Conclusion
An attempt has been made in the foregoing chapters to analyse Anand's novels and stories in the light of his philosophy of human-ism. The purpose of this last chapter is to gather all the threads together and to find out how Anand, the artist, fares as a humanist. In other words, it needs to be examined how far Anand's humanism becomes an ally of or a hindrance to his art of fiction.

The objective of creative art, according to Anand, is one of integration. It should effect 'connection' between one man and another, one group and another and finally between the individual and the world. Thus the creative artist is in a pre-eminent position to do by virtue of his special gift of awareness into the hearts of men and women. He is capable of moulding the values by which men must live. In this sense, Anand is a committed writer. He does not believe in art for art's sake, a cult which turns creative artists into mere escapists or complacent conformists. He belongs to that class of writers who believe that art is for, life's sake, for the sake of man, for enriching the quality of his life. Such an artist cannot shirk his responsibility to society of which he is an organic part. He believes that literature ought to lead to action aimed at the creation of one world with whole men, enjoying social, political, and economic equality.
Even in his adolescence, Anand was faced with the crucial problem of choosing either the quest for philosophy leading probably to self-realisation or aesthetic life in human relations. After prolonged deliberation, he rejected philosophy and took to literature. But, paradoxically enough, a philosophy does emerge from his writings, and that is his philosophy of humanism. That a man's creative writing is conditioned by the age and milieu of his society is particularly true in Anand's case. The entire bulk of his fiction is to be viewed as a corpus of novels and stories whose characters embody in them the trials and errors, the passions and torments, the agonies and ecstasies of his countrymen of the last two generations. Anand's writings are not shallow concoctions fabricated just with the purpose of providing some sort of sophisticated entertainment to the lazy, leisure-loving rich, but they reflect the contemporary life, comment on it, and also imply in them a message—broadly speaking, the message of love and tenderness. But Anand is too cautious an artist to mistake art for the pulpit. He believes that the message in creative writing should not be so overt as to distort art.

Anand firmly believes that the main object of art is to help man realise himself in the framework of earthly existence. What we find in his
fiction, therefore, is not merely a realistic portrayal of life; it is an expressionistic vision. In other words, it has in it what Anand calls the 'desire image' of the author. He *suggests*, through his writings, what he wants from his characters. This tendency is often designated-and condemned-as propaganda. But it is difficult to see how any conscientious modern writer can escape being a 'propagandist', if by 'propaganda' is meant that an artist is committed to some values. In this sense almost all artists, worth the name, of course-are 'propagandists', whether they are conscious of it or not. Eric Gill has some illuminating comments to make on this question. He says:

"The fact remains. All art is propaganda, for it is in fact impossible to do anything, to make anything, which is not expressive of rallies! The artist may say *I do not care who likes* his work or dislikes it, *whether it affects anything or not, but directly he shows his work to anyone, and more so if he shows it in a public place, he becomes a responsible propagandist for the 'rallies', the ethos, expressed ill his work and therefore promoted by it."
"There is to escape from this. The artist cannot escape being a man. He cannot escape responsibility, he cannot escape being a propagandist."\(^1\)

Philip Henderson, in fact, pleads that it is the duty of modern writers to be propagandists in the sense that they should not only express the creative needs of the race and hope for the establishment of a reasonable society but must actively help to establish such society. He considers it a noble function of the writers to awaken man to an awareness of his destiny as a social being. But he hastens to add that the merit of a piece of creative writing depends on whether or not the writer has assimilated his convictions into the fabric of the work of art.

In this connection we may also invoke D. H. Lawrence with whom Anand is in emotional sympathy:

"Because a novel is a microcosm, and because man in viewing the universe must view it in the light of a theory, therefore every novel must have the background or the structural skeleton of some theory of being, some metaphysic. But the metaphysic must
always subsense the artistic purpose beyond the artist's conscious aim.

In fact, a distinction needs to be made between what it is to be a 'propagandist' in a bad sense and a 'propagandist' in a good sense. To be a propagandist, in a bad sense, means merely to preach and to allow the message to engulf the creative vision. But, on the contrary, to be a propagandist, in a good sense, means to have a sense of commitment or a vision, and not merely a thesis to prove. Anand, as shown earlier, is mostly a propagandist in the good sense, though occasionally he has become a propagandist in the pejorative sense too.

Maxim Gorky was also a propagandist in the good sense, and he invites comparison with Anand. Considering his literary career, it can be safely said that Anand has done in India what Gorky did in Russia. Gorky emphasised the idea that man can make himself. He introduced a new humanity, the outcasts, into literature. Anand has done the same thing for the first time in India. He has courageously written about the underdog; he has made the down-trodden and the lowly the central characters of most of his novels, and has suggested that these characters deserve
sympathy and love of the entire community. In a speech delivered on the
occasion of the Maxim Gorky Centenary celebrations, Anand writes thus
about Gorky:

"I have a great deal of my writing to Maxim
Gorky......he was the first writer to bring into
Russian literature, and thus into world literature, the
heroes of the unknown, unseen, unheard of obscure
peoples of Russia, the outcasts, the people rejected by
the superior people, who were not respectable enough
to appear ill literature before then." 3

What Anand writes further is enough to answer the critics who
decry propaganda:

"In my opinion, Gorky dared to put into literature I
hat which is generally called propaganda by the
capitalist world. All art is propaganda. The art of
Ajanta is propaganda for Buddhism. The art of Ellora
is propaganda for Hinduism. The art of the Western
novel is propaganda for humanity against the
bourgeois. Gorky as a humanist dared to speak of man, man's condition, not to say how awful it is, but lie also suggested what man could be. And thus he did propaganda for man.  

That way Anand also does propaganda for man—of course, with particular emphasis on Indian man. It is also clear now that Anand, like Lawrence, Eric Gill, and Gorky, belongs to that clan of writers whose writings are inspired by a mission. Like them he writes to reveal man to himself so that he can discover his potentialities as well as limitations, and in this awareness, make life a dedicated struggle aimed at the realisation of happiness and prosperity for mankind as a whole.

If we recall the various important incidents and influences in Anand's life which is not difficult to re-create imaginatively on the basis of his Apology for Heroism, Seven Ages of Man, and a few stray biographical essays, it is easy to see that Anand’s personal life as well as the world around him gradually helped him mature into a humanist with broad sympathies. A strong distrust of orthodox religion, a deep disgust for cruelty, a genuine compassion for the lowly and the lost, the ignorant
and the exploited, a tendency to disbelieve in the traditional concept of God, heaven and hell, his hatred of capitalism and imperialism, feudalism and Fascism, and several other factors which go to make his philosophy of humanism were learnt by him all through his life. Anand himself, therefore, would perhaps feel no hesitation to admit that the most pertinent way of looking at him is as a humanist writer with tremendous concern for man in general, and the common man in particular. In fact, Anand is the most ever democratic of writers that India has ever produced. Therefore, it is but right that Dr. Iyengar writes about Anand thus: "He (Anand) wrote of the people, for the people, and as a mart of the people." Also, there is no denying the fact that Anand’s fiction derives much meaning and depth by his commitment to humanist philosophy, though it is possible that at places he has failed to maintain a perfect balance between his art and philosophy.

Viewed from this angle, Anand can easily be credited with total success for his very first novel, Untouchable. The evil of caste and its disastrous effects on human dignity is the central theme of this novel. Through a couple of deft strokes Anand brings out the terror and cruelty that are inflicted on the hero who is a symbol of all unfortunate
untouchables, victims of the wrath and injustice of the caste-Hindus. The problem is posed; the horrors of untouchability are vividly painted and then, some solutions are suggested, not forced. Thus, Anand has cleverly succeeded in effecting a perfect fusion of his point of view—his concern for the lowly and the weak—and the artistic values demanded by the novel which ought not to become a pulpit. In short, the message in his novel becomes the word. This is, in fact, the impression that the novel made on Eric Gill, the renowned British artist. His reaction is to be found in a letter he wrote to Anand on reading this little great masterpiece.

Further, Untouchable is significant for its pellucidly simple and unaffected style which is a reflection of the novelist's burning sincerity and complete absence of sentimentalism. Bakha, the central character, is at once an individual in flesh and blood, true to life, as well as, a type representing hundreds and thousands of his like. His life is a tragedy which invites our sympathy. At the same time, the novel ends in an optimistic note in the sense that a change in the life of untouchables is, after all, possible, though probably remote. Untouchable is, perhaps, Anand's greatest novel, a work whose excellence Anand himself has not been able to improve upon till now. Anand's intention in taking up the
same theme of untouchability for his novel. *Road*, was clearly to show that the evil of caste was not totally dead even after nearly three decades. But the old fire is conspicuous by its absence here. *Road* fails to reach the same height of excellence as *Untouchable* does. Structurally it is rather ill-knit and artistically it is not quite satisfying. One of the reasons for its failure is Anand’s inability to make the hero really the central figure. In fact, it is not impossible to mistake Dhooli Singh for the central character. Bhiku lacks the flesh and blood necessary for a life like individual and he rather seems to be Anand’s creation just meant for vindicating his thesis against untouchability. Another reason for the novel’s failure seems to be the ill-management of scenes and character-delineation. The characters are unnecessarily too many and the several scenes shift in such breathless succession that they frustrate the reader’s attempts to focus his attention on any specific scene.

The second significant tenet of Anand’s humanism is his crusade against the evils of poverty and cruelty, misery and desolation, pain and suffering. All these figure in *Coolie*, one of Anand’s early novels acclaimed as a great novel almost in the same breath as *Untouchable* is done. The whole novel can be compared with a vast dramatic stage on
which the tragedy of a poor orphan boy is enacted. It has a rich variety of characters and scenes, but the real focus is always the hero whom we follow in his course of fortunes and misfortunes with unabated interest till the very end. *Coolie* is reminiscent of both Dickens’ *Hard Times* and Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*, and Dr. Iyengar pays it a just tribute when he praises it for its unparalleled amplitude and power of narration, and calls it “a prose epic of modern India.” However, perhaps it needs to be admitted that it is not as impeccable as *Untouchable*. The multiplicity of characters, episodes, and scenes has produced on some critics the impression of vagueness and amorphousness. But, apart from this, the narrative grows perceptibly rambling when Anand introduces the character of Mrs. Main-waring. While one wonders if the story of the invention of rikshaw and the description of its length and breadth and weight is not ridiculously purposeless, Mrs. Mainwaring’s flirtations with number-less men cannot but bore the discerning reader. Since Anand believes that even Shakespeare needs serious editing, it may be suggested that the whole of Mrs. Mainwaring’s episode needs thorough editing, Also, as pointed out earlier, in a place or two Anand seems to have become too overtly propagandistic to escape a serious critic’s notice and
censure, for instance, in depicting a rikshawalla's reaction to the club life of society's men and women. These are mistakes, no doubt. But, the total impression that one gets of this novel is that it is a great work, convincingly unfolding the vast drama of a poor boy's bitter struggle for existence, and his eventual defeat and death at the hands of the cruel world. Coolie, just like Untouchable, succeeds in registering our sympathy for the poor and the lost, and they are both eloquent pleas for tenderness and social as well as economic equality of all.

An alert look at the contemporary Indian literary scene reveals Anand's position there. With his deep social conscience and sense of commitment, Anand is down to the earth, and there is a range and depth in his writings unparalleled by others. R. K. Narayan is essentially an ironic spectator of life with hardly any sense of commitment. Raja Rao is growing too metaphysical in his recent writings, and he often loses touch with life as revealed by his Cat and Shakespeare in which there seems to be no clear dimension of realism. But Anand avoids the limitations of both Narayan and Raja Rao, thanks to his philosophy of humanism which animates all that he writes. Anand invites comparison with Charles Dickens. It is true that this English master of fiction was a greater comic
artist, gifted with a greater dramatic sense, greater power of invention, and also a wider range of characterisation. But, like Anand, Dickens was a humanist who championed the cause of the poor, the down-trodden, and the under-privileged.

It is, by and large, the destiny of man that forms Anand's central concern in all his fiction. This explains the universal appeal of his novels and stories. They, indeed, are like so many flames unquenchable: that is precisely why almost all his works have been translated into several world languages. Nearly a decade ago, Anand wrote:

"There has been no important book in the world of any age, which has not probed the very basis of human reason, not analysed the deepest stirrings in the lonely heart, and not exposed the hypocrisies, the brutalities and insensitiveness of society... The poet is the guardian spirit of those tendernesses, which are always being crushed by the toughnecks of every society. The poet exposes the lies of men and, by
implication, reveals the vision of a more (sic) and nobler existence.\textsuperscript{14}

This clearly explains Anand's position. He belongs to that class of artists who are inspired by a mission—a tireless crusade against falsity and hypocrisy, cruelty and insensitivity, and a defence of love and compassion, and all that goes to make man's life happier and nobler.

Also, viewed in the light of the above statement of faith, the best in Anand's fiction easily belongs to the category of the important books of the world.

The artist as humanist is an artist who stands at the centre of the human experience, and derives his strength from it. Though he occasionally strays away from it, Anand, at his best, stands firmly at this 'still centre.'
References


4. Ibid., p. 94.
