CHAPTER V

HUMANITARIAN
AND
HUMANISTIC CONCERNS
A close study of the novels of Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand reveals that both these writers are concerned with human welfare and sympathetic towards the weaker sections of the society. Both these writers respect human personality and recognize the freedom and dignity of Man. They are earnest in their endeavour to eliminate human suffering and work for the progressive realization of civilized standards of good living. In fact, the central preoccupation of their novels is the dignity of man. When weaklings like Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, David Copperfield and Little Nell become the victims of the callous Society, Dickens pleads for them and demands a better deal for them in the society. He blames the society squarely for its neglect of children and rebukes the society for not giving them due recognition and for not showing sympathy, love or concern for them. Like Dickens, Anand by presenting the miseries of Bakhra, Bhiku and Munnu, the outcasts shows in his novels that the caste-ridden society has done injustice to the socially and economically weaker
sections of the society. A comparative study of their novels makes it clear that though they have their own views on religion, politics and Man, they are at the outset, humanitarians interested in the welfare of mankind; humanists full of compassion for the suffering human beings. In fact, their humanitarian and humanistic concerns have earned them wide readership and also a place of pride and honour in the world of letters.

A brief note on humanitarianism and humanism, at this stage will not be out of place, for this will enable us to understand their novels in the right perspective. A humanitarian is one who professes humanism. Generally, he is interested in philanthropy with the sole aim of serving the poor and the oppressed for their uplift. He has love and sympathy for the suffering and takes up their cause. His fellow-feeling and kindness broaden his vision and enlarge his social consciousness. Humanism is also the awakening of the individual to a sense of freedom. The universal tendency of humanism is to stress self-understanding and self-determination at the human level. Both humanism and humanitarianism stress the value of human relationship for peaceful living. According to H.J. Blackham, humanism is a concept of man focused upon a programme for humanity.
The term humanism has been used in many senses. There are scientific, religious, atheistic and ethical humanists. All wish to actualize human potentialities, enhance human experience and contribute to happiness and social justice. They are all opposed to authoritarian forces that dehumanize men. They profess compassion for human suffering and peaceful existence for happy living. Humanism centres on the faith that man can live a good life on this earth. Dr. G.S. Balarama Gupta says:

Man, then, is the central concern of humanism, and its efforts are directed toward the recognition of the dignity of man as man. Its chief aim is the achievement of man's happiness.

Finally, humanism is humanitarian in that it is concerned with good life and social justice as moral ideals. The humanistic temper has always protested against any subservience to an external law, whether religious or mechanical, imposed upon Man from without. The most important factor in the humanistic temper is the obligation to respect and cultivate the dignity and worth of human personality, in oneself and in others. Humanism calls men to shed the dogmas and divisions of traditional religion. To commit oneself to humanist values is to put the welfare of human beings first, to make people supremely important, to adopt
human welfare and human goods and the ultimate criteria of right and wrong. The humanistic contribution lies not only in helping man solve his present and forthcoming problems, but in ensuring a better, more humane world. Humanistic philosophy is the result of various influences and forces. All humanists, whether they are scientific, religious, ethical or atheistic have a common ideal. The ideal being compassionate feeling, human dignity, freedom from bondage, equality, security and good life. In the light of the basic principles of humanitarianism and humanism, an attempt is made in this chapter to study the humanitarian and the humanistic concerns of Dickens and Anand.

Dickens, who has been inspired by the philanthropists of the humanitarian movement, introduces humanitarianism as the predominant note in his novels. Wilberforce, Peel and Bright are some of the philanthropists who pioneered the humanitarian movement in the nineteenth century. The philanthropists established hospitals and societies for the benefit of the poor. Laws were enacted to protect the labour of women and children. They fought for the abolition of the slave-trade. The society for the prevention of the cruelty to children was founded. Trevelyan points out that 'in many directions life was being humanized, as
some set-off against its increasing ugliness and sordidness in the growth of great cities under their pall of soot and fog.' Wilberforce and the anti-slavery men introduced into English life and politics new methods of agitating and educating the public opinion. The humanitarian movement gave birth to the humanitarian novel, and in turn, the novel probably accelerated the movement. In fact, the philanthropic motive was present even in the eighteenth century, in Defoe, Fielding and Goldsmith. In 1830, Bulwar Lytton published *Paul Clifford* and showed in that novel, a vicious prison discipline and a sanguinary criminal code could not prevent crime at all, but really helped to turn out criminals. Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, though differing in details, and somewhat in aim from *Paul Clifford*, is built on similar lines. It is a picaresque story humanized, and given a realistic setting in the London slums. Professor Cross is right in his view that "after the publication of the two immediately succeeding novels of adventure-Nicholas Nickleby and The Old Curiosity Shop—Dickens became a sort of professor of humanitarianism and he held his position for nearly thirty years."^4^

Dickens brought both his imagination and sympathetic observation to bear upon various aspects of
the English life and character especially on workhouses, debtor's prisons, pawn-brokers' shops, hovels of the poor, law courts, dark streets and all the London haunts and shady places of vice, crime, and suffering. He is highly critical of the Parliament and the government machinery. He seeks to arouse the conscience of the British public, and he leaves the issue to be settled by the people themselves. Dickens evinced great interest in social service. He attended and addressed several meetings of philanthropic societies, where governmental abuses and the conditions of criminals and the poor are to be canvassed, visited jails, holding long conversation with keepers. Inspired by the philanthropists of the humanitarian movement, Dickens introduces humanitarianism as the predominant note in his novels. It is obvious that in every novel he takes up the contemporary vices, exposes the social evils and draws the attention of the readers towards the need for social reform. For instance, he satirises the delay in the court of chancery in The Bleak House and shows that justice delayed is justice denied. The circumlocution office is presented as a notorious place of red-tapism. By satirising the government institutions, Dickens intends to show that suitable reforms are to be made to make them meaningful and
useful to the public. As a humanitarian, he has his sympathy towards the poor children and he is sad that they are ignored by the state. In *Oliver Twist* he shows how children are neglected by the state and the society. He ridicules the mismanaged workhouses in this novel through Bumble, the workhouse beadle and arouses the conscience of the readers. By showing Oliver Twist as a victim of the callous society, Dickens is certainly appealing to the good sense of his reading public to view such poor innocent children as part of the society who require sympathy and kind treatment. In *Nicholas Nickleby* and *David Copperfield*, he attacks the bad educational system as well the cruel teachers who have no concern for children or for education. Dickens shows through the story of Gradgrind, Louisa and Tom in *Hard Times* that education which relies on mere facts ignoring the faculty of imagination is useless. By continuing the theme of the oppressed child in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Dickens shows his concern towards the helpless children and ridicules the irresponsible attitude shown by parents towards their children. He continues to expose them in *Martin Chuzzlewit* and in *Dombey and Son*. His humanitarianism is quite obvious in *Little Dorrit*. The rigours of prison life and the inhuman treatment of prisoners
are attacked in this novel for bringing about prison-reforms. In *Hard Times*, Dickens attacks the squalor and misery of Coke-Town and exposes the wretched conditions of workers oppressed by the capitalistic forces. Also, he condemns the gross materialism and upholds imagination and spiritual values in human life. In *A Tale of Two Cities*, he shows the horrors of the French Revolution leading to hatred, enmity, and disorder and pleads for love and tolerance. What is interesting to note is that Dickens has directed his pen against the social evils of the Victorian society by taking the role of a social reformer just to arouse the public conscience to these evils and to induce practical social reforms inspired by the philanthropists of the humanitarian movement. Compton Rickett rightly remarks that Dickens 'proved to be that rare type of reformer who could moralise with a smile on his lips, and mix his sermonic powders in such excellent jam, that his contemporaries did not realize for a while that he was doctoring them for their good.' Dickens emerges as a writer with a purpose, the purpose of relieving the sufferings of the poor from various forces which are inimical to them. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that humanitarianism is the keynote of his work. As a humanitarian, Dickens always pleads
for tolerance, kindness, love and order.

Dickens's humanitarianism may be related to his Christian morality. The Bible is drawn on more than any other source.

... his morality is the Christian morality, but in spite of his Anglican upbringing, he was essentially a Bible-Christian, as he took care to make plain when writing his will. In any case he cannot properly be described as a religious man. He 'believed', undoubtedly, but religious in the devotional sense does not seem to have entered much into his thoughts. Where he is Christian is in his quasi-instinctive siding with the oppressed against the oppressors. As a matter of course he is on the side of the underdog, always and everywhere.

This is true because Dickens is less interested in problems of doctrine and theology than in touching the religious consciousness of a vast reading public. He does not believe in ritualistic religion. Like William Blake, he condemns what he considers as a false religion which imposes upon the innocent the traditional doctrine of the depravity of human nature. 'His religion is always oriented towards society and social action.' The religious dimension of Pickwick Papers is to be found in Dickens affirming the value of innocent benevolence exploited mainly in the character of Pickwick. The novel is based on a cheerful and optimistic view of human nature rather than an characteristic evangelical tenets. In Oliver Twist, Dickens
expresses the belief that, at the last, acts of individual love, sympathy and good will may provide for the suffering poor. It is by means of a charity that goodness ultimately triumphs in the novel. The main purpose of the novel is to reveal the sufferings of the unknown poor, to overturn prevailing attitudes to their relief, and elicit public sympathy and charity on their behalf. In Barnaby Rudge, Dickens expresses his hatred of religious intolerance by presenting the horrors of the Gordon riots and urges the need for a positive counteracting force of goodwill based on reason and common sense. Dickens does not concern himself with the theological or institutional features of Christmas, with the Incarnation, or Church attendance. In Pickwick Papers and Christmas Carol, Christmas is described as a happy occasion when friends meet, exchange greetings and spend their time in music and dance. To Dickens, Christmas seems to have had a purely social rather than a religious value, an occasion for social intercourse rather than religious or spiritual experience. Norris Pope points out that Dickens's religious outlook was shaped by 'the staunchly Protestant conviction that religion was a matter of individual conscience, not something that depended significantly upon ritual, ecclesiastical authority, or abstruse theology.' In orthodox Christian terms, there
is much that is missing in his novels. The role of the priest and the church is minimal and certain kinds of Chapel-going and sermonising are typically represented as ludicrous and reprehensible. However, Angus Wilson claims that Dickens is essentially a Christian and he tries to trace the Christian elements in his novels.

He comments:

He is Christian not merely in the formal sense of the word; in profound ways the Christian religion makes sense of his work.9

Dickens says in one of his letters:

With a deep sense of my great responsibility always upon me when I exercise my art, one of my most constant and most earnest endeavours has been to exhibit in all my good people some faint reflections of the teachings of our great Master, and unostentatiously to lead the reader up to these teachings as the great source of all moral goodness. All my strongest illustrations are derived from the New Testament; all my good people are humble, charitable, faithful, and forgiving ...10

Dr. Walder offers a judicious and informed exploration of Dickens's obsessive themes, from the 'fall' of innocence in Pickwick Papers, to the search for a religious 'answer' in Little Dorrit. He shows in Dickens and Religion that Dickens's beliefs are a pervasive and deeply felt presence in his works. He concludes: Dickens's religion was personal and modest.11
Though one can find the influences of the New Treatment on him, he is not a religious novelist; nor are any of his novels primarily religious in intention or effect. Also, he is not a philosopher and in his work he seems to be not perplexed by religious or philosophical theories. According to David Masson, 'the philosophy of Dickens certainly is the professed philosophy of kindliness, of a genial interest in all things great and small, of a bright English joyousness, and a sunny universal benevolence'\textsuperscript{12}. Comparing Dickens with Thackeray, he says that the philosophy of Dickens is "Anti-puritanism" and that of Thackeray is "Anti-Snobbism."\textsuperscript{13} Whatever practice, institution, or mode of thinking is adverse, in Dickens's view, to natural enjoyment and festivity, against that he makes his attack. While Thackeray does not concern himself with the social anomalies or abuses, Dickens is "singularly aggressive and opinionative."\textsuperscript{14} There is scarcely a social question which he has not touched upon; and there are few novels of his in which he has not blended the functions of a social critic with those of the artist.

As a thinker Dickens does not seem to be good at the theoretical implications of issues or at organising his own ideas into a systematic order. "He
was not a conscious proto-Marxist, and was in no way drawn towards socialism." 15 Dickens seems to have gained from Carlyle the concept of revolt and revolution as an elemental upsurge of the oppressed. He criticises the mid-Victorian industrialism only from moralistic or humanistic point of view. He holds firmly to the radical notion that human nature is essentially good and is, when freed from encumberances of stupid and inhuman restraints, capable of betterment. He makes it clear that, in his view, it is intolerable that the human spirit, essentially good, should be warped and twisted by institutions that are heartless or passions which are inhuman. In this sense he seems to be didactic and a preacher. Usually, to point and illustrate his main theme, Dickens selects some social evil in need of reform, and attacks it with indignation. According to Jack Lindsay, Dickens is a writer who "gives full expression to the human forces caught up in the throes of national development, moving powerfully from folk-levels to the resolving and unifying levels of socialism, and, in between, defining all the complex conflicts of love and fear, dissociation and integration." 16 Dickens always regarded charitable social work as an essential duty. He did not pay much attention to the enormous set of antagonisms heavy industry had created, the impersonal
relations between capital and labour, and the local
and national problems posed by the new industrial
conurbations. Commenting on this aspect of Dickens
Cazamian says:

His background had given him 'petit-
bourgeois' habits of mind, and his
social ideas fell naturally into
simple patterns: a better, physically
and mentally fitter police force,
with a more paternalistic outlook;
higher wages for white and blue-collar
workers, employers, masters, and
wealthy patrons showing more goodwill
to employees, apprentices, and humble
shop-keepers. The public and private
practice of charity would re-establish
a just social order as alms-giving and
kindness relieved distress, and the
sewer of vices cloaked by decent
officialdom was cleansed.17

These tendencies continued to develop throughout his
youth and into maturity, as unreconciled parallel growths.
He was opposed to conservatism and once wrote to Forster:
'By Jove! how radical I am getting.'18

Dickens's interest in the social reforms is
exerted purely from a humanitarian view point. He
wrote letters to the Press protesting against capital
punishment and public executions, and pleading for more
humane prison conditions. He was frequently invited
to contest Parliamentary elections but he always declined
the offer. Parliament, he remarked in one letter, was
'just the dreariest failure and nuisance that ever bothered this much-bothered world', and to another correspondent he wrote: 'I have thoroughly satisfied myself .... that I can be far more usefully and independently employed in my chosen sphere of action that I can hope to be in the House of Commons; and I believe that no consideration would induce me to become a member of that extraordinary assembly.'

Dickens believed, or was interested, solely in the prospect of direct reform offered through the approach of individuals to individuals; and he lent the weight of his words and voice only to societies which had such short-term practical objects. Dickens's radicalism is of "a very curious kind." He was opposed to the existing order of society, in the sense that he saw injustices committed, laws administered harshly, and all sorts of social miseries tacitly allowed to exist; but he was not opposed to the existing order in the sense of wishing to reform it through the parliament, or to overthrow it by extra-parliamentary means. Anthony Trollope confirms this:

I never heard any man call Dickens a radical; but if any man ever was so, he was a radical at heart, — believing entirely in the people, writing for them, speaking for them, and always desirous to take their
Part as against some undescribed and indiscernible tyrant, who to his mind loomed large as an official rather than as an aristocratic despot.\textsuperscript{21}

In fact, Dickens's criticism of society is not based on the intellectual understanding and rational condemnation, but on moral feeling.

*Sketches by Boz* contains hints of radical feeling in the London and Parish sketches, and *Pickwick Papers* in the parliamentary and prison scenes. After he had seen the miserable lives of workers in cotton mills in 1838, he wrote: 'I mean to strike the heaviest blow in my power for these unfortunate creatures.'\textsuperscript{22} According to Julian Symons, Dickens's radicalism is a personal faith and this faith enabled him to keep some kind of grip on external events. A close reading of the novels of Dickens reveals that Dickens does not wish to change the whole structure of society, by revolution or by legislation. Dickens the social reformer alienated no one, for the aid of reformism is to preserve the system, not to transform it in any fundamental way. His novels show a division between the society he rejected and the humanity he believed in, and that humanity, in different ways, is somehow preserved, frozen, shut off and saved from the social pressure. Dickens's humanitarianism reveals a profound and just perception of social ills, based on his intuition and sympathy.

A.E. Dyson is of the opinion that Dickens is close to Marx and Engels in his analysis of England's social
situation, but he is far from sharing their views of its root causes or its political cure. Though the nineteenth century economic developments put a new edge on the debate about money, the debate itself was not new. According to St. Paul the love of money is the root of all evil and Dickens is much closer to St. Paul than he is to Marx. According to the communists, exploitation is part and parcel of capitalism; to St. Paul it is the inborn curse of human nature since the fall. St. Paul finds the root of all evil not in money itself but in the love of money, and Dickens surely concurs with this. Dickens emphasises this truth in all his novels.

In the year when Dombey and Son was being written (1848), the Communist Manifesto, an analysis of capitalism came into its first obscure existence. Though Marx and Dickens lived in the same city at that time, it was strange that they had no acquaintance with each other. Dickens, like nearly all of his contemporaries, did not know the Manifesto, but many aspects of it would have interested him not the least, the analysis of the new railways as a revolutionary force. Railways bring the two worlds of rich and poor face to face with one another (Mr. Dombey travels to Leamington), and offer new possibilities of mobilisation for the poor. It is of particular interest to note how the darkness in Mr. Dombey's mind is projected on to the railway through the very rhythms in which Dickens creates his journey, so that even the landscape of squalor which he responds to almost
as a personal insult seems to be spun out of himself. The railway is a destroyer elsewhere in *Dombey and Son*, it tear down Stagg's Gardens, and it kills Carker after turning to nightmare in his guilty thoughts. Shaw, in applauding Dickens as a revolutionary, says that he had probably never heard of Marx: it would be more to the point to say that there was no sign in his novels; of any reading of serious economics or philosophy, except that of Carlyle.

In the introduction he wrote to *Great Expectations* in 1937, Shaw made explicit the revolutionary implications of Dickens's work.

Dickens never regarded himself a revolutionist, though he certainly was one... The difference between a revolutionist and what Marx called a bourgeois is that the bourgeois regards the existing social order as the permanent and natural order of human society, needing reforms now and then and here and there, but essentially good and sane and right and respectable and proper and everlasting. To the revolutionist it is transitory, mistaken, objectionable, and pathological: a social disease to be cured, not to be endured... Undoubtedly Marx was a revolutionist, but it cannot be said of Dickens: Ideologically, the two men were different. Marx was uncompromising on the question of the proletarian revolution; Dickens on the other hand, his humanitarianism notwithstanding, was equally uncompromising in his
opposition to any revolution by the proletariat. In other words, Marx wanted a structural revolution, but Dickens wanted a conversion of heart among the bourgeoisie. Dickens in his novels as well as his speeches and journal articles expressed himself against revolutionary methods as a political means to an end. James M. Brown does not consider Dickens either revolutionist or a socialist writer. According to James M. Brown Dickens's radicalism is exacerbated by the fact that his social criticism is in the form of a general vision of society rather than concrete or constructive political proposals for social change. Dickens has often been viewed as a democrat, mainly on account of his famous speech to the Midland Institute at Birmingham, September 1869.

I will now discharge my conscience of my political creed, which is contained in two articles, and has no reference to any party or persons. My faith in the people governing is, on the whole, infinitesimal; my faith in the People governed is, on the whole illimitable... 25

James M. Brown holds the view that Dickens was no embryonic socialist, and his view of the working class owes more to Carlyle than to Marx. Carlyle has portrayed the working class as a 'dumb inarticulate' mass crying out for good paternalistic leadership. The working class is often portrayed by Dickens as a dehumanised object or animal in need of strong control and management. In Bleak House, Jo and his like are described as 'blind Oxen', badly guided
and sorely goaded, but liable to do an injury to themselves and to innocent others if they unwisely attempt to find their own way. Also, Dickens's portrayal of the mob in *Barnaby Rudge* and later in *A Tale of Two Cities* testifies to this Carlyean inspired hatred of revolutionary means.

Dickens always adheres to middle-class standards of delicacy and propriety in presenting his material. He follows the convention of the optimistic close ending which satisfied the implicit demands of his middle-class reading public. It must be emphasised that the closed ending is not an accidental aspect of the Victorian novel form but is directly related to the expectations and demands of a middle-class reading public, which wished to see the virtues of hero and heroine rewarded, celebrated, and hence legitimised through a happy ending of love, marriage, and children. Humphry House says, "He (Dickens) was not a Benthamite or Philosophical Radical or Chartist or Owenite or Christian Socialist or Young Englander, nor did he start a Dickens Party."²⁶ According to Gold, Dickens was rather a moralist. Humphrey House holds the view that the moralist-radical might be a visionary closer in some ways to Blake than to Marx. The universal sympathy and pleasure evoked by Dickens's world may depend most on this persistent and profound human desire for the personal and social harmony.
At first glance Dickens's morality looks like the Christian liberalism that so many critics have found it to be, but in reality his is a much more penetrating analysis of human dilemmas. All evils and inhumane institutions are according to Dickens part of an endless cycle of sin and error which nothing short of a personal revolution can change. "Dickens's career is an artistic struggle to realize in fiction the images of personal redemption, the only hope for a more humane society. The novels are never celebrations of mindless goodness. They are explorations of the uses to be made of the good that is part of the human make-up. Dickens shows in his novels that only the 'humanity of heart' can alter the evils of exploitation and dehumanization. To cite an example, isolated, beaten and humiliated, Oliver is saved from suicide only by the exclusion of the means. But this temerity does produce a change and in the world of the workhouse all change is for the better. Dickens demonstrates through his novels the power of evil and evildoers as also of goodmen and humanity in contrastive juxtapositions. Evil is first analysed and examined in every phase and mode, in all its manifestations. Thereafter the means to eschew evil, to attain the vision of human beauty and dignity as well as the means to acquire the 'humanity of heart' increasingly figure in the novels. The exploration of the human confusion and the means for its
resolution are the themes of Dickens's work. In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens conveys images of redemption. He does this by humanizing the suffering of evil, the learning of hate the blindness of indifference, and the transforming powers of love. It is evident that what Dickens has at heart is not any economic conception like Marx's labour theory of value, but a feeling of the human value of human beings. The growing intensity of Dickens's attempt to force art into the shape of an apprehensible vision of redemption and of human existential possibility for meaning is clearly discernible in *A Tale of Two Cities*. "Here history is rendered into myth, psychology is given profoundly moral implications and theology is converted by metaphor into humanism". Dickens seems to emerge in his novels as a moralist, supported by a religious faith. The tradition of his English Christianity is powerful in giving shape to his vision. As a humanist, however, Dickens absorbs and reshapes his religious awareness into something quite different from an orthodox theology or a codeified ritual practice. It is a religious impulse that tries to distil the humanistic spirit of Christianity and breathe into it the yearning of the fiction for a more humane world. Christ becomes for Dickens the perfect man. Edgar Johnson remarks:

Not primarily a systematic thinker, but a man of feeling, intuitive and emotional, Dickens had nevertheless a sharp intelligence which pierced through the complexities of
the social scene to a comprehension of its shocking realities that was essentially true. His instinctive sympathy with the fruitful and creative enabled him to see how the generous potentialities of human nature were crippled, and he felt his way step by step to a realization of the forces that blighted men’s health and happiness. 30

Just as the humanitarian movement inspired Dickens to take up the cause of the down-trodden in his novels and treat them with utmost sympathy, the 'thirties movement' inspired Anand to take up the causes of the outcasts in his novels and plead for them. Both Dickens and Anand reveal their common concern for the socially weak in their novels by protesting against social evils to protect the interests of the oppressed. Both these writers value the human dignity and profess humanism in their novels. The "Comprehensive historical humanism" of Anand is a synthesis of both Western and Eastern thoughts. During his stay in London between 1924 and 1945, nearly for twenty one years, Anand came under numerous literary, political and social influences. A closer look at the 'thirties movement' will help us to comprehend the basic principles of Anand's political philosophy. The movement began with the publication of Micheal Robert's anthologies, New Signatures (1932) and New Century (1933) which brought Auden, Spender, Dav Lewis, Isherwood and Edward Upward together for the first time. These writers
formed the core of a wider movement in England which in turn saw itself as part of an international brotherhood of writers extending from Europe across the U.S.A. to the awakening countries of Asia. Under the impact of this movement, many writers turned towards Marxism. They had a desire to express a 'new humanism, a new belief in brotherhood and the value of the life of every single breathing man and woman'. These writers were concerned with the attacks in Germany and Austria on democratic and working class rights, the suppression of freedom of thought and the drive against culture in these countries. They opposed Fascism and decided to unite all the like-minded writers and make them protest against these evils in their works. These writers were conscious of their role in the world-wide movement. Christopher Caudwell appealed to the writers to commit themselves to the working class world and to make the class struggle their central subject. Marxism was slowly gaining ground among these writers. That gave rise to unprecedented amount of extra-literary activity among these writers. A theatre under the name of the 'New Country' was established and this group staged plays at the Group Theatre. American and Russian plays with the revolutionary themes in support of the proletariat were enacted in the Unity Theatre. Anand was very much involved in the theatre movement. His unpublished play *Famine* was staged and the amount £ 20,000 thus collected was donated for the famine relief
work in India. A Leftist Book Club was founded in 1936 by Victor Gollancz which imparted anti-Fascist political education. New Left wing magazines such as Fact, Our Time, Left Review and New Writing became very popular. Also, conferences were organized to discuss the role of writers in the struggle for a new society. Anand actively took part in all these activities right through the decade. He contributed articles and reviews in Left Review. Impressed by the Marxian ideology, he edited the letters of Marx on India and they were published in the Labour Book Service. He participated in the International Writer's Conference against Fascism in Madrid in 1935. He was involved in the formation of the Progressive Writer's Association in London in the same year and drafted the Manifesto of the association. He shared many of his assumptions about literature with the contemporary English Marxist writers. Like all Marxists, he agreed that there should be a link between history and the novel. R.D.Charques and Henderson stressed the role of literature in changing men and society. Anand agreed with them and emphasised the revolutionary aspect of art. He was impressed by the idea of founding a new society or a new world and decided to write novels to awaken the reading public. William Packam rightly points out that Anand's Marxism, like Fox's, always lay within the humane tradition. The work of the writers of the 'thirties
'movement' is a form of social realism which concentrates on the description of human misery. Anand's works are primarily a literature of protest under the influence of this movement. An important influence on Anand at that period is the Marxist creed. He believed that the human values underlying Marxism were the most important, 'that among the fundamental values the dignity of man is the highest'. Anand is very much concerned with the dignity of man in his novels and he revolts against the caste-ridden society for its ill-treatment of the poor in the name of caste and religion. Anand acknowledges the influence of Marxism on him but states that he is not a communist. He admits that among many philosophers, Marx is one who has influenced him most. This is because Anand considers Marx first and foremost a humanist.

Anand's faith in humanism has evolved out of his profound study of the thoughts of the East and the West. His Indian upbringing and familiarity with India's cultural heritage, the study of Western philosophy at University College, London, under Professor G. Dawes Hicks, the famous Kantian scholar, who belonged to the realist school in contemporary British philosophy and above all, the reading of Karl Marx's *Das Capital* have combined to reveal to Anand "a new conception of the role of man, an emphasis on the importance of human being as such, a profound respect for man, love for him and faith in his
He declares: 'I believe, first and foremost, in human beings, in man, in the whole man.' The humanism of Anand does not rest on a divine sanction, as does the mystical humanism of Gandhiji. It has its faith in the creative imagination and unconquerable spirit of man and is possible only through socialism, for socialism alone can restore economic and political freedom and thus help the growth of a full man. "The deepest socialism is the only basis for perfecting the deepest human personality." Anand believes that this new humanism alone can restore order and decency in our world. His faith in humanism has also made him optimistic about the future of mankind. He is confident that nothing can wipe off humanity from the earth. The human heart is bound to survive all the calamities. Puran Singh in The Big Heart echoes this view:

Actually, no one can wipe out the whole of humanity. Only, certain men can destroy the will of other men by piling terror upon terror... Anand elaborates on his humanism in his book, Is There a Contemporary Indian Civilization? He gives in fact a credo of his humanism:

1. This humanism places man in the centre of all things.
2. This humanism believes that matter precedes mind in any metaphysical attitude towards the universe.
3. This humanism believes that man is an evolutionary product of the matter of which he is part.
4. This humanism, which puts man in the centre of the Universe, believes that human beings possess the potential power to understand many problems, hitherto undreamt of, both in the (sic) relation to themselves and to nature.

5. This humanism believes, in opposition to all theories of fatalistic acceptance of God, predestination and determinism, that human beings, conditioned by man's history, possess genuine freedom of creative choice and action.

6. This humanism believes in an ethic which is based on human psychology and human values, in this earthly existence, achieved through the relations of persons and persons, and persons of and society.

7. This humanism believes that the individual attains full manhood by integrating his personal satisfactions and continuous creative self-development through significant creative work with the hand, the heart and the brain...

8. This humanism believes in the wide and deepest possible development of creative art and the awareness of beauty.

9. This humanism believes in the brotherhood of man through the affirmations of love.

10. This humanism believes in the application of imagination, reason and scientific method in all human undertakings, making room for the understanding of different instincts and emotions.
11. This humanism believes in the constant questioning of the basic assumptions and convictions of inventive science, employing, throughout, human test based on moral values.

12. This humanism wishes to connect itself to international humanism, so that, in spite of differences, a comprehensive universalist outlook may prevail. The last one is significant because it shows Anand's understanding of international humanism and his desire to have a comprehensive universalist outlook. He states in *Prolegomena to a New Humanism*:

.. by humanism I do not mean anything more or less than what it has always meant, illumination or enlightenment in the interests of man, true to his highest nature and his noblest vision...  

G.S. Balarama Gupta finds in Anand's humanism the Protagorean concept of man as the measure of all things. Also, G.S. Balarama Gupta notices in Anand's thoughts an Aristotelian concern for man's well-being, a Renaissance ambition to build a glorious civilization and the rejection of the supernatural shown by the naturalistic humanists. In *Is There a Contemporary Indian Civilization?*, Anand traces the Indian humanistic values through Buddha, the mediaeval Hindu saints, Islam, Guru Nanak, Rammohan Roy, M.N. Roy and Jawarharlal Nehru. To a question raised by Prof. P.K. Rajan regarding the humanism in his novels which is marked by a spiritual-
metaphysical lyrical quality on the one hand and a
cultivated, revolutionary, socialist, Marxist comprehension
of reality on the other, Anand replies:

The term 'humanism', as you know, falsifies
the very idea of that original inspiration
of sympathy or empathy which has been
summarised and made abstract in that word.
I think humanness is a better word, as it
has some relation to human realities. The
word 'humanism' is therefore only tolerable,
as it is not as rigid as the other isms of
the world. I would rather use the term
'philosophy of the human person' than the
word 'humanism'.

Anand's belief in human beings, in Man, in the whole man
has led him to portray the miserable life of untouchables,
coolies, peasants, poor villagers and the outcasts of the
society to arouse the compassion of the Indian
intelligentsia to work for the alleviation of pain and
its expiation. He selects an outcast like Bakha, a waif
like Munoo, a landless labourer like Gangu as the
protagonists of his novels and unfolds the "drama of their
exploitation." The exploiters of these poor people are
landlords, religious priests, government officials, rich
merchants, English colonists, British tea planters and
factory managers and their agents. Anand points out that
the world is divided between two distinct classes of people;
the poor or the oppressor and the oppressed. He is very
much conscious of the class-structure. Sauda, the Trade
Union leader addresses the coolies of cotton mill in Bombay
There are only two kinds of people in the world: the rich and the poor, and between the two there is no connection. The rich and the powerful, the magnificent and the glorious, whose opulence is built on robbery and theft and open warfare, are honoured and admired by the whole world and by themselves. You, the poor and the humble, you the meek and the gentle, wretches that you are, swindled out of your rights, and broken in body and soul, you are respected by no one, and you do not respect yourselves.41

Reggie Hunt, Jimmie Thomas, Harbans Singh, Pundit Kalinath, the Sikh priest Mahant Nandgir and the Prince Victor belong to this group of exploiters. The inter-connection between the greedy landlords of the village and the wicked religious priests worsens the situation. Lalu in The Village, warns his brother Dayal Singh against such men:

And beware of a religious teacher who in greed is so gluttonous that he will suck the blood of the poorest...42

Shocked by the ignorance and the superstitious belief of the poor villagers Ananta in The Big Heart says:

A well-fed man needs religion. 'Mahashaji, it is a question of the belly! The soul is with us all the time, because we are ourselves...43

Dr. Mahindra expresses similar view:

Our Dharma is feeding the Brahmins and paying interest to Zanias. And ill-treating the untouchables. And Vinoba can convert a good man here and a good man there. And some tigers may learn to eat vegetables. But can you tell me of how many sons of ministers have given away their land to the poor at the bidding of Vinoba?..... And how many have become shareholders of the Ram Raj, who have dividends for once following Gandhi and going to jail?44
Anand is a non-believer in God. He frankly admits this in 'why I write':

My first real essay was a letter to God Almighty, asking him why he had caused the death of my little cousin Kaushalya, at the age of nine, by inflicting on her the dread disease of lungs, when she had not done anything bad. But God did not answer my protest. So I have tended to regard Him, since then, as the enemy of mankind.  

He does not believe in any institutionalized religion. He says:

..like Tolstoy, I would like to leave the beliefs of people to their private conscience, collaborating with them for certain secular ends, without objecting to their pet religions.  

He makes his position clear to Balarama Gupta

..I wanted grace in human relations without the belief in god, but did not want to destroy contemplativeness.  

These statements of Anand reveal that he is not a religious humanist but an atheist humanist. Naturally his interest in man — with his strengths and weaknesses, his struggles and defeats or triumphs — is more important for him than a construction of any regular, systematic philosophy about him. He says that he does not write tracts on humanism. As Harish Raizada points out, human dignity occupies a very important place in Anand's scheme of ethical values and conduct.
The protagonists of Anand attach a high value to their dignity as men, as individuals and resent the indignities inflicted on them by their exploiters. Bakha tells his father:

They think we are mere dirt, because we clean their dirt.49

When Munoo realizes that his dignity is at stake at every place, he feels sad and lonely.

He realised finally his position in the world. He was to be a slave, a servant who should do the work, all the odd jobs, someone to be abused, even beaten... He felt sad, lonely.50

Lal Singh is determined to fight against the landlords by organizing the peasants. He has faith in human beings and believes in transforming the society. He says:

...Now is the time to change the world, to fight for life and happiness; now is the time to sing, Comrade, brave songs of the struggle.51

Ananta tells Janki:

And we will try to take things in hand as soon as we can get in, then form a trade union and prepare for the Revolution.52

With their zest for life, belief in fighting for social justice, faith in humanism, optimism, universal brotherhood and the desire to create an egalitarian society, both Lal and Ananta are modern in their outlook and approach like their creator.
Anand holds the view that Man is controlled or shaped by society, especially by his heredity and environment. Man strives hard to bring about a change in his destiny and consequently suffers a lot. But his sufferings, if presented by the novelist artistically and sincerely arouse 'Karuna' — 'aesthetic sympathy' in the reader. Sharma points out that Anand uses the word 'karuna' or compassion for catharsis. Anand believes that the novel is cathartic in its effect. He says:

I realise that the catharsis of a book, lies ultimately in the pity, the compassion and understanding of an artist and not in his partiality.

Anand believes that Art is for life's sake and for the sake of man's progress and literature should be used as a means of alleviating the sufferings of fellow human beings. He says:

If this conception of the function of art in society approximates to the real needs of people in our time, then the artist is a revolutionary in the true sense... the artist stands as an inspiring force behind all those men and women who face the tasks of reconstructing the future society out of the shambles of a near prehistoric present.

Anand states in his article, 'Why I write' that his compulsion to pursue the truth of human relations becomes the mission of his life. He says:

As a writer I have tried to drink from the sources of love in our people, specially poor people, and to give them of my own exuberant passion, through the burning and melting that goes on inside me.
Anand considers literature and art as the instruments of humanism. Anand seems to use the novel for the distillation of his social and political ideas; and his characters mostly work out to be little more than elucidators and amplifiers. R.K. Kaushik remarks that "a systematic and manifest radicalism runs through his characters. —Dr Shankar, Ananta, Dhooli Singh, Lal Singh, De La Havre, Dr Mahindra, Sirshar, Sauda Sahib and others copiously demonstrates the nature of Anand's humanism.60 S.C. Harrex considers Anand a serious and moral writer. He says:

His viewpoint, or ethical base, is cosmopolitan-Indian, anti-Brahmin, this rather other world oriented. 61

He points out that Anand's theory of fiction is influenced by his exposure to Western ideas but the subject of his fiction is India as experienced by the Indian.

"he saw the core problem of India to be the crushing weight of the allegedly 'dead myth' of 'neo-Hinduism' and Vedantic Absolutism, he counter-reacted at first by expressing himself in a fictional form derived from Western literary theory rather than traditional Indian sources. 62

S.C. Harrex believes that in his quest for form Anand has "Indianised a Western materialist structure derived largely from Marx and has tried to find for this structure, applied to Indian conditions, an alternative to the social order realist mode of expression which, in the West, has been the dominant methodology of fiction". 63 Anand's belief
in the necessity of class-war derives from the impact of Marxism. Riemenschneider points out that Anand illustrates in *The Village* Marx's definition of labour as an act of man's self-realization in a most convincing manner. Lal Singh is digging the ditch deeper through which water from the irrigation system is flowing on to his family's fields. Riemenschneider remarks:

Anand depicting man at work, does not only succeed in conveying a Marxian understanding of the relationship between man and nature and man and society as a dialectic relationship, he does not only illustrate the central meaning of work for man, but he also succeeds in presenting these ideas through the medium of literature in an aesthetically convincing manner by using the individual case to illustrate the essential nature of man.

Anand acknowledges his indebtedness to Marx thus:

I believe Marx supplies a good yardstick for history and his basic position 'Means of Production determine consciousness' is correct.

In a letter written to the writer of this dissertation Anand states that he is a humanist first. G.S. Balarama Gupta rightly points out:

Anand's humanism places man in the centre of all things. It also believes in the ethical equality of all men. Therefore, it cannot sanction any distinction between men, say divisions of caste, creed, or race which are positive obstacles for human beings to grow to their full height and dignity... He firmly believes that one of the most urgent needs of mankind today is to infuse love and tenderness into the hearts of all men.
Referring to the philosophy of Anand G.S. Balarama Gupta writes:

Anand's philosophy is an inveterate enemy of Fascism, feudalism, imperialism, and all other similar tendencies which come in the way of man's efforts to achieve freedom. It believe in democracy and socialism, and the peaceful co-existence of all nations.\(^{67}\)

Anand's humanism is diametrically opposed to Vedanta and he is mainly in the tradition of scientific humanism. A close study of his novels reveals that Anand sticks to his humanistic values. He does not deal with the supernatural powers but with ordinary human beings highlighting their sorrows and sufferings in the material world. He exposes the evils of the caste-ridden society and takes up the cause of the down-trodden. Both *Untouchable* and *The Road* reveal the optimistic humanism of Anand. By presenting the miseries of the outcasts, he suggests that they deserve a better deal. This is possible only when men give up the age-old belief in caste and 'karma' and love all their fellowmen. While condemning the evils of capitalism, Anand expresses his sympathy for the proletariat in *Coolie* and *The Two Leaves and a Bud*. Anand declares a war against the ruthless landlords, factory owners and the religious priests who are hypocrites in the *Village Trilogy*. Anand emphasises the need for discarding the traditional
orthodoxy or communal chauvinism in the two novels *Big Heart* and *Death of a Hero*. Women are equal and so they are to be treated on an equal footing with men and this is one of the principal tenets of Anand's humanism. This forms the core of *Old Woman and the Cow*. The principal tenet of humanism that inspires *Lament on the Death of a Master of Arts* is Anand's belief that modern education is by and large, a failure. His condemnation of poverty and cruelty as dehumanising forces, his denunciation of religion reduced to mere rituals, and superstitious belief are the other humanist ideas present in the novel. In *Seven Ages of Man* Anand shows how he gradually developed certain convictions which actually form the various tenets of his humanism. Being an autobiographical novel, it gives us a better insight into the several incidents which impinged on the consciousness of Anand as a boy and sowed in him the seeds of humanist faith. Like *Seven Summers*, *Morning Face* and the *Bubble* are autobiographical novels and they help us understand how Anand has come to believe in the efficacy of humanism as a philosophy. It is to be noted that Anand, like Lawrence, Eric Gill and Gorky belongs to the group of writers whose writings are inspired by a mission. Like them he writes to reveal man to himself so that he can discover his potentialities as well as limitations, and in this awareness, makes life a dedicated struggle aimed at
the realisation of happiness and prosperity for mankind as a whole. It is quite obvious that Anand's fiction derives much meaning and depth by his commitment to the humanist philosophy which centres on man. Both Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand are primarily social reformers and champions of the down-trodden because of their humanistic vision. They may have differences in their humanistic approaches. But basically they are humanists. Though Dickens does not proclaim himself a humanist, he is certainly a humanist like Mulk Raj Anand, for his philosophy is governed by principles such as natural justice, love, sympathy, charity, benevolence and brotherhood. All the novels of Dickens deal with heart and humanity and affection as well. Commenting on these aspects in the novels of Dickens, Gold remarks:

Dickens is a moralist, supported by a religious faith. The tradition of his English Christianity is powerful in giving shape to his vision. As a humanist, however, Dickens absorbs and reshapes his religious awareness into something quite different from an orthodox theology or a codified ritual practice. It is a religious impulse that tries to distill the humanistic spirit of Christianity and breathe it into the yearning of the fiction for a more humane world.

Dickens's humanism is the result of his christian morality. In his novels Dickens shows love, sympathy and charity as
the redeeming forces. G. S. Balarama Gupta commenting on the humanistic aspect of Dickens's novels says: "..like Anand, Dickens was a humanist who championed the cause of the poor, the down-trodden, and the under-privileged." It is, by and large, the destiny of man that forms the central concern in the novels of both Dickens and Anand. This explains the universal appeal of their novels. They, as humanists, belong to that class of writers who are inspired by a mission—'a tireless crusade against falsity and hypocrisy, cruelty and insensitivity, and a defence of love and compassion, and all that goes to make man's life happier and nobler.'

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NOTES


2 G.S. Balarama Gupta, A Study of the Fiction in Humanist Perspective, p. 156.


11 Ibid., p. 208.

12 David Mason, Dickens and Thackeray', The Dickens Critics, p. 32.

13 Ibid., p. 33.

14 Ibid., p. 33.

16 Jack Lindsay, 'Final Judgment', *The Dickens Critics*, p.234.

17 Louis Cazamian, *The Social Novel in England*, p.120.


19 Ibid., p.17. (quoted)

20 Ibid., p.32.


22 Quoted by Julian Symons, *Charles Dickens*, p.35.


29 Ibid., p.231.


34 Ibid., p.140

35 Ibid., p.137

36 Ibid., p.155

37 Mulk Raj Anand, The Big Heart, p.87.


39 Mulk Raj Anand, Prolegomena to a New Humanism, Lines Written to an Indian Air (Bombay, 1949) p.7.


41 Mulk Raj Anand, Coolie, p.265.


43 Mulk Raj Anand, The Big Heart, p.185.


49 Mulk Raj Anand, Untouchable, p.87.


53 K.K. Sharma, Perspectives on Mulk Raj Anand, p. xii.

54 Ibid., pp.xiii.

55 K.K. Sharma, Perspectives on Mulk Raj Anand, p. xii.

56 Mulk Raj Anand, Two Leaves and a Bud, Preface (1951).


58 Ibid., p.134.


63 Ibid., pp.159-160.


67. Ibid., p. 18.
