows that he hopes notes to have casteless Indian society in which untouchability has no place. With the help of single character novel's protagonist, Bakha is able to tear the

evil practices. Self cognitivepower leads person to be critical upon every incident that he faced in the society. Bakha never felt himself as outcaste. As Bakha is returned his mind s raised with the hope that soon the flush system would come to the sweepers. He is able to challenge the orthodoxy of PanditKalinath, colonel Hutchinson, crescendo of Gandhi etc. and established the critical humanism. Meaninglessness of worship and its uselessness when it is not practices is stressed. Then the change the world need to change ourselves. The after world become a better place to live. Therefore, humanity must be its own supreme being since there is none higher. It emphasizes the truth of certain category for the desire to pursue of that kind of knowledge.

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