Chapter 3

GANDHIAN IDEOLOGY IN THE NOVELS OF MULK RAJ ANAND

A writer’s work is sustained by the intellectual, social, political, religious and cultural milieu to which he belongs. From 1920 onwards Indian thought and life were greatly influenced by the powerful impact of the nationalist movement and the ideology of Gandhi. All Indian literature showed a marked impact of Gandhian thought and reverberates with the glorification of truth, non-violence, village uplift, charkha, prohibition, communal harmony and abolition of untouchability. The political milieu is the dominant setting of Indian literature of the period and Gandhian ideology as its intellectual background. Indian writing in English as a branch of Indian literature too was not left untouched. It succeeded in catching the wide spread popularity of Gandhi and his movement throughout the length and the breadth of the vast subcontinent. Of all literary forms fiction is the most vitally concerned with social conditions and values. In fact, the artistic Indian fiction in English has given a very comprehensive and vivid account of Gandhi’s personality, philosophy, popularity and movement. There is hardly any phase of Gandhi’s life and movement since 1920 when he look up the leadership of the people in their stupendous struggle for freedom till his harrowing death that has not been mirrored truthfully and successfully.

Of all the Indo-Anglian novelists Mulk Raj Anand is the most prolific and the most committed ranking in stature with the other two elderly novelists R K Narayan and Raja Rao. These three writers began their career in 1930s. It was in fact, during
this period that Indian English fiction discovered some of its most significant themes such as the ordeal of the freedom struggle, East-West relationship, the communal problem and the plight of the untouchables, the landless poor, the economically exploited classes etc.

There is a close proximity between Anand’s life and his art as we find in Gandhi. Anand himself has observed as: “The connection between my life and my writings is more intimate than in other novelists. I write as I like. My life is my message” (Anand 1986: 95).

Mulk Raj Anand came under the influence of Gandhi at Sabarmati Ashram and discarded all his English styles which he had adopted in England. He became an Indian in his dress and life style. His stay in Sabarmati Ashram also gave him a chance to come closer to the exploited—particularly the untouchables. He could also gain a closer and sympathetic understanding of the socially and economically exploited poor Indians. As a result of his contact with Gandhi, Anand could gain a closer and sympathetic understanding not only for the social exploitation of Harijans but also of the poor Indians in general—an exploitation which was embedded in the political system of the colonial rule of India by the capitalistic British.

Furthermore, he was influenced by the nineteen thirties— the pink decade when Gandhi dominated on the Indian scene as K R Srinivas Iyengar writes:

The nineteen thirties were the seed time of modern independent India: the Gandhian salt Satyagraha movements in 1930 and 1932, the three Round Table Conferences, the passing of the Government of India Act of 1935, the introduction of Provincial Autonomy in 1937, the
Gandhian movements of Harijan upliftment and Basic education


Anand imbibed Gandhi’s ideas about the exploited poor Indians, the downtrodden, the untouchables and the poor helpless peasants. Gandhi’s humanism left an everlasting impression on young Anand’s mind:

The influence of Gandhi on Anand was remarkable and indelible. Recalling his participation in Gandhi’s Civil Disobedience movement in 1921 when he was a college student at Amritsar Anand describes how he came under Gandhi’s spell:

I became vaguely interested in his ideas, particularly in the ethics of simple living that he was insisting on in the press. Spinning, weaving, and wearing of home-spun, the campaign against untouchability, and the great doctrine of ahimsa, non-violence as practised in the liberation movement (Anand 1981: 5).

During his visit to the Sabarmati Ashram he showed the script of his novel ‘Bakha’ to Gandhi and draw inspiration and strength from him. Anand was impressed by Gandhi’s sincerity, love of truth and love for the downtrodden. He admits: “The warmth towards Bakha which has made this character lovable to many people, may to some extent, has emerged from my warmth towards the person of Gandhi” (Anand 1967: 13).

It was again the Gandhian influence that, as Anand acknowledges prompted him to write for the poor and the depressed: “I begin to dream writing only about the poorest of poor human beings …and not very much about the orthodox and superior people of high caste, class and status” (Anand 1967: 38).
All of his main characters, therefore belong to the poor strata of life—Bakha, a sweeper boy in *Untouchable*, Bhikhu, a cobbler in *Coolie*, Gangu, a labourer in *Two Leaves and a Bud*, Lal Singh, a peasant cum soldier in *The Village*, *Across the Black Waters* and *The Sword and the Sickle*, Ananta in *The Big Heart* and Krishna, a Head clerk’s son in *Seven Summers*, *Morning Face* and *Confessions of a Lover*.

Anand, with his avowed perceptions of social determinism, attempted to fuse the ideological base of Gandhism with his all-encompassing ‘historical humanism.’ Anand was inspired by Gandhism to an extent that it not only became a precept to him but also a religion to be vividly endorsed and practised.

Like Gandhi, Anand is a humanist, always conscious of the miseries and sufferings of the underprivileged and always determined to help them rise materially and spiritually. He writes in *Apology*:

… I would like to underline at this juncture, specially as an Indian, as I am conscious of the need to help raise the untouchables, the peasants, the serfs, the coolies and the other suppressed masses of society, to human dignity and self awareness in view of the abjectness, apathy and despair to which they have been condemned (Anand 1975: 137).

Anand was drawn towards Gandhi for his humanity, especially his great love for the poor and the suffering and his tireless efforts to uplift them materially and spiritually. Anand was a humanist, a proletarian who does not believe in the ‘Arts for Arts Sake’ but writes to awaken the social conscience. He was audacious enough to admit that he used literature as a means to some other end, and that this end was the alleviation of the suffering of fellow human beings. He made the position clear in his *Apology for
Heroism: “Any writer who said that he was not interested in ‘la condition humaine’ was either posing or yielding to a fanatical love of isolationism” (Anand 1975: 123). Anand all along wrote novels and short stories with a view to teaching men to recognize the fundamental principles of human living and exercise vigilance in regard to the real enemies of freedom and socialism. It was a lifetime mission for him to help raise the untouchables, the peasants, the coolies and the other suppressed members of society to fight for human dignity deliberately denied to them by the privileged sections of society.

Of all great Indian novelists in English, Anand was perhaps the one whose life was most closely and most obviously connected with his work. For him, his life was his art and art, his life. Ideologically, Anand is quite akin to Gandhi. His sympathies were with the underdogs of society and he was against all types of exploitation whether by the ‘white sahibs’ or ‘brown sahibs’. He did not believe in caste discrimination or class distinctions. Most of the victims of exploitation portrayed by him were people in real life. He wrote in the preface to Two Leaves and a Bud: “All these heroes, as the other man and women who had emerged in my novels and short stories, were dear to me because they were the reflections of the real people I had known during my childhood and youth” (Anand 1972: 1).

And those ‘real people’ are the untouchables and the coolies, the poor peasants and the uneducated pathans fighting a grim and desperate battle for survival. His pre-independence fiction deals with several aspects of social reform, including the plight of the untouchables in Untouchable; the exploitation of the tea garden workers in Two Leaves and a Bud, and the problems of industrial labour, which are dealt with in
greater detail in *The Big Heart*. Anand’s realism is unsparing, but his humanistic faith and humanitarian compassion often colour his narratives so strongly as to cause varying degrees of damage to the prime artistic values in novel after novel.

Anand has often been dubbed as a propagandist but it is not so. Jack Lindsay defends Anand in the words: “As Mulk Raj Anand, the leftist is angry, he is very angry; but he is enough of an artist to save his excellent novels from the stigma of mere propaganda” (Lindsay 1975: 14).

Anand might appear to be ‘angry’, but he was decidedly not a committed writer who intended to propagate any ‘ism’. He might at best be called ‘committed’ in the sense that he was determined to expose the caste-and-class-based exploitation of the society so that a salutary, social change may be brought about where all, irrespective of status and profession, live in peace and with self-respect. In fact: “His fiction seeks to get a heaving for the orphans of society whose potentialities and desires are thwarted in a system which is heavily weighted in favour of the groups” (Rao 1978: 159).

After about a few years of having written *Untouchable*, Anand happened to come across a poignant story about a sweeper-boy, Uka, narrated by Mahatma Gandhi in *Young India*. He found similarity of theme and attitude and decided to meet Gandhi and read to him some parts of the novel. Anand has summed up his impression in these words: “The genuineness of his love for the outcasts moved me more importantly than many of his other ideas, except that we then all followed his thoughts on national freedom as our man …” (Anand 1967: 33).
Anand writes, “One of my Welsh friends encouraged me to seek Gandhi, in spite of my godlessness, perchance the Indian prophet may convert me into the faith in God” (Ibid: 33). Anand’s girl friend even donated money for his passage and he left for India. On board the ship too, Anand felt humiliated at the fellow British passengers as Gandhi had experienced while traveling in first class railway coach in South African early twentieth century. He said: “I began retouching my novel Untouchable from the new anger I felt about being an outcaste of the society of the ship” (33).

After reaching Bombay, Anand took an appointment with Gandhi and called on him in April 1929. He describes his first meeting with Gandhi in the following words: “The old man appeared with an awkward gait, but there was something compelling about his simple presence, clad only in a loincloth. His skin was shining almost as though he had his bath” (35).

While at the Sabarmati Ashram, Anand expressed a desire to stay in it and work for Gandhi’s anti-touchability programme. The Mahatma told him that he could stay only after taking the vow that included cleansing the lavatories once a week, abstinence from liquor and avoiding looking at a woman with lustful eyes.

As a novelist in the modern world, with a deep intellectual concern for humanity, Anand employs his ideas and ideologies as raw materials for his art; and through his art he intends to reach down to the metabolism of Indian life and perhaps to transform the reader’s consciousness through the empathy it creates. He confesses that his impulse to write originated from the necessity to reform Indian society. But it is Anand the novelist who comes to make use of Anand the activist, the idealist or
even the ideologist. This becomes clear from Anand’s insistence on the use of the novel form to write about the life of a sweeper boy. Anand reports about a session Gandhi whom he had discussed this point. When Gandhi asked him, “why write a novel? Why not a tract on untouchability? I answered that a novel was more human and could produce contrary emotions and shades of feeling, whereas a tract could become biased and that I liked a concrete as against a general statement” (Anand 1967: 23).

Since Anand’s intention had been to write with a view to changing life, he found it all the more imperative to use the form of the novel to bring about this change. It helped him view the social reality in more concrete terms. He had been inclined to stress the need for a humanist art commensurate with the needs of the contemporary times. Gandhian ideas provided him a ready reference for this endeavour.

Anand expresses a similar concern with specific issues of Gandhian identity and civilization as Gandhi did in *Hind Swaraj*. How deeply he was affected by the Gandhi’s genius to synthesize disparate elements, his stand on anti-mechanization and his philosophy of non-violence becomes evident from Anand’s analyses of the tenets of Gandhian philosophy in, for example, *Is There a Contemporary Civilization*. Anand is of the view that “behind the mechanical civilization of the West was the ferocious man-eater of the profit system” (Anand 1963: 4). And he does not think very highly of the publicity-oriented and “gadget mongering civilization of the West” (Ibid: 4). In this book Anand also analyses how inspired by Gandhian leadership and Gandhian “combination of ideology in action” (Ibid: 62). Writers and intellectuals
reinterpreted Indian culture. He refers to the all comprehensive thought of Gandhi which made politics a house-hold word and related to it man’s socio-economic and cultural life of India: “Life in India is politics and politics life. And politics itself has been compounded of socio-economic urges as well as ideas based on facts” (Ibid: 62).

It is Gandhian thought which was based on facts of the Indian situation that appealed to Anand. He talks passionately about Gandhi’s “uncanny manner of allying himself with the masses and evolving ideas of a new peasant civilization” (Ibid: 72). He seems to find a way out of Gandhi’s discovery of “certain simple techniques of protest rooted in the peasant consciousness” (Ibid: 73) and his “concept of violence of the West” (Ibid: 74).

For Anand, humanism was the enlightenment in the interest of man, true to his highest nature and his noblest vision. In his Apology for Heroism, he speaks of his humanism that stands for “reverent attitude towards the last members of society, towards the weak and the fallen and the under-privileged everywhere” (Anand 1975: 96-97).

Anand’s disillusionment with Marxist thinking can be ignored only at the cost of understanding him as a novelist. In a post-script to the second edition of Apology entitled, “There is no higher thing than Truth,’ he accepts that the “philosophical basis which supplied the cue for the reform and revolution is suspect and needs deeper analyses” (Ibid: 142). Anand also unequivocally accepts that the communist world is in the defensive and “denies the people the very liberties and human rights for which the revolution was fought” (Ibid: 202).
Gandhian thought ultimately aims at creating a society that ensures the common man’s improvement, though in his thought it is man himself, the individual, who, by being, a free agent of his actions, would ensure that improved status for himself. It is this humanistic aspect of Gandhian thought that helped Anand the novelist decide the choice of themes, protagonists and his fictional techniques of stark realism. His concern with individuals like Bakha in *Untouchable* and Munoo in *Coolie* shows his unmistakable sympathies with the downtrodden and lowliest of the low in Indian society. Not only that, it is on Gandhian lines that his novels present a critique of the modern, industrialized and mechanized society. It is significant that it is only the non-violent methods that are approved by characters who initiate social change in his novels. Gandhi opposed untouchability on social, political and humanitarian grounds. He felt that the age-old untouchability was a curse and a kind of disease to Hindu society.

Anand’s very first novel *Untouchable* is a novel based on Gandhian voice against untouchability. Anand in the novel depicts the stigma of this evil that isolates man from man from his society. The novel portrays an individual who tries to release himself from the customs and beliefs of the community he belongs where he fails to do so.

Anand is a novelist with an inherent social purpose. His themes are socio-economic problems. He is not interested in writing about the glorious past but contemporary India- with its problems of untouchability, poverty, labour problem, hunger, superstitions, narrow formalism, woman and her economic security. His novels focus attention on the basic condition in which man lives. “His first novel
Untouchable was inspired by Gandhi’s story of Uka and he made changes in the language and style on Gandhi’s insistence” (Bamezai 2000: 7). In the words of Venkateswarlu: “The novel is a recordation of the epic sufferings of an untouchable who is regarded the scum of the Indian society and who is denied the opportunity of social betterment, and who is victimized and thoroughly dehumanized” (Venkateswarlu 2003: 27)

Recalling the genesis of the novel, Anand admits that in the early Twenties he “came across a poignant story about a sweeper boy Uka by Mahatma Gandhi in Young India, written with the utmost simplicity. I showed this to the poet A.E. (George Russell) who said: ‘Son, write like him about your hero-anti-hero. Gandhi says the struggle to free untouchables is equal to the struggle for freedom for India. Go to him” (Anand 1991: 94-95).

The cruelty of this God-ordained system (varna-ashram, the Hindu caste-order) came home to me when Bakha, a sweeper boy, brought me home bruised in the head by an accidental stone, and my mother scolded him for carrying me and touching me. She bathed me even though I was bleeding. This little incident was to remain in my conscious-unconscious, and became a passion for justice against the age-old fixtures of non-human discrimination against untouchables. This became the protest in my first published novel, Untouchable (Anand 1991: 47).

Untouchable depicts the impact of Gandhi who launched the freedom movement in the 1920s to liberate India from the slavery of the British. The writer assiduously
explores the Gandhian ideals of loving one’s enemies, non-violence and abolition of untouchability. Anand refers to the immense popularity of Gandhian thought in the novel. The idea of the novel *Untouchable* had sprouted from the seed of humanism deeply ingrained in the novelist when he himself had undertaken the sweeper’s work in Gandhi’s Ashram.

*Untouchable*, Anand's first novel, brought him immense popularity and prestige. This novel shows the realistic picture of society. In this novel Anand has portrayed a picture of untouchable who is a sweeper boy. Bakha is a universal figure to show the oppression, injustice, humiliation to the whole community of the outcastes in India. Bakha symbolizes the exploitation and oppression which has been the fate of untouchables like him. His anguish and humiliation are not his alone, but the suffering of whole outcastes and underdogs. Anand’s life and experience in the Sabarmati Ashram proved extremely useful in realizing the characters in the novel. Bakha is too much under the Mahatma’s spell to listen to anyone. But the mention of the ‘machine which clears dung’ and which would enable a sweeper to change his profession so that he would no longer be thought of as an untouchable grips his attention. It also catches his fancy. Gandhi strongly believed in the dictum ‘simple living and high thinking’ and one of the salient features of Gandhian literature is the simplicity and clarity of language. Perhaps that is the reason behind Anand’s discarding ornateness, artificiality, pedantry and laborious artistry in his language. In theme, the novelist preferred the village to the city, the poor to the rich, the cultural heritage of the village to the urban luxury and sophistication. Almost all the protagonists of his novels come from the lower class of society such as Munoo in
Coolie, Bakha in *Untouchable* and Gangu in *Two Leaves and a Bud*. As C. J. George says:

Especially his cleaning of latrines in the Ashram was a lesson in recognizing the dignity of labour. He realized that devotion to duty is the highest form of worship and all labour is a kind of creativity. With this new insight into work as worship Anand gave a new touch to the character of Bakha and we find in the novel as a worshipper of God through hard work (George 2008: 31).

The periods of meditations in the ashram were often periods of recollections for Anand. He recalled how energetic and kind hearted was his childhood friend, Bakha. He also recalled the feelings for devotion or ‘bhakti’ which he had acquired as a young boy by seeing the personal love of his Sikh maternal grand father who used to tend the sick and the poor in his home. This recollection along with Gandhi’s exhortation to show devotion to the poor was a source of convention for Anand. Anand’s writings have been continued in the vein of Gandhian age. The Gandhian set up is idealistic but Bakha’s adolescent impression of the machine symbolizes the new mode of production and set of new values for the eradication of untouchability.

*Untouchable* is a story of a day in the life of Bakha, 18 years sweeper boy, in a small town in Punjab. The story shows the evil of untouchability in Hindu Society. Anand describes the pathetic conditions of the untouchables through the character Bakha, their immitigable hardships and physical and mental agonies almost with the meticulous skill of historical raconteur.
Untouchable is a faithful record and a transcription of the pathetic plight of untouchables who are subjected to immitigable social indignities, "only because of their lowly birth." Anand depicted the miserable condition of the small family of Lakha, the jamadar of the sweepers. Anand not only throws light on their abject poverty and suffering but also focuses its attention on their low-caste. The novel has a tragic beauty of its own. The will to revolt and the sheer impossibility of successful doing so under the circumstances constitute the basic tension in the novel. The hero is simultaneously a rebel and victim. His anguish becomes our sorrow. But Bakha has no tragic status as scapegoat and a victim, tyrannized by a recalcitrant society. He is the lowest of the lowly whose destiny does not suffer any appreciable erosion.

The novel was written under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi who suggested to Anand the proper way to write a novel on the challenging theme of untouchability. Bakha has to undergo untold humiliation and undeserved derogatory remarks, tyranny and injustice without any rhyme and reason- only because he belongs to a low caste. Condemned by society to live on the outskirts of the army settlement Bakha realizes at the end of his one day odyssey through social wrongs and mental crises that he is a polluting agent. Bakha’s problem revolves around cleaning the latrines. The solutions proposed- Christ, Gandhi, Marx and the sewage system give an optimistic conclusion to this novel of protest against the miserable life of an untouchable.

As the novel opens, we see Bakha, receiving so many derogatory epithets by Lakha e.g. ‘son of a pig’ (15), ‘you illegally begotten’ (17), ‘scoundrel of sweeper’s son, etc. we also get the detailed description of the uncongenial surroundings where Bakha has to live. Anand describes Bakha’s morning round of duties with a
painstaking particularity, bringing out both the efficiency with which the boy does this essential service and the callousness with which the beneficiaries receive it as a matter of no account whatsoever.

The first page of the novel pinpoints the social structure in which such inhuman treatment of an individual is a fact. But for Bakha, the place where: “…the ramparts of human and animal refuse that lay on the outskirts of this little colony, and the ugliness, the squalor and the misery that lay within it, made it an uncongenial place to live in” (Anand 1970: 9).

*Untouchable* is the real conscientious manifestation of Gandhi’s ideas about the hideous practice of untouchability resulting from the racial discrimination deeply rooted in Indian societies. Gandhi despised the practice of untouchability by the high caste Hindus- more particularly by the Brahmins. He considered untouchability as a sinful and contemptible act to be condemned by all. Bakha is a dedicated worker. He begins his day even before dawn at the rude command of his father. Bakha avoids all alibis accompanying idleness and goes about with strength and vitality. He finishes the fifth round of work even before he could have his morning cup of tea. Like the followers of Gandhi he is very dutiful. His reverence for work makes him a Gandhi disciple without knowing it. But it is an irony that society pays no credit to his devotion to duty. Cigarettes are flung at him and the thin paper like pancake flies down to him like a kite from the third floor.

Anand writes: “the symbolic act of cleaning the latrines made a deep impression on me” (Anand 1967: 36). Now under the influence of Gandhi, he realized that if the sweepers could clean the latrines and carry the excreta, the caste Hindus
should also do it. After beginning to do this kind of work, he revised the novel in the light of the fact that he could make the very act of cleaning latrines by Bakha, hero of his *Untouchable* seem no better and no worse than any other work. Anand says: “Apart from conversion to the idea of work as worship, I had already imbibed an integral outlook towards all labour, as a kind of creativity” (Anand 1967: 37).

Bakha has to fight the enemies not from within but from without, and he is not as against any particular individual as against the whole hierarchical stiffness of the social custom. With this sense of alienation from the conglomerate humanity, he becomes much distressed when he comes to know that he is ostracized even before he is aware of it. Cleaning three rows of latrines in a single day and starting his routine work with his father's cascade of abuses and unconcealed threats are the rituals he had to undergo umpteen times.

His day starts with endearing entreaties and downright abuses by his father and his encounter with the high-caste people, who can not put up with his very sight. All the time the author is aware of his tragedy, because this otherwise near perfect human being is a sweeper and is ill treated, insulted and humiliated by others all the time because of his low caste. He is addressed to in the most humiliating manner even when required to do the scavenger’s job.

Bakha is insulted and beaten in the market by a Hindu Lalla when he touched him unknowingly. Lalla told him to:

Keep to the side of the road, ohe 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, cock eyed son of a bow-legged scorpion. Now I will have
to go and take a bath to purify myself (50-51).

Bakha becomes conscious for the first time being an untouchable. He realizes that it is
only the Hindus and the outcastes who are not sweepers and for then he is a sweeper,
an untouchable.

He began to shout aloud warning word to announce his approach: “posh, posh,
sweeper coming” (59). When he becomes aware of his position Anand gives other
incidents to stress this point. At the temple Bakha is again disturbed by the priest’s
shouting: “polluted! Polluted! Polluted! (66). It is the priest who has tried to molest
Sohini, but he tries to create a scene saying that he has been “defiled by contact” (68).
This has finally killed Bakha inside.

Gandhi is introduced personally in the end of the novel. A reference is made to
the impact of his magnetic personality when Bakha recalls how, “the crowd had
determined to crush everything however ancient or beautiful that lay in the way of
their achievement of all that Gandhi stood for.” (21) Bakha even hears people saying
that “he was a saint, that he was an ‘avatar’ of the gods Vishnu and Krishna.” (22) He
is referred to as having the power to change the whole world. Bakha too feels like
others that only Gandhi could cure the ills of the modern world by teaching it the true
religion of love. For Bakha, however, the privilege of being one in the crowd before
the Mahatma itself is a great experience. He is an all pride when he realizes that like
him the Mahatma is also black, he finds something intimate and warm about him. His
simplicity, purity and childlike smile haunt the sweeper-boy.
Gandhi declared himself to be a man of religion and he sought to relate his ideas and thoughts to a transcendental reality. He wielded such an overwhelming influence that his mere presence used to cause sensation in the public. This charismatic characteristic of Gandhi is presented in the novel:

The Mahatma raised his right arm from the folds of his shawl and blessed the crowd with a gentle benediction. The bubble of voices died out, as if he had sent an electric shock through the masses of humanity gathered at his feet. This strange man seemed to have the genius that could by a single dramatic act, rally multi-tongued India to himself (158-59).

In this way Gandhi united the whole of India for the first time. He loved untouchables. His mission was to emancipate the untouchables. In the novel he declares: “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 sorrow, sufferings and affronts leveled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and them from their miserable condition” (162).

Gandhi also advised the untouchables to be clean so that others should not look down upon them. Gandhi continues in Untouchable: “If there are untouchables here...they should realize that they are cleaning Hindu society... They have, therefore, to purify their lives. They should cultivate the habit of cleanliness, so that no one shall point his finger at them” (163).

Bakha also recalls how Gandhi was very keen on uplifting the untouchables. Gandhi himself appears on the platform and tells the people. “I regard untouchability
as the greatest blot on Hinduism’’ (23). This speech about untouchability is quoted almost fully and a reference is also made to Uka, an untouchable, who used to work for Gandhi’s mother and had an indelible mark on his sensitive mind.

Though Gandhi doesn’t appear in the novel Coolie as in Untouchable and The Sword and the Sickle, Coolie is based on his ideas against the exploitation of the poor labourer at the hands of industrial forces. The novel propagates and strengthens Gandhi’s economic thoughts. He believed that no one in this world should suffer from want of food and clothing and everybody must have the right to make two ends meet.

Coolie is a story of an orphan hill boy Munoo who is forced out of his village in search of livelihood. It describes the disillusionment of him. It is based upon the problem of class struggle, social injustice, and psychological conflict of the untouchables, the poor and the rich. It is an indictment against the inhuman treatment given to the poor, against the denial of the right to happiness to a simple landless orphan, against the exploitation of the under privileged and unjust social system.

First he works as a servant boy at the house of a middle class Babu, and then in a pickle factory in another town. Then he reaches Bombay and works in a cotton mill from where he escapes when the Hindu-Muslim riot is sparked off. The car of an Anglo-Indian woman knocks him down. He works for her page-cum-rikshawallah, and eventually dies of consumption. The novel exposes the exploitation of the poor by the rich: “He had heard of how the landlord had seized his father’s five acres of land because the interest on the mortgage covering the unpaid rent and he knew how his father died a slow death of bitterness and left his mother a penniless beggar to support a child in arms” (Anand 1972: 6).
Compelled by poverty, Munoo, a lad of fourteen, starts working as a domestic servant in the house of Babu Nathu Ram. He is ill treated and runs away when Bibiji’s young daughter is hurt. He in the course of his life comes in contact with people of various sections of society. In the words of Iyengar: “If Untouchable is the microcosm, Coolie is more like the macrocosm that is Indian society” (Iyengar: 1962: 340).

At all stages of his life, Munoo is ill treated, insulted and disdained. Anand again upholds the dignity of man by making a labourer of the lowest strata of Indian society the protagonist of the novel. It is the evil of poverty that drags Munoo from his village to the lot of the domestic servant. His escape from Babu Dayaram’s house lands him in still more difficult situation. Munoo has a fascination for the machine but:

… the atmosphere, the wild hum of the machine, the jig-jig-jagging of his pistons, the tick-tick-ticking of its knobs, the furious motion of the broad conveyer belts across its wheels, the clanking of chains, the heat they all generated and the heavy, greasy odour of oil mixed with the taste of the fresh cotton thread not offensive by itself, but sickening like bile in the mouth- from all this seemed to rise a black shadow, strangling one at the throat with its powerful, invisible fingers (Anand 1972: 168).

Munoo is shown being sucked down in the industrial sink. On the very first day in the factory, he loses his only shirt he had as it got stuck in the conveyer belt of the machine. Fortunately, he was saved by his co-worker Hari who dragged him away
from the machine. Munoo felt as if: “... the many headed, many armed machine god was chuckling with laughter at the joke it had played on him by divesting him his shirt” (Ibid: 169).

The close reading of the novel conveys Anand’s anti-machine stand. Factories are compared to prison houses from which the coolies like hungry tigers are waiting to be released. Accidents at the factory are common. Anand imaginatively touches on the callousness and indifference of man to man produced as a result of the machine civilization. The machine is presented again and again as a monster and a messenger of no hope for better life. It heralds only death:

On Monday mornings they faced death again. And, as if the monster of death were some invisible power which throttled them as soon as they stet out to work, they walked to the factory in a kind of hypnotized state of paralysis, in a state of apathy and temper which made the masks of their faces assume the sinister horror of unexpressed pain (Ibid: 195).

In Coolie, caste, unlike, Untouchable, does not matter. It is their poor economic status that compels the poor people belonging to the higher caste to the menial work of a servant. Munoo, a Kshatriya, and Verma, a Brahmin, are forced to work as servants due to their poor economic status.

In the novels after Untouchable, the economic factor becomes more crucial than social status and in the novels after novels Anand repeats that there are two types of people- the rich and the poor.

The village trilogy deals with the turbulent career of a Punjabi peasant. The village is symbolic of the tragedy and hope of India simultaneously. It stands for the
village in transition from orthodoxy to modernity. Gandhi emphasized many a time that the nucleus of Indian life lies in the villages of India. Anand chooses village as a locale in his trilogy *The Village, Across the Black Waters* and *The Sword and the Sickle* which itself is Gandhian. Lal Singh, a Sikh peasant, is the hero of these novels.

The *Village* depicts the evil of rural indebtedness and the exploitation of the poor villagers by the rich landlords and the money lenders- the evils Gandhi wanted to eradicate. Like Gandhi, Anand does not approve of unquestioning traditional religion, blind faith and superstitions and exposes the hypocrisy of Mahant Nandgir who is a confirmed glutton, drug addict and lecher. Religion and ethics are reduced to a mere formality and this is what Anand, in the true Gandhian spirit, brings to light. *The Village* holds a mirror to the reality of the village life. Peasant life as a victim of ritualistic Hinduism is the main focus in the novel. The fear of avenging gods, personal ritualistic devotion to deities, beliefs in Karma, Dharma and Maya are presented as the causes of the peasants’ fatalistic approach to life that cripples him in fighting against injustices in his society. Even Gandhi’s faith in the equality of all religions is brought to the foreground when Lalu, accused of infidelity by the Maulvi retorts: “Surely there is no favouritism shown to man in heaven, if there is such a place, just because men belongs to the one religion or others” (Gandhi 1954: 218).

Gandhi attacks these very ritualistic and superstitious aspects of Hindu society. It relates people’s religion to the concrete economic and social problems by emphasizing the philosophy of action in this world. According to it, God is to be perceived not in deities, but in men- the down-trodden men and women of Indian society.
Lal Singh is the first of Anand’s heroes who actually revolt against the socio-religious system in the society. Amongst the first symbolic acts of revolt are his getting a hair cut and his eating at a Muslim shop at the village fair. Lalu’s action in the novel could be said to be a Gandhian quest for personality. He gets into trouble and runs away from his village to join Army. Anand’s disapproval of the theories of Karma and God are evident in the novel.

The story of *The Village* is carried forward in *Across the Black Waters*. *Across the Black Waters*, the second volume of the trilogy, is an elaborate running commentary on the four years of war. Lal Singh joins the Indian Army which joins the French and English armies at Marseilles. He moves from Marseilles to Orleans, to Calais and to Festubert and so on. The novel illustrates Anand’s denunciation of war, the attendant cruelty and violence and the ultimate meaninglessness of it all. The novel describes the relationship of the poor and the lowly by those in power. Lalu compares the European and the Indian life and finds more equality in Europe as he and his companions see, “two sweepers drinking wine by the two Tommies and also a woman” (Anand 2008: 34). His admiration for this set up clearly indicates Gandhian influence as what impresses him is not the lure of Western civilization, but the spirit of equality.

In the true Gandhian spirit Mulk Raj Anand tries to prove that we must detest the sin and not the sinner as the English as the whole cannot be condemned. Only the way of the rulers whether British or Indians is wrong that is what should be rectified. The novel is Anand’s severest indictment on war and violence. Anand’s pacifism in this novel has obviously Gandhian overtones unequivocally; he suggests that war is
evil. It is relevant here to point out that Gandhian condemnation of war as evil was integral to his criticism of the western machine civilization as something that inevitably results in war.

*The Sword and the Sickle*, the third volume of trilogy is a continuation of Lal Singh’s life history. Lal Singh returns to his village after five years of stay in Germany as a war prisoner and is shocked to that his family is broken up and his property lost. Like *Untouchable* Gandhi also appears in *The Sword and the Sickle*. He goes to Allahabad on behalf of the peasants to express their grievances to Congress where he has a face to face meeting with Gandhi. When he listens to the words of Gandhi about suffering, he does not appreciate his words as ‘He had never welcomed suffering’ (Anand 1955: 200). “He had wanted to be happy, and he had suffered in his search of happiness, because all the people around him did not believe in happiness” (Ibid: 200). Gandhi’s words about suffering appeared to him quite ridiculous when he glorifies sufferings in the novel:

suffering is the work of human tribe. It is an eternal law. The mother suffers so that the child may live. Life comes out of death. The condition wheat growing is that the seed grain should perish. No country has ever risen without being purified through the fire of suffering. It is impossible to do away with the law of suffering which is the one indispensable condition of our being. Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone; the power the suffering, the greater is the progress. Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering (Ibid: 200).
Lalu mentions how he became a ‘revolutionary’. Gandhi goes on telling Lalu with an ‘ambiguous smile’ how he converted so many revolutionaries to non-violence:

I have come across plenty of revolutionaries in my time” said the Mahatma with and ambiguous smile. ‘They came to me knowing that they will get a patient hearing from me, ad that in confiding their secrets to me they have a friend whom they can trust. As a result quite a good number of them today are to be found fully converted to non-violence and are among my co-workers… (Ibid: 200).

When Lalu tells Gandhi about him and his comrades’ answer with violence to the Nasirabad and his watchman, Gandhi abruptly comments: “What do you expect me to do about it?... ‘if you answered back violence with violence’ (Ibid: 200).

Lalu, however, is struck by the directness of the man when he meets him personally. He agrees when the Mahatma says that fear is the first enemy of the peasant:

The first thing I can say to the peasants, the Mahatma said, looking Lalu straight in the face, as if admonishing him, is to cast out fear. … the real relief is for them to be free from fear…. This impressed Lalu. It was uncanny how the Mahatma had laid his finger on the first trait which was obvious in the peasant character, their terror stricken abjectness-“If the waging of a struggle to redress the grievances of the peasants is violence… then I have committed violence. Lalu confessed…” “Not the airing of the grievances of the rhyots, but the
invocation of revolution against the landlords, is violence,” said the Mahatma (Ibid: 201).

Anand tries to emphasize Gandhi’s belief in the dignity of labour, attainment of freedom through non-violence and suitable adaptation of western ideas to the traditions of our country. Lalu has a great admiration for him because: “The Mahatma seemed with his emaciated, dark flesh covered with a rag to have brought himself to the level of a peasant and that filled Lalu with the hope that he might be kind to the cause which he himself espoused” (Ibid: 203).

Nevertheless, Lalu is ill at ease to accept Gandhi’s insistence on celibacy, hand spinning, and passive resistance. To him: “The Mahatma seemed full of himself, of his spiritual struggles. And Lalu felt himself lapsing into listlessness as if he were being suffocated by the deliberate simplicity of the egoistic confessional talk of self perfection” (Ibid: 207).

Lalu is greatly impressed by the Mahatma’s sincerity, humanism and and forceful personality, but being a revolutionary he does not appreciate his views on non-violence, self discipline, suffering and cow protection. But later on Lalu realizes that strength does not come from physical force but from the will and that one must put one’s whole soul against the will of the tyrant.

Gandhi advises the peasants to ‘cast out fear’. (Ibid: 200) when Lalu tells Gandhi about his advice to Nasirabad peasants ‘to hit back’, he goes on telling Lalu that strength does not well up from physical force rather it comes from the will. Anand describes it with explicitness: “Your advice to them was utterly wrong in my opinion”, the Mahatma said, his face contorted with a painful impatience:
even if it succeeded in holding the enemy at bay. Strength does not come from physical force. It comes from the will. Non-violence does not mean submission to the will of the evil doer, out of pitting one’s whole soul against the will of the tyrant working under the law of our being, it is impossible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire and lay the foundation for that empire’s downfall or its regeneration (Ibid: 201).

Gandhi expresses before Lalu his views on some of his favourite fads like Celibacy, Harijans, khadi, non-violence and satyagraha and Lalu with his earlier peasant and later army background, does not agree with the ascetic life of a brahmachari. He accepts some of the Gandhian principles because Gandhi is wiser and older man. In the true Gandhian spirit he has come to believe that they are basically ‘good but misguided’ (Ibid; 279).

The novel ends with Lalu resolving the conflict in his mind in the true Gandhian spirit. He realizes that one must learn to discard pride in one’s class and caste, to discard all the superstitions and lies of religion and to break the dividing walls which segregate man from man.

Anand’s prime focus in the novel has been on Lalu’s encounter with Gandhi. This has obviously been intended to establish Lalu as “fully converted” (Ibid: 204) to Gandhian faith. He accepts ‘purification through the fire of suffering’ as advised by Gandhi. Lalu undergoes experience of various kinds to reach Gandhian faith. In the process of helping the peasants, Lalu undergoes a spiritual evolution, grows from being an immature and embittered young man, from a state of egoism where only he
and his beloved count to a mature manhood where he realizes the message of ancient sages, namely, service to others. The peasants for whom he works evolve, too, from a situation of humiliating wretchedness to a position of collective strength and courage. Hence the title of the novel, where the peasants (sickle) conquer their fear and fight (sword), though non-violently, for their rights. The ‘sword’ has to be as much their weapon as the ‘sickle’, neither of which they have in the beginning. Being evicted tenants, they have no crops to reap and being trodden down by landlords, they have no courage. If they want to have the sickle, they must take up the sword first.

The presentation of the ideologies, however, proves to be only long orations and not shown in action. Lalu feels that there is something to be said for each of them, not knowing how each of these ideologies will work out in practice. Surprisingly he has nothing good to say about Gandhi’s ideology and his asceticism and khadi becomes the object of ridicule to both Lalu and the count. Lalu is a humanist and, therefore, he cannot accept Gandhi’s asceticism; belongs to the twentieth century and hence cannot accept the charkha; he is a man of action and naturally rejects Professor Verma who is only an academician without any convictions; he has been in the army and consequently looks down upon anarchism as opposed to discipline. He is, however, inclined not to Communism but its methods of discipline, organization, and planned programme.

Serving the peasants was an idea not in his mind then but it was not a new idea to him, for “hadn’t his family brought him up to think that the highest aim of life was the service of others, devotion to one’s brethren? And did not all the circumstances of his life force him to mingle his own distress with the sufferings of others to root out
evil, to give battle to all the forces which crushed the peasants, to the powerful who tyrannized over the weak?...” (Ibid: 109-110) Here too, he could devote himself to helping evicted tenants who were a common phenomenon in those days of famine, particularly in the area under the Nawab of Nasirabad. The Count and Lalu and others meet the Nawab to see if the evicted tenants can be reinstated, but to no purpose. So they decide to hold a meeting and publish a newspaper. The political meeting, is, however, disturbed by priests at the instigation of the Nawab and their “attempt to work up a Revolution” (Ibid: 141) comes to an ignominious end.

Gandhi wrote, “True morality consists, not in following the beaten track, but in finding out the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it” (Bose 1948: 254). Several of the values and qualities of Lalu as a person bear the imprint of Gandhi’s thought. Lalu is conscious disciple or follower of Gandhi; on the contrary he approaches Gandhi with great hopes that he would lead the Kisan movement to victory, as he had in Champaran and Kheda, and he receives only advice. The advice consists of values- ascetic, moral, political and social- which should be practised and a course of action to be followed. The first step in action is for the peasants to conquer fear. This advice, which is practical enough to appeal to the peasants, is accepted with unprecedented success. They do not mind going to jail under Lalu’s leadership in the same way as Gandhi and his followers did in any non-cooperation movement.

Lalu, however, ridicules the other values, but is apparently influenced by Gandhi nevertheless, albeit unconsciously. Gandhi was like a magnet whose powers may not be seen physically but are felt irresistibly. Lalu was a soldier who had been used to violent action but does not indulge in any violent action after meeting Gandhi
except slap the chaprasi who was belabouring the innocent peasant. The poor peasant was rolling in the ground with his mouth full of dust and any non-violent protest would have been wasted, since the chaprasi would have probably killed him before anything non-violent could have been done to prevent it. This was perhaps the situation where violence was perhaps justified. Not taking action could have been cow-ardice.

According to Gandhi, true religion is above sectarianism. It rises above all religions by transcending them, by harmonizing them. In this sense, Lalu is truly religious. He never asks the peasants to which caste they belong. He is satisfied that they are a part of humanity. Some of them are probably Harijans, but he lives and eats with them. Gandhi called the untouchables Harijans in order to secure for them a position of equality with caste Hindus, but has possibly perpetuated the distinction between them by glorifying it.

Lalu rejects not only caste distinctions but the idea of god himself. To him it is nothing more than stupid superstition. When the peasants expect God to do everything for them, including procuring food, Lalu tells them bluntly, “If you leave men to the mercy of god, dig some graves” (281). This is his way of telling them the importance of self-help, something on which Gandhi laid stress. “My humble occupation has been to show people, how they can solve their own difficulties” (Bose 1948: 43) he wrote. Rama Jha writes, “Gandhi interpreted man as a free agent of his own will and therefore capable of action in this very world.” (Jha 1883: 38) And every man is important not merely as an individual but as a member of society. Lalu has viable values as both.
Though Gandhi is not at all introduced personally in his next novel *The Big Heart*, the theme of the novel clearly portrays the influence of the Gandhian ideology. Anand called this novel, “the drama of machine wrecking” (Anand 1980: 78). The novel presents a strong criticism of the machine civilization. He projects his theme through depiction of a day in the life of Ananta the man who believes “one must have a big heart” (Ibid: 11). Ananta is a protagonist of the use of machines and is called a machine-man by Janaki. In the true Gandhian spirit he feels that the machine is an only a neutral tool to be put to the right use by man. Sardar Puran Singh, however, exposes the other side of the picture. He describes how machine can become, “a death trap which alters the whole character of man.” (Ibid: 7). He goes on to elaborate how it has also become a tool in the hands of the exploiters to tyrannize the underprivileged. The issue here is not between the higher castes, but between the “Thathiars” and the “capitalists”. The latter set up a factory and as a result the former are thrown out of employment. The machine has thus deprived them of their only source of earning. Black God Viroo shouts’ “I will change my name if they not break under the weight of those machines, as Mahatma Gandhi said they will, all those who trust themselves to the machines.” (Ibid 25).

Gandhi did not aim not at eradication of all machinery but its limitation. After some years he elaborated that the heavy machinery for public utility has its inevitable place but all that could be owned by the state and used entirely for the benefit of the people. Therefore, what is generally given to understand that Gandhi was not at all in favour of industrialization is wrong. In fact, he could clearly and correctly visualize the significant role that machinery would play in the industrial economy of India.
After all Gandhi was not absolutely against the use of machines. He had said that what he objected to was the craze for machinery not machinery as such. In fact, his fight was against the system that welded human beings to the machines. He considered mechanization inevitable when there was dearth of labour. It became needless and an evil when there was a surplus of hands.

Besides Ananta, Mahasha Hans Raj is another character which embodies Gandhian outlook on life in general and on the use of machines in particular. He has firm faith in non-violence and endured imprisonment for participating in national activities. Like Gandhi he is anti-machine and therefore anti-Western and like Gandhi again, he is against only the evils of Europe, not its good. This character seems to embody all Gandhian virtues. The programme he presents to thathiars is a happy contrast to the facelessness of man in the mechanical civilization of the West. He supports Gandhi’s humanism which rejects materialism of the West:

The Western ethos has made machinery the new messiah. The source of all higher life comes to man from his spiritual mind, but they are for abolishing of personality. Mahatma Gandhi has said that it is everyone’s duty to resist… the evils of vilayat which are flooding into the country. Only the evils, remember, not the good. And the sage knows that our happiness lies in acceptance of this duty- the mysterious God who is greater than all petty considerations of want and family demands… (Anand 1980: 115).

However, Anand does not isolate the theme of mechanization from other issues in the novel. In fact it is interwoven with them. In the novel, the machine is introduced in a
society already divided into various castes which can also be seen in terms of various economic classes. In this milieu, the introduction of the machine divides the community of thathiars more sharply and even antagonistically into the haves and the have-nots, the mill-owners and the coolies. It is money, the value of the cash nexus, a corollary of the machine that is shown to have killed the existing sense of brotherhood.

A few years before India became independent; there was much discussion in intellectual circles as to how the future Republic should be. Some were for all out industrialization even without any considerations of the infrastructure required for it. They wanted to make India a modern industrial power in no time. Some others were at the other end of the pole, strongly supporting the view that India should focus all its attention upon agriculture and make its economy agriculture oriented. There were some others who had a middle view. They recognized the importance of the machine for nation building. They could not agree with “Gandhi’s natural rejection of machine for the emerging republic. They were aware that the sudden all-out industrialization can expose Indian society to the plague of utilitarianism and laissez faire as was experienced by the industrialization of England. Mulk Raj Anand belongs to this last group of thinkers. He believed in the machine as a powerful tool of prosperity for mankind. His *The Big Heart* artistically presents the need for controlled industrialization. He presents in this novel a situation in which uncontrolled industrialization causes tremendous problems to the accepted social values. This novel is a protest against the indiscreet introduction of the machine.
Like *Untouchable*, *The Road* deals with the theme of untouchability but with a difference as it was written at the time when casteism was abolished and untouchability was forbidden. In the novel, Anand has not been able to keep the standard achieved in the previous novel. The novel however shows that the untouchables are subordinated even after attainment of freedom. The story revolves round Bhikhu, the leader of untouchables of village, condemned to build a link road.

*The Road* instead of becoming a way to enlightenment is converted into a place of human degradation, a shattering place of Gandhi’s ideals, he decides to help these untouchables. He, unfortunately, has to pay a heavy price for his wife deserts him and caste Hindus brand mark him to the rank of untouchables, since his conduct is a violation of caste based hierarchal gradation. Anand excels in laying bare before us the acute mental agony and utter despair of Bhikhu in the scene where, inspired and enthused by Government’s decision to abolition of untouchability, he asks for water at the house of Thakor Singh, a Kshatriya, but is furiously insulted and turned out by the latter. “He went in the direction of the road, he had helped to build, and in his soul, took the direction of the village towards Delhi town, capital of Hindustan, where no one knew who he was and where there would be no caste or outcaste.” (Anand 1961: 19)

Two Leaves and a Bud deals with the theme of exploitation of the underdogs. Though Gandhi is not referred to directly, his ideology is prevailing in every incident of the novel. In the novel Anand denounces the evil of poverty and cruelty and rejects the theory of karma.
The novel is the story of Gangu and his family. Gangu, the protagonist of the novel is a middle aged peasant who is goaded by the loss of his land and hut to greedy money-lenders goes to Assam and joins service in McPherson Tea Estate where he is exploited by the merchants. Persons like Gangu are lured by the fabulous promises made by the Sardar Buta. But they have to maintain themselves on a starvation and live in unhygienic and the unhealthy surroundings. The tea plantation is a place from where nobody can escape, coolies fall sick and some of them also died.

His wife dies of Malaria and he doesn’t have money even to conduct her last rites. The British planters are not sympathetic to Indian workers. In the meantime, discontent spreads in the plantation because of Reggie Hunt’s brutal behaviour. Once Reggie Hunt happens to see Leila. Mad by the desire to possess her, Reggie follows her frantically to her house, and shoots the father when the latter intervenes. A show of trial is arranged where Reggie is declared ‘not guilty’.

For the plantation owners the Indians are not human beings but merely machines which are to be exploited to the maximum. De La Havre candidly sums up Britisher’s attitude:

So the Britons, who never shall be slaves, went and enslaved the millions of Asia, went and built grandiose Gothic homes for themselves in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, and barns for the coolies to work in… These were ostensibly good enough for the niggers for they did not seem to die when put into them (Anand 1972: 137-138).

De La Havre wishes, “If only the British had begun by accepting these people from the very start on terms of equality, as human beings.” (Ibid: 154)
In the true Gandhian colour, he regrets the abject apathy and humility on the part of the coolies and is frustrated with the lack of self respect on the part of the coolies.

Anand’s intention in the novel is to highlight the legal, economic and racial exploitation perpetrated by the British. The conflict ensues between the British, representing violence and the coolie, representing non-violence. In a sense, the book helps one as Lindsay rightly says: “to understand something of the reality of the Gandhian non resistant movement where the passivity is rigorously alive with the deep warm togetherness of a folk who own a long memory of peaceful co-operative ways” (Lindsay 1975: 65-71).

In the novel Anand makes an effort to arouse the conscience of the people against the appalling and unsympathetic attitude of the rulers. This is what Gandhi had been trying throughout his life.

In his autobiographical novels, Anand has frequently referred to Gandhi and his ideals. *Morning Face, Confession of a Lover* and *The Bubble* are full of such references. In *Morning Face*, Anand refers to Krishan Chandar’s sympathy with untouchables. Krishan Chandar, who is a prototype of Anand himself, takes a vow not to believe in caste system and to mix up with untouchables under the influence of Gandhi. “At any rate, I vowed in my self again, never to accept caste in my life and to wherever the slaves were cleaning, washing and scrubbing to become poor Bakha’s sake…” (Anand 1968: 326). Anand praises Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj* in the same novel: “And I felt that book called *Hind Swaraj* which I had read, and words it contained,
were very exalted. But I knew our towns were full of rough people who would never understand Gandhi’s advice to be non-violent.” (Ibid: 444).

In the same novel Anand, through Uncle Harihar, refers to Gandhi’s advice to the poor and helpless to raise their voice against exploitation without the use of violence: “Mr. Gandhi says that he wants the people to protest against exploitation without violence” (Ibid: 251).

In *Confession of a Lover*, Anand refers to Gandhi’s definition of Islam. Gandhi had drawn attention to the fact that the very word Islam means peace or non-violence. The sword is not the emblem of Islam. The caliphs brought in the sword after the death of the prophet… (Anand 1976: 206). Mr. Pickthalam compares Gandhi’s love for human beings to that of Allah in *Confession of a Lover* and also compares him to Abraham in the Book of Genesis: ‘In cities of the plain, a single man changed the mind of God; Gandhi loves human beings as Allah loves them.” (Ibid: 207)

In the novel, Anand refers to Mrs. Beasant’s remarks about Gandhi who compares him to medieval saints like Baba Farid, Kabir and Nanak who preached love, rejected caste and was against cruelty, injustice and violence:

Today Gandhi is teaching us the same truth. He is teaching us not only to attain political freedom, but freedom from ignorance, freedom from caste, freedom from slavery to custom. He is leading us to a new innocence, beyond sadness, melancholy and disgust, to a new joy, in devoted labour, for this country- as part of the whole world (Ibid: 251).

Sikh students protest against the management of college for the reform of the institution has also been referred to in the same novel by Anand, which was
welcomed by Gandhi: “Mahatma Gandhi welcomed the protest against the impurity that has been allowed to creep into the Sikh shrines, due to the negligence of the sycophants of the British Raj.” (Ibid: 258).

Thus it can be said that Anand has dealt with the various aspects of Gandhian ideology. Anand was more or less an atheist whereas Gandhi was a deeply religious man. Both Gandhi and Anand are against caste discrimination and class distinctions. Anand wrote mostly about the exploited, the disinherited, the weak and the dispossessed. His personal contact with Gandhi made him aware of Gandhian principles or ideology. Non-violence is touched upon in *The Sword and the Sickle* where he tries to emphasize that it can succeed if undertaken in the right spirit.