CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERS

3.1 Preliminaries

The present chapter focuses on the different characters in the selected novels such as *The Plot Against America*, *Untouchable*, *Coolie* and *Everyman*. In this chapter, the researcher attempts to analyze the characters such as major male and female characters and minor male and female characters in the selected novels. The characters are studied from social, religious, racial, and realistic points of view to justify the actual motive of the writers. An attempt is also made to study the characters from literary viewpoints such as round characters, flat characters, main characters, subordinate characters, etc. The aim of this chapter is to study the characters’ relationship with one another, their social contribution, duties, optimistic and pessimistic attitudes. It focuses on characters’ cooperation and non-cooperation with other characters, their close association and disassociation with the same race or caste. This chapter examines the characters’ supportive roles and the change they want to bring in their respective societies.

3.2 Characterization

E.M. Forster (1879-1970) as a critic of novels is primarily known for his division of characters into ‘flat’ and ‘round’. Forster’s terms have
a wide acceptance among critics. Forster in Abraham M.H (1993) says:

“A flat character is built around a single idea or quality and is presented without much detail, and therefore, can be fairly, adequately described in a single phrase or sentence. A round character is a complex in temperament and motivation and is presented with subtle particularity; such a character therefore is difficult to describe with any adequacy as a person in real life, and like real person is capable of surprising us.” (p.24)

Edwin Muir in his book The Structure of the Novel (1928), remarks that the characters in the novel are known for their unchanged ability and completeness from the beginning itself. He argues in the defence of unchanging characters that Forster calls ‘flats’. Muir argues in Dnyate Ramesh (1996):

“Why indeed should not characters be flat? The only answer to this is that the present taste in criticism prefers round characters. The taste of the next generation may prefer flat, for all we know. (p.25)

The above statement suggests that it is the incorrigibility and changelessness of the flat characters that constitute the stark reality in the novel. Mary McCarthy (1962) underlines the story of flat characters, while making the most significant although rather controversial comment on Forster. She says:
“The principle of growth in human being is as real. Of course, (though possibly not so common) as the principle of eternity or inertia represented by the comic.” (p.74)

W.J. Harvey (1965) covers a wide range of characters and groups them into different categories underlining their nature and purpose in the novel. According to him, the most important are the protagonists.

The characters are known as background characters. The rustic characters represent the voices of the community rather than individualized traits. These characters are given a moment of intensity and generally have anonymous existence. The fickle characters certainly are more individualized than the background characters and serve a specific function in the novel. Dnyate Ramesh (1996) says that “flat” characters and have equally significant existence. He says:

“To suggest that one order of characterization is better than another is folly. To realize that differences exist is the beginning of wisdom.’’ (p.161)

The findings are greatly relevant in the context of Mulk Raj Anand’s characters. These views may be referred to the present study, and it is here that one may think it essential to understand Anand’s concept of human characters since it has pervasive influence upon the entire corpus of the writer’s fiction and occupies the centripetal position in Anand’s novels.

Anand was one of the practising novelists whose ideas, personal convictions and beliefs related to the overall styles of life have an
unmistakable stamp of his creative art. With regard to Anand’s notion of characters in Untouchable and Coolie, he gives preface to social, political and personal aspects of the human beings in his writing. He underlines certain salient features of characters in his novels; the characters are prototypes and moulds. The human race is cast in the mould, which has a permanent existence. The personality alone remains unchanged. The social aspects are reflected with the help of characters. Having a good knowledge of the society and class struggle, Anand himself had experienced evils of the untouchability and social reality in his life. The method of characterization in his novels provokes readers to think about the social, political and religious approaches while studying his characters. It is the general critical consensus that Anand is a remarkable socialist and a gifted caricaturist of the downtrodden. It also registers a vivid note of dissent on account of his unchanging, un-growing, and underdeveloped characters, particularly the protagonists in his novels. Forster’s term ‘flat’ seems to have become a stick for many to beat Anand’s characters.

In short, many of his critics argue that since the novelist fails to delve deeply into the minds of his protagonists like Bakha and Munoo, he seems to be incapable of creating ‘round’ characters and consequently remain a surface delineator of characters. In all fairness to Forster, it may be admitted that his terms, ‘flat’ and ‘round’, have a wider acceptance and a great relevance in the context of characters’ criticism. Likewise, the Forsterean yardstick may be useful to a
certain extent in the case of Anand’s characters and serves as a point of reference in dealing with his characters in their entirety.

There seem to be discrepancies in Forster’s use of his terms. There has always been a general critical consensus that the protagonists in Anand’s novels do not show any perceptible development. Putting it differently, they do not seem to be growing and thus remain unchanged in all appearances. The term ‘unchanged’ is loaded with several implications. Basically, Anand’s characters have been realized through the social ethos and essentially belong to the pre-ordained conscious characters, seem to be accepting their ‘lot’ in life and thus, finally remain immutable when it comes to rebellion, a sure ground to develop and grow from. It has been observed that the rebellious tendencies though expressed as natural human instincts and traits of diversified nature are regarded as social deviations significantly present in Anand’s novels. The rebellious nature of the protagonist never allows them to live satisfying life.

The representation of persons in narrative works include direct methods such as the attribution of qualities in description, commentary and indirect methods of inviting the readers to infer qualities from characters' actions, speech, or appearance. Since E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*, (1927) a distinction has often been made between ‘flat’ characters, which are simple and unchanging, and ‘round’ characters, which are complex and ‘dynamic’ (subject to development), and less predictable.
3.3 Types of Characters

1. **Major or Central**: Major or central characters are vital to the development and resolution of the conflict. In other words, the plot and resolution of conflict revolves around these characters.

2. **Minor**: Minor characters serve to complement the major characters and help move the plot events forward.

3. **Dynamic**: A dynamic character is a person who changes over time, usually as a result of resolving a central conflict or facing the major crisis. Many dynamic characters tend to be central rather than peripheral characters because the resolving conflict is the major part of central characters.

4. **Static**: A static character is someone who does not change over time. His or her personality does not transform or evolve.

5. **Round**: A round character is someone who has a complex personality. He or she is often portrayed as a conflicted and contradictory person.

6. **Flat**: A flat character is opposite of the round character. The literary personality is notable for one kind of personality trait or characteristic.

7. **Stock**: Stock characters are those types of characters who have become conventional or stereotypical through repeated use in particular types of stories. Stock characters are instantly recognizable to readers.
8. **Protagonist:** The protagonist is a central person in the story and is often referred to as a main character in the story. He or she is faced with a conflict that must be resolved. The protagonist may not always be admirable (e.g. an anti hero); nevertheless, he/she must command involvement on the part of the reader, or better yet, empathy.

9. **Antagonist:** The antagonist is the character(s) (or situation) that represents the opposition against which the protagonist must contend. In other words, the antagonist is an obstacle that the protagonist must overcome.

10. **Anti-hero:** A major character, usually the protagonist, who lacks conventional nobility of mind and struggles for values not deemed universally admirable.

11. **Foil:** A foil is any character (usually the antagonist or an important supporting character) whose personal qualities contrast with another character (usually the protagonist). By providing this contrast, we get to know more about other characters.

12. **Symbolic:** A symbolic character is any major or minor character whose very existence represents some major idea or aspect in the novel.

The discussion of the major characters in detail in the four selected novels two each by Mulk Raj Anand and Philip Roth is
essential here taking into account the above stated categories of the characters.

3.4 Major Male Characters

The male characters of Philip Roth and Anand are studied against the backdrop of socio-culture and political realities that existed while the novels were being written. The male characters of both the writers help to develop the plot of the novels.

3.4.1 Herman

Herman is one of the male characters introduced by Roth in *The Plot Against America*. He is the protagonist and the head of the family. Being a father, he fulfils the needs and expectations of the members of his family so that he can teach moral values to his sons Sandy and Philip. His teaching proves useful to them in their lives. Sometimes, he gives an idea of saving money and how to use it properly. This point becomes clearer when Philip says:

“*My parents would give me or Sandy a couple of coins to drop into his collection box, largess, I always thought, dispensed out of kindness so as not to hurt the feelings of a poor old man who, from one year to the next, seemed unable to get it through his head that we’d already had a home land for three generations.*”  
(PAA-p.05)

It becomes clear that Herman is a dutiful father who often teaches morals and importance of money to his sons. He considers the likes
and dislikes of the members his family. When the family goes on a tour to Washington, he asks Sandy and Philip to choose the guide as they wish:

“What do you want? My father said, turning to Sandy and me.

“Well, if it costs too much...” Sandy began.

“Forget the cost”, my father replied. “Do you like this guy or not?” (PAA-p.72)

The statement clarifies that Herman loves his family and takes care of their interests. When Philip first observes the injured leg of Alvin, he is worried but asks his son to take care of himself and advises him to be bold and courageous:

“Here my father took me by the shoulders. “Don’t be afraid,” he said to me. “Don’t be afraid of Alvin and don’t be afraid of his leg. Let him see how you have grown up.” (PAA-p.150)

Roth describes the relationship between the parents and children in the family. The readers easily understand the mild, cooperative and friendly nature of Herman. Sandy’s attitude is abnormal and distanced from the father because he never considers his father’s advice. In the adolescence, the boys characteristically rebel against the maternal constraints. If the father takes longer time to understand and to resolve the issues of his children, there is more complex equation of sympathy and hostility towards the father. Lionel Trilling narrates his own experiences in the following manner. He says on NET:
“In my time, we all were trying to find a release from our father.”

Trilling rightly points out the psychological state of adolescents in the above statement. In The Plot Against America, Roth describes the same attitude of Sandy who rebels against his father and mother. But Herman tries to dominate his son Sandy, who rejects the advice of his father. Sandy says:

“But I can’t listen to you. How can I listen to you when you tell me about ‘millions’ of people? Millions of people are nothing but idiots!” (PAA-p.275)

Thus, Herman faces the rebellious attitude of his own son Sandy, Herman’s dominant nature is one of the prominent characteristics given by Roth in the novel. He tries to suppress Sandy by using the force and restrict his activities, but he tries to rebel against his father. When restrictions are unbearable, Sandy opposes him. He compares his father with Hitler, the dictator. He says:

“You’re a dictator,” Sandy said to him, “You’re a dictator worse than Hitler.” (PAA-p.229)

From the rebellious statement of Sandy, it is clear that he is not interested in the advice of his father. However, as a husband, Herman performs his duties very well. He is a good husband and helps his wife. He also follows her advice in critical situations. When he decides to reject the promotion of and transfer from the company, his
wife Bess advises him and asks him about the job and the boss. She says:

“But can the company fire you for turning them down?”

“Honey, I did what I did. That’s the end of it.” (PAA-p.14)

Though his wife, Bess, is worried about his job and tries to advise him to follow the order of his boss in his company, he ignores her advice and faces problems. Sometimes, she is unable to control the emotions and activities of her husband. When they are maltreated by the hotel manager, Herman tries to oppose him, but Bess forces him to leave the hotel although she is unable to control him. She says:

“Dear, let’s just go,” she beseeched my father. “Mr. Taylor found a room nearby.”

“No!” my father cried, and he threw off the hand with which she had tried to snatch his arm.” (PAA-p.84-85)

This shows the dominant nature of Herman and inferior treatment given to Bess by him. At the crucial juncture, Herman rejects his wife’s advice too. Roth rightly depicts the male dominated society in America. Though it offers equal status to women, the novelist presents the real life of women through their characterization in the novel. Herman’s relations with other characters are good. Sometimes, he tries to provoke the members of his family against the followers of the Nazis and thus creates problems in his family. Uncle Monty objects to the political discussion and advises Herman:
“You sound like Alvin, Herman. You sound like a kid. What counts besides money? Your two boys count. You want Sandy to come home one day like Alvin? You want Phil,” he said, looking over to where I sat listening at the kitchen table, “to come home one day like Alvin? We’re out of the war, and we’re staying out of the war.” (PAA-p.148)

This statement highlights the relation between two brothers. Uncle Monty dislikes some qualities of Herman so he openly objects and criticizes him bitterly, but Herman does not take this advice seriously. On the contrary, he advises Alvin to oppose the Nazi and their strong followers. Alvin and Herman discuss the current political topics and the Jews. He always thinks about the ridiculous situation of the Jews in America and in other parts of the world. Roth introduces him as a practical man who starts rebellion from his own house. His sister-in-law makes advances towards Nazi follower Rabbi Lionel Bengelsdorf, so he does not hesitate to punish her and his son, Sandy follows Aunt Evelyn. He condemns Evelyn and her relationship with Rabbi Bengelsdorf:

“The woman is an idiot, Bess,” my father said to her, “a childish idiot who understands nothing. A dangerous idiot.” (PAA-p.223)

Roth focuses on the nature and strong Jewish attitude of Herman. He abuses the Nazis and their followers as they are responsible for the tragic life of the Jews. He also focuses on the helpful nature of Herman, which helps him to maintain good relationship with the
Jewish society and other communities. His relationship with Mr. Wishnow’s family is close one and he often helps them in the crisis. He helps Mr. Cucuzza honestly as a part of his character, but he is not satisfied with his colleagues and company workers because they criticize him when his back is turned. He says to his wife:

“You can imagine what they would have called me behind my back. No, I’m better off where I am. We’re all better off.” (PAA-p.14)

Being a Jew, Herman is a strong follower of the Jewish community. He tries to bring together the Jews to form unity and motivate them to rebel against the President Lindbergh’s policy. He says to his wife:

“And young as I was, I was able to surmise why: because she was thinking, ‘Ours will be the house ‘where the Jews live’. It’ll be Elizabeth all over again.’” (PAA-p.10)

Herman’s character and his attachment to the Jewish community and strong awareness of social problems of the Jewish community are quite evident. Roth depicts him as a social and practical person fighting against the fascist followers and their cunning policies. He always abuses the Nazis and their followers for their misdeeds against the Jews. He abuses:

“Son of bitches!” my father said. “Fascist bastards!” and then the light changed and we drove on in silence to look at the office building where he was about to get his chance to earn more than fifty dollars a week”. (PAA-p.12)
The underlined abuses make it amply clear that Herman is against the evil activities of the Nazi followers. Roth explains various incidents, which indicate the anti-Lindbergh and anti-fascist attitude of Herman. He describes Herman’s strong bond with his Jewish community. Herman is a strong enemy of Hitler and denounces the evil deeds. He speaks to Rabbi Bengelsdorf in the following manner:

"Hitler," I heard him saying, "Hitler is not a business as usual, Rabbi! This madman is not making a war from a thousand years ago. He is making a war such as no one has ever seen on this planet." (PAA-p.130)

Roth emphasizes frank opinions of the Jews about Hitler and his followers as it is evident in the above extract. Herman is a symbolic character through whom the writer attempts to present the views of the Jews. Another quality of Herman is described by the novelist with the help of political events. Herman is more interested in politics than anything else. He discusses politics with Alvin and other friends. He likes to participate in election by voting. He says to Mr. Cucuzza:

"You know what I Love, Cucuzza? Election Days," my father told him. "I love to vote. Since I was old enough, I have not missed an election." (PAA-p.340)

The above expression indicates the awareness of Herman about the rights and duties of the citizen. The protagonist gives importance to democracy and the right to vote. He has never missed a single chance of voting in an election. His political awareness is a prominent feature
of his character throughout the novel. Discussing politics is an inseparable part of Herman’s character. As a Jew, he condemns the cunning plan and policy of President Lindbergh against the Jews. He satirizes the policies of Hitler and Lindbergh and the way they treat the Jews:

“In Germany Hitler has the decency at least to bar the Jews from the Nazi party. That and the armbands, that and the concentration camps, and at least it’s clear that dirty Jews aren’t welcome. But here Nazis pretend to invite the Jews in. And why?” (PAA-p.221)

Here, Roth focuses on the critical attitude of the hero. He objects to the policies of the Nazi followers and Charles A. Lindbergh. According to him, on the one hand the Nazi followers have cunning plans to destroy the Jewish race, and on the other hand, they have a strategy to use intellectual Jews for their own benefits. Roth describes the good and noble qualities of Herman in this novel as a protagonist. He depicts him as an ideal and cooperative person. His relation with his nephew Alvin is healthy and free. As an uncle, he advises Alvin to complete his college-education with the help of Billy Steinheim’s cooperation and scholarship. He says:

“A four-year free college education.” “Free because he browbeats the president of Rutgers the way the way he browbeats the whole goddamn world.” (PAA-p.61)
Herman expects Alvin to focus on his education, but he does not take it seriously. At the same time, he makes him aware of the educational facilities for the Jews that Billy Steinheim started for the Jew children. It is obvious that the Jews have occupied various fields in America as their earning source. Billy Steinheim is one of the well-known builders in America from the Jewish community who cooperates with other Jews to help them overcome their poverty. He starts scholarships for intellectual Jew students in colleges which help them in their development. Alvin fails to understand Herman’s advice. On the contrary, he objects to his morality and character. Herman says to Alvin:

“My morality stinks,” said my father, “everybody in this city knows about my morality. But the issue isn’t me. It’s your future. It’s going to college.” (PAA-p.61)

Roth depicts the honest and moral qualities of Herman in the novel. He presents different professions of the Jewish people with the help of the characters of two brothers: Uncle Monty and Herman. When he resigns from the job in the company, he joins the business of Uncle Monty which changes daily his routine and lifestyle too. He accepts all these changes without any request. He is described as an honest and ideal person. He is the representative of the Jewish society. Though he resigns from the job, he never regrets and enjoys working in the market:

“As then on, Sunday night through Friday morning, he’d come home at nine, ten A.M., wash up, eat his big meal, go to
Roth describes the hardworking nature of Uncle Monty and Herman to delineate the characteristics of the Jewish people. At the same time, he focuses on how physical exertion becomes the reason of drinking habits for Herman and Uncle Monty. Meanwhile, Roth compares the job of insurance agent and the market business. The following statement reveals this:

“But now he would get home from the market and, before he changed out of his dirty clothes and took his shower, he’d pour the whiskey into a short glass, tilt back his head, and take it down in one gulp, making the face of a man who’d just bit into a light bulb.” (PAA-p.284)

Roth, here, describes how the exhausting work in the market place leads Herman to drink wine. He criticizes and analyzes different characteristics of Herman, which become responsible for the tragic events in his life. Herman’s strong affinity and attachment to the Jewish community sometimes proves harmful for him. He fails to control his emotions. Roth presents him as the hero of the novel. The writer skilfully portrays various dimensions of Herman’s character to show him as the representative of the Jewish community. The character of Herman is unique and well-balanced with skills.
3.4.2 Lindbergh

Roth describes a number of political characters in *The Plot Against America* among which Charles A. Lindbergh is a leading character in the novel. He gives alternate history and historical incidents, which refer to the political characters like Lindbergh, Walter Winchell, La Guardia and others. Lindbergh is one of the prominent characters created by Roth in this novel. He is a lean, tall and handsome, and a little athletic-looking man of forty years. He is a pilot and has made a historical record in the Air Force by continuously flying the plane ‘The Spirit of St. Louis’ nonstop thirty three and a half hours from Long Island to Paris. It is due to this historical record, he becomes a popular person in America. Roth introduces Lindbergh as a pilot in the beginning of the novel and slowly develops him into a great political leader in America. Roth focuses on various aspects of Lindbergh and reveals him through many incidents. The novel begins with the prediction of Lindbergh’s political career. Roth says:

“FEAR PRESIDES over these memories, a perpetual fear. Of course no childhood is without its terrors, yet I wonder if I would have been a less frightened boy if Lindbergh hadn’t been president or if I hadn’t been the offspring of Jew.” (PAA-p.1)

From this prediction, it is clear that the victory of Lindbergh will bring trouble to the Jewish community. Roth creates imaginary political history with the help of Lindbergh’s leading Presidential election in America. He describes the period of World War II, the fascist activities and the Nazi followers and their influence on various
fields such as politics, science, religion and society. In *The Plot Against America*, Roth depicts the political crisis of the Nazi followers, the President’s election and exploitation of the Jews by the Nazi followers. Lindbergh who contests the President’s election criticizes the Jews and their followers. He blames the Jews in the following manner:

“....most important groups who have been pressing this country towards war” a group constituting less than three percent of the population and referred to alternately as the Jewish people and “the Jewish race.” (PAA-p.15)

Philip Roth visualizes various dimensions of Lindbergh’s personality in the novel under consideration. Lindbergh’s interests in the political, social and national issues are worth studying from the viewpoint of his characterization. One realizes that Lindbergh is not a static character. On the contrary, he is a dynamic character because he changes over the time, usually as a result of resolving central conflict or facing major crisis. His deceitful nature and cunning policies are some of the contributing factors, which make him a villain. The author focuses on the cunning policies of Lindbergh and his use of sensitive subjects for his speech only to provoke the voters in America. Lindbergh openly criticizes the Jews. His philosophical views give deep insight into the American society and politics. He criticizes the policies in the following way:
“No persons of honesty and vision,” Lindbergh said, “can look on their pro-war policy here today without seeing the dangers involved in such a policy both for us and for them.” (PAA-p.15)

Philip Roth visualizes various aspects of Lindbergh’s character in this novel, such as political, social and national. He is an antagonist in the Novel. He talks about the murder of his own son to gain sympathy of American citizens, but in the end the truth is unveiled. He displays the news of his twenty-month old baby’s abduction and murder by German agent, but in the end, the people realize that the news is false. Lindbergh uses cunning strategy to gain victory in the election so he evokes sympathy from the voters. Actually, he sends his baby to Germany for education and the training of army. Roth focuses on the vices of human beings with the help of Lindbergh’s character. Roth narrates many incidents, which show the villainous side of Lindbergh. For instance, his speech during the Presidential election at Madison Square Garden where twenty thousand people gather to hear his speech shows his popularity. In this rally, his close friend Rabbi Bengelsdorf explains Lindbergh’s intention to visit Germany. He says:

“Contrary to the propaganda disseminated by his critics”, the rabbi informed us, “he did not once visit Germany as a sympathizer or a supporter of Hitler’s but rather he traveled each and every time as a secret adviser to the U.S government.” (PAA-p.45)
The writer uses the paradoxical qualities of Lindbergh to show his cunning nature and how he uses intellectual Jews against the Jewish community. Though Rabbi Bengelsdorf is one of the Jews in America, he knows cunning strategies of Lindbergh and his anti-Jewish policies but does not object him. On the contrary, he tries to hide his evil deeds. Roth describes all bad qualities and aspects of Lindbergh, which indicate him as an evil person. He discloses the cunning policies of Lindbergh and the involvement of the selfish people in his life. Roth emphasizes the inhuman side of Lindbergh and his misdeeds through various incidents. In the end, his sudden disappearance twists the story and plot of the novel. When he addresses the rally in Louisville, he says final goodbye to all:

“The engine turns, the Lone Eagle waves a final goodbye, and with a rush and a roar the Spirit of St Louis lifts free of Daniel Boone’s gorgeous wilderness state, inch by inch, foot by foot, until at last the most famous small plane in aviation history the modern day counterparty of Columbus’s Santo Maria and the Pilgrims Mayflower disappears eastward, never to be seen again.” (PAA-p.367)

The political system collapses after sudden disappearance of President Lindbergh. FBI, National Guardian, and police arrest all politicians after this incident. The party announces Mr. Wheeler as an acting President, but the German agency handles the government indirectly:

“There Burton K. Wheeler announces that, after consulting with the First Lady and the majority leaders of the House, the
Senate and the chief justice of the Supreme Court, he has deemed it in the country’s best interest to assume the duties of acting president in accordance with Article II, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution.” (PAA-p.368)

It is surprising that the German agency tries to interfere directly in U.S. domestic matters. Wheeler is unable to control this agency, but the First Lady, Anne Morrow Lindbergh attempts to disclose the news and cunning plan of the German agency. She addresses American citizens on the radio as follows:

“My fellow Americans, unlawfulness on the part of America’s law enforcement agencies cannot and will not be allowed to prevail. In my husband’s name, I ask all National Guard units to disarm and disband and for our guardsmen to return to civilian life.” (PAA-p.380)

The wife of Lindbergh gives a moral support to the citizens and requests them to maintain peace in America. Roth creates political characters and their influence on the other characters. Lindbergh is one of the prominent characters and President of America who instils anxiety and fear in the Jewish community. Roth introduces him as a political leader, and after his disappearance, the political system of America gets disturbed. Roth balances of all these incidents and political characters and offers the readers an alternative history. He presents Lindbergh as anti-Jewish, anti-American and a strong follower of Hitler.
3.4.3 The Nameless Hero

Roth begins the novel with the funeral scene and then goes back in time to narrate protagonist’s complete story. The hero as a young man gives importance to the physical pleasures of sex, but in the old age he regrets about his sexual activities. The novel is a story of the nameless protagonist. He suffers from a lung disease because of his promiscuous nature. At the beginning of the novel, during the funeral scene, the brother of the nameless hero, Howie, publically recalls how his younger brother was fascinated by all the watches brought in:

“My little brother could sit there for hours, spinning the hands and listening to the watches tick, if they still did, and studying what each face and what each case looked like. That’s what made that boy tick”. (E-p.07)

From the above expression of Howie, Roth makes it clear that the nameless hero is a hard working person and an expert in the jewellery work. The protagonist also helps his father in his business such as designing the jewellery and bringing the diamonds. He understands the tricks of the jewellery business and tries to make contacts with other merchants for more jewellery business. Roth weaves the life of the protagonist and his family skilfully. He focuses on the domestic side as well as old age problems of human beings with the help of the story of the protagonist. The Nameless hero starts suffering from hernia at the age nine, so his father hospitalizes him. During the surgery of his hernia, he becomes anxious and fearfull, but his father supports him physical and morally. His father says:
“You can do it, son,” his father said, leaning over to kiss him as well. “It’s like when I give you an errand to run on the bus or a job to do at the store. Whatever it is, you never let me down”. (E-p.23)

Roth depicts the physical sickness and lack of confidence of the nameless hero in his young age, but his father gives him moral support during his illness and wishes him speedy recovery. His mother also helps him during his hospital days. She serves him kindly and provides him everything that he needs. She helps him to replace the books he brought to the hospital:

“The hospital was around the corner from the local branch library, so his mother could replenish his reading material should he read through the books he’d brought for his hospital stay.” (E-p.17)

The hero loves to read books so his mother helps him to replace the books from the library. On the other hand, the protagonist is far from happy in his married life because of his sexual desires for other women. He always meets women to satisfy his physical desire. His immoral and sexual adventures with various women enable him to achieve self-gratification.

Roth attempts to give universal characteristics to the Nameless hero. The sickness, disease, hospitalization, and death are common to human beings. Everyman has to go through similar situations. The protagonist invokes sympathy, affinity and pity in the mind of the
readers. Roth describes the life of the protagonist’s unhappy married life. His carnal desire is the root cause of his tragic life. His first marriage to Cecilia is not successful though they have two children named Ronny and Lonny. After he divorces Cecilia, he marries sincere and dutiful, Phoebe, and tries to settle down in life, but it is in vain as the immoral behaviour of the protagonist separates him from his second wife. When his second wife discovers his illicit relationship with Danish model Merete, she decides to abandon him. She objects his illicit relationship with another woman. She says:

“The desk clerk told me, ‘Madame and monsieur have just departed for the airport.’” “Yes,” he said, “I shared a cab with the photographer’s rep.” “No, you shared a cab with the Danish twenty-four-year-old with whom you are having an affair. I’m sorry, but I can no longer look the other way. I looked the other way with that secretary. But the humiliation has now gone too far to Paris,” she said with disgust. (E-p.118)

The above extract shows the crisis between the husband and wife which ends in their separation. The illicit relationship of the protagonist and his carnal desire are responsible for the divorce. Roth focuses on sexual and erotic desires of the protagonist, which cause his tragic downfall. In the novel the symbolic character of the nameless hero conveys an unsuccessful domestic life. Roth tries to portray the domestic problems in America through his characters. In America, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, many families suffered owing to materialistic attitudes of men and women. The hero is careless about his duty and is promiscuous in nature. When his
mother is admitted in the hospital in a serious condition, he indulges in sexual pleasures with Danish model ‘Merete’ in Paris. The following message from Phoebe indicates this:

“There was a message from Phoebe waiting for him at the hotel: “Contact me immediately. Your mother is gravely ill.”” (E-p.117)

Roth criticizes the nature of the protagonist for neglecting his duties. He focuses on the inhuman and evil side of the protagonist. The hero gives more importance to the carnal desire than his duties and keeps illicit relationships with different women for sexual pleasures.

The protagonist of Everyman feels jealous about his athletic and successful elder brother Howie who is fearless and enjoys good health. Roth characterizes two brothers and their contrasting natures. The hero suffers from various physical weaknesses over a prolonged period of time while his brother, Howie, enjoys good health and family life because of good habits. The relationship between two brothers is good and without any conflict. Howie loves his brother. During the funeral, he mourns:

“His voice was husky with emotion when he whispered to his wife, “My kid brother. It makes no sense.”” (E-p.5)

Roth narrates a strong bond between two brothers’. After the death of the nameless hero, his brother Howie expresses his heart felt grief. Howie helps him in times of crisis and gives him moral support. The protagonist’s first wife divorces him after the birth of two children,
Randy and Lonny. The hero’s relation with his two children is not cordial and they denounce the authority of their father and sometimes, mock his painting. At the time of protagonist’s funeral, they express grief, but it is without any genuine feelings. They are disappointed because their father did not treat their mother Cecilia well enough:

“And he readily met with success when he went to speak. “Sleep easy Pop”, Randy said, but any note of tenderness, grief, love or loss was terrifyingly absent from his voice.” (E-p.14)

Thus, Roth highlights the broken relationship between the children and father. They know their father’s conduct and sexual escapades. The protagonist’s second wife, Phoebe, gives him satisfaction and helps him settle down in life. It is due to his lust and lack of ethics, he loses her faith. Nancy is the daughter of the protagonist who has apparently been an ideal daughter. Her relation with her father is warm and she gives moral support to her father hence he often worries about her:

“He never really stopped worrying about her, nor did he understand how it happened that such a child should be his. He hadn’t necessarily done the right things to make it happen, even if Phoebe had. But there are such people, spectacularly good people- miracles, really- and it was his great fortune that one of these miracles was his own incorruptible daughter.” (E-p.76)

The novelist describes the love and passion of the Jewish father for his daughter. Though he commits several mistakes and creates problems
for his wives, he never distances himself from his daughter. Nancy gives him moral support and inspiration during his lonely and unhappy life. She tries to motivate him. When the protagonist loses the confidence in painting, Nancy inspires him:

“You’re just upset right now. Don’t insult yourself- it’s not so. I know It’s not so. I have your paintings all over my apartment. I look at them every day, and I can promise you I’m not looking at doodling. People come over - they look at them.” (E-p.104)

Though Nancy tries to support him, his loneliness haunts him and he embarks on a painting class where he runs a creative department at New Jersey Shore. Roth creates the character of the protagonist, who is a representative of the American society. The protagonist of the novel is involved in the sexual escapades with various women including the hospital nurse, Maureen, his three wives, the old woman in the class, and in the end, he tries to get close to a jogger. Roth creates a character of lusty and promiscuous protagonist who gives importance to the physical pleasures. He also focuses on the psychological aspects of human beings. The dotage of the hero is a prominent aspect in the novel. He watches the young female joggers on the board. One day, he gets into conversation with one of them and begins to make his old seducer’s moves even as the grotesque of the age disparity is obvious:

“He’d said, “How game are you? and she’d replied, “What do you have in mind?” Now what? (E-p.133)
She seems to be interested, a phone number is exchanged, but she never runs that route again:

“She must have decided to do her jogging along another stretch of the boardwalk, thereby thwarting his longing for the last great outburst of everything.” (E-p.134)

The young jogger changes her way to save herself from lustful looks of this old man. Roth describes the psychological aspect of the protagonist. He tries to produce sentimentality, extremity, and coarseness with the help of these scenes, moments, and the illicit relations of the nameless hero. When Phoebe is admitted in the hospital, her former husband visits her:

“Paralysis is terrifying,” she told him, staring down at the lifeless right arm by her side. He nodded. “You look at it”, she said, “you tell it to move ......” He waited while the tears rolled down her face and she struggled to finish the sentence. When she couldn’t, he finished it for her. “And it doesn’t,” he said softly.” (E-p. 138-139)

Roth depicts emotional scenes in this novel with the help of the protagonist and his wife Phoebe. The loneliness and isolated life of the protagonist in an old age is one of themes in the novel. Roth is aware of the American people and their ways of life. He handles the current issues of the American society, which indicate absurdity of the life of the nameless hero. He narrates:
“But now it appeared that like any number of the elderly, he was in the process of becoming less and less and would have to see his aimless days through to the end as no more than what he was .......the aimless days and the uncertain nights and the importantly putting up with the physical deterioration and terminal sadness and the waiting and waiting for nothing.” (E-p.161)

Roth creates anxious and gloomy moments with help of the death scenes, funerals and graveyard scenes to create ominous atmosphere in the novel. Brad Karr has been hospitalized for suicidal depression, Eza Pollock has terminal cancer at age seventy, and Clarence Sparco has been suffering for years from heart trouble and dies at the age of eighty four. Such incidents make the protagonist anxious during his old age. He focuses on the fearful mind in the old age and the protagonist’s fearful behaviour. He exposes various aspects of his characters with the help of various incidents:

“In just the past month, he had been among the mourners at two funerals in two different cemeteries in Monmouth County, both rather less dreary than this one, and less dangerous too.” (E-p.167)

It is obvious that Roth builds his characters to create awareness about the old age. The hero’s fearful dream and strange behaviour are the chief dimensions of his anxious nature. Roth describes the old age and its problems. When the hero dreams, he cries loudly:
“Momma, Poppa, Howie, Phoebe, Nancy, Randy, Lonny-- if only I’d known how to do it! Can’t you hear me? I’m leaving! It’s over and I’m leaving you all behind!” And those vanishing as fast from him as he from them turned just their heads to cry out in turn, and all too meaningfully, “Too late!” (E-p.165)

The fear of death of the nameless hero has been aptly depicted by the writer. Towards the end of the novel, the protagonist visits his parents’ graves. The sad description of his father’s funeral creates an absurd situation. Many of the elderly people are seen weeping and holding on to each other. Roth presents the psychological condition of the hero to show his inner consciousness. He also depicts the inner thoughts of the characters. While depicting the character of the nameless hero, Roth takes care of the particular aspects such as the journey of human life, the obstacles faced by him, and his own mistakes which are responsible for the tragic life of the characters. Roth is practical and plain at the cemetery as the protagonist meets the man who dug his parents’ graves and asks him several questions, He says:

“So from start to finish, how long does it take?” “It’ll take about three hours to do my end, could even take four hours. Depends on the dig. My son’s a good digger-- takes him about two and a half hours more”. (E-p.175)

Roth tries to highlight the nature and anxious state of the hero. In the end, the hero is admitted for the daily routine check-up and surgery of his heart. He dies at the age of seventy one. Roth creates unique and
dynamic characters, which represent the grave reality of human life in
the American society. He describes the life of the protagonist as
careless, immoral, and flirtatious. Thus, the novels of Roth are full of
pathetic situations in the lives of the main characters. Mulk Raj Anand
also creates tragic situations where the main characters get trapped
and left at the mercy of their masters. The main characters from
Untouchable and Coolie are discussed in details below.

3.4.4 Bakha

Mulk Raj Anand’s first novel Untouchable (1935) is a fine example of
characterization. The novelist fully emphasizes the role of the main
character in this novel. He gives details of an eventful day in the life
of Bakha, a young sweeper boy who lives in the outcaste colony in a
north Indian cantonment town. The locality is full of dirt and one
would find dung of cows and dogs and skeletons of animals. The
writer rightly describes:

“A brook ran near the lane, once with a crystal-clear water,
now soiled by the dirt and filth of the public latrines situated
about it, the odour of the hides and skins of dead carcases
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.” (U-p.01)

Mulk Raj Anand attempts to present the real picture of the colony
of the outcastes living in squalid conditions. The scavengers clean
and sweep the city dirty roads but they ignore cleanliness of their own neighbourhood.

At the beginning of the novel, Anand gives a detailed description of the physical charm and strong body of Bakha the hero. He is strong and intelligent youth having frank face and glistening high cheek bones. Anand describes:

“At least so thought Bakha, a young man of eighteen, strong and able-bodied, the son of Lakha...” (U-p.01)

Bakha, the protagonist, is an image of his childhood experiences with the sweepers. Bakha is an eighteen-year-old youth having strong physic, muscles and good health. He does not live like other scavengers. He is entirely different from his fellow outcastes. He has the intelligence, sensitivity and the air of dignity. He intentionally takes care his living standard though he gets less money. Sometimes, he begs for the trousers from the Tommies. He works in the British regiment, so he is fascinated by the glamour of the white man’s life. The Tommy gives him good treatment as a human being. He helps him:

“He had begged one Tommy for the gift of a pair of trousers. The man had given him a pair of breeches, which he had to spare”. (U-p.03)

Bakha’s father Lakha, is a Jamadar of the sweepers and very harsh. Lakha abuses his son profusely:
“Get up, ohe, you Bakhya, you son of pig”, came his father’s voice, sure as a bullet to its target, from the midst of a broken, jarring, interrupted snore.” (U-p.05)

Anand keenly describes the nature of untouchable’s father, mother, brother, sister and other relatives because he had observed the lives of the untouchables from close quarters. He depicts the alienation in these relations due to the social, cultural and racial aspects. Bakha shares good relation with his sister because she is a dutiful sister and knows her responsibilities in the house. She looks after her family members carefully after her mother’s death. Usually, she brings water, cooks food, and sometimes goes to bring food from the houses of the high-castes for the members of her family. Anand narrates the ridiculous situations of the Dalit and their plight. He also tries to focus on the disqualifications of the Dalit community as they have to depend on the mercy of the higher caste people for food and shelter. In the novel, Anand depicts Lakha’s family and their dependence on the mercy of high-caste Hindus for basic amenities of life. Poverty and hunger do not allow the hero to achieve the social status. Anand describes:

“Bakha thought of the uncongeniality of his home as he lay half awake in the morning of an autumn day, covered by a worn out, greasy blanket, on a faded blue carpet which was spread on the floor in a corner of the twelve
Bakha has a few good traits. One of them is that he is hard working and saves money to fulfil his daily needs. He is highly fascinated by British clothes and likes to maintain his living standard. The following description substantiates this:

“The pay which he received there had, of course, to be given to his father, but the bakshish which he had collected from the Tommies amounted to ten rupees--”

Anand narrates the qualifications of the hero and his good habits. He is a dutiful man and does his work perfectly. He supports his family too. His father is orthodox because he always keeps his son busy to do the work of the latrine cleaning rather than to give him freedom to play with his friends. Lakha summons Bakha for the work of latrine but the latter takes objection:

“And if I go to play with the boys, he calls me in the middle of the game to come and attend to the latrine. He is old. He doesn’t know anything of the Sahibs.”

Mulk Raj Anand depicts the deep agony of the childhood and how the boy was deprived of his happy childhood. The author presents the social reality and exploitation of the children during their childhood. Bakha is one such victim of the social
circumstances. Bakha always feels the void in absence of his mother in the family. The days of the protagonist were joyous when his mother was alive, but after her death, he suffers too much and realizes the importance of mother in the family. Sometimes, he remembers his mother and the delightful days. Anand describes:

“When his mother died and the burden of looking after the family fell on him, there was no time left to look for such comforts and luxuries as an early morning tumblerful of tea. So he learnt to do without it, looking back, however, with fondness to the memory of those days when he lived in the enjoyment not only of the tasty, spicy delights of breakfast, but of all the splendorous details of life, the nice clothes which his mother bought him, the frequent visits to the town and the empty days, filled with play.” (U-p. 5-6)

From the above description, one can understand the role of a mother and her love for her children. Anand tries to depict the happy days in the life of the hero when his mother was alive. After her death, his sister looks after him. Since there as no water in the house, Sohini, Bakha’s sister goes to the well to fetch water. As an elder brother, Bakha, loves his sister, Sohini, and helps in her work. He even supports her in every problem. Sohini too loves him and is aware of the problems of the family. While cooking, Sohini faces many problems and Bakha helps her, he says:
“Will you get up and let me blow as it?” Bakha said. And without waiting for a reply he walked up to the corner of the room, sat down on his knees, shook the fuel and stooping, began to blow.” (U-p.13)

Anand gives the details of the co-operative nature of the hero as it is evident in the above extract. When Bakha comes to know that Pundit kali Nath, priest of the temple, has tried to molest Sohini, he becomes furious and intends to kill him. He cannot bear the insult of his sister. As a typical Indian brother, Bakha prepares to avenge his sister’s insult. He is not able to control his anger and outbursts:

“Why didn’t I go and kill that hypocrite!” He cried out silently, “I could have sacrificed myself for Sohini.” (U-p.56)

Anand narrates the aggressive nature of the hero as well as his rebellious qualities against the injustice. When he realizes that his sister is molested by Pundit Kali Nath, he becomes furious but is not able to give her justice because of rigid social structure. Bakha belongs to the lower caste. His family suffers from the social evil of untouchability. Though they are hard working and perform their duties well such as cleaning the roads and latrines, the Hindu social system does not allow them to enter the temple or to touch other higher caste people. Mulk Raj Anand himself had witnessed such types of humiliations in his boyhood days.
Bakha’s relation with his brother is good. He loves his brother and occasionally encourages him. He also advises him to help Sohini in her household chores. He has a good rapport with his brother Rakha. Sometimes, he advises him not room around. He thinks Rakha is not aware of the ways of the world and has no experiences of life:

“Then he turned to his brother and said, “Oh Rakhia, why did you run away early in the morning? Father is ill and there is all the work at the latrines to do in my absence. Come, my brother, run back home. Sohini has kept some hot tea for you too.”” (U-p.28)

From the above description, it becomes clear that Bakha tries to guide his brother. Bakha attempts to maintain co-ordination between his family and friends. He plays a key role in the family. Though he belongs to the Bhangi (scavenger) caste, he establishes relations with other outcastes, i.e. Chota, the leather-worker’s son and Ramcharan, the washerman’s son. He shares good relations with them. They are good friends and help each other. When his friends come to know that a Hindu man has beaten Bakha, they become angry. Bakha narrates the incident and explains the reason of his grief to his close friends:

“Why didn’t you strike back? Chota asked, enraged. That won’t be the only thing, continued Bakha. And he narrated how the priest tried to molest his sister and then came shouting at them both, polluted, polluted.”” (U-p.88)
Bakha experiences catharsis in his mind in front of his two close friends Ramcharan and Chota, but these two friends are also the part of the same social system and try to console Bakha. These two friends also suffer more or less owing to their low social status. Mulk Raj Anand focuses on the similarity and the common problems of the Dalit characters in his novel. Their plight is the prominent subject of his novel. Most of Anand’s novels emphasize the social issues and drawbacks of the society.

As we know right from the morning, Bakha suffers a series of insults at the hands of the caste Hindus. The social system makes him handicapped and subdued. Bakha, the protagonist of the novel, is the archetypal figure representing untouchables. He becomes conscious when he comes face to face with the evil in the world in which he is an outsider. He stands outside the magic circle of the caste and tries to fight against it. He cleans the road, latrines and the temple, courtyard but is not allowed to enter the temple and no one bears his touch. When Bakha is on his way, he unfortunately happens to touch a high caste Hindu who uses filthy language:

“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!” (U-p.38)

The social issues of the untouchables are emphasized by Mulk Raj Anand in his novel the action of the characters. Most of the characters belong to the lower-castes. Anand attempts to paint their sufferings and agony. Only the touch of a Dalit or Bhangi defiles a high caste Hindu. To purify, he needs to take a holy bath and change the defiled clothes. This is the grim reality of the Hindu society that Mulk Raj Anand focuses with the help of the character of Bakha. The hero of the novel Bakha becomes a victim of the prevailing evils of the caste-system during pre-independent India. The untouchable is always a dispossessed man, deprived of freedom, honour and dignity. There are some Hindus who give good treatment to untouchables. Havildar Charat Singh, a caste Hindu, gives a good treatment to Bakha. He praises the athletic qualities of Bakha and gives him a new hockey stick. Even, he allows him to enter the house in order to bring tea and coal fire. According to Hindu holy books, any untouchable or Dalit should not enter the temple. While cleaning the temple courtyard, Bakha enters the temple, he is not aware of any rules or restrictions. Someone observes Bakha entering the temple and starts abusing:

“One of the crowd struck out an individual note. “Get off the steps, you scavenger! Off with you! You have defiled our whole service You have defiled our temple! Now we
will have to pay for the purificatory ceremony. Get down, get away, you dog!” (U-p.53)

Anand describes the grim reality of the Indian society before the independence from the religious point of view. Sweeper boy is allowed to enter the yard of the temple to clean it, but he is not permitted to go inside the temple where the Brahmins and other devotees offer prayers to the God. According to Hindu religious philosophy, the entry of the untouchables amount to the defilement of their society. Hence, they are prevented from entering the temple. Bakha is the representative of the lower castes. He attempts to rebel against the Hindu tradition and inhuman practices but he fails. However his father accepts the tradition. He does not wants Bakha to go against the social norms because he knows that all the power of the society is in the hands of caste Hindu and the only option for untouchables is to follow Hindu caste Hindus traditions mutely.

Lakha says:

“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. They are our masters. We must respect them and do as they tell us.” (U-p.71)

Anand tries to present the conflict between the old and new generations during the Indian pre-independence era. Bakha belong to the new generation. He thinks that quality and ability
determine social status. He thinks that due to dirty work, people treat him badly. He asks his father:

“But, father, what is the use?” Bakha shouted “They would ill-treat us even if we shouted. They think we are mere dirt because we clean their dirt.” (U-p.70)

In search of equality and humanity, Bakha comes across so many people and incidents. In the end, he realizes that in Hindu religion and Christianity, there is the lowest place for the scavengers. Bakha becomes glad when he comes to know that Gandhi is going deliver his speech on the issue of untouchability. Bakha is eager to listen to the speech of Gandhi. He says:

“Is he really going to talk about outcastes, about us, about Chota, Ramcharan, my father and me? What will he say, I wonder? Strange that the sahib of the Mukti (Salvation Army) said that the rich and the poor, the Brahmins and bhangis, are the same.” (U-p.132)

Bakha hopes that Gandhi will do something for the outcastes and solve their problems. In his speech, Gandhi announces that untouchability is one of the greatest blots on Hinduism. Gandhi proclaims:

“I do not want to be reborn. But if I have to be reborn, I should wish to be reborn as an Untouchable, so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings and the affronts
levelled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and them from their miserable condition.” (U-p.138)

The words of Gandhi bring delight to and satisfaction for Bakha. Gandhi himself wants to be reborn as an untouchable. Bakha concentrates on Gandhiji speech. He realizes that Gandhi is well aware of the worst situation of the untouchables in the Indian society as he explains the cunning strategy of the British government “divide and rule”. Gandhi announces:

“I shall only speak about the so-called “Untouchables whom the government tried to alienate from Hinduism by giving them a separate legal and political status.” (U-p.136)

Gandhi even expresses the bitter opinion in his speech about the habits of outcastes. Gandhi says:

“They have, therefore, to purify their lives. They should cultivate the habits of cleanliness, so that no one shall point his finger at them. Some of them are addicted to habits of drinking and gambling of which they must get rid.” (U-p.138)

Bakha is unhappy about Gandhi’s opinion. When Bakha comes to know the third solution that flush machine can be a solution to his dirty profession but it also creates confusion in his mind. The poet Iqbal Nath and the Barrister R.N. Bashir present their
opinions about the issues of the untouchables. As per Bashir’s point of view:

“When the sweepers change their profession, they will no longer remain Untouchables. And they can do that soon, for the first thing we will do when we accept the machine, which clears dung without anyone having to handle it - the flush system”. (U-p.146)

Bakha, after hearing the speeches of Gandhi and the poet becomes confused.

3.4.5 Munoo

Munoo is the central character in the novel Coolie. Anand gives the minute details of the miserable trajectory of his life from childhood to youth. During his journey, Munoo comes across different known and unknown places and people. In the beginning of the novel, the novelist describes the wretched life of Munoo, the death of his mother, and helpless father, and the way he lives with his uncle and aunt. He is neither well treated nor loved by them. Anand narrates:

“Where have you died? Where have you gone, you ominous orphan? Come back and be- gone! The piercing soprano resounded through the valley and fell on Munoo’s ears with the dreadening effect of all its bitter content.” (C-p.01)

Though his aunt is childless, she never considers Munoo as her child. He also helps his family to graze the cattle on the bank of the river. He
helps his aunt in the household chores but his uncle decides to send him as servant in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram to earn his livelihood.

Bishan is a good friend of Munoo so he advises him not to leave the village. Bishan always gives him moral support and scolds his enemy Jay Singh for his illtreatment to Munoo:

“Don’t go yet,” Bishan, the fat one, pleaded, “your aunt only wants you to run an errand for her.” Then he turned banteringly to Jay Singh and said, “You call him a savage for not going home when his aunt calls. What about you who abuse your mother for asking you to stay indoors and not go out in the heat of the noon?” (C-p.2)

Anand describes the strong bond between the two friends and their innocent friendship. Bishan thinks that Munoo is not old enough to work. He is just fourteen years old, but his uncle and aunt are reluctant to keep Munoo in the house because they want him to earn money. Munoo says:

“My uncle says I am grown up and must fend for myself. He has got me a job in the house of the Babu of the bank where he works in Shampur.” (C-p.2)

Anand emphasizes the problems of child labour and how the family itself is responsible to produce the child labour. Munoo is studying in the fifth class and wants to complete his study, but due to the force of his childless uncle and aunt, he has to abandon his education and join
as a servant in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram. Munoo’s life in the village is very happy. He enjoys the fruits ripe and unripe as well as jumping on and off trees, but very soon the days of happiness come to an end and Munoo walks on the way to town. During the journey to the town, he gets tired and realizes the cruelty of his uncle:

“There were tears in Munoo’s eyes as he gazed at his blistered feet and felt a quiver of self-pity go through him. “My feet hurt me”, he sobbed in reply to his uncle’s admonition. “Come, come”, said Daya Ram irritably.” (C-p.5)

Anand also depicts the pathetic life of Munoo surrounded by his uncle, aunt, and other relatives. Munoo is totally unaware about the life in the town. As he comes across different parts of the town, he eagerly asks his uncle:

“What is that animal?” he asked, rushing up to his uncle still the thumping of his heart and to seek the confidence that knowledge brings, “That is the injan of the rail gari...” (C-p.6-7)

The protagonist is absolutely unaware of the modern comforts and life style of the town. When Munoo begins to work as a servant in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram, he faces humorous problems from the first day. Sometimes, these unknown things create a humorous situation. Anand writes:

“Now he did not know where he should go to relieve himself. There were houses all about, and there were forbidding
bungalows cresting the hill. And he could hear people walking on the road. He did not know where the people in the towns went”. (C-p.17)

When Munoo relieves in front of the kitchen, the sharp-tongued mistress of the house abuses him:

“Vay, you eater of your masters! you shameless brute! You pig! You dog!” the storm burst on his head as, hearing no response to her call, she appeared at the door, saw him, and unable to bear the sight, withdrew.” (C-p.17)

Munoo has no option but to bear abuses and curses. He works hard in the house: washing dishes, bringing vegetables and cleaning them too. Munoo gets ill-treatment from Bibiji. When she notices that Munoo always joins her son and daughter in the play, she admonishes and reminds him that he is nothing but a servant in the house and he should stay away from her children. She also advises him to concentrate on work only. As the time goes by, Munoo spends miserable days in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram. Munoo gets worst treatment from his uncle and other people as a result of disappointed and which he becomes disheartened. On getting such worst treatment from the members of the house, Munoo thinks to escape from the house.

Anand narrates the evil characteristics of the members of the house where Munoo works as a servant. In the end, he revolts against the
humiliation and without considering the result he bites Sheila the daughter of the master:

“Before he knew what he has done he had bitten her on the cheek.” (C-p.57)

This is the first revolt of the protagonist against his exploiters. The volcano of revolt, which burns inside gets burst. Munoo realizes his mistake and runs away from the house permanently. On the train, he meets to Prabha Dyal, a kind person, who promises him to take to Daulatpur and give him a job in his factory:

“Will you come with us, ohe Munoo?” asked Prabha, ignoring his partner’s advice and gently stroking the boy’s dark hair, which grew long on all sides and shadowed his wheat-coloured face. “Will you come and live with us? I am from Hamirpur, near Bilaspur, so we will look after you.” (C-p.63)

Munoo does not know where to go and what to do. He immediately accepts the proposal as he needs support of someone who can give him food and shelter. Prabha Dyal is a good natured man. Anand gives different phases in the life of the protagonist. In the new phase, he becomes acquainted with new people and shelter and love from them. Prabha Dyal’s gives a warm and loving welcome to Munoo:

“She was rather pale and reticent, but the wonderful eagerness with which she came up to Munoo and without asking who he was, took him in her arms and patted him on his forehead, at once put him at ease with her, and made him realize, what we
always realize in one subtle moment, the living warmth that is going to endear us to a person.” (C-p.66)

Since the death of his mother, Munno has not received such kind, tender and motherly love from any woman. He feels comfortable in the company of Prabha Dyal and Parbati. In the factory, Prabha gives him clear ideas about the job. Prabha says:

“Come,” said the master, smiling, “I will take you round to the shops and show you to the clients to whom you will be delivering goods.” (p.70)

Munoo starts his new job as a delivery boy. He delivers the products of the pickle factory to different shops. Anand describes in detail this new profession of the hero and his skills. His life becomes happy for a short period of time. He enjoys his life in the company of Tulsi, Prabha Dyal, Parbati and others. In the factory, Munoo comes across several incidents related to workers. During the work, he gets worst treatment from Ganpat and Sir Todar Mal, the neighbour. After the compliant from Sir Todar Mal against the factory, the corporation officer Dr. Marjoribank visits the factory. At that time, Munoo shows good manners to the medical officer. He greets:

“Good afternoon Sahib,” shouted Munoo mischievously from back side of the door of the pickle factory.” (C-p.88)

Munoo is very honest and sincere in nature. He works very hard in the factory and tries to support his beloved master Prabha Dyal, but his hard work and honesty do not solve problems of Prabha Dyal. He
feels very dejected that his owner is arrested and beaten up due to the wrong doings of Ganpat. He tries to argue with the officer regarding the charge. He and Tulsi say:

“*Oh, don’t beat him, don’t beat him,*” cried Munoo and Tulsi.

“*It is Master Ganpat who is at fault.*” (C-p.112)

Anand narrates Munoo’s loyalty towards his master Prabha Dyal. He tries to convince the police latter but unfortunately the officer starts beating him without reasons. Prabha Dyal makes a request to the officer:

“*Oh, beat me, huzoor, beat me!*” shrieked Prabha. “*Beat me as much as like, but spare those boys.*” (C-p.112)

It is the honesty and kindness of Prabha who himself suffers much, but he humbly folds his hands in front of the officer for an orphan and becomes the first man in Munoo’s life as a saviour protector. Anand depicts the picture of humanity and compassion with help of this character. After a long inquiry, the police officer realizes that Prabha Dyal, Munoo and Tulsi are innocent and loyal servants, so the police officer relives them without any charge. When they reach the house, Munoo immediately serves his master by calling the doctor and by giving him medicines. Munoo says:

“*Did they leave you then, Ustadji?*” asked Munoo, *coming up to him impetuously.*” (C-p.114)
Munoo attempts to support his master and decides to work as a coolie, but it is very difficult for him to do that. Both Tulsi and Munoo stay loyal to Prabha and decide to work hard in the market to support their master. However, Prabha decides to leave the town and go to his native place. Once again, Munoo remains alone and alienated. After the departure of Prabha and his family from the town, Munoo has to face starvation. He tries to satisfy the hunger, he stands as a beggar in the row in front of the temple. Anand narrates:

“He ran and spread his hands before the dispenser of food.

“Where is your plate? The man asked.

‘I haven’t got one, Maharaj’, Munoo said with a tremor on his lips to convey an appeal for pity’. (C-p.133)

Anand presents a series of misfortunes in the life of the hero. The hypocrisies, lies, and harmful practices are presented by the novelist with help of his characters. Though Munoo starts to work as a coolie in the Daulatpur station, he never gets success because of the license and the social system. Everywhere, he faces obstacles and the system would not allow him to live peacefully.

When Munoo arrives in Bombay with the help of an elephant driver, first he tries to find the earning source. By his good luck, he comes across a couple who have also come to seek same odd job in Bombay. When he finds Hari Har and his wife want to settle down in Bombay, he immediately gets close to them and helps them by taking his son on his shoulder. Every time, Munoo’s life takes new twists and turns.
During his journey from his village to Shampur, from Daultapur to Bombay, he becomes acquainted with various people in the country. Some of them are good and cooperative, where as some are unkind and uncooperative. When Munoo comes to Bombay, he knows nothing and tries to make friendship with others. He tries to get close to Hari Har, as a coolie. He says:

"Brother," said Munoo eagerly, "I am a newcomer to Bombay and I want a job too. In your thought do you think it will be possible for me to get a job at the factory where you work? I am a coolie. I come from up country." (C-p.159)

Here, Anand gives the minute details about humble nature of the coolies. Munoo’s humble request is accepted by the old man Hari Har and both join the factory by accepting the condition of Chimta Sahib. Munoo lives with the family of Hari as well as works with him in the same factory. As a companion, Hari teaches him how to handle the machine. He says:

"You stand here, boy," said Hari from where sat on his left, "and move that handle with your right hand as I am doing. Whenever the thread breaks, join it quickly with a knot." (C-p.185)

Munoo gets familiar with the new jobs and atmosphere. He starts to learn machine handling skill. The hero’s life in Bombay is adventurous one because he faces extremely new atmosphere as compared to the pervious life. He learns social lessons from Ratan but
unfortunately he gets separated from him due to the strike of the factory workers. The incident of accident brings Munoo close to Mrs. Mainwaring. She takes him with her thinking that he would be useful as an aide and would work as a servant in the house and pull rickshaw. She also thinks that the boy can be useful to fulfil her sexual desires. She gives Munoo good treatment. Anand narrates:

“\textit{He was pleased with life, especially as the Memsahib has, with her own hands, given him some apples and bananas and sweets.”} (C-p.255)

Munoo embarks on his new life and serves his new memsahib as a domestic servant and a rickshaw puller. He serves his mistress and offers her every comfort. She becomes dependent on him. In the company of Mrs. Mainwaring, Munoo becomes aware of the sexual intercourse. His desire becomes ripe so he gets interested in her toilet and strolls around the bedroom. Sometimes, Munoo cannot control himself and his amorous feelings. But as a boy, he does not know what to do:

\textit{“Munoo smiled with the quivering ripples of affection that the contact of her hands had produced him. He felt dizzy with the intoxicating warmth that her coquettish movements had aroused in him. He hung his head down to avoid the embarrassment, which he felt, and yet unable to control the fire in his blood, he fell at her feet in an orgy of tears and kisses.”} (C-p.259)
This sudden change in the body of Munoo is the key aspect for Anand to observe physical maturity of the protagonist. Munoo, the protagonist of the novel gets the knowledge of the physical world. But it is too late for the protagonist to survive the practical, hypocritical, and selfish world. In the end he suffers from tuberculosis and at young age.

3.5 Major Female Characters

3.5.1 Bess

Bess is one of the female characters in the novel The Plot Against America. She completes her school and but due to high expenses, she fails to complete her education. Philip narrates:

“My mother- who’d wanted to go to teachers’ college but couldn’t because of the expenses, who’d lived at home working as an office secretary after finishing high school, who’d kept us from feeling poor during the worst of the Depression by budgeting the earnings my father turned over to her each Friday as efficiently as she ran the household - was thirty six.”

(PAA-p.01)

Bess is a housewife and looks after her two children named Sandy and Philip. Her relation with her husband is good and both understand each other well. She supports her husband in social work, family functions and other activities. She likes social work, but only for the Jews. Philip states:
“My parents were outgoing, hospitable people, their friends culled from among my father’s associates at the office and from the women who along with my mother had helped to organize the Parent-Teacher Association at newly built Chancellor Avenue School, where my brother and I were pupils. All were Jew.” (PAA-p.2-3)

Bess is well aware about the Jews’ problems in America and other parts of the world. As a wife, she understands her husband’s nature. She knows the anti-Nazi attitude of her husband. On many occasions, she manages to pacify Herman’s anger and his anti-Nazi outrage. She knows the habits and behaviour of her husband. During the tours to Washington, Herman starts abusing the Nazi follower. That time, she pacifies him in the following manner:

“Herman,” my mother pleaded, “Don’t start.” (PAA-p.76)

From the above comment, one understands Bess psychology and maturity. She is a very hardworking woman and loves her children. As a good mother, she takes care of her children and teaches them values and ethics. Being a woman, she is very sensitive and understandable. Philip opines:

“Of course, I knew my mother cared for each of her children with equal devotion, but not till Sandy was gone to Kentucky did I learn how much he meant to her as someone distinct from his little brother.” (PAA-p.108-109)
From the above opinion of Philip, it becomes clear that Bess loves her children. The writer also presents her sensitive nature. Her relation with Alvin is quite good. She looks after him as her child. When she gets information about the injury of Alvin in the war, she becomes sad and can not control her feelings. She says:

> “I have to tell you about Alvin,” my mother said to him. “I didn’t want to write because…….well, I didn’t want to shock you dear.” Here, having gathered herself together to make certain she wouldn’t cry, she said in a low voice, “Alvin was wounded. He’s in a hospital in England. He’s there recovering from his wounds.” (p.112)

In this context, one can comprehend Bess’ nature and the way in which she helps her family, relatives and other Jews. As a husband, Herman does not fail to perform his duty but sometimes he seeks the advice of his wife in important matters. When he decides to reject the promotion and transfer order given by the company, his wife Bess says:

> “But can the company fire you for turning them down?”

> “Honey, I did what I did. That’s the end of it.” (PAA-p.14)

Sometimes, Bess is unable to control her husband’s feelings and activities. When the family is humiliated by the hotel manager during their tour, Herman tries to admonish him, but Bess forces him to leave the hotel and tries to control him:
“Dear, let’s just go”, she beseeched my father. “Mr. Taylor found us a room nearby.” “No!” my father cried, and he threw off the hand with which she had tried to snatch his arm.” (p.84-85)

Bess is a very kind and thoughtful mother. She wants to prevent her children from doing wrong things. Sometimes, Sandy disobeyes her and indulges in unwanted activities. He wants to participate in OAA program against his mother’s wish so it hurts her. She wants to prevent him, but in the end fails in her plan. She tries to convince him in the following manner:

“And your hands,” my mother said. “There’s barbed wire on the farms. There are machines with sharp blades. You can injure your hands, and then where would you be? You’d never draw again.” (PAA-p.102)

Roth attempts to present the psychological aspects of the woman. When Sandy blames his father for the tragic life of Alvin, it is only Bess who clears the misunderstanding of her son and tries to maintain healthy atmosphere among the family members. She argues:

“Dear, no, this isn’t true”, and her hand flew up to cover her mouth as though it were she who had spoken those unpardonable words. “That is not so”, she objected. “Alvin went off to Canada without telling us. He ran away on that Friday night. You remember how terrible it was. Nobody
wanted Alvin to go to war- he just went on his own.” (PAA-p.114)

It becomes clear that as a mother, Bess plays a vital role in the family. She gives proper guidance to her sons. Sometimes, she lives a suffocated life under the dominant nature of her husband. When her sister arrives in their house, she is not able to welcome her openheartedly as she knows that Rabbi Lionel Bengelsdorf is an enemy of her husband. She does not want to disappoint her husband. She tries to stay away from Evelyn and her husband. She says:

“Forest green’ said my mother, trying to smile and trying to please but speaking with difficulty and unable as yet to look his way.” (p.122)

As a wife, she considers the likes and dislikes of her husband so she deliberately avoids speaking to Evelyn and her brother-in-law. Roth narrates the male dominant society with the help of characters like Bess and Herman. She tries to avoid her sister, Evelyn and does not come to receive her. Being a good mother, Bess always encourages and inspires her children for good work. When Philip sees the dead body of the man and gets scared, his mother gives him moral support. She tries to remove the fear from his mind as it is evident in the following expression:

“Don’t, don’t, darling”, my mother said. “There’s nothing to be frightened of.” She put her arms around my head, held me to her, and repeated, “There’s nothing to be frightened of. He was
sick and he was suffering and he died. Now he’s not suffering anymore.” (PAA-p.201)

Roth creates the universal character of a mother in this novel and emphasizes that the American woman is not devoid of love, passion and feelings. Her relationship with her neighbours is not only good but also very co-operative. In the tragic times, Herman and Bess help Mrs. Wishnow and support her morally. The following statement highlights this fact:

“After we’d finished eating, my mother put a meal together for Seldon and Mrs. Wishnow, and my father helped her carry the plates downstairs while Sandy and I were left with the dinner dishes. (p.203)

Roth depicts the helpful and social nature of Bess. He narrates the details of her habits and attitudes. At the same time, she is well aware of the Jewish community. Her husband keeps insulting and humiliating her sister, but she does not react or give her opinions because she knows her sister is involved in the sly activities, which are against the Jewish community. In the end of the novel, she is worried about the tragic life of Evelyn. She argues:

“Why don’t you go to the von Ribbentrops’ to hide? My mother said. “Why don’t you go to your friend Herr von Ribbentrop for protection? Stupid girl! What about my family? Don’t you think that we’re afraid too? Don’t you think we’re in danger too? Selfish little bitch—we’re all afraid.” (PAA-p.405)
Though she abuses her sister for her evil deeds and her association with anti-Jewish people, she is disappointed to see the worst circumstances in which her sister is trapped. She gives priority to the security of her family.

3.5.2 Phoebe

Phoebe is a tall, thin and white-haired woman introduced by Philip Roth at the beginning of *Everyman*. She works in the agency as a copy writer with the nameless hero, and during this period, they fall in love with each other. Though the nameless hero is married and has two sons, she accepts him:

“He’d never before felt so rotten, not even after he’d left Cecilia and the two small boys and the court battle ensued over the terms of the separation and he was characterized to the court by Cecilia’s attorney as a “well-known philanderer” because of the affair he was having with Phoebe.” (E-p.33)

The above description clarifies that Phoebe is well aware of the family background of the nameless hero and yet she accepts him.

The nameless hero has a strong faith in his second wife and calls her during stay in the hospital. He feels that Phoebe will help him without any remorse. During the hospitalization of the hero, she serves him truly so he feels comfortable and recovers in a short time. Roth characterizes the helpful and hard working nature of the women characters in his novel. Bess is the representative of such characters.
The writer focuses on the universal qualities such as cooperation, devotion, loyalty of women through the characters in the novel:

“Phoebe was in a chair beside the bed holding his hand. She was a pale, pretty young woman whose soft appearance belied her equanimity and steadfastness. She manifested no fear and allowed none in her voice”. (E-p.36)

It shows that the bond between the wife and husband was strong at one stage, but due to the immoral nature of the hero, she estrangers him. Meanwhile, the nameless hero also proves to be capable of taking care of Phoebe at this juncture. During the illness of Phoebe, the hero devotedly helps and serves her without any misunderstanding. He knows Phoebe’s generous and supportive nature. It becomes clear from the following:

“All he could do for her was to remove the big cooking pot into which she vomited, and to clean it out in bathroom, and then to tiptoe back into the bedroom and place it beside the bed for her to use when she was sick again.” (E-p.37)

One notices an intimate relationship between the husband and wife. Roth describes the warmth and passionate bond between them that for a lasts short time because of the nameless hero’s addiction to sexual pleasures from his youth. When Phoebe realizes her husband’s affair with the Danish twenty-four year old model, it results in conflict between them:
“No, you shared a cab with the Danish twenty-four-year-old with whom you are having an affair. I’m sorry, but I can no longer look the other way. I looked the other way with that secretary. But the humiliation has now gone too far.” (E-p.118)

Roth focuses on the American lifestyle, problems in the American family and their feeling of alienation. The lust, sex and extramarital affairs make the people in American society suffer too much. The novelist focuses on the evil activities like immoral relationships, killing, and stealing in American society which gets worse day after day. The nameless hero starts an affair with the Danish Model without giving a single thought to his wife and daughter. The novelist depicts the immoral relation of the nameless hero and how it affects his family in the worst possible manner. Phoebe does not realize the real nature of her husband. At first, she does not believe it, but soon, she understands the deceitful nature of her husband:

“With Phoebe he lied and lied and lied, but to no avail. He told her that he had gone to Paris to break off the affair with Merete.” (E-p.119)

When she discovers the illicit relationship of her husband, she decides to divorce him. This decision is very painful for her. She is not willing to accept another woman in the life of her husband. Philip Roth attempts to describe the universal quality of a woman with the help of Phoebe’s character that woman cannot bear the illicit relation of her husband. After divorcing her husband, she lives in a luxurious apartment in Manhattan along with her lovely daughter, Nancy.
Phoebe’s relations with other members of the family are quite good. She regards each and every one of them as a family though she has divorced her husband, the nameless hero. Her relationship with her daughter Nancy is without prejudice as they know each other’s tribulations very well. Both are aware of the degradation of the nameless hero. On the tragic death of her father, Nancy not only supports her mother at cemetery but also requests her to offer deep condolences. She remembers the days in the life of her husband. She speaks:

“When asked by Nancy if she wanted to say anything, Phoebe shyly shook her head but then went ahead to speak in a soft voice, her speech faintly slurred.” (E-p.2)

Thus, it becomes clear that Roth depicts the emotional aspects of Phoebe and indicates how she loves her husband though he is unfaithful to her. When her mother becomes emotional and starts crying, Nancy gives her physical and emotional support. The following expression makes it clear:

“His way of talking and the pleasant pitch of his voice were so like his brother’s that Phoebe began to cry, and, quickly, Nancy took her by the arm.” (E-p.5)

Roth emphasizes the bond between the mother and daughter to show the common feeling of love, passion and psychology of the women characters.
3.5.3 Nancy

Nancy is one of the woman characters in the novel *Everyman*. She is the daughter of the nameless hero. Roth reveals the inherent good qualities of women characters in his novel. He also depicts the characters in different roles such as mother, father, son, daughter, etc. The female characters are naive, generous, and dutiful symbolizing humanity, cooperation and compassion. Nancy completes her college education but in real life she is not able to learn the lessons of life. In school, Nancy was a sportswoman and a good runner. Roth describes:

“They were thirteen, she’d placed second in a race at her all-girls school, a run of about two miles, and she saw the possibility of something in which she could be exceptional.” (E-p.77)

As a father, the hero loves his daughter as is evident from her running in competition and behaviour when he takes her to the hospital. Along with the coach, he rushes Nancy to the hospital emergency room, when she is in acute pain. There is a strong bond between the father and the daughter. Nancy also supports her father in his illness. She serves him faithfully. She says:

“Are you all right?” Nancy asked, putting her arms around him while he stood and looked at the lines the stick had made in the soil, drawn there as if for a children’s game.” (E-p.61)
Roth describes the close association and affinity between the nameless hero and his daughter. When he comes to know that Nancy is divorced, he becomes unhappy. Nancy tries to maintain her father’s happiness without considering her own sorrow in life and separation from her poet husband. In the beginning of the novel, Roth describes the scene of the cemetery where all the relatives of the nameless hero assemble. Nancy arranges the funeral ceremony of her father. Nancy’s mother, Phoebe is also present for this funeral. She asks everyone to express their feelings about her father and in the end, she talks about her family. She is full of pride about her family history and the social status. She, very eagerly, tells every mourner about the cemetery and also its tradition. She says:

“Nancy told everyone, “I can begin by saying something to you about this cemetery, because I’ve discovered that my father’s grandfather, my great grandfather, is not only buried in the original few acres alongside my great-grandmother but was one of its founders in 1888.” (E-p.2-3)

From the above expression, it is clear that Nancy is proud of her family history and the stature of her family in the past. As a daughter, she expresses the emotions and feelings about her father even though she knows that her father married three times in his life as well as had affairs with several women. She wants to bury her father by the side of his parents whom he loved very much. She says:

“I wanted him to lie close to those who loved him and from whom he descended. My father loved his parents and he should
be near them. I didn’t want him to be somewhere alone.” (E-p.4)

Nancy expresses her feelings during her father’s funeral. She knows everybody in the family and how the deceased are buried close to each other. Thus, Nancy’s character is noble and praiseworthy.

3.5.4 Sohini

The second main character of the novel Untouchable is Sohini. As a female character, she is calm and hard working. Anand introduces female characters in a very subtle and naive manner particularly the heroine of his novel is simple and a committed girl. Some characters are morally good and exhibit good qualities such as love, kindness, compassion, etc. Anand uses very subtle yet realistic language for the physical description of his women characters in Untouchable. He paints the figurative picture of Sohini. He describes:

“She had a sylph-like form, not thin but full-bodied within the limits of her graceful frame, well-rounded on the hips, with an arched narrow waist from which descended the folds of her trousers and above which were her full, round, globular breasts, jerking slightly, for lack of bodice, under her transparent muslin shirt.” (U-p.14)

The novelist portrays the character of Sohini vividly. She is innocent in nature. After the death of her mother, she does all the household chores including fetching water from the public well and food from the houses of the caste Hindus. She cooks food for the family and
manages to do every kind of work in the house because she is well aware of the duties of women particularly in the Indian society. Anand presents a typical Indian girl through the character of Sohini. She is hard working and cares for her family members. The following description reveals this fact:

“She was blowing hard at it, lifting herself on her haunches as she crouched on the mud floor. Her head almost touched the ground, but each puff from her mouth succeeded only in raising a spurt of smoke and was beaten back by the wet wooden sticks that served as fuel. She sat back helpless when she heard her brother’s footsteps. Her smoke-irritated eyes were full of water. She turned and saw her brother. Real tears began to flow down her cheeks.” (U-p.13)

Sohini understands the miserable condition in which the family lives. Therefore, she never asks anything from her brother or father. Being a woman, she understands the limitations and helpless situation of women in India and follows traditions of the society without any regret. Bakha loves his sister and understands the poverty of the family. He helps his sister in her household duties and gives her moral support in difficult times. When Bakha arrives, he comes to know that there is no water in the house. It is evident from the following extract:

“There is no water in that,” his sister said. “I will get some water from the pitcher.” he said as he casually made towards the corner. “There is no water in the pitcher either, she answered. “Oh!” he exclaimed under his breath, tired and
exasperated. And for a moment he stood defeated where he had bent down to the pitcher”. (U-p.14)

It becomes clear that Sohini and Bakha understand each other. Both are conscious about the problems so they co-ordinate each other in their work. Anand balances the characters in his novel. The elder brother is aware of their poverty and understands his sisters’s feeling. Sohini too understands the situation and the feelings of her brother. When she realizes her brother is very thirsty and wants to drink water, she immediately goes to the public well to fetch water. The following description highlights this fact:

“She had sensed with her deep woman’s instinct the feeling in her brother’s soul. He was tired. He was thirsty. She had felt like a mother as she issued from her home to fetch water, a mother going out to fetch food or drink for the loved ones at home.” (U-p.15)

Mulk Raj Anand highlights the love between brother and sister through incidents. Like a mother, Sohini takes care of her brother and hence she immediately goes to the community well to fetch water. As soon as she comes to the platform of the well Gulabo, the washerwoman picks up a quarrel with her. Gulabo is an aggressive woman who treats Sohini in an offensive manner. It is an irony that she herself is an outcaste woman having illicit relation with a caste-Hindu, but she objects to Sohini’s morality. Gulabo starts showering abuses on her as indicated in the words in the following extract:
“Think of it! Think of it! You bitch! You prostitute! Wanton!
And your mother hardly dead. Think of laughing in my face,
laughing at me who am old enough to be your mother. Bitch!”
The washer woman exploded.” (U-p.17)

Sohini is modest and submissive so she does not react to Gulabo and
listens to her abuses without protest because she is aware that Bhangi
is the lowest caste among untouchables. Anand suggests that the
untouchability also exists among the lower castes through the
characters of Gulabo. In India, each caste considers itself superior to
others’. The people of one caste look down upon therefore another
caste. We observe untouchability among different sub-castes of the
untouchables. Each caste tries to dominate the less privileged caste.
Anand keenly observes this downside of the outcastes.

The lower castes are not allowed to take water directly from the public
well. They have to depend on the mercy of caste Hindus for filling
their pitchers. The following expression makes it clear:

“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 the three upper castes would consider the
water polluted”. (U-p.14)

Anand points out on the grim reality of the Indian society which
believes in discrimination on the basis of caste. In the Pre-
Independence era, the so called upper class Hindus exploited the
downtrodden. They gave bad treatment to them. As a social writer,
Anand exposes the hypocrisy of Hindu people. The high caste people in the Hindu society do not allow the low caste people to enter the religious places, public places, and their houses. They do not even allow themselves to be touched by the low caste people.

Anand attempts to present such hypocrisies through the molestation incident of Sohini by Kali Nath, the temple priest. Sohini narrates this incident to her brother. When asked, she sobs and replies to Bakha:

“Tell me! Tell me! I will kill him if.........’ he shouted. “He-e-e just teased me”, she at last yielded. “And then when I was bending to work, he came and held me by my breasts.” (U-p.54)

The above incident clearly shows the keen observation of Anand and his social criticism of each and every aspect of the Indian society. He attempts to expose the hypocritical priest, immoral Gulabo, orthodox Lalaji and other similar characters that are representatives of evil forces in the society. Bakha is not only aware of the hypocrisy of the Hindu society, but also is the victim of it. He gets angry when he comes to know about the seduction of his beloved sister by Kali Nath. His anger knows no bound. His eyes flare wild and read. He says:

“I could show you what that Brahmin dog has done!” (U-p.54)

In the above context, Anand shows the bond between the brother and sister. In the male dominated culture, the women are given an inferior place. Even Sohini does not dare to oppose or rebel against the age-old structure of the Indian society. In the male-dominated society,
whatever she gets, she accepts it without any remorse and objections. Sohini is one of the representatives of women in Dalit society. Anand’s depiction of north Indian rural and feudal society, especially that of the Punjab is as authentic as Indian history.

3.5.5 Mrs. Mainwaring

Mrs. Mainwaring is one of the women characters in *Coolie*. She is an important character next to Munoo. She comes from an old Anglo-Indian family. Her father, William Smith, marries the daughter of an English engine driver. Before marriage, her name was May:

“*May was looked after in her early childhood by the wife of a Catholic missionary and then sent to the Convent of the sacred Heart at Simla.*” (C-p.251)

Anand describes the childhood of May and her school life at Simla where she grew up in the hill station among the children of English officials. In order to cope with the snobbery of other children, she fabricates cock and bull stories about her home. Although her life was miserable at school, she had a great ambition to go to England:

“*But May’s ambition to become ‘pukka white’, which was at the back of her desire to go to Europe, was satisfied mere easily.*” (C-p.251)

She tries to hide the reality and pretends to be a true British girl. This inferiority complex makes her fearful, parochial and stubborn. At the early stage of her life, she falls in love with a German photographer.
Both get married and spend two years together. She becomes the mother of a beautiful baby girl named, Penelope. Her family life was happy with her husband before the World War II. Unfortunately in India, British government arrested German people. Her husband also was arrested and they got separated from each other. Her husband had to move to concentration camp. After that she remains alone in the metropolitan city and her lifestyle changes. Anand describes a series of immoral incidents and unfaithful qualities of May after this tragic incident. She is unfaithful to her husband and becomes a mistress of Aga Raka Alishah, but she does not remain faithful to him also. Meanwhile, her ambition again provokes her and she wants to regain English nationality. She plans to marry an army officer, named Guy Mainwaring, in India on the condition that both will enjoy honeymoon in England:

“She married Guy and proposed that they should spend their honeymoon at home’ in England. Guy took six months’ leave of absence, took her and her children to London.” (C-p.253)

After their marriage, she becomes Mrs. Mainwaring and they enjoy their honeymoon in England. During this period, she gives birth to the baby girl, who does not resemble to her husband biologically but Guy Mainwaring accepts the fact and tries to keep her happy. Even he gives her the fortune inherited from his mother. Mrs. Mainwaring stays in England to complete the education and fulfils her ambition to gain the English nationality:
“She made the excuse that she wanted to get a diploma in teaching at the Polytechnic and to look after the children a bit before they went to a secondary school.” (C-p.254)

Anand describes ambitious nature of May and her efforts to fulfil her childhood dream. She reaches her destination by using foul means schemes. Anand depicts the sexual journey of Mrs. Mainwaring. Anand presents her as immoral, illicit and unfaithful in nature. She suffers due to anxiety and ambition from her childhood. She does not hesitate to accept the immoral ways. She wants to stay in England, but her husband always insists on her returning to India:

“Guy has been writing to her dutifully, regularly, imploring her to come back to India.” (C-p.254)

Guy loves her too much and hence he provides her with every luxury. He wants to make her happy but she neglects the real world and wants to live in the fancy world where she flirts with many men. In her life, there is no place for honesty, morality, and genuine feelings. She thinks of nationality, wealth, and pleasures of life. The following description shows this:

“She believed every rhyme to be a great poem, and every photographic portrait to be a great work of art. She slept with any verse writer or painter who would notice her.” (C-p.254)

Considering the journey of Mrs. Mainwaring, Anand gives us a detailed account of her luxurious life without trace of morality. After
the long journey, she arrives in Simla without her elder son. She keeps her elder son in a boarding school:

“...the elder children being fixed up at a boarding-school. It was summer, however, and she said she could not bear the heat of the plains and be with him in Peshawar. So he rented a flat near Annandale at Simla for the season for her.” (C-p.254)

Anand attempts to bring out the difference between European mother and Indian mother. In Coolie, these are female characters such as Parbati and Laxmi, but Mrs. Mainwaring’s character is different from them. Laxmi is a devoted wife who works in the factory and looks after her house and looks after her children. Though she gets tired, she never gets irritated or abuses her children. However, Mrs. Mainwaring is dishonest, lazy and without any trace of love for her children:

“Mrs. Mainwaring, who had gone to bed at two or three o’clock in the morning, cursed at her daughter for disturbing her sleep, and bullied her to clean her teeth and wash her face if she wanted her chota hazri. As the child was self-willed, obstinate and disobedient and wanted to be noticed all the time, Mrs. Mainwaring smacked her and sent down to the servants’ quarter for some time.” (C-p.257)

From the above description, it becomes clear that Mrs. Mainwaring is a selfish woman. She never considers the needs of her own children.
Her happy–go-lucky lifestyle and strange behaviour land her in absurd phases of life.

Mrs. Mainwaring is a cunning woman. She takes Munoo with her. She even knows how to utilize him in day-to-day work. Guy loves her too much and hence he provides every facility to her and makes her life happy but she neglects the real world and wants to live in the fancy world where flirtations with men short-lived pleasures exist. She even thinks of Munoo for arousing sexual feelings in her:

She said, “How a woman gives herself in love, in pity, in tenderness, in playfulness and in hundred different moods? What right had people to judge one? Why can’t I give myself to this boy?”(C-p.258)

For a while, she looks at Munoo and thinks to play with him physically but she is unable to do so. She used to have sex with various men in the city, in England and everywhere she goes but she feels disgusted to show her waist to a doctor or she does not want the waist chopped off. Anand narrates:

“She would not have any part of her body removed, though she would not have minded having her body under the waist chopped off because, she said, she was disgusted with the use to which God put it.” (C-p.259)

In the end, there comes the realization and she feels disgusted about her committing sexual crimes. Anand exposes such people who enjoy all pleasures in their lives and regret only at the end.
3.6 Minor Male Characters

Minor male characters also help in the development of the plot of a novel. Therefore, studying these characters against their socio-cultural aspects are as important as the major characters.

3.6.1 Sandy

Roth balances the political as well as family characters in the novel *The Plot Against America* and creates a unique method of characterization. He depicts the characters in the context of family, such as, son, father, mother, uncle, aunt, and cousin. Sandy, a twelve-year old boy, was born in 1928 and lives with his parents on the Street Avenue in Newark in New Jersey. He completes his school education from Chancellor Avenue School and has a great talent for drawing. He uses his talent to draw beautiful pictures of a lady, her dark hair and her smiling face with a surprise. Sandy can draw anything, a bike, a tree, a dog, a chair and political persons like Mr. Roosevelt, Mrs. Roosevelt, Newark mayor, Fiorello La Guardia etc. The people ask him about his drawing skills:

“What’s the trick, they all asked him, how’d you do it, as if tracing-as if outright magic-might have played some part in the feat.” (APP-p.25)

Roth describes various qualities of Sandy as an artist, a school boy, a good brother and a friend. Sandy’s drawing conveys the meaning of life. It is symbolic in nature. He draws life of human beings and society. Roth portrays him as an artist who draws the pictures of
Kentucky farm. When Rabbi Bengelsdorf visits the house, Aunty Evelyn forces Sandy to show the paintings of animals from Kentucky farm. He has painted the life of the Negroes, men and women on the farm. Sandy’s paintings are useful for Rabbi Bengelsdorf to introduce the planning of OAA program. Thus, he inspires him. Roth describes Sandy’s character as a representative of the new generation in the American Jewish society. His relation with Philip, Alvin and Uncle Monty is good. He shares his thoughts with his little brother Philip and gives him some useful knowledge of the world. He always discusses with him the political issues so that the new generation of the Jews will take interest in political activities. They talk about the current political scenario. When they observe the scene of beer garden where the fascist people have enjoyed, Sandy explains Philip about it:

“...the beer garden had something to do with the German-American Bund, the German-American Bund had something to do with Hitler, and Hitler ,as I hadn’t to be told, had everything to do with persecuting Jews”.(PAA-p.12)

Roth depicts the nature of Sandy and his relations with other characters. He also focuses on Sandy’s habits of saving money in the collection box and using the money to buy the instruments for drawing. He learns from his father Herman how to save money. He washes family cars for money and saves it to fulfil his daily needs:

“Sandy saved his weekly allowance of twenty- five cents- and what change he earned shoveling snow and raking leaves and washing the family car” (U-p.28)
It becomes clear that Sandy is a disciplined person. He is also self-reliant. Therefore, Philip is proud of his brother and follows all his instructions. He discusses the political and social topics with Sandy. He tries to learn about unknown things from his brother as his brother knows everything, so he feels proud of him. Philip says:

“There was nobody more truthful than my brother.” (p.31)

Sandy’s relationship with his parents is quite good but sometimes, he tries to rebel against them. He blames his father, Herman for the tragic life of Alvin. Sandy says:

“But why was he even in the war, Ma?” “Because----- ”

“Because of Dad!” Sandy shouted.” (PAA-p.114)

The above remark by Sandy means that it is obvious that he is secular in nature. Roth’s main intention is to present the characters and their attributes through the characters. He also introduces the views of the new generation in the Jewish society. Roth focuses on Sandy’s rebellious quality. Though his parents attempt to oppose the OAA program of Lindbergh, Sandy decides to participate in it. His mother Bess tries to change his mind. The mother says to him:

“And your hands,” my mother said, “There’s barbed wire on farms. There are machines with sharp blades. You could injure your hands, and then where would you be? You’d never draw again.”(PAA-p.102)
Sandy is eager to know the new things so he participates in the program against the wishes of his parents. In the program, he gets the knowledge about farm animal and cultivation. When he returns from the OAA Program, his weight increases by ten pounds, and his hair become blondish because of the summer heat. Roth focuses on the crisis of the parents and the son. He depicts the crisis between Sandy and his father Herman at various levels. Sandy calls him a dictator like Hitler, and rejects the advice given by his father. Roth highlights the psychological features of Sandy. Generally in youth, boys do not follow the advice of their parents, they want to do according to their own likes and dislikes. Even, they do not succumb to the pressure of anyone. Sandy is a representative of such types of groups. When Herman tells him about the cunning plan of Aunty Evelyn and how she used him as a tool, Sandy rejects the blame and marks the advice of the father:

“Aunty Evelyn?” Sandy asked, “Aunt Evelyn is making me into a ‘tool’? Getting me invited to the White House- that’s making me in to a ‘tool’?” (PAA-p.229)

Roth presents the new generation with the help of Sandy’s character. He considers the opinions and views of the modern young boy who tries to learn something new in the world. Sometimes, Sandy does not follow his father’s advice and abuses him:

“Bullshit” Sandy said. (PAA-p.229)
Sandy’s furious and rebellious attitudes are introduced by Roth in the novel. He is more confident about his aunt Evelyn then his mother Bess and father Herman. Therefore, he tries to make a career of his aunt’s status. It is illustrated in the following utterances of Sandy:

“No! That isn’t true!” he said. “I’m sorry but I can’t let Aunt Evelyn down.” (PAA-p.229)

One can understand Sandy’s innocent nature and love for his aunt. He does not consider the cunning and crucial plan of Lindbergh. On the contrary, he mocks all the speeches of Walter Winchell and his anti Lindbergh policies. Roth creates the dynamic character of Sandy representing the Jewish society. Thus Sandy is a representative of the young generation of the Jews in America.

3.6.2 Uncle Monty

Uncle Monty is one of the male characters in the novel introduced by Roth. He describes various aspects of Uncle Monty and his relation with other characters. Uncle Monty’s character is different from other characters in the family. He wears clean clothes instead of the body stained, wind broken and splattered old pants. He is the most overbearing of Philip’s uncle and one of the richest persons in the Jewish society. He is a well known tomato king in the market business. He has been working in the market for fourteen years and his experience helped him to carve a future in the tomato business as the following description unveils this fact:
“-----he was no match for the innovator who’d first gambled on bringing ripe tomatoes to Newark in the wintertime by buying up carloads of green tomatoes from Cuba and ripening them in specially heated rooms on the creaky second floor of his Miller Street warehouse. When they were ready, Monty packed them four to a box, got top dollar, and was known thereafter as the Tomato King.” (PAA-p.146)

As a wholesale fruit and vegetable merchant, Uncle Monty is always busy in the market near the railroad tracks at the Miller Street market so his wife blames him for neglecting the family and not sparing any time for them. His relation with other members of the family is good. He takes care of everyone. Especially, he looks after his nephew, Alvin. He always feels sympathy for him as the following remark shows this:

“If Jack was alive”, Monty said “the kid wouldn’t have go out the front door.”(PAA-p.147)

He expresses the inner feelings about his brother Jack. He loves Herman but does not like his attitudes and anti-Lindbergh’s activities. He advises him to concentrate on the work rather than on political prospects, and sometimes, scolds him for misleading the kids. He says:

“You sound like Alvin, Herman. You sound like a kid. What counts besides money? Your two boys count. You want Sandy to come home one day like Alvin? You want Phil,”(PAA-p.148)
From the above comment, it is crystal clear that Monty does not like Alvin’s attitude. He objects to the wrong advice given to Alvin. He has experience of war. In his youth, he had participated in a war and fought for French army against Germany, but he came home and settled in the city. Therefore, he knows the distractive power of war. He scolds Alvin:

“How the hell did you manage to lose a leg?” (PAA-p.178)

Roth describes the honesty and faithfulness of Uncle Monty in this novel. He is an obedient person who follows the orders of his mother and helps Alvin. His knows his responsibility towards his brother’s family and sons. He is ready to help the son:

“I’m doing it for your father, sonny, not for you. I’m doing for your grandmother. “Help the boy,” she tells me, so I’m helping you.” (PAA-p.181)

From the above utterances, it becomes clear that Monty is a dutiful person and follows the advice of the elders. He never forgets Jack’s support and contribution during his critical days. It is because of Jack, he becomes rich and well-known in the business. As an honest man, he feels sympathy for Jack’s son, Alvin and is ready to help him after the death of Jack. He says:

“You pocket half the take at the Esso station, but I’ll go with you anyway because you’re still Jack’s kid, and for my brother Jack I do anything.” (PAA-p.180)
Roth describes contrastive natures and behaviours of the characters in this novel. Though Herman and Uncle Monty are brothers, their natures are diametrically opposite to each other. Herman is a strong follower of the Jewish community. He discusses the political issues and tries to provoke the people against Lindbergh’s policy. However Uncle Monty keeps himself away from the political arena and even does not discuss it. He always thinks about his business. He does not pay attention to the problems of the Jews and other societies on the contrary Herman takes part in the social activities. These are the prominent differences between Herman and Uncle Monty. Thus, Uncle Monty is practical in nature and gives preference to the economic development rather than social services.

3.6.3 Alvin

Alvin is one of the male characters portrayed by Roth in The Plot Against America. After the death of his parents, he lives with Herman’s family in Newark in New Jersey. His father Mr. Jack is a very hard working and cooperative person. He supports Uncle Monty to become a successful businessman in the market. Alvin remembers his father’s advice:

“He laughed, and so I laughed. “My father said-when he saw me crying like hell, “This little stinker about that high –my father said, ‘Stop crying, that doesn’t do any good’.”(PAA-p.184)
The above description makes it clear that Alvin’s father wants to make his son emotionally strong. Alvin’s relation with Herman is free in the beginning of the novel. They discuss the political topics and current situations of the Jews in America. Being a Jew, he is a strong supporter of the Jewish community. He realizes the selfish and corrupt nature of Rabbi Bengelsdorf. He criticizes him in the following manner:

“Yep”, Alvin said,” they brought him. The fix is in .They slipped a gold ring through his big Jaw, nose, and now they can lead him anywhere.” (PAA-p.44)

He considers Rabbi Bengelsdorf as a selfish man. He neither believes in moral values nor does he care for the Jewish ideals. He often blames him for the plight of the Jews in America like his uncle Herman. When uncle Herman suggests him to join as driver of Abe Steinheim, one of the Jew builders, he accepts it, but soon he leaves the job because of bad treatment given to him by old Steinheim. Let us study the following underlined abuses:

“But Alvin couldn’t bear Steinheim and reviled him constantly, he’s fake, he’s a bully, he’s a cheapskate, he’s a schemer, he’s a shouter....” (PAA-p.57)

From the above under lined abuses, one gets a clear idea about Alvin’s thinking. He is not a biased person because he openly abuses Steinheim though he belongs to the Jewish community. He never appreciates his own race for doing wrong things. On the other hand,
Herman only judges the Jews community rather than qualities, but Alvin deems that community as less important than qualities, humanity and morality so he rejects the advice of Herman to take the help from Abe Steinheim. Roth, thus, brings out the difference between the new generation and the old generation with help of various incidents in the novel. Though Herman tells him the real condition of other builders and their practical attitudes, Alvin does not accept his advice:

“You think if you worked for an Irish builder it would be better? Try it-go work for Shanley, you’ll see what a lovely fellow he is. And the Italians, would they be better, you think? Steinheim shoots his mouth off –the Italians shoot guns”?

(PAA-p.61-62)

Alvin denies the great opportunity of free college education, which is provided by the Jewish builder Abe Steinheim. He is self-centered, over-confidant and does not have any experience of the real world. Alvin bitterly criticizes the evil activities of Hitler and his followers. Whenever he hears about Hitler’s activities, he becomes angry. He abuses him:

“No, no, the worst human being ever born is Hitler, and frankly I’d rather be fighting that son of a bitch than waste my time with a Jew like Steinheim, who only brings shame on the rest of us Jews by his goddamn……” (PAA-p.61)
He decides to fight against Hitler and the Nazi followers so he participates in the war. Before he joins the Canadian army, he informs only Philip and Sandy about his joining. Alvin is ordered to be an active commando and is shipped to a secret staging area in the British Isles. But soon, he returns due to injuries. Roth projects the character of Alvin as a representative of the younger generation of the Jewish community. He gives more preference to the fight against Hitler than his career because he wants to save the Jew community from the evil activities of Hitler, the fascist.

When Alvin returns home from the war, the members of his family suggest him many career options. Uncle Monty wants him to take up the market business. Aunty Bess suggests him to complete his education with the help of disability pension, while Uncle Herman advices him to rejoin Abe Steinheim as a driver. Uncle Monty asks Alvin:

_To Alvin he said, “So now what? You going to lay there living off disability checks? You going to live like a sharpie off your luck? Or would you maybe consider supporting yourself like rest of us dumb mortals do?”_ (PAA-p.180)

Thus, it is obvious that the members of his family are worried about his career, but he does not think seriously. Meanwhile, he wastes his time in playing the card games and indulging in other activities. All these things create problems for Uncle Herman and Bess. Therefore, they decide to expel him from the house. Alvin’s disqualifications are lack of decision making power, over-confidence and self-centered
nature. In the company of Shussy and other friends, he indulges in smuggling so the FBI inquires about him. They blame Alvin for creating violence and indulging in criminal activities. During this period, he visits Minna and becomes her life partner though she is eighteen years older than him. Roth emphasizes the critical times in the life of Alvin. He also presents the real situation of the youth in America with the help of Alvin’s character. In the end, the novelist gives justice to the character and brings him to the original place.

When he comes to Uncle Herman’s home, he receives a good treatment and help. At that time, Herman discusses with him the social issues of the Jews. Alvin becomes furious and expresses his views:


Roth describes the ambiguous attitudes of the new generation about the Jewish community with the help of Alvin’s character. He decides to fight against Hitler, but in the end, he regrets for this over thinking about the community and his own career. Therefore, he scolds his uncle Herman and attacks him violently. The character of Alvin is the representative of the Jewish community and the young generation of the American society. Roth highlights different facets of the character through his activities and utterances.
3.6.4 Rabbi Bengelsdorf

Rabbi Lionel Bengelsdorf is one of the male characters described by Roth in his novel. He was born in South Carolina in 1879. He belongs to a well known family. His father Judah Benjamin was immigrant, dry goods merchant who fought for the confederacy and came from Germany to settle in South Carolina in 1850.

Rabbi’s father Judah Benjamin was a slave trader and sold Negroes to white people. Having such family background, Rabbi Bengelsdorf develops his qualities and becomes a scholar. He knows ten languages and various philosophical movements. He has a very impressive personality. He wears a dark three-piece suit, black shoes and speaks in mellifluous southern accent. Being a clergyman, he broadcasts his sermon weekly on the radio station WNJR. His friends Rabbi Silberfeld of B’nai Abraham and Rabbi Faster of B’nai Jeshurun are very close to each other. They consider themselves as Greek philosophers:

“It was fated just as Socrates Plato and Aristotle belong together in the ancient world, so we belong together in the religious world.” (PAA-p.39)

Roth describes self- centered, egoistic character of Rabbi Bengelsdorf. He does not consider the social problems the Jewish community though he himself belongs to it. On the country, he uses the weaknesses of the Jewish community and becomes a close friend of President Lindbergh. As a great scholar, he delivers speeches on
philosophical subjects such as nationality and unity of the nation. On the occasion of 215th anniversary celebration of the founding Newark, he is asked by the Mayor of Newark to deliver a speech on nationality. He says:

“There can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American, but something else also, isn’t American at all. We have room for but one flag, the American Flag.” (PAA-p.41)

This speech is well-know and is broadcast on the radio station. Roth describes the loyalty and faithfulness of Rabbi Bengelsdorf who gives physical and moral support to Lindbergh though his community criticizes him for his close association and friendship with Lindbergh.

He knows Lindbergh’s policies and anti-Jewish philosophy but does not take any objection. He does not have moral consciousness. On the other hand, he supports Lindbergh’s cunning policies. He addresses the rally of Madison Square Garden and explains why Lindbergh always visits Germany. He says:

“He did not once visit Germany as a sympathizer or a supporter of Hitler’s but rather he traveled each and every time as a secret adviser to the U.S. government.” (P-45)

The above description makes it clear that Rabbi is unfaithful to the Jewish society. Roth exposes the hypocritical nature of Rabbi through the characterization. As the director of OAA Program, he plans to send the Jewish family to Louisville, near Kentucky for the training
and to work on the farm though he knows the cunning plan of Lindbergh behind this policy. When he pays a visit to the house of Herman, he asks Sandy about the program and his experiences. He says:

“*And what was it like?” rabbi asked, “to work there in the Kentucky field under the burning sun?”* (PAA-p-123)

The above description makes it clear that Rabbi gives motivation and support to Sandy for OAA program. He considers that a problem of the Jews in America is different from other parts of the world so he provokes Jews. He says:

“The Jews of America”, the Rabbi told us at dinner, “are unlike any other community of Jews in the history of the world. They have the greatest opportunity accorded to our in modern times. The Jews of America can participate fully in the national life of their country.” (PAA-p-127)

Rabbi thinks only for Jews in America rather than the whole community in the world. The novelist focuses on the parochial attitude of Rabbi through the characterization. When he comes to know that Alvin is going to join Canadian army and wants to fight against Hitler in the war, he tries to persuade him. He says:

“*Alvin Roth was born as a citizen of The United States, and the United States is not at war with anyone, has no intention of going to war with anyone,....”* (PAA-p-129)
It is crystal clear from the above description that Rabbi tries to avoid American Jews to participate in war. But the American Jews consider him as a deceiver because he is considered a staunch follower of Lindbergh and his anti-Jew policies. Herman and his friends denounce Rabbi’s policies. He criticizes the deceitful nature, OAA Program and the directorship of Rabbi Bengelsdorf. Roth balances the moral and ethical qualities of the characters. Some characters show their vices, villainous qualities like Rabbi Lionel Bengelsdorf Lindbergh.

3.6.5 Philip

Philip is one of the male characters in *The Plot Against America*. He is the first person narrator in the novel. Roth emphasizes various qualities of Philip through incidents and events. He is the younger son of Herman. He finishes school education from the Jewish school. In his schooldays, he pledges allegiance to the flag. He sings the marvellous national anthem with his classmates at the assembly programme. His relation with the members of the family is good and healthy. He knows the artistic quality of his brother which makes him feels proud of him. Though he is a little boy having innocent nature, he knows more about the political people in America. The following remark makes it clear:

“Lindbergh was the first famous living American whom I learned to hate- just as president Roosevelt was the first famous living American whom I was taught to love....” (P-08)
It becomes clear that Philip criticizes the two political leaders. Roth gives the details of his likes and dislikes. His hobby of collecting stamps is one of the interesting aspects of his personality. He collects two thousand five hundred stamps including the information. His father Herman inspires him to collect the stamps. He asks his mother innocent questions related to social attitudes and the Jewish people. He asks his mother:

“Do you think there’ll ever be Jew on a stamp?” and she replied, “Probably—some day, yes, I hope so, anyway.” (PAA-p-28)

Roth focuses on the social thinking of the new generation and their expectations the Jewish community with the help of Philip’s character. He describes the Jewish society and minute in details qualities.

The political crisis is one of the prominent themes of Roth’s novel. He uses it invariably to make the story interesting and appealing. Philip discusses the political activities and current events in the society with members of his family. Sometimes, they strongly oppose each other for whoever is wrong. He expresses his views about the president’s election and about Roosevelt. He says:

“But nobody can beat Roosevelt,” I said (PAA-p-31)

Philip is a strong supporter of Roosevelt so he predicts his victory in the election. Roth explains the disastrous effect of World War II on every field including the innocent world of children. Through the
game, Roth highlights the dark side of war and how it takes toll on human life. Philip and his friend play the game called ‘I declared war’. Roth explains the impact of war through the various incidents in the novels. At the Christmas festival Philip, and his friend Earl visit the city and to enjoy the celebration of Christmas. The following dialogue between Philip and Earl reveals their views:

“Look,” Earl whispered, “See the top? At the very top of the tree –see that? It’s Jesus!”

“No, it’s an angel.”

“What do you think Jesus is?”

I whispered back, “I thought he was their God.”

“And chief of the angels –and there he is!” (PAA-p.143)

Roth indicates the religious attitudes of Philip and Earl through their characterization. He also presents the views of the new generation and their ideas about religion. Roth also indicates orthodox ideas of the characters. Philip thinks about the mysterious world, ghosts, and spirits and is afraid of them. But his father always tries to make him bold and courageous. He gives inspiration to Philip. The following remark reveals this fact:

“Here my father took me by the shoulders. “Don’t be afraid”, he said to me. Don’t be afraid of Alvin and don’t be afraid of his leg. Let him see how you’ve grown up.”(PAA-p.150)
Roth presents the bond between father and son through the characters of Herman and Philip. Seldon is a close friend of Philip and one of the chess players in the school. He attempts to teach chess to Philip but it remains incomplete due to the migration from New York to Kentucky. Roth describes funny and childish activities of the minor characters. He says:

“Unaccompanied by an adult? No, sir” the woman selling tickets told me. I’m an orphan, I told her. “I live at the orphanage on Lyons Avenue. The sister sent me to do a report on President Lindbergh”. (PAA-p.236)

The novel highlights the nature of Philip and his various qualities through this incident. Sometimes, Philip disobeys the orders of his father. Though his father has warned him to avoid the company of Aunt Evelyn, he attempts to meet her without informing his father. When he meets his Aunt, she becomes happy and gives him a brief smile. She asks him about Sandy, Bess and other members of the family. At the same time, he tells her about the family relocation to Kentucky. He says:

“Aunt Evelyn?”

“My darling.”

“Do you know that we’re moving to Kentucky?”

“Un-huh.”
“I don’t want to go, Aunt Evelyn. I want to stay at my school”.

(PAA-p.256)

Roth describes OAA Program and its worst influence on the Jewish family. His own family suffers due to this program and each Jew wants to reject the program, but there are no options for them. This program proves to be evil for the Jews and especially for Mr. Winslow’s family. Roth describes the fearful and anxious conditions of the Jews during the World War II. Even Philip is not away from this anxious atmosphere of war and fear of Lindbergh’s policy. He thinks about abduction, his daydream, expresses inner feeling and anxious state.

Roth deeply emphasizes the psychological, social and religious aspects of the characters in the novel. Philip’s psychological attitude and the presentation of inner feeling is one of the prominent skills of characterization. Roth portrays the character of Philip as innocent as he is unaware of the cunning and evil aspects of human beings. At the same time, Roth describes the funny attitude of Philip and how he mocks in the voice of Mr. Cucuzza:

“You Pulla the trig.” (p.339)

Roth presents the various aspects of Philip in this novel and has made the character unique and dynamic. Roth describes the various aspects of the minor characters and their roles in the development of the plot of the novel. They help the readers to form different opinions about
these characters. Some of the minor characters from the novel *Everyman* are discussed below:

### 3.6.6 Howie

Howie is one of the minor male characters introduced by Roth in *Everyman*. As a sportsman, Howie enjoys good health and is never hospitalized for a single day. Hence the nameless hero feels jealous about him. He receives a scholarship from University of Pennsylvania for the sports activities. After that, he continues his education and completes his MBA course. Roth describes his physical fitness in the follows manner:

> “He’d never been hospitalized for anything and, though a sibling bred of the same stock, had remained triumphantly healthy all his life.” (E-p.5)

It is evident from the above description that Howie is a healthy person as compared to his brother, the nameless hero. As an elder brother of the protagonist, teaches him everything. He is a kind, and honest person. He performs his duty as an elder brother. The following description shows this:

> “The next to throw dirt onto the lid of the coffin was Howie, who’d been the object of his worship, when they were children and in return had always treated him with gentleness and affection, patiently teaching him to ride a bike and to swim and to play all the sports in which Howie himself excelled”. (E-p.05)
Roth describes the qualities of Howie and how he taught his younger brother riding a bike, swimming and other sports. Howie remembers during his brother’s funeral his likes and dislikes and how he had helped his father in business. He says:

“*My little brother could sit there for hours, spinning the hand and listening to the watch as tick, if they still did, and studying what each faces and what each case looked like.*” (E-p.7)

The novel highlights the relation between the two brothers, their natures and attitudes. When Howie remembers the past, he fails to control his emotions and his voice becomes husky:

“*His voice was husky with emotion when he whispered to his wife, “My kid brother. It makes no sense.”*” (E-p.05)

Roth describes the family and personal life of his characters in detail. These characters represent the American society. Their families live in the modern times. In this novel, Roth introduces two characters, which are in total disparity to each other. Though they are brothers, their way of thinking are different. The nameless hero is an artist and he works in the advertisement department. He is promiscuous in nature and unaware of his accountability towards his family. On the other hand, Howie, the hero’s elder brother is very hard-working, sincere and honest. He works hard to settle down after his marriage. This is revealed below:

“In his late fifties, Howie, like almost all the partners who reached that age except for the top three or four, had retired
from Goldman Sachs; by then he was worth easily fifty million dollars. He was soon sitting on numerous corporate boards, eventually being named chairman of Procter and Gamble, for whom he’d done arbitrage in his early days”. (E-p.98)

His hard work and honest efforts make him achieve success in his life. Roth portrays. By investing money in trade and stock business, he extends the area of his business in different countries. The following description reveals his enterprising career:

“Howie stayed for four days. In four days he sometimes flew to Manila, and Singapore and, Kuala Lumpur and back. He had started at Goldman Sachs as a runner and quickly went from relaying messages to top dog on the current – trading desk and began investing for himself in stocks. (E-p.39)

Roth emphasizes the entrepreneurship of Howie through his characterization. The nameless hero does not love Howie. On the contrary, he is jealous of his good health and prosperous life:

“He hated Howie because of his robust good health. He hated Howie because he’d never in his life been a patient in a hospital, because disease was unknown to him, because nowhere was his body scarred from the surgical knife .....” (E-p.99)

Roth creates Howie’s character as supportive and subordinate to the Hero’s character. He exposes virtuous qualities of the elder brother and juxtaposes two characters i.e. two brothers in this novel.
3.6.7 Sparco Clarence

Sparco Clarence is one of the minor characters. He is the boss in the company named Wartime Eisenhower Aide and Advertising Innovator and runs the company for profit only. In the novel, the readers do not find the actual roles of some characters, they are absent. Through dialogues and telephone conversations, it becomes clear that they are minor characters and supporters of the hero. The readers come to know their activities and relation through the telephone conversations of the hero and his relatives. Sparco Clarence is such a type of character introduced by Roth. When the hero calls the wife of Clarence to know more about him, he receives information about his suffering and illness. Roth uses a new technique to introduce some characters with the help of telephone conversations between the hero and other characters. When the nameless hero calls Gwen the wife of Clarence, he gets his friend’s information about the death:

“Hello, Gwen,” he said.

“Hi, dear. How are you?”

“I’m okay. How are you doing?” he asked.”

“I’m doing all right. My kids came. I have a lot of company. And a lot of help. There are so many things I could tell you. In a sense, I was prepared, and in a way one never is. When I came home I found him dead on the floor, and that was a terrible shock. He had been dead for a couple hours at that point.” (E-p.142-143)
From the telephone conversation between Gwen and the hero, it becomes clear that the news of his friend’s death creates anxiety in his mind. He remembers how Sparco expanded his business with the help of his cooperation nature. The following utterances of the hero make it clear:

“I saw his picture today,” he said, “and I remembered a day year ago when a client had taken me to lunch at the Four Seasons, and we were heading down those stairs into the lobby there, and we bumped into Clarence. And my client was feeling expansive and he said, “Clarence, how are you? Do you know this young art director?” And Clarence said, “I do”. (E-p.144)

The hero’s relation with his boss and their roles in the company are the significant parts described by Roth. Clarence is the boss of the company and he allows the hero to visit England along with his wife at the expense of the company. He suggests:

“But when it was over Clarence said to me, “I want you and your wife to go to London for a long weekend. I want you to stay at the Savoy because it’s my favorite hotel, and I want you and Phoebe to have dinner at the Connaught. And it’s on me.” In those days, this was a huge gift, and he gave it even though we’d lost the account.” (E-p.145)

It becomes clear that the relation between the nameless hero and Clarence is good. Clarence is one of the successful and well known persons. Earlier, he had participated in a war and performed his duty
as a colonel. After his death, the obituary is published by ‘Berkshire Eagle’ with a wonderful picture of Clarence. During the telephone conversation, the hero tells his wife about Clarence’s personal life. Roth describes unique and fine traits of Sparco Clarence character with the help of conversation between Hero and his wife Gwen.

3.6.8 Ezra Pollock

Ezra Pollock is one of the minor characters in the novel. The last part of the novel gives details about him through the telephone conversation between him and the hero. The reader comes to know about his qualities and character through the conversation. They are close friends and work together in the company as art directors. The hero calls him:


I rise to conversation because conversation is my only recreation.” (E-p.151-152)

From the above conversation, it becomes clear that Pollock is also suffering from old age problems. Roth describes the various problems of the American people in the modern age. The hero and his friends call each other and ask about their health and life. They remember their glorious past when they enjoyed life doing their jobs. He says:

“I’ve begun my memoir of the advertising business.” (E-p.152)

In the old age, the nameless hero recalls the past days in the company. They discuss their family matters as well as the social issues. Ezra and
Hero worked together in an advertisement company under the supervision of Clarence, they enjoyed the work. He remembers:

“Well, don’t forget to include how you'd walk into my office and say, “Okay here’s your panic dead line first thing tomorrow I need that story board in my hand.”” (E-p.152)

As close friends, they help each other in their work. The hero receives the art director’s award only because of Ezra’s help the hero says:

“You gave me twenty pages on aloes. I got the art director’s award for that campaign, and it was because of those pages.” (E-p.152)

Roth balances the good and moral aspects of the characters. Ezra Pollock is a close friend of the hero and good natured colleague. He helps him at the critical junctures. The novelist creates the feeling of fear and death in this novel with the help of Ezra’s suffering. He suffers from cancer so he becomes unhappy. The following conversation is worth mentioning:

“Yes, and the cancer gives you nausea too. I throw up liberally.

“Is that the worst of it?”

“Sometime my prostate feels like I’m trying to excrete it.”” (E-p.153)
Roth balances the anxious and tense scenes in the novel with the help of sufferings and physical problems of the characters. A number of friends of the hero in his surroundings are absurd and anxious about their old age. The above discussion shows that Roth’s minor characters play their parts in sustaining the plot of the novel. Now, let us study the minor characters from Mulk Raj Anand’s novels Untouchable in detail.

3. 6.9 Lahka

Lahka is one of the minor characters in the novel Untouchable. He is an aged man and the head of the family. Lakha is not only Jamadar of sweepers in the town but also in charge of the three lines; therefore, he feels proud of his profession. He is not able to work due to the old age. He asks his son to shoulder this responsibility. It is observed that Lahka is short tempered by nature and always uses abusive language to address Bakha such as ‘You son of a pig’, ‘illegally begotten’. Lahka is well aware of the social structure in the village, therefore, he accepts the orders of his masters. Though he comes to know that his daughter is sexually exploited by the priest Kali Nath, he never utters a single word against him. On the contrary he advises his son to respect the caste Hindus thinking that they are their bread giver and protectors. He says:

“They are our superiors. One word of their is sufficient to over balance all that we might say before the police. They are our masters. We must respect them and do as they tell us.” (U-p.71)
Anand presents Lakha as a meek and timid old man. At the same time, he tries to present the traditional views of old generation of the untouchable characters like Lakha. After the death of his wife, Lakha does not remarry only because of his sons and daughter. Though he is a harsh person and devoid of any feelings, he loves his family members very deeply. Anand presents the heart-melting emotional incidents that prove the affection of Lakha towards his children. During Bakha’s illness, he runs the doctor and humbly requests him for medical help. Anand depicts the love and emotions of an Indian father, especially the untouchable father in the novel. Lakha says:

“I began to shed tears”, Lakha continued and said: “Maharaj, Great one, I forget. Your shoe on my head. I am not in my sense. Maharaj, you are my father and mother. I can’t compensate for the medicines. I can only serve you. Will you come and give some medicine to my child? He is on his death-bed!” (U-p.73)

Lakha’s love for his son is illustrated in the above extract. Anand introduces the different sides of Lakha through the incidents in the novels Untouchable.

Sometimes, Lakha is abused by his sons because of his eccentric tendency. Bakha abuses his father:

“The bully!” Bakha exclaimed under his breath as he listened to the last accents of his father’s voice die out in a clumsy, asthmatic cough.” (U-p.06)
From the above underlined abuse, it becomes clear that Bakha is well aware about the nature of Lakha. Therefore, he does not take his father’s advice to heart. Anand presents old age problems through the character of Lakha.

3.6.10 Rakha

Rakha is one of the minor characters in the novel *Untouchable*. He is the son of Lakha and brother of Bakha. Anand describes the physical appearance of Rakha in the following manner:

“Rakha, a short, long-faced, black, stumpy little man, seemed to resent his brother’s reprimand.” (U-p.28)

He is not only lazy and dirty but his standard of living is low. Anand describes the disqualifications of Rakha with the help of the incidents in the novel:

“Rakha was at length in sight, a basket of food on his bare clean-shaven head, a pan slung by a string handle in his hand, and his feet dragging a pair of Bakha’s old ammunition boots, laceless and noisy and too big for him.” (U-p.75)

Bakha and Rakha are brothers but one finds a lot of difference between the two. Bakha is highly fancied by British fashion and likes to wear clean clothes to maintain the living standard. On the contrary he is not attracted towards British people and their style of wearing cloth. Rakha is lazy and remains filthy. Bakha objects to his unclean living style. He suggests:
“At least wash your hands, you wild animal! said Bakha, irritated by the sight of his brother’s running nose.” (U-p.75)

As an elder brother, Bakha advises him to observe cleanliness. However there is a good coordination between the two brothers and in their day-to-day life. Both brothers share good relationship. Bakha sometimes guides Rakha and he brings to the latter’s notice the grim reality. He creates awareness about the good work too. He says:

“Then he turned to his brother and said, “Oh Rakha, why did you run away early in the morning? Father is ill and there is all the work at the latrine to do in my absence. Come, my brother, run back home. Sohini has kept some hot tea for you too.” (U-p.28)

Anand writes about the childlike nature of young Rakha who follows his brother’s advice without any objections but sometimes, misunderstands him.

3.6.11 Havildar Charat Singh

Havildar Charat Singh another minor character in the novel Untouchable. He belongs to the Hindu community. The first glimpse of Havildar Charat Singh in the novel creates a very good impression in a mind of the readers. The following physical description reveals this fact:

“A small, thin man, naked except for a loin-cloth, stood outside with a small brass jug in his left hand, a round white cotton
skull-cap on his head, a pair of wooden sandals on his feet, and the apron of his loin-cloth lifted his nose.” (U-p.07)

He is a famous hockey player of the 38th Dogra Regiment and has won many matches for his regiment, but now he suffers from piles so he is not able to play. He is a hard working, clever and honest. But he quick tempered. He always shouts at Bakha for not doing his work properly. He screams:

“Oh, Bakhya! Oh, Bakhya! Oh you scoundrel of a sweeper’s son! Come and clear a latrine for me!” someone shouted from without.” (U-p.07)

He scolds Bakha for ignoring his work of latrine cleaning. In the course of time, he realizes that due to the piles, the latrine becomes dirty. After hearing this, Bakha replies in a humble way and accepts his mistake. He says:

“All right, Havildar ji, I will get one ready for you at once,” Bakha said cautiously as he processed to pick up his brush and basket from the place where these tools decorated the front wall of the house.” (p.07)

Bakha respects Havildar and follows his orders meticulously. Though he is strict, Bakha is attracted to him. Charat Singh admires Bakha for his high living standards and he assures that he will give him a hockey stick. He says:
“You are becoming a gentleman, ohe Bakhya! Where did you get that uniform?” (U-p.08)

The appreciation and promise make Bakha elated and his dejection gets washed out just because he receives a good treatment from Charat Singh. In the afternoon, when he goes to the house of Charat Singh, he receives a hockey stick from him. Bakha never imagines such a kind treatment from him. He expresses his happiness:

“What has happened to change my kismet (fate) all of a sudden?” he asked himself. “Such kindness from the Havildar, who is a Hindu, and one of the most important men about the regiment!” (U-p.99)

Charat Singh does not believe in the concept of ‘untouchability’ so he asks Bakha to bring coal from the kitchen. At first, Bakha does not believe it. He says:

“For a moment he doubted whether Charat Singh was conscious and in his sense when he entrusted him with the job. ‘He might be forgetful and suddenly realise what he had done. Did he forget that I am a sweeper? He couldn’t have done, I was just talking to him about my work. And he saw me this morning. How could he have forgotten?’” (U-p.97)

Anand presents the character of Charat Singh from a liberal point of view. The character of Charat Singh seems to be progressive in thinking. He does not believe in caste discrimination.
3.6.12 Pundit Kali Nath

Pundit Kali Nath is one of the minor characters in the novel. Anand introduces him as a priest of the temple. His physical appearance is strong and healthy. This fact is revealed in:

“A tall man, evidently also a priest, naked, save for a loin-cloth, darkhaired and supple, with a sacred thread through into relief the beautiful curves of his graceful body, got up and blew a conch-shell.” (U-p.51)

Anand describes the physical features of Pundit Kali Nath in detail. He also focuses on the religious hypocrisy of Kali Nath through his character and his wicked activities.

Kali Nath seems to misuse his power and hierarchical statuses to molest Sohini, the sister of Bakha. Sohini says:

“He-e-e just teased me”, she at last yielded. “And then when I was bending down to work, he came and held me by my breasts” (U-p.54)

The above complaint of Sohini shows the wicked nature of Pundit Kali Nath. When Kali Nath realizes that Sohini is trying to expose his evil act, he takes the shelter of religion. He lies about the incident and denies his involvement it. He alleges Bakha and his sister for polluting the sacred place by entering the temple. Anand projects him as a hypocritical priest and criticizes him for his misbehaviour.
3.6.13 Colonel Hutchinson

Anand creates some of the unique characters such as Colonel Hutchinson in Untouchable. He is a representative of the ruling class in colonial India. During the colonial period, the missionaries played an important role in building the image of the British rulers. The novelist focuses on the colonial aspects from the religious and social viewpoints. Colonel Hutchinson wears a pair of white trousers, a scarlet jacket and a white turban with a red band across it. He is sixty five years old and his moustache has grown grey. He also preaches about their God. Colonel Hutchinson is one of the members of the Salvation Army so he devotes himself to his missionary work. He says:

“You couldn’t miss him even if you saw him from a mile off, for he was one of the few living members of the band of Christian missionaries in India who had originated the idea that the Salvation Army ought to be dressed in the costumes of the native and among them, if it was to achieve the true end of proselytizing.” (C-p.111-112)

Colonel considers that it is his duty to find the sufferers and convert them into Christianity. In the last twenty years, he has successfully converted many people, among them mainly are the downtrodden who are economically and socially backward. Anand presents the religious attitude of Colonel Hutchinson. He induces Bakha to embrace Christianity. Therefore, he kindly behaves with him though he is a sweeper boy. Colonel does not make any difference between a
Brahmin and an outcaste. On the other hand, he considers that everyone is equal before God. Study the following description:

“He had thrown aside every weight-pride of birth and race and colour in adopting the customs of the natives and in garbing himself in their manner, to build up the Salvation Army in India.” (C-p.114)

Being the priest, he performs his duties well and spreads the message of Jesus Christ to the low-cast people. He tries to influence Bakha and answers his counter questions. The conversation between them shows this:

‘Who is Yessuh Messih, Sahib?’ Bakha asked, eager to allay his curiosity. ‘Come, I shall tell you,’ said Colonel Hutchinson ‘Come to the church.’ And dragging the boy with his arm, babbling, babbling, all vague, in a cloud, and enthusiastic as a mystic, he led him away on the wings of a song:

‘Life is found in Jesus,

Only there ’tis offered thee;

Offered without price or money

’Tis the gift of God sent free.’ (C-p.116)

Colonel tries to convince Bakha the ideology of Christianity. When Colonel explains him that Jesus does not make any difference between the poor and rich, Brahmin and Bhangi. On hearing this Bakha
becomes glad and feels comfortable. The author presents the dialogues between Bakha and Colonel to make the readers aware of the spread of Christianity in India during the colonial period. At the same time, Mulk Raj Anand gives the real character of the priest who tries to spread Christianity in India. When Bakha realizes that there is no difference between a Brahmin and a Bhangi, he does not believe it. Bakha says:

“He scarified himself for us, for the rich and the poor, for the Brahmin and the Bhangi”. That meant there was no difference in his eyes between the rich and the poor, between the Brahmin and the Bhangis, between the pundit of the morning, for instance, and himself.” (C-p.120)

The priest lives without fear in the outside world but inside his home, he is really afraid of his wife. He does not like to talk about his religious work in front of her. He is really a henpecked husband as it is illustacted in the following example:

“Coming, coming,” respond to the Colonel automatically, standing where he stood, but with his arms and legs all in a flurry. He had heard his wife’s voice. He was afraid of her. He was confused. He didn’t know whether to go into the mud-house on the right which was his bungalow, and to take Bakha in there, or to take him to the church. He stood hesitating on the edge of a conflict.” (C-p.122)
Anand shows the difference between the real life and the practical life of Christian Missionaries through the character of Colonel. The priest gives a message of equality to Bakha, but he fails to give the same message to his wife. On the contrary, he does not dare to face her. The wife of Colonel does not believe in social equality. She strongly abuses Bakha and other lower caste people. She says:

“I can’t keep waiting for you all day while you go messing about with all those dirty bhangis and chamars,” and saying this, she withdrew into her boudoir.” (C-p.123)

After discovering the attitude of Colonel’s wife, Bakha realizes the actual world of the priest and the meaning of real life. Colonel’s contrasting behavior is exposed and leaves a bad impression on Bakha’s mind.

3.6.14 Gandhi

Anand has observed the real persona of Gandhi, therefore, he has portrays the exact picture of Gandhi in the novel. He also describes Gandhi’s social work, his method of delivering speeches and how he creates spiritual atmosphere. Gandhi’s disciples sing hymns and religious songs:

“Someone stood up to chant a hymn. The Mahatma had closed his eyes and was praying.” (U-p.134-135)

Anand depicts Gandhi’s social work, his understanding of mass psychology and how he handles the crowd. During his speech, Gandhi
explains the malpractice and suppression of Indians under British government divides and rule policy. He also describes the government is efforts to alienate the weaker sections of Hindu society. He says:

‘The British Government sought to pursue a policy of divide and rule in giving to our brethren of the depressed classes separate electorates in the Councils that will be created under the new constitution.’ (U-p- 136)

In his speech, Gandhi makes it clear that the British government has the intension of dividing the country. He says:

‘I shall only speak about the so- called “Untouchables”, whom the government tried to alienate from Hinduism by giving them a separate legal and political status.’ (U-p.136)

Anand describes the burning issues in India during the pre-independent era. Though he does not mention the name of great social reformer and true representative of Dalit society, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, he uses political references with the help of artistic devices. In his novel Untouchable, he directly introduces Gandhi as a political leader. When Gandhi realizes that the lower castes among the Hindu suffer too much due to practice of the untouchability, he starts a movement to transform the people. He tries to convince them that ‘untouchability’ is the stigma on the Hindu religion. Gandhi says:

“I regard untouchability,’ the Mahatma was saying, ‘as the greatest blot on Hinduism. This view of mine dates back to the time when I was a child.’ (U-p.137)
Therefore there is a need to wash out the great blot. He delivers the speeches on the topic of untouchability in various cities. In his speech, he explains his own experiences during the childhood and how his mother treated Uka, the untouchable boy. He wants to be reborn in the family of untouchables. He says:

‘I do want to attain spiritual deliverance. I do not want to be reborn. But if I have to be reborn, I should wish to be reborn as an untouchable, so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings and the affronts levelled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and them from their miserable condition.’(U-p.138)

Thus, Gandhi wants to be reborn in an untouchable’s family so he can experience the sorrows and sufferings of these people. At the same time, Gandhi advises the untouchables how to live and maintain their social status. He also explains that it is not only the fault of the Hindus but the Dalits are also responsible for their plight as they have some bad habits and they must get rid of them. He says:

‘They claim to be Hindus. They read the scriptures. If, therefore, the Hindus oppress them, they should understand that the fault does not lie in the Hindu religion but in those who profess it. In order to emancipate themselves they have to purify themselves. They have to rid themselves of evil habits, like drinking liquor and eating carrion.’ (U-p.138-139)
On listening to the advice of Gandhi, Bakha becomes disappointed and gets confused. He thinks that Mahatma has not realized the basic problems of untouchables.

Bakha starts forming his opinions about Gandhi Hindu and his vision to erradicate untouchability. Though Gandhi tries to eliminate untouchability, he does not succeed in his plan. For instance, Bakha does not accept the principles of Gandhi because he remains unconvinced Gandhi’s solution to abolish untouchability. He wants to discover other answers to the problems of untouchability. Anand depicts the real feelings and attitudes of the down trodden in the light of Gandhi’s movement and his social work.

3.6.15 Iqbal Nath Sarshar

Iqbal Nath Sarshar is one of the young poets who edits the journal named Nawan Jug (New Era). He is the companion of R. N. Bashir. These two often discuss the policies of Gandhi. Iqbal says:

“He has his limitations but he is fundamentally sound. He may be wrong in wanting to shut India off from the rest of the world by preaching the revival of the spinning-wheel, because, as things are, that can’t be done. But even in that regard he is right. For it is not India’s fault that it is poor; it is the world’s fault that the world is rich!” (U-p.142)

The poet uses the poetic language to ridicule Gandhi’s vision of India.
Anand describes the voices of youth and how the young generation by influenced by the European model of development. Sarshar is the representative of the poet and is aware of the changes taking place in India and in Europe. Anand focuses on the bitter reality of India with help of the character of the poet in the novel. The poet bitterly criticizes the misinterpreted philosophy of the Hindu religion. Which believes in karma and rebirth: Let us consider the following extract:

“If it had not been for ride the wily Brahmins, the priest craft, who came in the pride of their white skin, lifted the pure philosophical idea of Karma, that deeds and acts are dynamic, that all is in a flux, from the Dravidians, and misinterpreted it vulgarly to mean that birth and rebirth in this universe is governed by good or bad deeds in the past life…” (U-p.145)

The poet has a good knowledge about the social structure of India and knows the real exploiters of the society. He objects when a very few people in the society misuse the power given to them for their selfish and personal interests. They enjoy each and every comfort and luxury of life on the one side and on the other side they emotionally blackmail people in the name of religion. In his next argument, the poet puts forward the modern views. He says:

‘The old mechanical formulas of our lives must go, the old stereotyped forms must give place to a new dynamism.’ (U-p.145)
Hence, Anand characterizes different qualities of the poet and his views. During the freedom struggle, people dreamed of the ideal country where everyone would enjoy the fruits of freedom: i.e. equality of social justice. The poet is the representative of this class and dreams of a better future for Indians. He also suggests the use of flush system to clean the latrines. Mechanical work is the only solution to solve the problem of untouchability. He also thinks that the sweepers will no longer remain untouchables if they change their profession.

“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 caste having been broken down by the British-Indian penal code, which recognizes the rights of everyman before court, caste is now mainly governed by profession. When the sweepers change their profession, they will no longer remain Untouchable.’ (U-p.145-146)

Thus, the character of Sarshar plays an important role in the making the readers to think. He gives different solutions for the basic problems of Indian society. Anand creates the real social picture with the help of political, social and religious characters. The poet Sarshar really wants to bring the changes in the society as well as awaits the great revolution like a Russian revolution. The character is a representative of the socialist class. He has radical ideas to transform the society and bring equality. The minor characters of Untouchable can not be understood as they play a very significant role in the
development of the plot of the novel. The minor characters in his another novel *Coolie* also needs to be studied thoroughly as their roles are governed by the economic structure of the Indian society.

### 3.6.16 Daya Ram

Daya Ram is one of the minor characters in the novel *Coolie*. He is reprehensible in nature. He is a peon in the Imperial Bank of India and his wife Gujari is a housewife. After the death of Munoo’s parents, they look after him but do not consider him as their own child. Daya Ram is very selfish and wants Munoo to abandon his education and start earning money. Hence, he takes Munoo to a town and makes him work as a servant in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram. He is cruel and treats Munoo badly. He even abuses his innocent nephew:

> “Walk quickly! Walk quickly, you son of a bitch!” shouted Daya Ram, the chaparasi of the Imperial Bank of India as he strode with big military strides with his gold-brocaded red coat and neatly tied white turban, along the circuitous hill road constructed by the Angrezi Sarkar, of which he felt himself to be the symbol as he flourished his hand ostentatiously and angrily at his nephew Munoo.” (C-p.4-5)

Anand contemplates on every aspect of human beings.

Anand observes various men and women in the Indian society and how they behave with each other. Daya Ram is one of the representatives of bureaucracy. He is short tempered, selfish and full
of pride. When the cart driver wants to help him on his way to Shampur, he rejects it arrogantly. He says:

“Don’t you bark! I didn’t talk to you”, said Daya Ram. “Go your way, or I will have you to put into prison. Don’t you know that I am a government official!” (C-p.5)

When Daya Ram enters the office, he notices that everything is okay. He goes to see the sub-accountant of the bank, Babu Nathu Ram. He greets him:

“I bow my forehead to you, Babuji,” Daya Ram said, joining his hands and dusting his feet as he entered. (C-p.10)

Daya Ram uses a very polite form of Greeting to show his respect to Babu Nathu Ram who is superior in rank and file. As a peon, Daya Ram works in the bank as well as does the household chores of his boss. Daya Ram leaves his nephew in the house of Babuji and warns the latter to serve his master. After a long time, he comes to meet and Munoo takes him out of the house of his master. Munoo tries to tell his uncle about his miserable condition and how he is exploited and abused by the mistress of the house. But his uncle threatens him not to object the Memsaheb. He says:

“You are their servant” “You must not mind what they say. You must grow up and work. You have had too easy a life at home. Your mother spoiled you. Your aunt was too kind to you.” (C-p.32)
As an uncle, he never understands the feelings of Munoo his nephew. He wants the boy to grow up and earn money. Every month, Munoo gets three rupees for his services in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram. When Mr. England visits the house of Babu Nathoo Ram for breakfast, Munoo breaks the tea-tray Mr. England leaves without taking breakfast. When, Daya Ram comes to know about this incident, he gets angry and beats Munoo in the worst manner:

“Rushing at the boy, he kicked him again. Then he went on, Mischievous and self-willed and obstinate, you imagine yourself hardworking! You have ruined the Babu’s prestige before the Sahib! Brought a complaint from the Babu on my head!” (C-p.48)

For Daya Ram, the Babu’s prestige is more important than his nephew’s plight. He does not have not have sympathy for the boy. He wants him to earn money. Thus Anand focuses on the selfish nature of Daya Ram. The novelist also exposes the materialistic attitudes of members of the family towards each other.

3.6.17 Babu Nathoo Ram

Babu Nathoo Ram is a sub-accountant in the Imperial Bank of India, Sham Nagar. He is the boss of Munoo’s uncle in the office. He has two daughters named Sheila and Lila and a son named the family needs a domestic servant. Daya Ram takes Munoo to his masters’ house for the household duties. Babu says pointing to Munoo:

“Oh, is that he?” (C-p.10)
He agrees to employ Munoo as a servant in their house and advises Daya to take him in the house. He expects Munoo to be a good servant in the house and help his wife. The next morning when he comes to know that Munoo has relieved himself at the doorstep of the kitchen, he gets angry and flings abuses at the boy. The following underlined abuses show that:

“Why, ohe you son of a bitch!,” squeaked Babu Nathoo Ram, lifting his thin, bony hand, both to quieten his wife and to threaten Munoo.” (C-p.18)

The underlined abusive expression makes it clear that Babu Nathu Ram is short tempered. However as a family member he is cooperative. He is not only hard working but also ambitious. He even attempts to get promotion to the post of accountant but in vain. Everyone makes an attempt to hold the good post in the office and there is a competition to reach the higher level at any cost. Anand uses these common things in his novel to depict his characters. Babu Nathoo Ram wants to invite Mr. W. P. England for tea at his house with the intension that he will increase his salary and give him promotion in the office, but his vain attempts do not yield Mr. England is not impressed by the hospitality. Nathu Ram’s write Bibiji blames Munoo for spoiling her husband’s chances of promotion in the bank.
3.6.18 Seth Prabha Dyal

Seth Prabha Dyal is one of the minor characters. He plays a supportive role to the main characters in the novel. He is from Hamirpur next to Bilaspur. He is hard working and has a good nature. He considers that every work is useful for livelihood. He is from Kangra hills and well aware of the problems, and social reality of his surroundings. He has gone through the trials and tribulations in his life. And the bitter experiences of the world

Anand presents Prabha Dyal as a gentle and kind hearted man who knows the real meaning of life. He shows mercy to Munoo and takes the latter with him to Daulatpur. He gives him food, shelter. He also gives him a job in his factory. Anand depicts the kindness of his character through various incidents in the novel.

Since Prabha comes from the hill area he knows the hardships of the village people. He finds his way through hard work. In the beginning he works as a coolie. He raises himself to become the owner of a factory only because of his hard work and sincere efforts. With the help of Prabha Dyal’s character, Anand wants to show the humanity, kindness and generosity among the human beings. He lives with his wife Prabati happily they are a childless couple. The couple accept Munoo as their son. Munoo also accept them as his parents and works for them in the pickle factory. They look after him and take care of his basic needs. Let us study the following extract from the novel:
“The meal followed. There was rice, both plain and sweet, and dal and vegetables, tamarind pickle, all hill dishes which he had missed in the Babu’s home, and a few city ones, four dumplings mixed with curds and kara parshad. It was the most sumptuous meal he had eaten since the feast on the death anniversary of his father and mother, which his aunt had given three months before he left the hills.” (C-p.67)

Both Prabha and Parbati treat him with love and affection.

In the market, everybody knows Prabha Dyal because of his honest and cooperative nature. He earns a reputation in the market:

“Come, Seth Prabh Dyal, have you come back?” called someone, and Prabha stopped.” (C-p.70)

Being a good at heart Prabha wants to maintain healthy relations with others. He knows the value of good relationship. He wants to have good relations with his neighbours too. He does not want to take up a quarrel with his neighbor Rai Bahadur Sir Todar Mal though he is well aware. He creates a healthy atmosphere among the workers in his factory. But Ganpat his partner in the pickle factory deceives him leading to bankruptcy. When the money lenders in the market realize Prabha Dyal’s insolvency and inability to return the borrowed money, they lenders gather in front of the factory’s gate and demonstrate. The following description shows this:

“The creditors are shouting outside”, Munoo said with an effort, “They want you.” He got up at once and came to the
window overlooking the gully. He was pale and his limbs shivered slightly. He joined his hands to the creditors and was going to speak to them when they burst out, “Oh, there he is, the illegally begotten! There is the rogue! The scoundrel! Come down, You son of a dog. Come and pay us our money.” (C-p.108)

He loses all his earnings over the years partly due to his lack of business skills and partly due to the wicked nature of Ganpat, the partner. His reputation is lost and he is unable to repay the money. Now it is partly due to his lack of business skill and partly due too late for Prabha to notice the evil side of Ganpat. All the creditors from whom he borrowed the money gather around his factory and demand their money without immediately. This incident ruins in reputation in the market. The money lenders threaten him to register a complaint against in the police station. Prabha humbly requests them and them some more time to repay the loan but they are not ready to listen to him. Prabha requests meekly:

“Oh, please forgive me, Lallaji. I will pay every one of you. I will pay every penny that I owe you, even though I may die in doing so.” (U-p.108)

All efforts and requests of Prabha are in vain when the police officer arrives and arrests him for cheating and fraud. He folds his hands and meekly requests the officer that he is not guilty. The police humiliate and force him to confess the crime:
“Now, confess you rogue, he said, coming up to Prabha, where Teja Singh and Yar Muhammad still held him. “Confess, where have you buried your money? Come, own up!” (U-p.111)

The police officer tries to force Prabha Dyal to accept the crime, but he refuses to do so. In the end, the police leave the place without imprisoning him. After this tragic event, Prabha decides to leave the city with the intention to settle in his village. Anand describes the rise and fall of the gentleman, Prabha Dyal, in the novel.

3.7 Minor Female Characters

The forgoing discussion about the minor male characters in the novels under study shows that the roles of these characters are equally important as the roles of the major male characters. The novelists reveal the intricacies of life with the help of the minor male characters. The minor female characters also play their roles in the development of the plot and story of the novels. The minor female characters in the novels play a significant role in the development of the plot and story. The following discussion proves this point. Let us study the minor female characters in The Plot Against America.

3.7.1 Aunt Evelyn

Aunt Evelyn is one of the female characters in the novel The Plot Against America. She is an embodiment of vices and wickedness. Roth introduces her as an agent of Nazi and a follower of Lindbergh. She is married to Rabbi Bengelsdorf. Her husband works as clergyman and broadcasts his sermons on the radio station WNJR
weekly. Her mother died of heart failure when she was thirty years old:

“Evelyn was just thirty in 1941, and until two years before, when my maternal grandmother died of heart failure after a decade as a coronary invalid, it was Evelyn who’d cared for her in the tiny top-floor apartment of a two-and-a-half-family house that mother and daughter shared on Dewey Street, not far from Hawthorne Avenue School, where Evelyn usually subbed.” (PAA-p.103)

After her marriage, she gains a good post in the government office:

“Evelyn, now executive assistant to Rabbi Lionel Bengelsdorf, who’d been appointed by the new administration to serve as the first director of the OAA office for the state of New Jersey.” (PAA-p.101)

Aunt Evelyn knows that her brother-in-law is against Lindbergh Therefore, she tries to tell him about Rabbi Lionel Bengelsdorf’s nature and his work. Bess is mystified by her sister’s job in the OAA Program. Both Bess and Herman try to advice her:

My father considered her apparel in poor taste for a school teacher, and so did the Principal at Hawthorne, but my mother, who, wrongly or not reproached herself for Evelyn’s having had to sacrifice her youth caring for their mother, was incapable of judging her sister’s boldness harshly, even when Evelyn resigned from teaching, quit the union, and seemingly
without a qualm, abandoned her political loyalties to work for
Rabbi Bengelsdorf in Lindbergh’s OAA. (PAA-p.105)

Here, Roth describes Bess’ concern about her sister’s job and her
changing of loyalties. Roth narrates the contrasting nature and
behaviour of some Jewish people; among them Rabbi Bengelsdorf
and Aunt Evelyn are leading members. They fail to discover the
dangerous plans and harmful activities of Lindbergh but are fascinated
by his high social standing and wealth. Evelyn loves her nephew so
much that she sends him to Kentucky to work and get knowledge of
the world. When Sandy returns from OAA program, Aunt Evelyn
goes to the railway station to receive him. Aunt Evelyn expresses her
excitement and joy on receiving Sandy. Though she tries to change his
ways of life, her brother-in-law does not like to change his world.
Herman uses abusive language to her and often tries to keep her away
from the family. He does not like her company with anti-Jewish
people and Lindbergh. Rabbi Bengelsdorf and Aunt Evelyn support
anti-Jewish people in their work and send the Jewish people in OAA
program. Herman condemns Evelyn and her association with Rabbi
Bengelsdorf in the following manner:

“The woman is an idiot, Bess”, my father said to her, “a
childish, idiot understands nothing. A dangerous idiot.” (PAA-
p.223)

Herman’s comment gives a clear idea about the nature of Aunt
Evelyn. Her brother-in-law blames her anti-Jewish activities. Roth
depicts each and every weak aspect of women with the help of the
characterization of Aunt Evelyn. Towards the end of the novel, Roth presents the mental disorder of Aunt Evelyn when her husband is arrested by the FBI. Evelyn wants to take shelter in her sister’s house. She requests in the following manner:

“They’re after me, Bess! I have to hide - you have to hide me.”

(PAA-p.404)

Roth describes Aunt Evelyn’s last days when she is chased by the FBI. The mental disorder of Aunt Evelyn is nothing but the punishment for her wicked, ugly, evil and anti-social activities that are against the Jews.

3.7.2 Maureen

Maureen is one the minor female characters in the novel. She wants to marry TV Cameraman after he gets a permanent job. She fails in her plan as she works in a hospital. She is a nurse in the private hospital and comes in contact with the nameless hero and falls in love with him. Though he is an old man, she loves him very much. This is clarified below:

“The sublime experience had been the private nurse with the unassuming professional air who’d come home with him from the hospital and who tended him with a high-spirited devotion that promoted a slow, steady recovery and with whom, unknown to his wife, he conducted a sustained affair once he had recovered his sexual prowess.” (E-p.15-16)
As a woman and nurse, her duty is to serve the patients but she keeps illicit relations with the nameless hero who is an aged person and who is sixteen years older than her. She loses the skills of nursing. Roth presents some licentious characters in the novel and Maureen is one of them. She serves the nameless hero faithfully as a nurse, but she fails to keep herself away from the patients:

“He began to do mild calisthenics with Maureen and tried each day to add another ten years to the afternoon walk he took with her.”(E-p.49)

Roth describes Maureen as frivolous character. Roth depicts her immoral relations in the following words:

“He was not the first patient to fall in love with his nurse. He was not even the first patient to fall in love with Maureen. She’d had several affairs over the years, a few of them with men rather worse off than he was, who, like him, made a full recovery with the help of Maureen’s vitality.”(E-p.50)

Here, Roth makes the readers aware of loose characters of depraved nature of Maureen and how she indulges in the chain of sexual pleasures. Roth throws light on the basic problems of American society especially the morality of the women and he attempts to present the social reality with help of his fictional characters. He depicts a few other disqualifications of Maureen in the following manner:
“She’d be forty-eight now, more than likely married and a mother, a shapely energetic young woman grown into middle aged stoutness.” (E-p.16)

Maureen works in the hospital where the nameless hero is admitted for heart surgery later he dies. She attends the funeral. She offers her tribute to the nameless hero whom she loves very much:

“The last to approach the coffin was the private duty nurse, Maureen, a battler from the look of her and so stranger to either life or death. When with a smile, she let the dirt slip slowly across her curled palm and out the side of her hand onto the coffin, the gesture looked like the prelude to a carnal act.” (E-p.14)

It is clear that due the choice of wrong ways in one’s life one can lose the real meaning and pleasures in life. Roth and Anand depict a variety of characters in their novels. Mrs. Mainwaring and Maureen are symbolic characters in that both are licentious, frivolous and devoid of any morality. They waste their time in illicit affairs and try to indulge in physical pleasures. Gulabo, a minor character in the novel Untouchable also is of such type.

3.7.3 Gulabo

Gulabo is a middle aged washer woman and belongs to the lower strata of the Hindu society. She thinks herself higher compared to other subcaste people. Anand describes her characters as follows:
“Gulabo, the washerwoman, the mother of Ramcharan, her brother’s friend, had observed Sohini approach. She was a fair complexioned, middle-aged woman, the regularity of whose supple body bore even in its decay the evidence of a form which must, in her youth, have been wonderful.” (U-p.15-16)

Gulabo has a high esteem for herself when she compares herself with other lower caste women. She has illicit relation with a Hindu man so she dares to oppose other as well as Bakha’s sister Sohini who is innocent and beautiful Gulabo is jealous and she starts to create troubles for Sohini. She feels Sohini is her competitor and can attract more men towards her. The author presents the tendency of the frivolous women and their aggressive nature through the characters of Gulabo. She fights with Sohini and uses filthy language to address her. Let us consider the underlined abusive expressions in the following extract:

“Ari, you bitch! Do you take me for a buffoon? What are you laughing at, slut? Aren’t you ashamed of showing you teeth to me in the presence of men, you prostitute?” shouted Gulabo, and she looked towards the old man and the little boys who were of the company.” (U-p.17)

In the fit of jealousy, Gulabo throws abuses at Sohini without considering her age or innocent nature. Anand emphasizes that some of the people among the outcastes are also responsible to devalue their castes. Gulabo is a short tempered and evil woman who gives ill
treatment to Sohini requests her not to use abusive language. Sohini requests:

“Please don’t abuse me”, the girl said, “I Haven’t said anything to you.” (U-p.17)

Though Sohini requests her, Gulabo has no sympathy for the teenage girl. She is not kind enough to understand the feelings of Sohini who is of her daughter’s age. She is not respected by her own son, Ramcharan. At the time of marriage ceremony of her daughter, she comes to know that a sweeper, a close friend of her son, is also present for the marriage. Gulabo cannot tolerate the presence of Bakha in the marriage and objects to her son when he plays games with Bakha. But Ramcharan opposes not only his mother but also abuse her. He says:

“Shut up, you bitch!” replied Ramcharan, as was his wont, for he had been hardened into impudent, obstinate young rascal by the persistency of his mother’s abuse.” (U-p-83)

As a mother, she is neither respected by her son Ramcharan nor appreciated by any one. Anand depicts the women characters from the real life and gives the different sides of the women in the Indian society.

The nature of characterization and Mulk Raj Anand’s skill of presentation is noticed in the portrayal of the minor woman character like Bibiji Uttam Kaur in the novel Coolie.
3.7.4 Bibiji Uttam Kaur

Anand depicts Bibiji Uttam Kaur as an orthodox woman in the novel Untouchable. Her husband Babu Nathoo Ram is a sub-accountant in Imperial Bank of Shampur. Anand narrates her physical appearance as follows:

“She had a dark face mobile and without any set form, except that which the tired smile on her thin lips gave it, and a sharp nose over which her brown eyes concentrated in a squint, and her forehead inclined with wrinkles. Her stern, flat-chested from was swathed in a muslim sari.” (C-p.12)

The first appearance of this lady presents her strange nature and bad habits. In her speech, she always uses abusive words every time. When she hears the noises of her children inside the house, she starts abusing without thinking. The underlined abuses and curses are uttered by her:

“Oh baby, you have eaten my life! You can’t rest even while I am talking business to anyone! May you die! May your liver burn! May you fade away! You of the evil star! Now, what is the matter with you? What do you want? you.....” (C-p.12-13)

From the above underlined abuses, it becomes clear that she is wicked in nature. When Dyal Ram entrusts Munoo to Bibiji, she starts giving him instructions regarding the work. As a woman, she does not have compassion for the poor boy. Without considering his pitiable life, she immediately sends him to Bazaar to bring vegetables for the dinner.
The next morning, she abuses Munoo for waking up late and relieving in front of the kitchen door. She abuses:

“This shameless rustic!” began Bibiji again, with all the vociferating intensity of ‘which she was capable.’” (C-p.18)

Anand depicts the paradoxical nature of Bibiji. Though she herself is a rustic from a village, she abuses and humiliates Munoo for being a rustic boy. Her brother-in-law ridicules her for insulting Munoo, the village boy.

“Don’t say anything against village folk”, mocked her brother-in-law. “You yourself come from a village.” (C-p.19)

Anand depicts the grim reality of these village people who migrate to the cities to live a comfortable life. But immediately forget their reality after settling in the city. Bibiji is a representative of such people. Though she belongs to a village, she abuses the village boy for his rustic behaviour. As a mother, she performs her duty towards her daughter, son and other members of the family but she is a sharp-tongued woman who often abuses and scolds each and everyone in the house for simple reasons. She scolds her daughter Lila:

“O you eater of your master, Lila! You have awakened, have you! The bane of my life! Now you will not let me rest or do anything!” (C-p.20)

Anand creates the real life-like characters of Bibiji in the novel. She considers herself and her family superior to others.
When she observes that Munoo is playing with her two daughters and son, she admonishes him:

“Your place is here in the kitchen! You must not enter the sports of the Chota Babu and the children. You must get on quickly with work in the house! There is no time to lose.” (C-p.23)

Bibiji gives disrespectful treatment to Munoo. She is uneducated and has no manners. She just pretends to be a well-mannered woman. From her behaviour, it becomes clear that she is uncivilized woman though she is surrounded by educated women. Anand introduces the real picture of the society and women with the help of Bibiji’s character.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher has analyzed the characters in the selected novels in the light of various critical approaches. The characters have been categorized as flat, round, static, dynamic, antagonist, protagonist, symbolic, universal, and stock and foil. All the characters have been thoroughly studied with the help of comparative study. The analysis offers different aspects from the literary viewpoints. The characters such as major male characters, major female characters, minor male characters and minor female characters have been examined against the Indian social reality. Their roles and locales have been examined and studied. An attempt has been also made to describe the physical, social, political, racial, caste,
class, and economic background of the characters. The chapter emphasizes the classification of villainous and heroic characters on the basis of their actions and roles in the novels under study.