CHAPTER - I

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Man is basically an egoist. This is an irrefutable fact, though the degree of egoism differs from person to person. One need not refer to Sigmund Freud for affirmation. Though other motives may be present when a man writes, the desire to thrust his personality and views on the public is a dominating force. In this context it would be interesting to know the views expressed by certain celebrities in the field of writing. George Orwell, in his essay "Why I Write" gives four reasons for a person to write:

i) Sheer egoism. Desire to seem clever, to be talked about, to be remembered after death, to get your own back on grown-ups who snubbed you in childhood, etc. etc.,

ii) Aesthetic enthusiasm. Perception of beauty in the external world, or, on the other hand, in words and their right arrangement.
iii) Historical impulse. Desire to see things as they are, to find out true facts and store them up for the use of posterity.

iv) Political purpose - using the word 'political' in the widest possible sense. Desire to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other people's idea of the kind of society that they should strive after. (100-101)

This compulsion to write has been there since language came into existence.

The novel, though of comparatively recent origin, has become the most favoured literary genre today. Since the novel is supposed to be an objective form, the writer has greater freedom to express his views without being personally held responsible in any way. An added advantage is that he can attempt to reform the society in which he lives by depicting characters in an unflattering light. Charles Dickens is a writer who one is immediately reminded of in this context. Writers like him felt it their duty to point out the shortcomings of contemporary society and thereby reform it. In such novelists the degree of egoism is often
veiled. The writer, on the contrary, is preoccupied with the moral he tries to impart. Sadly today one finds that the moral element is conspicuously absent. Then, a writer is after all a representative of the age in which he lives. The moral degeneration of our times is reflected in the novels turned out in hundreds in this century.

It requires on the part of man a fine sensibility to be moved to such an extent as to see the injustice done all around and to be compelled to express in writing his disgust and protest. This urge stems undoubtedly from his sense of social justice and concern for the nation as well as the individual. The expression of protest some people display physically; but the intellectual and the gifted do it in writing. There are many who are appalled at the moral degradation taking place, but they do not have either the initiative or the aptitude to write. Undoubtedly the art of writing is a gift. When such a gifted man finds himself, either by volition or by force of circumstance, unable to take to flights of fantasy and create characters of his own, he can turn his energies in the direction of re-creating the past of real-life characters. Their work is to state these facts and allow the readers to draw their own conclusions. Boswell's Life of Johnson enables the readers to understand
Johnson and his times better but the book serves no didactic purpose. Boswell refrains from adopting a moralistic stand and giving value judgments, as he felt himself under no obligation, whatsoever, to correct the society of his time. If the biography is an ineffective instrument of social reform the reason might mainly be the protagonist being a passive player. The reading public does not have direct contact with him and the inner feelings of the man may not be faithfully transcribed by the biographer.

The moral sense, when it is not the product of a wooden or stereotyped scale of values artificially inculcated in a man, is the result of the interaction of the self and the outside world -- the cumulative product of the ebb and flow of feeling and experience -- the sum total of the patterns formulated and generalized conclusions drawn, which are an integral part of that collective entity called a man's personality. The biographer, who is just an observer (however faithful he may be), cannot plumb the inner depths of his subject and this imposes a severe circumscription on his work in the moral sense.

It is in this respect that the autobiography assumes importance in literature. It is confessional by nature. It
is not the result of any egotistic impulse, as generally one feels impelled or justified to write one's own life-story only if it can serve as a model or a warning to people. In either case, the motivation is moral or didactic. It is a dialogue of the mind with itself -- the intimate moral questionings which can assume the force of a tempest shaking the foundations of the spirit -- which can lend relevance and value to an autobiography. Without this the work will slide down to the level of the banal or the commonplace. In Mahatma Gandhi's *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* one is struck by the unshakable faith the great Mahatma had in Truth and God. The readers are prompted to emulate him. The researcher has in mind only autobiographers who are genuinely interested in reforming society and are basically honest to themselves. There have been autobiographies written solely out of sheer snobbishness and with a desire to impress the people with their own greatness. Such writings cannot justly be termed autobiographies; they just blow the bubble of the writer's imagined picture of himself and can at best be called the literature of propaganda. Society profits little from such writings. Man is a bundle of emotions and feelings. It is inevitable that uncontrolled and unjust opinions might be expressed while writing the autobiography. It is indeed excusable but a consistent and constant harangue
cannot be accepted as good literary work. For example, Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* is an admirable autobiographical work. His experiences and agonies are so superbly and picturesquely portrayed that they serve to any prospective opium addict as a warning and threat. Here one finds De Quincey as a lone crusader against the abuses of the dreaded drug.

The readers cannot accuse De Quincey of being an egoist. Here is an example to show egoism is not necessarily the prime motive for a person to write. But then, the very feeling that one has something to convey from one's life that is of great importance universally may be termed as a mild form of egoism. Egoism is found in a far smaller measure in writers of novels. In a novelist it is imagination and creativity that play a major role. Personal experience and didactic purpose are kept to the minimum. This is so because there is always a danger that the reader's attention might wander or he might lose interest in the book altogether. The chief aim of the novelist is to sustain the interest of the reader throughout the novel. However, it happens that even in novel writing personal experiences inadvertently hover as a shadow.
W.H. Thrall, A. Hubbard and C. Hugh Holman in *A Handbook to Literature* define a novel as "any extended fictional prose narrative" (318). But its use in practice, according to them, is customarily restricted to narratives in which the representation of character occurs either in static condition or in the process of development as the result of events or actions. So it is progressive unfolding of character with the series of actions or events serving as pieces of the jigsaw puzzle; alternatively, it is the development of the character through interaction with the ambient world. Often the term implies that some organizing principle -- plot or theme or idea -- should be present in a narrative. The term 'novel' is an English version of the Italian 'novella', a short, compact, broadly realistic tale popular in the medieval period, perhaps best represented by the tales in the *Decameron*. The English novel has come a long way to have become, as now, an effective medium for the depiction of the Freudian and post-Freudian perception of the complexities of the human psyche as well as the problems of the post-War social and political situation which are turning increasingly difficult and baffling. The works of Richardson, Fielding, Swift, Jane Austen, Scott as well as the great Victorian novelists have been important milestones in the course of the
evolution of the modern English novel. Mention must be made of the Twentieth Century writers like Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, who used this literary form as a tool for probing the inner recesses of the human soul.

In India the birth and development of this literary genre is almost wholly identical with the introduction and spread of English education. This does not mean that fiction or prose fiction was new to the country. India can boast of ancient fictional writings like the Panchatantra and the Kathasarit Sagara, but their objectives are either moral instruction or entertainment and, without the elements of realism and characterization which are hallmarks of the modern form, cannot be called novels. So, it is safe to state that the novel is of Western origin and came to this country in the train of English education, which was one of the beneficial effects of British rule in India. Many Indians mastered the English language to perfection. Indians wrote in English, without forfeiting their ancient heritage and managed to evolve a uniquely Indian idiom, suited specifically to the ethos and culture of their country. The English language in their hands became a vehicle of the urges, dreams, and sorrows of the average Indian. The English literature of India came to be known as 'Indo-Anglian
Despite W.B. Yeats's advice to Sarojini Naidu -- 'Don't write in English, write in your mother tongue' -- Indian writers continued writing in English, and not a few of them have won approbation and acclaim from readers and critics of many parts of the world. Indian English can hardly acquire the native strength of American or Australian English, for on Indian soil, it has always remained an exotic plant, and Indian writing in English is a tree that has sprung upon a hospitable soil from a seed that a random breeze brought from afar. Various Indian writers have carved out a name for themselves in different fields of its literature. (2-3)

The Twentieth Century produced a galaxy of Indo-Anglian writers like Jawaharlal Nehru, Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, S. Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo. However, Indian English fiction matured to international standard in the Nineteen Thirties with the emergence of three Indian writers of outstanding calibre. They were Mulk Raj Anand (b.1905),
R.K. Narayan (b. 1906) and Raja Rao (b. 1909). These three novelists had spent their youth under foreign rule and their first novels were published during the pre-Independence days. However, there is no trace of any similarity in their writing or themes. William Walsh calls them the founding fathers of Indo-Anglian fiction. Walsh describes how these three novelists were different from one another in every aspect:

Mulk Raj Anand does not have the profound common sense of Narayan which enhances both actuality and myth, the fact and the poetry of life. He does not have that sense of the metaphysical nature of man we find in Raja Rao. But he has a deep feeling for the deprived, a grasp of the social structure of his society and the clearest vision of its injustices and malformations. When his imagination burns and the propagandist is forgotten he is a novelist of considerable power. (67)

A writer picks up the fragments of experience from around himself and pieces them together, giving them a new unity and coherence. This unified picture of life becomes an integral part of his literary art and the episodes in his
writings then become just manifestations or demonstrations of it. This integrated picture of experience one calls the writer's vision or philosophy of life. As far as Anand is concerned, the agonised cry of the underdog, the torture and exploitation which the deprived and dispossessed in society were ruthlessly subjected to, the deliberate cruelty of man to man -- these were the inescapable facets of life which cried for the writer's attention.

A man who is surrounded by darkness longs for light; when one sees so much of oppression and injustice around, one has to cry out for redressal. It is more so when a person is a writer whose sensibility is finer than that of the layman. This is exactly what Anand did. His feelings for the oppressed of all hues in society was sincere; his cry for justice and redressal was born of genuine anguish. It was not the affected rhetoric of the armchair idealist; it was the powerful voice he lent to the millions who had suffered mutely earlier. He was able to speak about them with a first-hand feel because they were real-life participants in the drama of his personal life. Their suffering was the starkest fact of the life he saw around him; no wonder he wove it into the fabric of his vision of life. The oppressed and the oppressor are archetypes of society; the time and
manners of society may change, but the oppressor and his victim are bound to continue; it will be so till the end of time. Blinker-eyed ideologues may offer half-baked solutions; but the problem will resurface in a different form. This is a fact one has to bear in mind when one reads Anand; one has to reject Anand the ideologue and accept Anand the writer.

A novel is supposed to be an objective form; all the same, it is a product of the writer's personality -- it is supposed to have an existence independent of the writer's self, but it draws its life from the author's psyche, and is fed on the social, political and economic changes taking place around him. The novel is the codification of the writer's responses to these factors from the ambient world and thus becomes a palpable expression of the vital impulses which collectively are called the self. In this sense it becomes as much a form of self-expression as any other literary medium; here, as elsewhere, the written word transforms itself into a quest for self-knowledge.

In the contemporary Indian milieu one sees old civilizations moving towards the machine, with hangovers of tradition and a stupendous increase in human knowledge. At
this dramatic juncture of time, stands Mulk Raj Anand, who has carved a niche for himself as the pioneer of the realistic and naturalistic Indo-Anglian fiction. Shattering our culture's obsession with God-realisation, he stretches his arms towards "Destination Man". Human experience to him becomes legitimate material for moulding a progressive, liberal society where every underdog could have his day. If James Joyce's stream-of-consciousness transforms every novel into an autobiography of soul-search, the self-same phenomenon can be seen in Anand too. Life has taught him that the near perfect man is the one who is most humiliated by the whips and scorns of time. Every panoramic passage of time in his novels is the movement of his self. Set against the background of a torrid cross-section of Indian society, every novel becomes a mirror to his own life.

Mulk Raj Anand was born on 12 December 1905 in Peshwar (now a part of Pakistan) into a family of coppersmiths and silversmiths. His father, Lal Chand Anand, however, did not pursue the family craft but joined the British Indian Army. Anand studied at Khalsa college at Amritsar and obtained the Honours degree in the year 1924 from the Punjab University. On a scholarship he went to London in 1925 to study Philosophy and got the Doctor's degree in 1928 from the
London University. It was during this period that he fell in love with Irene, the daughter of a scientific philosopher. At her suggestion -- for her reading only -- he began to write his autobiography modelled on Roussaeu's *Confessions*. His confessions ran to two thousand pages. Since he had no hope of getting them published, he made use of them while writing novels. He returned to India in 1932 and lived at the Sabarmathi Ashram with Mahatma Gandhi for some days. It was here that Anand's first novel *Untouchable* received the final touches. However, only in 1935 was *Untouchable* published and Anand emerged as a notable novelist.

Each of his novels has a certain amount of autobiographical element in it. Most of the characters and incidents in his life were made use of in his novels. The glory of every one of Anand's novels is the exclusive world of the child. Drawn from his own childhood experiences, all his representative novels depict the importance of these formative years. It is an earnest representation of all the innocence of childhood. To the child, society seems to belong to the adult -- malevolent and regardless of the existence of children. Tinged with humour the happy spirit of the child intensifies the pathos.
The present research purports to deal specifically with Anand's later novels considered as autobiography. Here the creative artist has liberty to shift from one genre to another. As the country felicitates this nonagenarian whose creative genius continues to be as fertile as ever, it is most fitting that a research analysis be carried out of the great personality's self. The research thesis is definitely not a critical analysis based on either mono-dimensional or multi-dimensional concepts of Anand's novels. It is a formalist analysis of how society and literature create a revolution in combining two literary forms to communicate effectively the writer's views and ideas. The research would be casting a new and different light on the technique of Anand's stream-of-consciousness: was he making the novel a social medium or is the novel the man himself? Unmistakably, shifting perspectives in the two different genres show the man in his novels. His later novels can be viewed with the perspective of an intense personal account of life and they are chosen for study.

Anand's ability to transform felt experience into art is commendable. In Seven Summers, Morning Face, Confession of a Lover and The Bubble (the first four volumes of his
projected series of seven autobiographical novels called *The Seven Ages of Man*. Anand has admirably transformed the corpus of his personal experience into stuff for literary creation. When asked by Marlène Fisher why he had chosen to write autobiographical novel instead of a straight autobiography, Anand replied:

An autobiography is too personal a thing and idiosyncratic of one eccentric individual. I think the life of any one of us may have some meaning in terms of other lives as well. And especially for India, where the novel... is a new form, it was important to try and slightly impersonalize the character, so that I could look at him as a character with a certain vigilance, which would prevent self-adulation and self-pity and all the things which happens to writers of autobiographies (and) I feel that the first-person singular form is important because in that the felt experience comes in with more immediacy than in the third-person singular. (121)

The *raison d'être* of Indo-Anglian literature -- the appellation given to the significant body of writings Indian
writers produce in English -- used to be questioned: they used to doubt whether the English language would lend itself to creative use by a foreigner. But such doubts have been quelled by now. The standing of Indian creative writing in English as a vehicle for the expression of the Indian ethos has been vindicated and, over the years, it has managed to evolve a unique idiom of its own. It is natural corollary that a number of Indian writers in English have attracted a lot of critical attention and exhaustive studies have been made of writers like R.K. Narayan. Against this background, it is sad that Mulk Raj Anand has not been accorded the kind of recognition he deserves. As Meenakshi Mukherjee points out, "One of the most conspicuous anomalies in available criticism of Indo-Anglian literature is that Anand, perhaps the most prolific and widely known of Indo-Anglian novelists, has been subjected to the least amount of critical scrutiny" (236).

In the decades following Independence it was the trend among writers in India (as in the West) to apply the sociological approach to problems: a number of people with left-leaning philosophies tried to ascribe human ills to social and economic reasons and Anand is a leading light of this school of thought in India. This researcher, who has
from early days been an avid reader of Anand's writings, has viewed with dismay the critical apathy shown to one of the greatest exponents of the Indian creative genius. He (the researcher) has been of the view that a number of the facets of Anand as a writer are yet to be revealed and a study of those can be interesting and illuminating. This study is an effort in that direction.

The latest three novels of Mulk Raj Anand, namely Morning Face, Confession of a Lover and The Bubble, have been taken up in this thesis to examine the autobiographical dimensions seen in each novel. Seven Summers has also been included for study—though it was published much earlier—because this novel forms the first volume of Mulk Raj Anand's ambitious series titled The Seven Ages of Man. The seven stages of man as described by Jaques in Shakespeare's As You Like It have given Anand the idea to title each of his seven novels. Actually Anand had titled his third volume as The Lover. The publisher has changed it into Confession of a Lover.

The methodology used has been to take the chief episodes and characters of Anand's novels and discover their biographical origins by tracing them to events and
personalities in his life. When there is a systematic correspondence between the two, the relationship cannot be attributed to mere coincidence and the explanation has to be Anand's deliberate use of personal, biographical material for literary creation. In that case the veil of fiction becomes too thin to hide the identity of the person or experience involved. When a writer deliberately uses matter from his personal life as the stuff of his novels, they become vehicles of self-expression and the borderline between the novel and the autobiography vanishes as far as his works are concerned. The succeeding chapters take up each of these four novels by turn and discover their autobiographical nature. The novel is supposed to be an objective and impersonal genre, and so the autobiographical nature of these four novels makes them uniquely interesting.

No creation can be absolutely independent of the creator and the mysterious forces within the recesses of the maker's soul are bound to leave their stamp on his work. This is matter for the biographical or psychological critic, but in Anand's case there was a conscious effort to bring his personality to bear on his novels and so a full understanding of the range and significance of his novels is impossible
without tracing their personal origins. This study is an attempt in that direction with reference to the novels under consideration.

For research and documentation procedures, the style recommended in MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (Third Edition) by Joseph Gibaldi and Walter Achtert is followed.