

I. Introduction

Recovering the Subject: Mulk Raj Anand's Literary Voyages

The purpose of this research, based on Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*, is to reorient the discussion of *Untouchable* to include Anand's use of the figure of the outcastes from Hindu society --to reinsert the character of Bakha into a text which has produced readings that decisively displace him and the crucial importance of his characterization. Mulk Raj Anand's entire attempt in *Untouchable* is a continuation of a series of literary attempts to dislodge, from within, the terms of attempted nationalist resolution of the question of collective selfhood and belonging. The fiction is an immanent critique of nationalism's divine ambitions--of its claim to a God-like perch above society. He renders an account of national modernity that is inscribed, not with affirmations of identity and subjectivity, but with displacement and difference.

The acclaimed Indian writer, Mulk Raj Anand, has shown how the people are suppressed by the colonial power in *Untouchable*. With the continuation of colonialism, dominant indigenous national, regional, religious and local groups suppressed the group of minorities. The writer, in his novel *Untouchable*, brings such characters from the group of minorities, laborers, and peasants. The protagonist, an orphan, works as a scavenger. That is how the novel, *Untouchable*, opens with the descriptions of the people who are affected from the caste apartheid. The instability inherent in the psychology of most of the characters is because of their lack of resistance and mere succumbing to disasters.

As most of the poignant course of victims of class distinction comes from their rueful lives living under the nationalist utopia and governance preaching and advocating for a handful of elite population, Anand's characters suffer from the same

milieu. Historicity is embedded in Anand's narrative, even after the multiple efforts to harmonize life; the effort gains no weight because it fell into the cruel hands of notorious temple officials and their far reaching practice of class segregation.

Anand's works draw heavily upon the character, tradition of subaltern and dichotomies between elite and non-elite cultural-praxis-groups. Yet, his protagonists and themes often extend the sufferings of laborers and rural people of outcaste colony. Through this discourse, the work exposes the subaltern people and their resistance against local religious ruler. Anand's writing reflects the recent concern of anthropologists with the porosity of cultural boundaries.

In contrast with the classic view, which posits culture as a self contained whole made up of coherent patterns, culture can arguably be treated as a more porous array of intersections where distinct processes cross from within and beyond its borders. The characters in Anand's novels consist of the lower strata people of rural gentry and the dichotomies with the elite cultural groups in local levels. Anand returns to a rigorous mode of empirical research to recover the historically situated subjectivities of a network of scavengers and their 'maliks' operating between religion and society. Pathetic condition of the lower rank of people and the obsessed mentality of elite people in the society has been shown transparently in this novel. It means that subaltern consciousness remains present rather than trace.

Indian novelist Mulk Raj Anand publishes his novel of social protest, *Untouchable*. Considered one of modern India's premier writers, Anand champions the poor and oppressed through Bakha, the protagonist of the novel who belongs to the so-called group of untouchables. Anand is known for his realistic portrayals of the poor in India. In the 1920s and 1930s the novels of Mulk Raj Anand describe the

situation of India's poor and dispossessed. He first gained recognition with the novels *Untouchable* (1935) and *Coolie* (1936).

What distinguishes Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*, what makes it the epic of the subaltern world, is its capacity to narrate the socialization of the individual, its inscription at the level of form of the claim that life is ethically meaningful. David Ludden writes in *Reading Subaltern Studies*:

For the nationalist narrative in late colonial India—and this applies as much to Nehru's *The Discovery Of India*(1946) as it does to Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*(1935) or Premchand's *Godan*(1936)—the representative self that is the object of the narrative has a secular nationalist consciousness as its defining characteristics.(11)

A revealing document in this connection is the speech that Anand, a founding member of Subaltern Historian's association from its London phase, delivered at a convention of AIPWA at Calcutta in 1938. Aamir R. Mufti contends this speech Anand delivered in *Community Gender and Violence* edited by Partha Chatterjee and Pradip Jeganathan:

Anand argued that the goal of social realism is as much the portrayal of all those tragedies in the obscure lanes and alleys of our towns and villages as is the imperative to release the dormant potentialities of our people buried in an animal biology and make them the creative will which may take us from the infancy of our six thousand years to the millenniums of less elemental struggle for individual freedom and perfection. Realism here is only as much a matter of mimesis as it is of narrating the passage from primitivism to modernity. (12)

The degraded life of India's peasant masses is barely above the level of animal biology. It is the task of committed writer to narrate the conditions of the possibility from this limited stage of existence to the universal consciousness of citizen subject-individual perfection.

In Anand's novel *Untouchable*, the totality that is the nation is concretized as the formal tension between the universalistic and secular consciousness of the narrator and the subaltern protagonist, Bakha, a consciousness defined by, and in struggle with, the socio-religious institutions of caste society.

E.M. Forster praises Anand's work--in fact, he has written introduction for the book--for Anand's capacity to dig out the sufferings of marginalized scavengers from their viewpoint. He compares the work with Kipling's *A passage to India*: "Some years ago, I come across a copy of a book by myself, *A Passage to India*, which had apparently been read by an indignant Colonel" (V). He remains surprised at the primary stirring of emotions that the book percolated in colonizer. He had not concealed his emotions. Forster continues, "on the front page, he had written, burn when done, and lower down: has a dirty mind" (VI). Forster, thus, further exclaims, "Well, if the Colonel thought *A Passage to India* dirty, what will he think about *Untouchable*, which describes a day in the life of a sweeper in an Indian city with every realistic circumstance?" (VI). It was considered esoteric and vulgar to speak from the side of the socially ostracized the so-called 'dalits'. Moreover, Forster's observation blurs the contemporary criticism of non-western people and places by a writer who belongs to colonizer's race: "Is it a clean book a\or a dirty one. . . some readers, especially those who consider themselves all-white, will go purple in the face with rage before they have finished a dozen pages, and will exclaim that they cannot trust themselves to speak?"(*Preface V*). Forster contends:

I cannot trust myself either, though for a different reason; the book seems to me indescribably clean and I hesitate for words in which this can be conveyed. Avoiding rhetoric and circumlocution, it has gone straight to the heart of its subject and purified it. None of us are pure – we shouldn't be alive if we were. But to the straightforward all things can become pure, and it is to the directness of his attack that Mr.

Anand's success is probably due. (V)

The sweeper is worse off than a slave may change his master and his duties and may even become free, but the sweeper is bound for ever, born into a state from which he cannot escape and where he is excluded from social intercourse and the consolations of his religion. Unclean himself, he pollutes and to rearrange their plans for the day. Thus he is a disquieting as well as disgusting object to the orthodox as he walks along the public roads, and it is his duty to call out and warn them that he is coming.

Untouchable could only have been written by an Indian, and by an Indian who observed from the outside. No European, however sympathetic, could have created the character of Bakha, because he would not have known enough about his troubles. And no *Untouchable* could have written the book, because he would have been involved in indignation and self-pity. Mr. Anand stands in the ideal position. By cast he is a Kshatriya, and he might have been expected to inherit the pollution-complex. But as a child he played with the children of the sweepers attached to an Indian regiment, he grew to be fond of them, and to understand a tragedy which did not share. He has just the right mixture of insight and detachment, and the fact that he has come to fiction through philosophy has given him depth. It might have given him vagueness –that curse of the generalizing mind – but his hero is not suffering abstraction. “Bakha is a real individual, lovable, thwarted, sometimes grand,

sometimes weak and thoroughly Indian . . . even his physique is distinctive,” Forster well grasped the truth inside *Untouchable*; the story behind the real suffering, “we can recognize his broad intelligent, graceful torso and heavy buttocks, as he does his nasty jobs, or stumps out in artillery boots in hopes of a pleasant walk through the city with a paper of chap sweet in his hand” (Forster Preface VIII).

The book is simply planned, but it has form. The action occupies, and takes place in small India. “The great catastrophe of the ‘touching’” (*Untouchable* 46) occurs in the morning, and poisons all that happens subsequently, even such pleasant episodes as the hockey match and the country walk. After a jagged course of ups and downs, we come to the solutions, or rather to the three solutions, with which the book closes. The first solution is that of Hutchinson, the Salvationist missionary: Jesus Christ. But through Bakha is touched at hearing that Christ received all men, irrespective of caste, he gets bored, because of the missionary cannot tell who Christ is. Then follows the second solution, with effect of a crescendo: Ghandi. Ghandi 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. Forster concludes his assessment with *The untouchable*:

Hard upon this comes the third solution, put into the mouth of a modernist poet. It is prosaic, straightforward, and considered in the light of what has gone before in the book, it is very convincing. 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. Introduce water-closets and main-drainage through India, and all this wicked rubbish about untouchability will disappear. Some readers may find this closing section of the book too voluble and

sophisticated, in comparison with the clear observation which has preceded it, but it is an integral part of the author's scheme. (*Preface VIII*)

It is necessary climax, and it has mounted up with triple effect. Bakha returns to his father and his wretched bed, thinking now of the Mahatma, now of the Machine. His Indian day is over and the next day will be like it, but on the surface of the earth if not in depths of the sky, a change is at hand. Anand opens the first chapter canvassing with the rueful living of scavengers and their settlement: "The outcastes' colony was a group of mud-walled houses that clustered together in two rows, under the shadow both of the town and the cantonment, but outside their boundaries and separate, from them" (*Untouchable* 1). There lived "the scavengers, the leather workers, the washermen, the barbers, the water-carriers, the grass-cutters and other outcastes from Hindu society" (1). Anand further ventures to their (his characters') lives:

A brook ran near the lane, once with crystal-clear water, now soiled by the dirt and filth of the public latrines situated about it, the odor of the hides and skins of dead carcasses left to dry on its banks, the dung of donkeys, sheep, horses, cows and buffaloes heaped up to be made into fuel cakes, and the biting, choking, pungent fumes that oozed from its sides. The absence of the drainage system had, through the rains of various seasons, made of the quarter a marsh which gave out the most offensive stink. And altogether the ramparts of human and animal refuse that lay on the outskirts of this little colony, and the ugliness, the squalor and the misery which lay within it, made it an 'uncongenial' place to live in.(1)

Though Bakha-- Mulk Raj Anand's protagonist in *Untouchable*-- is a diligent, attractive young man who brings his life together in sweeping and cleaning latrines, he is an outcast in cast-ridden Indian society where he belongs to the so called community of untouchables that consists of scavengers, the leather workers, the washer men, the barbers, the water carriers, the grass-cutters and other outcasts from Hindu society.

Untouchable propagates a discourse that seeks to contain the crisis of, both, intracultural and intercultural, difference through an oppressed, non-player protagonist in order to translate the problems of 'dalit' into the problematic of minority culture and history. Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* has championed wide range of controversies and approval since its publication in 1935. The book and its projection of a protagonist's anguish who comes from socially outcaste sweeper community has made those who considered themselves all-white, and pure Hindu go purple in the face with rage. Today, the brook of criticism runs another way out; *Untouchable* is the voice of margin.

To read the novel of Mulk Raj Anand is to go to the Indian history when there was subordination and segregations on the people of the minority classes. This had created a hierarchy in the society and thus some were taken as powerful and sacred and some as the 'untouchables' or the other. For this sort of tendency Dipesh Chakrabarty interrogates, "how do we read this text, this self-making of an Indian male who was second to the society depicted in *Untouchable*" (233). Anand's participation in public life and literary circles is interrupted to make a room for something approaching the intimate.

The Indian writers have repeatedly tried to valorize the resistance of the elitist culture established by the colonizers in India with the tendency of giving voice to the

characters of noble birth rather than the low marginal class people. The voices in this trend always exposed the high egalitarian perspective in the depiction of the society, but Anand in his novel *Untouchable* has tried his best to resist this tendency and establish Bakha as the voice of the subaltern class. This depiction has revolutionized the field of literary trend. Rosalind O'Hanlon states:

[. . .] The contributions range in theoretical sophistication from empirical accumulations of detail concerning these groups and their resistances, to the most ambitious attempts to redraw the basic explanatory procedures of Marxist historical theory. What they all share in common is their critical intent, and indeed it is the critique of the conventional genres of nationalist, colonialist and Marxist historiography which is now the most familiar and impressive feature of the series. (138-139)

The citation encapsulates the critical ethos of late twentieth century that is pervasive in the third world-questioning conventional genres of nationalist and colonialist historiography. Jim Masselos in the essay on subaltern studies tries to manifest similar kind of idea by advocating about Guha and his group of contemporary subaltern critics:

There is of course considerable difference in the technical skill and intellectual thirst of the history they are producing but at the moment subjective matter is more concerned than the perceptive writing. Others too have taken the path of tracing subaltern resistance without of course using... subaltern terminologies. (193)

Masselos' assimilation with theories related to resistance echoes Gayatri Spivak's assessment to the works that highlight worker's struggles "is located in the desire to

grow up power of any point of its application” (66) which comes in her must sought after texts on subaltern theory, an essay entitled “Can the Subaltern Speak?”; where she charges Marx for being too much concentrated on industry and therefore failed to address the third world’s working class. She further says:

[. . .] no doubt the exclusion of the family, albeit a family belonging to a specific class formation, is part of the masculine frame within which Marxism marks its birth. Historically as well as in today’s global political economy, the family’s role in patriarchal social relations is so heterogeneous and contested that merely replacing the family in this problematic is not going to break the frame. Nor does the situation and solution lie in the positivist inclusion of a monolithic collectivity of women in the list of the oppressed whose unfractured subjectivity allows them to speak for themselves against an equally monolithic same system. (73)

The citation encapsulates the far-reaching consequences of the tattered huts and the fringing life in the streets. Whatsoever has been theorized on Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* remains a premonition of the voice from the margin that is inevitable to bestow the rise of consciousness among the so-called untouchable community of Indian outskirts.

The research examines Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* as a tale of domination, subordination, hegemony, resistance, revolt, and subaltern social mobility disappearing along with class differentiation, where protest movement is confined to the lower storey because it could not threaten the political structure. Anand weaves the composite culture of resistance to and acceptance of domination and hierarchy, colonial construction of culture and power, clash of unequal culture under Indian

Nationalism, colonialism, and the dominance of colonial modernity over India's resistant, indigenous culture.

Untouchable is the critique of myopic vision of elitist historiography which views the Indian nation, its consciousness and nationalism as a product of elite initiatives emanating from British or Indian sources. The research simultaneously explores such possibilities by turning towards sexually and morally displaced figures (female subalterns), figures that are at the heart of controversies concerning obscenity. *Untouchable* is the novel that creates the figures of those prostitutes, who emerge in his stories not simply in binary opposition to the virtuous wife and mother of the nationalist imagination, but as a means of exploring the complexities of the latter itself as signifier. Likewise the novel creates a vibrant color of untouchables in society (a group of socially, economically and politically beaten scavengers, washer men, etc.).

Interested in intersecting these potential spaces of caste apartheid, this research categorically exploits critical apprehensions among subaltern historicists and unavailability of resistance in the following chapter before interpreting the text itself which will succeed the former. All four chapters, along with conclusion, are meant to transcribe the research aspirations for which Anand's text is appropriated.

II. Theoretical Modality

Subaltern Studies

The term 'subaltern' refers to the people of lower status, lower strata people of not conversant peasantry, under-represented, under-taught, non-canonical and the subordinated group who are always, directly or indirectly, prejudiced by ideologies of dominant class. The term 'subaltern' is used to refer inferior rank of people from country areas. M. S. Nagarajan, in *English Literary Criticism and Theory: An Introductory History*, defines subaltern as “a military term which means ‘of lower rank’” (276). “Initially used by Italian communist Antonio Gramsci to refer to the plebeians (the working class), the term is appropriated by postcolonial theorists and put in wide circulation,” Nagarajan contends, “Gayatri Spivak’s influential essay, ‘can the subaltern speak?’ shows how the elitist political historiography has stifled the voice of subaltern groups” (276).

David Ludden quotes Guha in *Reading Subaltern Studies: Critical History, Contested Meaning, and The Globalization of South Asia* where subaltern are addressed as “community other than elite cultural groups of dominant foreign groups included all the non-Indian, that is mainly British officials of the colonial state and foreign industrialists, merchants, financiers, planters landlords and missionaries” (53). Subaltern is a group of marginalized people whose history is conspicuously excluded from national history.

Partha Chatterjee associates the rise of subaltern consciousness with a shift in political involvement in South Asian countries that brought ‘popular politics’ to the front. In *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in most of the World* (2004), he writes:

My subject is popular politics in most of the world. When I say “popular,” I do not necessarily presume any particular institutional form or process of politics. I do, however, suggest that much of the politics I describe is conditioned by the functions and activities of modern governmental system that have now become part of the expected functions of governments everywhere. These expectations and activities have produced, I will argue, certain relations between governments and population. The popular politics I will describe grows upon and is shaped by those relations. (1)

The extract is taken from Chatterjee’s most discussed essay, “The Nation in Heterogeneous Time,” where the author argues that “what I mean by ‘most of world’ are those parts of the world that were no direct participants in the history of the evolution of the institutions of modern capitalist democracy” (1). Subaltern is related to popular politics which comes in opposition to ‘modern capitalist democracy’: “Popular politics comes from many modern non western societies, just as, indeed, there are large sectors of contemporary western society that are not necessarily part of the historical entity known as the modern west” (1). “However, if I were to make a rough estimate of the number of people in the world who would be, in a conceptual sense, included within my description of popular politics,” he further contends, “I would say that I am talking of the political life of well over three-fourth of contemporary humanity” (1).

The prevalent feudal magnates, the most important representatives of the industrial and mercantile bourgeoisie, and native recruits are positioned at the uppermost levels of the bureaucracy. Guha regards subaltern classes in *Subaltern studies I* as “the social groups and elements included in the category represent the

demographic differences between the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as the elite” (SS I 8). Subaltern classes differentiate from the groups of elite. The theorists on subaltern studies have repeatedly tried to valorize the resistance against the elitist culture established by the colonizers in India with the motif of giving voice to the characters of noble birth rather than the marginal class people. This delineation has revolutionized the field of theoretical trend. For this trend Rosalind O’Hanlon states:

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The origin of the term 'subaltern' goes back to medieval age. In the medieval age this term applied to vassals & peasants. Later in 1700 it came to denote lower ranks in military suggesting peasants. Antonio Gramsci adopted it to refer to those groups in society, who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes. The subaltern classes may include rural illiterate peasants, workers, lower strata laborers, lower ranks in military rural tribes and other groups who denied access to superiority of social classes. As a Marxist, Gramsci was concerned with the laborers, workers, in Marx's terms, proletarians whose voice remained unheard in this history of the society. Gramsci was very much interested in the historiography of the subaltern classes. Due

to the inconsistency, indigenous dominance revive the peasant revolt which had emerged in 1930s. The founders of *Subaltern Studies* first met in England at the end of 1970s; they were surrounded by decades of research on history from below on insurgency in colonial India. In 1982, Gramsci's ideas were in wide circulation. It formally appeared in 1982 under the banner "Subaltern Studies: Writing South Asian History and Society." Due to the fragmentation, a new kind of nationalism had emerged at the local, regional and national levels. Subaltern Studies group aims to promote a systematic discussion of oppressed groups of society through a new historiography that rewrites history from below. They describe their project as follows:

The general attribute of subaltern in South Asian Society whether this is expressed in terms of class, age, gender and office or in any other way [. . .] subaltern studies group sketched out its wide ranging concern both with visible 'history, politics, economics, and sociology of subalternity' and with the occluded attitude, ideologies and belief system-in short, the culture informing that condition. (Guha VII)

Guha contrasts "politics of the people" with elite politics and he privileges the former over the latter. It in spite of the end of colonialism continues in different forms, the development of nationalist consciousness, in accordance with elitist historiography, has been an achievement either of colonialist, administrators, policy, and culture of Indian personalities or ideas. We can trace questions: what is the role of culture in nationalism? And what is the relationship between states and popular politics? Elite culture play major role to form nationalism as highlighting themselves and whose cultural ethos become dominant. Instead of highlighting subaltern, due to the power

and knowledge of dominant class, they are always oppressed. David Ludden argues that "theories of peasant's struggle against global capitalism is supported the idea that popular insurgency in British India emerged indigenous moral sensibilities" (7).

Critics argue on those lines to show that autonomous popular movements shaped Indian nationalism by provoking dialogue and tension with national leaders that produced various contingent outcomes. Due to the competitions for power among the institutions; classes and others, groups fought for power under the banner of nationalism at every level of colonial system. Separation of opposing theoretical schools brings the separation in society and culture from state institutions and political economy. This separation emerges Subaltern Studies. Critics comment upon the formation of national history which has two kinds of national history: one is the people's history filled with native culture and popular insurgency, and the other is the official history. Guha holds colonialism parallel to bourgeois' nationalism, in his seminal essay "Dominance without hegemony and its Historiography" (SSVI), reinforces his previous claim that bourgeois nationalism is equivalent with colonialism. R. Radhakrishnan views about subaltern studies, in his book *Diasporic Mediation*:

The work of subaltern studies Group of historians and theories in situating the 'Critique' has been outstanding in its capacity and willingness to submit theory to historical interrogation. These theorists work in the mode that combines modes of highly nuanced self reflectivity with the pressures of historical existences. Thus, in speaking for the subaltern, subject, these historian-theorist come up with complete diagnosis of coloniality, post-coloniality and bourgeois nationalism. (24)

Subaltern Studies comes as a social theory to speak against coloniality, and bourgeois nationalism. The focus of subaltern studies is on the consciousness of the subaltern classes, specifically peasants. Gayatri Spivak's *Introduction to Selected Subaltern Studies (IV)* cites about subaltern consciousness and "the colonial subject" as the basis of theorization, perceive their task as making "a theory of consciousness or culture rather than specifically a theory of change" (4). Postcolonial cultural criticism and literary theory has embraced subaltern studies' endeavor in deconstructing historiography:

[. . .] subaltern consciousness is subject to the elite, that it is never fully recoverable, that it is always asked from its recovered signifiers indeed that it is effaced even as it is disclosed, that it is irreducibly discursive. 'Negative consciousness' is conceived of having historical stage peculiar to the subaltern rather than the grounding positive view of consciousness, should not be generalized as the group's methodological presupposition. (339 SSIV)

Negative consciousness, for instance, sees it as the consciousness not of the being 'subaltern' but of that of the oppressors. Subaltern studies provide the model for a general theory of consciousness. 'Subaltern consciousness' is emergent as collective subaltern consciousness which is unavoidably a post-phenomenological and post-psychoanalytic issue. Some elitists objectify to the subaltern and are caught in the game of knowledge as power. So, Subaltern Studies seems to suggest that its own subalternity, in claiming a positive subject position for the subaltern, might be reinscribed as a strategy for our times. Dipesh Chakrabarty points out about subaltern consciousness as the "Peasant consciousness" in his seminal essay "Invitation to a Dialogue":

The religious consciousness of the peasantry is not subjected to any determinations and is made supra-historical. It is assumed that the peasantry has an ideal for at paradigmatically pure peasant consciousness marked by religiosity existed in a pure state especially in the nineteenth century. (365 SSIV)

Guha is not proposing to study 'peasant consciousness' and its entirety, but only the consciousness of the insurgent peasants. Dipesh Chakrabarty, further, views about two opposing totalities-the elite and the subaltern, the feudal mode of power and the peasant communal mode of power. In simplistic two fold division 'elites' and 'subalterns' in *Subaltern Studies* tends to undermine and supplant the Marxian method of class analysis, if it ignores class-analysis and one-sidedly emphasizes 'subaltern' action alone, subaltern studies is also supposed to be ill equipped to analyze the role and effect of colonialism.

Thus, the class analysis should be 'the' latent anti-imperialism within the communal consciousnesses. The insurgent consciousness that Guha analyses is "constructed on the basis of categories which are derived from Marxism and which are only remotely connected to 'categories' that peasants use in their daily lives to make sense of their world" (375 SSIV). Peasant 'experience' has to find a place in any project that aspires to categorize and understand peasant consciousness. Spivak represents the voice of difference among the major postcolonial theorists. Spivak presents the situation of subaltern members whose spokesperson becomes their life-giver and master:

The small peasant proprietors cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must appear simultaneously as their master, as an authority over them, as

unrestricted governmental power that protects them from the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. (71)

Spivak's attempt to speak on the behalf of 'subaltern', comes against the intellectual elite who can only present interpretation of the subaltern voice filtered through an intellectual/elitist view point. And she further queries, "how can we touch the consciousness of the people, even as we investigate their politics [. . .] with what voice consciousness can the subaltern speak?" (80) The actual subaltern subject is relegated to the position of subject rather than participants in a two way dialogue. Spivak provokes academicians to understand how their positions of intellectual and economic privilege limit their integrity while representing the subaltern.

In her influential essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak clearly asserts that subaltern cannot speak. The subaltern, a member of the non-ruling class, has to face the bias of the elite intellectuals. In other words, there is every chance that the elite intellectual overshadows the subaltern people, whom he represents. Spivak consistently draws the attention to the problem of representation, as it is the privileged position of elite intellectual scholars that let them serve as the spokesperson of marginalized subaltern. This kind of representation is not rooted in the socio-cultural reality. Instead, it tends to give false impression about the represented subaltern class. The privileged elite manipulate in the representation of the subaltern group, and this representation brings the elite writer to the limelight at the cost of the represented subaltern.

Veena Das views subaltern as a perspective to represent excluded, marginalized group of subaltern among elite cultural groups in her celebrated essay "Subaltern as Perspective." She views on *Subaltern Studies*, "make an important point in establishing the centrality of the historical moment of rebellion in understanding

the subaltern as subjects of their own history" (*SSVI* 312). Veena Das further argues about the Subaltern Studies:

Subaltern Studies poses a serious challenge to some of dominant conceptions about tribes or castes in anthropological theory. This project performs in our understanding of tribes, castes or other such group to restore to them their historical being. It is no longer possible to think, for instance, of tribes or inhabitants of the hill regions deprived of their rights to forests as simply inhabiting a world of nature. (314 *SSVI*)

Subaltern studies represents the deprived, marginalized caste and tribes in the national history, as Veena Das views, for coexistence and complex interaction between different type of consciousness- e.g. caste, class, regional and national. The interactional context with the consciousness is being articulated.

Mahasweta Devi's short story "Standayani" reveals the technique to represent the subaltern classes is gaze from above. Her argument assumes that representation inevitably involves inhuman suppression of the represented subaltern classes.

Subaltern Studies is moving from a diffuse notion of resistance to a miasmatic description of power that removes it from the world of production and experience. The subaltern subject is fragmented and the outcome of several post-colonial displacements and it's a project of relatively powerless groups in society.

Cultural elitism is the study on practices of the dominant group, which is followed by others. The elite culture refers to the customs, law, religion, civilizations, language of dominant groups of people, actually who are in power and whose voice is heard and recorded in history. Many critics argue that the elite culture is the superior and dominant over the non-elite cultural groups. Lower strata illiterate groups of

peasantry, metropolitan sub proletariat and who resist against the hegemony of bourgeois ideology are non-elite cultural groups.

In the case of the cultural elitism west today is the result of an interested desire to conserve the subject of west or the west as subject. Mainly, elite cultural groups are dominant indigenous foreigner's groups, national groups, and regional and locals groups. In the case of elite cultural groups, Spivak views "Europe as subject is narrativised by the law, political economy and ideology at the west" (Spivak 12). During the colonialism Europe was dominant over other Non-western countries. Ranjit Guha gives his opinions on Elitism especially linked with Indian Nationalism that came in many forms. "The Indian Nationalism is the continuation of British colonial power, which split into colonialist elitism and nationalist elitism," Guha holds in his *Subaltern Studies* volumes:

The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism-colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism. . . shar[ing] the prejudice that the making of the Indian nation and the development of the consciousness-nationalism that confirmed this process were exclusively or predominantly elite achievements. In the colonialist and neo-colonialist historiographies these achievements are credited to British colonial rulers, administrators, in the nationalist and neo-nationalists writings to Indian elite personalities, institutions, activities and ideas. (SS 137)

In Gramsci's term, elitists have the hegemony, domination over lower strata sub-proletariat groups in politics, economy and others social activities whose voice is heard, in case of writing literature and have the power over group of subordination.

Culturally elite group whose culture the non-elite cultural groups are obliged to follow, take the latter as 'other' and 'them'.

Elite cultural groups, as taken from the historiography from preliminary exercises of colonial history, whether done on a local or global scale, "abetted directly in laying the foundation of the raj during the last decades of eighteenth century" (Guha 211). This rudimentary historiography was soon followed up by a more mature and sophisticated discourse when the time came for the growing colonial state, already secured in its control of the wealth of the land, the reinforce its apparatus of ideological control. Political persuasion remained as main cause for official policy throughout the formative period of 'raj' as indigenous elite to attach them to the colonial regime. However, the historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism-colonialist elitism and bourgeois nationalist elitism. 'Elitism' is the product of bourgeois ideology and colonial mentality of colonizers. The historiography of Indian nationalism has for along time been dominated by elitism. Guha further argues:

Elitism is the product of British rule in India, but have survived the transfer of power and been assimilated to neo-colonialist Elitist historiography of the colonialist or neocolonialist forms of discourse in Britain and Indian respectively. Elitist historiography of colonialist or neo-colonist type counts British writers and institutions among its principal protagonists, but has its imitators in India and other countries. (18 *SSIV*)

Though, cultural elitism is dominant upon non-elite, marginalized group of subaltern since the last decades of eighteenth century, until now transfer of power and the varieties of elitism share the prejudice that the making of nation and the development

of the consciousness. This process was exclusively or predominantly elite achievement. Those achievements are credited to British Colonial rulers, administrators, policies, institution and cultures: in the nationalist and neo-nationalist writings to Indian elite personalities, institutions activities and ideas. Politically the difference of elite and non-elite cultural groups were spelt out as one between rulers and ruled; ethnically white and blacks; materially between a prosperous western power and poor Asian subject; culturally between higher and lower levels of civilization, between the superior religion of Christianity and indigenous belief systems made up of superstition and barbarism-all adding up to an irreconcilable difference between colonizer and colonized.

Though, elite cultural groups as hegemonic among religions, civilizations, knowledge, power and economic activities, appears later as imperialists. In the whirlpool of colonial power, as Guha argues, “Gandhi would, when outraged by particularly vicious of official violence, condemn the administration of British” (*SSIV* 213). The paradox consists of the fact that historiographies with their principal themes, was widely at various with their historic competence. Thus, as elitists the metropolitan bourgeoisies who professed and practiced democracy at home were happy to conduct the government of their Indian empire as an autocracy.

The English term 'resistance' denotes 'using force to oppose something/somebody. Resistance opposes to the proposed of changing where power remained undamaged or unaffected by something. Further, we can define resistance as the opposing force, and counter-hegemonic, resisting authorities especially to conquer over hegemonic power. Opposed by inferior rank of people for power, knowledge and position, which is antagonism against the superior power due to the purpose of changes according their common consent. Superior power is the group of hegemonic

oppressor, exploiter whose voice is heard and history is recorded. In other words, hegemonic power is 'colonial power'. In the case of colonialism, from the experiences and histories of particular individuals and social groups, who have been historically dispossessed and exploited by colonialism, these people raised the issue of resistance. In the context of political struggles for national independence or anti-colonial 'resistance' the use of master words like 'the colonized', 'women' or 'the worker' may seem to provide a coherent political identity for disempowered individuals and groups to unite against a common oppressor. In other words, group of minorities- subaltern- want to empower themselves against dominant indigenous groups of foreigners' in national, regional and local levels.

Many critiques view literary resistance as narrative hurled against a clearly definable set of power relations. Literary resistance produced and reproduced in and through communities of readers and through the mediating structures of their own culturally specific histories. 'Literary resistances' do not escape from the constitutive purchase of genre, and trope, and figure, and mode, which operate elsewhere as a contract between text and reader. In fact, 'literary resistance' necessarily embedded in the representational technologies of those literary and social 'texts' whose structures and referential codes they seek to oppose. Stephen Slemon reiterates on the 'literary resistance' in his celebrated essay "Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World":

It is an act or a set of acts that is designed to rid a people of its oppressors, and it so thoroughly infuses the experience of living under oppression that it becomes an almost autonomous aesthetic principle resistance literature can be seen as that category of literary writing

which emerges as an integral part of an organized struggle or resistance for national liberation. (qtd. in Mongia, 78)

Literary resistance is to question upon the colonial authority in colonial and postcolonial writing. It measures as an effect of the contradictory representation of colonial authority. Benita Parry argues in her seminal essay, "Theorizing Resistance Two Cheers for Nativism," that "it is a reverse discourse as an oppositional practice, posing problems about the appropriate models for contemporary counter hegemonic work" (Mongia 84). Literary resistance is a counter to the traditional genre, theme, and point of view.

III. Textual Analysis

Subversion of Cultural Myopia in *Untouchable*

Mulk Raj Anand's entire attempt in *Untouchable* is a continuation of a series of literary attempts to dislodge, from within, the terms of attempted nationalist resolution of the question of collective selfhood and belonging: an immanent critique of nationalism's divine ambitions, of its claim to a God-like perch above society. He renders an account of national modernity that is inscribed, not with affirmations of identity and subjectivity, but with displacement and difference.

Mulk Raj Anand chronicles a tale of domination, subordination, hegemony, resistance, revolt, and subaltern social mobility disappearing along with cast differentiation, where protest movement is confined to the lower storey because it could not threaten the religious structure, throughout *Untouchable*. Anand weaves the composite culture of resistance to and acceptance of domination and hierarchy, colonial construction of culture and power, clash of unequal culture under Indian Nationalism, colonialism, and the dominance of colonial modernity over India's resistant, indigenous culture.

Primacy of opposition between indigenous and colonial knowledge comes as a major patterning element in the novel. In Anand's novel India becomes the fragments of nation: their identity and consciousness reflects India's colonial subjugation. *Untouchable* attempts to uncover the fragments of subaltern nationality that promotes a new kind of cultural essence. This culture of suppressed and marginalized nationals of India is found in iconic residues of hidden identities, expressions of difference, and misunderstood mentalities. Moreover, *Untouchable* constitutes subversive cultural politics because it exposes forms of power/ knowledge that oppress subaltern people and also because it provides liberating alternatives.

The entire narrative shakes itself free of modernity's master narrative and from the shackles of chronological, linear time. This fictional expedition is an effort to restore the integrity of indigenous histories that appear naturally non linear, oral, symbolic, vernacular, and dramatic in forms. Thus, *Untouchable* is the critique of myopic vision of elitist historiography which views the Indian nation, its consciousness and nationalism as a product of elite initiatives emanating from religious or cultural sources.

Anand develops a set of themes around the national allegorical possibilities of sweeper as signifier. He simultaneously explodes such possibilities by turning to socially and morally displaced figures, figures that are at the heart of controversies concerning religion. His story creates the figures of those women who emerge in his stories not simply in binary opposition to the virtuous wife and mother of the nationalist imagination, but as a means of exploring the sexual harassment that a women from so-called lower caste bear. The precarious instability of Sohini's world is brought abruptly crashing down by an encounter with a priest who attempts rape under the roof of a temple.

Untouchable is the complex tale of a young Indian boy. The novel begins as the sweeper-boy Bakha, who possesses a brilliant and massive body, begins his daily duties of cleaning the public lavatory mostly used by members of Hindu upper caste people and military men in the village of Balashah. Anand weaves into the narrative Bakha's eccentricities and fascination with regimental dresses as well as the human transgressions of other inhabitants of his village.

Anand opens the first chapter canvassing with the rueful living of scavengers and their settlement: "The outcastes' colony was a group of mud-walled houses that clustered together in two rows, under the shadow both of the town and the

cantonment, but outside their boundaries and separate, from them” (*Untouchable* 1). There lived “the scavengers, the leather workers, the washermen, the barbers, the water-carriers, the grass-cutters and other outcastes from Hindu society” (1). Anand further ventures to their (his characters’) lives:

A brook ran near the lane, once with crystal-clear water, now soiled by the dirt and filth of the public latrines situated about it, the odor of the hides and skins of dead carcasses left to dry on its banks, the dung of donkeys, sheep, horses, cows and buffaloes heaped up to be made into fuel cakes, and the biting, choking, pungent fumes that oozed from its sides. The absence of the drainage system had, through the rains of various seasons, made of the quarter a marsh which gave out the most offensive stink. And altogether the ramparts of human and animal refuse that lay on the outskirts of this little colony, and the ugliness, the squalor and the misery which lay within it, made it an ‘uncongenial’ place to live in. (1)

Anand carves the realistic picture of settlement where low caste workers are situated. They live among filths, like that of swine. The place is stinking because of lack of drainage, skins of dead carcasses scattered everywhere, and dung of humans as well as of cattle. They are condemned to bring their life in uncongenial way where people of upper caste, missionaries, and military men live comfortably inside a house with neat and clean bearings.

Cast hierarchy prevails in Anand’s narrative where washer men and leather workers are placed above sweepers and scavengers: Chota is a leatherworker’s son and therefore he behaves differently from Bakha, the son of sweeper. The caste

hierarchy permits Chota to adhere to Englishman's style of clothing. He is an "exception" (2) to other outcastes:

Otherwise the rest of outcastes with the possible exception of Chota, the leather worker's son, who oiled his hair profusely, and parted it like the Englishman on the side, wore a pair of shorts at hockey and smoked cigarettes like them, and of Ramcharan, the washerman's son who aped Chota and Bakha in turn, were content with their lot. (2)

The cast hierarchy is also manifested at the time when children group together to play games. There are those "who aped together" (2) and those who are not permitted to group together. Anand casts a bewildering glance over the society's intrusion in innocent children games too.

Nonetheless, mimicry—a desire to imitate Englishman's ways of dressing and communicating—makes a ridiculous show in these backward settlements. Bakha envies with the way Englishman's children live their life. He has been told that they are superior people and called sahibs. He tends to be like them. "And he had soon become possessed with an overwhelming desire to live their life," Anand narrates the cause of Bakha's desire to imitate Englishman's life, "he had been told they were sahibs, superior people [. . .] had felt that to put on their clothes made one a sahib too" (2). So, he tries to copy them in everything, to copy them as well as he can in the exigencies of his peculiarly Indian circumstances.

The outcastes are entirely subjected to domination. Even in terms of their excess to drawing drinking water. They have to wait for some members of upper cast though it may cost them the whole morning for a pitch full of water. The narrator reflects over a scene around the well:

The outcastes were not allowed to mount the platform surrounding the well, because if they were ever to draw water from it, the Hindus of three upper castes would consider the water polluted. Nor were they allowed access to the nearby brook as their use of it would contaminate the stream. They had no well of their own because it cost at least thousand rupees to dig a well in such a hilly town as Bulashah. Perforce they had to collect after the foot of the castes Hindus' well and depend on the bounty of some of their superiors' to pour water into their pitchers. (15)

When Sohini, Bakha's sister, reaches the well, there are already many other outcastes waiting. But there is no one to give them water. She comes as fast as she can to the well, "full of fear and anxiety that she would have to wait her turn" (15) since she can see from a distance that there is already a crowd.

The caste hierarchy in Anand's fictional settlement ranges from avoidance of untouchable in drawing water from well to verbal abuse by higher caste woman to the girl of lower caste. Sohini, beautiful lass from the 'untouchable' family, happens to be a matter of jealousy and envy. Her perfect figure and well developed parts of body makes her superior to her caste. This becomes an obvious thing that she is frequently humiliated by women of higher caste, and old women whose beauty is declining. Anand reflects over the verbal, and nearly physical, intimidation of Sohini by Gulaboo, the washerwoman:

Gulabo, the washerwoman, the mother of Ramcharan, her brother's friend, had observed Sohini approach. She was fair-complexioned, middle aged woman, the regularity of whose supple body bore even in its decay the evidence of form which most, in her youth, have been

wonderful. She thought herself superior to every other outcaste, first because she claimed a high place in the hierarchy of the caste among the low caste, secondly because a well known Hindu gentleman in the town who had been her lover in her youth was still kind to her in her middle age. (16)

“Bitch, why don’t you speak, prostitute, why don’t you answer me?” (17) Gulabo insists. “Please don’t abuse me,” (17) the girl says, “I’ve not said anything to you” (17). But Gulabo accuses her of annoying her with her silence. Gulabo further insults her: “you illegally begotten [. . .] you eater of dung and drinker of urine; you bitch of a sweeper women, I’ll show you how to insult one enough to be your mother” (17). And she rises with upraised arm and rushes at Sohini.

The young lass from the community of untouchable are at constant threat of sexual molestation. The upper cast men gaze at her with a lust despite her young age:

But he had as good an eye for a pretty face as he had an ear for the sound of a request. Sohini had sat patiently away from the throng, the while it charged the well. The pundit recognized her as a sweeper’s daughter. He had seen her before, noticed her as she had come to clean the latrines in the gullies in the town—the fresh young from whose full breasts with their dark breads of nipples stood out so conspicuously under her muslin shirt. (21)

They [the upper cast men] are seemingly sympathetic to Sohini. But it is only for their sexual lust. Anand explicitly portrays the lust of upper cast and a sense of insecurity of these girls like Sohini from the community of untouchables.

Anand further carves the poignant narrative of a father unable to resist against all the humiliations bestowed upon his daughter and son. Lakha lamely succumbs:

“‘no, no, my son, no’ said Lakha, ‘we can’t do that; they are our superiors, one word of theirs is sufficient to overbalance all that we might say before the police’” (71).

They are their masters. They must respect them and do as they tell them.

Lakha seems a true servant of the outcast colony, where there are no drains, no light, no water; of the marshland where people live among the latrines of the town’s men and the stink of their own dung scattered about here, there and everywhere; of the world where the day is dark as the night and the night pitch-dark. He had wallowed in its mire, bathed in its marshes, played among its rubbish-heaps; his listless, lazy, lousy manner was a result of his surroundings. He is a vehicle of a life-force, the culminating point in the destiny of which would never come, because malaria lingered in his bones, and that disease does not kill but merely dissipate the energy. He is a friend of the flies and the mosquitoes, their boon companion since his childhood.

Mulk Raj Anand in his novel *Untouchable* attempts to reinvent Bakha, the sweeper, a lower strata peasant, under-represented, under-taught, non-canonical and the subordinated group who is always, directly or indirectly, prejudiced by ideologies of dominant class,. He presents rueful lives of people living in Bulashah, an outcaste settlement. The novel is a critique of the elitist political historiography that has stifled the voice of outcastes.

Anand’s narrative includes rural illiterate peasants, workers, lower strata laborers, who are denied access to superiority of social classes--proletarians whose voice remained unheard in this history of the society. Anand speaks Bakha’s voice:

Bakha noticed the ardent, enthusiastic look that lighted of the little ones face. The anxiety of going to school! How beautiful it felt! How nice it must be to be able to read and write! One could read the papers

after having been to school one could talk to the sahibs. One wouldn't have to run to the scribe every time a letter came and one wouldn't have to pay him to have ones letters written. He had often felt like reading Waris Shah's *Hir and Ranjah* and he had felt a burning desire while he was in the British barracks, to speak *tish-mish, tish-mish* which the Tommies spoke. (30)

Bakha's uncle at the British barracks had told him when he first expressed the wish to be a sahib that he would have to go to school if he wanted to be one and he had wept and cried to be allowed to go to school but then his father had told him that schools were meant for the babus, not for the lowly sweepers. He was a sweeper's son and could never be a babu. Later still he realized that there was no school which would admit him because the parents of the other children wouldn't allow their sons to be contaminated by the touch of the low-caste man's sons. The masters wouldn't teach the outcastes. Their fingers which guided the students across the text should touch the leaves of the outcaste' books and they are polluted. But he dreamed of becoming as sahib several times he had felt the impulse to study on his own. Live at the Tommies' barracks had fired his imagination. Recently, he had actually gone and bought the first premier of English. But his self education hadn't proceeded beyond the alphabet. Today as he stood in the sun looking the eager little beyond boy dragging his brother to school, a sudden impulse to ask the babu's son to teach him.

Anand aims to promote a systematic discussion of oppressed groups of society through a new historiography that rewrites history from below. The general attribute of peasants in Indian society is expressed in terms of class, religion, and gender. He sketches wide ranging concern both with visible history, politics, economics, and occluded attitude, ideologies and belief system and the role of the culture in forming

that condition. Anand contrasts Hindu caste system with elite politics, and he privileges the former over the latter. Bakha faces multiple humiliations because he belongs to a so-called group of untouchable:

‘Keep to the side of the road, you low caste vermin!’ he suddenly heard someone shouting at him. ‘Why don’t you call, you swine and announce your approach! Do you know you have touched me and defiled me, you cockeyed son of a bow-legged scorpion! Now I will have to go and take a bath to purify myself. And it was a new dhoti and shirt I put on this morning!’ (38)

When Bakha passes through the road, he cannot even touch an upper cast Hindu which eventually leads to scold like “‘Dirty dog, Son of a bitch, and the offspring of a pig!’ ” (39). The upper cast people shout, their temper spluttering on their tongue and obstructing their speech, and the sense behind it, in its mad rush outwards. “ ‘I . . . I’ll have to go-o-o . . . and get washed-d-d . . . I . . . I was going to business and now . . .now, on account of you, I will be late’ ” (39).

How desperate the living becomes when one cannot even comply with his job. The vainglory of being from upper cast! “These dirty dogs bumped right into me [. . .] so unmindfully do these sons of bitches walk in the streets,” the Brahmin explodes: “he was walking along without the slightest effort at announcing his approach, the swine!” (39).

It in spite of the end of colonialism continues in different forms, the development of nationalist consciousness, in accordance with elitist historiography, has been an achievement either of colonialist, administrators, policy, and culture of Indian personalities or ideas. Besides, highlighting Bakha’s poignant tale, he traces the fundamental cause of their plight which is due to the power and knowledge of

dominant class. Anand seems to argue from Bakha's struggles against upper class Hindus supports the idea that popular insurgency in India emerges from indigenous moral sensibilities. Separation of castes brings the separation in society. This separation emerges vast gulf in between workers and peasants. Anand narrates:

But the crowd which pressed round him, staring, pulling grimaces jeering and leering, was without a shadow of pity for his remorse. It stood unmoved, without heeding his apologies, and taking a sort of sadistic delight in watching him cower under the abuses and curses of its spokesman. Those who were silent seemed to sense in the indignation of the more vociferous members of the crowd, an expression of their own awakening lust for power. (40)

Bakha feels that everyone is looking at him. He bears the shopkeeper's abuse silently and goes on. A little later he slows down, and quite automatically he begins to shout: "posh keep away, posh, sweeper coming, posh, posh, sweeper coming!" (42).

Untouchable comes as a social theory to speak against bourgeois and religious nationalism. The focus of *Untouchable* is on the consciousness of the subaltern classes, specifically peasants.

Negative consciousness, for instance, sees it as the consciousness not of being subaltern but of that of the oppressors. Some elitists objectify to the subaltern and are caught in the game of knowledge as power. The religious consciousness of the peasantry is not subjected to any determinations and is made supra-historical. It is assumed that the peasantry has an ideal for at paradigmatically pure peasant consciousness marked by religiosity existed in a pure state.

Anand is proposing to study peasant consciousness and its entirety, including the consciousness of the insurgent peasants. Peasant experience has found a place in

Anand's fictional project that aspires to categorize and understand peasant consciousness. Bakha represents the voice of difference among the outcastes:

Facing his mind was a figure was a little priest. That made his blood boil. He felt a wild desire to retaliate, retaliation meaning to him just doing anything to the man, from belaboring him with blows to killing him if need be. For though the serfdom of thousands of years had humbled him, the tropical emotions that welled up in him under an open sky had lessened his respect for life. He came up peasant stock, his ancestors having come down in the social scale by their change of profession. The bloods of his peasant ancestors, free to live their own life even though they may have been slaves, raced in him now. (56)

Anand presents the situation of members from outcaste settlement whose spokesperson becomes their life-giver and master. The small peasants cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must appear simultaneously as their master, as an authority over them, as unrestricted governmental power that protects them from the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above.

My poor sister! How can she show her face to the world after this? But why didn't she let me go and kill that man? Why was she born a girl in our house to bring a disgrace upon us? So beautiful! So beautiful and so accursed! I wish she had been the ugliest women in the world! Then no one would have teased her!' but he couldn't bear the thought of her being ugly. His pride in her beauty seemed to be hurt. And he just wished: 'oh, God, why was she born, why was she born.' (57)

Anand's attempt to speak on the behalf of Bakha, comes against the religious elite who can only present interpretation of the peasant voice filtered through an religious-elitist view point. Low-cast workers have to face the bias of the elite Brahmins and priests. In other words, there is every chance that the upper-cast overshadows the lower-cast. *Untouchable* possess a serious challenge to some of dominant conceptions about tribes or castes in anthropological theory. This novel performs in our understanding of tribes, castes or other such group to restore to them their historical being.

Anand represents the deprived, marginalized caste and tribes in the national history, for coexistence and complex interaction between different types of consciousness--caste, class, regional and national. The interactional context with the consciousness is being articulated throughout the narrative. The peasant subject is fragmented and the outcome of several displacements and Anand speaks for relatively powerless groups in society.

Religious elitism is prevalent in *Untouchable* as practices of the dominant group, which is followed by others. The elite culture is the superior and dominant over the non-elite cultural groups:

‘You people have only been polluted from a distance,’ Bakha heard the little priest shriek. I’ve been defiled by contact.’ The distance, the distance!’ the sweepers from the top of the steps were shouting. ‘ a temple can be polluted according to the holy books by a low caste man coming within sixty-nine yards of it, and here he was actually on the steps, at the door. We are ruined. We will need to have a sacrificial fire in order to purify ourselves and our shrine.’

But I . . . I . . .’ shouted the lanky priest histrionically, and
never finished his sentence. (53)

The crowd on the temple steps believes that the priest has suffered most terribly, and sympathize, for it has seen the sweeper-boy rush past him. They do not ask about the way he has been polluted. They do not know the story that Sohini told Bakha at the door of the courtyard with sobs and tears. Lower strata illiterate groups of peasantry, metropolitan sub proletariat and who resist against the hegemony of bourgeois ideology are non-elite cultural groups.

The Indian Nationalism is the continuation of British colonial power, which split into colonialist elitism and nationalist elitism that bear hindu religion as its icon. Religious elitists have the hegemony, domination over lower strata sub-proletariat groups in politics, economy and others social activities whose voice is heard, in case of writing literature and have the power over group of subordination. Culturally elite group whose culture the non-elite cultural groups are obliged to follow, take the latter as ‘other.’

Elite religious groups, as taken from the historiography from preliminary exercises of colonial history, function on a local or global scale.

However, the historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism—religious elitism and bourgeois nationalist elitism. Religious elitism is the product of bourgeois ideology and colonial mentality Upper-cast Hindus. The historiography of Indian nationalism has for along time been dominated by religious elitism. Anand represents Bakha’s voice:

They always abuse us. Because we are sweepers. Because we touch
dung. They hate dung. I hate it too. That’s why I came here. I was tired
of working on the latrines everyday. That’s why they don’t touch us,

the high-castes. The tonga-walla was kind. He made me weep telling me, in that way, to take my things and walk along. But he is a Mohammedan. They don't mind touching us, the Mohammedan and the sahibs. It is only the hindus, and the out-castes who are not sweepers. For them I am a sweeper, sweeper—untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable! That's the word! Untouchable! I am an untouchable!' (43)

Elitism is the product of British rule in India, but have survived the transfer of power and been assimilated to neo-colonialist Elitist historiography of the colonialist or neocolonialist forms of discourse in India. Anand questions elitist historiography of neo-colonist type that counts temple institutions among its principal protagonists. Though, cultural elitism is dominant upon non-elite, marginalized group of subaltern since the mid decades of twentieth century, until now transfer of power and the varieties of elitism share the prejudice that the making of nation and the development of the consciousness:

Oh, maharaj! Maharaj! wont you draw us some water, please? We beg you. We have been waiting here for a long time. We will be grateful, shouted the chorus of voices as they pressed towards him, some standing up bending and joining their palms in beggary, others twisting their lips in a various attitudes of a servile appeal and abject humility as they remained seated. (18)

Indian independence exclusively or predominantly is elite achievement. Those achievements are credited to mainstream culture, religion, administrators, policies, and institution and cultures. Since then, the difference of elite and non-elite cultural

groups are spelt out as one between rulers and ruled: culturally between higher and lower cast.

Nonetheless, Anand has flashed some hope over Mahatma Gandhi. He interweaves history with fiction in presenting Gandhi. He quotes Gandhi as saying,

‘Well, we must destroy caste; we must destroy the inequalities of birth and unalterable vocations. We must recognize an equality of rights, privileges and opportunities for everyone. The mahatma didn’t say so, but the legal and sociological basis of cast having been broken down by the British-Indian penal code, which recognizes the rights of everyman before a court, cast is now manly governed by profession. (145-46)

Bakha goes to the speech delivering programs at the unset of political upheavals in India. “Then the last words of the Mahatma’s speech seemed to resound in his ears,” Anand chronicles the effect of Mahatma in Bakha and his political consciousness, ““may god give you the strength to work out your soul’s salvation to the end” (147). Anand portrays Mahatma’s vision and its soothing effect in Bakha:

‘What did that mean?’ Bakha asked himself. The mahatma’s face appeared before him enigmatic, ubiquitous. There was no answer to be found in it, yet there was a queer kind of strength to be derived from it. Bakha recollected the words of his speech. It all seemed to stand out in his mind, every bit of it. Especially did the story of Uka come back. The mahatma had talked of a Brahmin who did the scavenging in his *ashram*. Did he mean, then that I should go on scavenging?’ Bakha asked himself. (147)

As the brief Indian twilight comes and goes, and a sudden impulse shoots through the transformations of space and time and gathered all elements that are dispersed in the stream of Bakha's soul. Into a tentative decision "I shall go and tell father all that Gandhi said about us" (147-8), which he whispers to himself, and all that that poet said. And he proceeds homewards.

Bakha's resistance can be taken as the opposing force and counter-hegemonic, resisting authorities especially to conquer over hegemonic power. Bakha's move serves for antagonism against the superior power due to the purpose of changes according their common consent. Superior power in *Untouchable* constitutes of the group of Hindu upper castes, merchants, priests, and remnants of British colonizers. It is the voice of those groups whose voice is heard and history is recorded. In other words, hegemonic power is colonial power. Anand traces the experiences and histories of particular individuals and social groups, who have been historically dispossessed and exploited by colonialism, these people raised the issue of resistance. In the context of political struggles for national independence or anti-colonial 'resistance' the use of master words like 'the colonized', 'women' or 'the worker' may seem to provide a coherent political identity for disempowered individuals and groups to unite against a common oppressor. In other words, group of minorities- subaltern- want to empower themselves against dominant indigenous groups of foreigners' in national, regional and local levels. Eventually, Bakha understands the reality, that "it was not a proper place to spend whole life" (147).

Describing the character of modernity in India, Anand emphasizes the relation between Enlightenment rationality and subaltern. When he traces the upper cast activity of the pre-independent Indian state in the face of luridly imagined political threats, Anand outlines the repressive aspects of colonial rationality that linger in the

structures of postcolonial government. He suggests that the colonial state is heir to the anxieties about order and control that are characteristic of colonial regimes, and the full force of postcolonial rationality is seen in the state's response to insurgency and subaltern suffering. At the same time, Anand's novel stages a succession of utopian projects that bear the imprint of religious reason. It points to the liberatory dimensions of reason and denounces the characters pursuit of these enlightening projects. In juxtaposing so explicitly these themes of the progress and perversion of reason and the exorbitation of upper cast people and in its depiction of colonial India, *Untouchable* raises questions concerning the relationship between Enlightenment discourses of religion and the apparatuses of 'untouchables' and colonial government in the colonial context.

IV. Conclusion

Mulk Raj Anand infuses the thrust of passive resistance, subaltern consciousness, and the rueful lives of the so-called untouchables in his novel *Untouchable*. This research ventures through the multiple instances of marginalization and suppression of lower strata people like that of sweepers, scavengers, and washermen in the light of subaltern studies. The people in colonial India are the constant victims of religious and political subordination in Anand's novel. The historicity is embedded in Anand's reluctant narrative, even after the multiple efforts to harmonize life; the effort gains no weight because it fell into the cruel hands of notorious temple officials and their far reaching practice of class segregation.

Anand champions the poor and oppressed through Bakha, the protagonist of the novel who belongs to the so-called group of untouchables. Anand is known for his realistic portrayals of the poor in India. He describes the situation of India's poor and dispossessed. What distinguishes Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*, what makes it the epic of the subaltern world, is its capacity to narrate the socialization of the individual, its inscription at the level of form of the claim that life is ethically meaningful. Anand has produced countless of societies, histories, and cultures from below which have prompted to dispersed terms, methods, and bits of theory used in subaltern studies among countless academic sites.

At the center of the words and pages of *Untouchable* remain the subalterns themselves. This novel explains the uses of the term untouchable in two ways: positively, by outlining who they are; and negatively as a constituent of binary opposition, by distinguishing them what they are not. Untouchables are those of inferior rank, those subordinate in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office or in

any other way. As an opposition, they are not those who are dominant, the ruling groups, the elites.

Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* deserves critical consideration from the subaltern perspective because it points to and severely criticizes the state's rationalities that shape colonial experience. Its conceptual focus on religion, as signaled by the title, makes it a particularly suitable text to explore the ambiguous legacy of religious rationality in the colonial India. When its characters become aggressive, it is to escape the religious atrocities, driven by the rationalities of the religion. The novel, however, fully acknowledges the very different circumstances of bourgeois and subaltern people. At the level of plot, the forces of upper cast criminalize the protagonists and defeat their enlightened utopian projects. However, the narrative techniques that the novel employs go against the grain of the logic of repression that is embedded in classic nationalist fiction. A deliberation upon intelligence gathering and politics in colonial India, the novel engages, disrupts, and parodies the generic conventions of nationalist fiction in order to challenge its coercive logic. By turning the generic conventions of religious epics upside down, Anand critiques the repressive tendencies of Enlightening religion.

Anand has traced the unhappy effects of colonial administration on the population of India and even deeper is his projection of religious atrocities. Even when the motives were benign, the colonial regime's limited knowledge of local customs meant that rational administration could have adverse effects.

This research draws heavily upon the character, tradition of subaltern and dichotomies between elite and non-elite cultural-praxis-groups. Yet, his protagonists and themes often extend the sufferings of laborers and rural people of outcaste colony. Through this discourse, the work exposes the subaltern people and their resistance

against local religious ruler. Anand's writing reflects the recent concern of anthropologists with the porosity of cultural boundaries. In contrast with the classic view, which posits culture as a self contained whole made up of coherent patterns, culture can arguably be treated as a more porous array of intersections where distinct processes cross from within and beyond its borders. The characters in Anand's novels consist of the lower strata people of rural gentry and the dichotomies with the elite cultural groups in local levels. Anand returns to a rigorous mode of empirical research to recover the historically situated subjectivities of a network of scavengers and their 'maliks' operating between religion and society. Pathetic condition of the lower rank of people and the obsessed mentality of elite people in the society has been shown transparently in this novel. It means that subaltern consciousness remains present rather than trace.

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