Anand has deservedly come to be regarded as a pioneer of the Indian novel in English. He has endeared himself to millions of readers, throughout the world, because of his impassioned moral vision. He has an uncanny capacity for empathising with the lowliest of the lowly, in a realistic manner. There is a sense of battle in his prose. He is a crusader. His love for the down trodden coupled with the Western exposure enabled him to carry the tradition of Tagore, Premchand, Bankim, and Sarat to new heights. He not only interpreted the soul of India, the real India of the villages to the West, but also convincingly made known to the colonial rulers, the debilitating aspects of their presence in India. He has made an earnest effort through his works to promote understanding among individuals and nations, for which he was honoured with the International Peace Prize by the World Peace Counsel in 1952.

What gives Anand, a distinctive place in the Post-Colonial Indian English Literature, is the great importance, he attaches to his vocation as a writer. During the interview he revealed:

"I was offered the political career so many times, but I did not want to do that. I will write novels and do my moral duty to arouse the dormant vision of the masses. This writing novels is a self-imposed duty to eradicate all immoral practices and evils prevalent in our system."

C.B. Christesen, paid a rich and well-deserved tribute to Anand for his contribution in nurturing and sustaining the basic moral values of the society.
Anand knew that he cannot remove all darkness in the world, but he decided to light at least one candle. Though he would rather not be stamped a reformist, it is increasingly evident from his novels that Anand even at the age of ninety eight years, consciously or otherwise, has taken on the mantle of an activist – writer. He raises a lot of questions in his fiction. Like, what is the meaning of human existence? How is man to live in the face of all oppression, chaos, and decadence of values in society? He provides some tentative answers. What is more important is that he makes the reader – even a casual one – sit up and take notice.

Right from his first novel to the present, he admonishes and criticises and advocates demolishing the malafied structure of the society and build it on a new, just foundation. Anand visualises the creative writer as a trio who combines Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. He destroys the spurious elements of the
contemporary society, purifying it of dross and creates afresh. In his role as Vishnu, he advocates the right values to make this society work. Anand is taken up with the plan of rebuilding a sovereign India. He is advancing the idea that the real change would be possible if Gandhi’s moral vigour is combined with modern scientific ideas. This would lead to a change which will be organic and not mechanical. Bakha of Untouchable will then be resurrected from his ashes. Only then he felt “the sweepers can be ‘free from the stigma of ‘Untouchability’ and assume the dignity of status that is their right as useful members of a casteless and classless society.” (Unt., p. 171). K.D. Verma made an interesting interpretation in this context:

Untouchability, as Anand tries to stretch the metaphor, is a universal global problem: in a sense, we are untouchables and coolies. Not only are untouchables like Bakha denied social discourse by all rungs of society, but also they are wilfully and intentionally created by a permanent category in fulfilment of the self-indulgent egotism of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie.3

American anthropologist James M. Freeman reinforces the same idea in the life story of a middle aged man Muli, who is also from the untouchable caste:

The life story of Muli, one of India’s hundred million Untouchables, is an indictment not merely of the caste system as an Indian phenomenon but also of stratified systems of inequality everywhere.4

Premila Paul emphasizes the universal appeal of the theme:
It is noteworthy that the novel assumes an added significance because of its embodying the so-called colonial experience, which forms the staple as it were of Commonwealth Literature. Its significance lies in its being involved with such questions as loss or failure of identity, rootlessness, aloneness, which constitute the major themes in modern fiction. Anand draws our attention to an aspect of the human condition which has a tragic import since it sets at nought such liberal concepts and ideals as ‘brotherhood of man’ or ‘the community of humanity’.

In Coolie Anand formulates a basic question, ‘Human beings or soulless machines’? This is highly indicative of those modern aspects of the class-structure of Indian society, which spell misery, unhappiness, and frustration. They are interpreted in terms of the conflict between egoism and socio-political necessity. In fact, money is the major factor, which overrides both caste and class. As Munoo, remarks in Coolie “there must only be two kinds of people in the world : the rich and the poor”. (Coolie, p. 87) Peter Burra opined that Munoo of Coolie is a universal figure..... the passion not only of India but of mankind”.

The advent of machine has brought some change. But Anand’s analysis is that the prospects of the machine and the new technology would be bleak, if it works in coalition with the class and caste-system. Instead of nourishing the dreams of the deprived, it would become exploitative. S.C. Harrex observed, “The ethical ambivalence of the machine becomes fully apparent. The machine’s potential for the promotion of the common good, as envisaged by Munoo, has been prevented by the self-interest of the powerful few”. This reinforces the idea that in the hands of exploiters machine becomes the tool of strangulating and coercing people into submission. If flush-system
appears the most meaningful alternative of relieving Bakha from his predicament, machine becomes symbolic in *Coolie* of churning people's cravings and will to live under its soul-less wheels. The coolies are merely used as means by the capitalist class to achieve their ends. There has been no contradiction in Anand's attitude towards utility of machine for the Indian society. Anand advocated Gandhi's perception about how to evolve an Indian culture that would take the best of the West and yet retain its basic 'Values'.

Another focal point in *Coolie* is the predicament of the slums. The predicament remains intact. In fact the problem has grown with growing population. The Magsaysay award winner, and police officer Kiran Bedi, writes about slums in the present scenario:

> Nurseries of delinquency, bad habits, violence, exploitation, illiteracy, unemployment, starvation for sex...

People at the helm of affairs are doing little. Slums are treated as vote-banks and there is lots of politicisation and exploitation.

Throughout the world, there has been a growing awareness that decolonisation and emancipation of every society and its people is an integral process of economic, political, and cultural systems. In this process of radical change, literature is of paramount importance as one of the main potential promoters, accelerators and catalysts of social change. *Two Leaves and a Bud*, the title at a glance suggests 'valley of sunshine'. But that is not what the novel is about. It is about the murkiness lurking behind the sunshine. The dehumanising condition of the labourers creates sheer terror. The masters of tea estates are no better than wild wolves. It is tempting to shrug the novel off.
as an exaggeration. Saros Cowasjee puts it in the right perspective when he writes:

_The picture Anand paints is more than substantiated by the report of the Royal Commission on Labour,... Anand had drawn much of his information from the report, and far from exaggerating matters he has minimised the brutalities of the English and the hardships inflicted on the coolies._

The worm has turned. At times now the pendulum moves to the other extreme. But the change that has taken place in the tea gardens is noticeable. Manraj Grewal comments on the present state of affairs in the tea gardens:

_The labour unrest is the way of life there. No matter, how many demands you accept, 14 others always remain outstanding. A manager in the neighbouring Tea Garden was gheraoed and was thrown into boilers. Such hair-raising accounts abound._

Kamla Das paid a glowing tribute to the authentic accounts of Anand's _Coolie_ and _Two Leaves and a Bud:_

_The two novels had done their job as neatly as an assassin's knife... Mulk Raj Anand had changed me from a romantic steeped in a world of fantasy to a realist._

Anand evaluates exploitation, subjugation, colonialism, imperialism, including intellectual and cultural colonialism, as moral evils. He creates universal types in Bakha, Munoo, Gangu, and Lalu, by a process of
transformation of philosophy, history, value and morality. They are ‘individuals’—full blooded characters yet at another level they symbolize universal subjugation, colonial and imperial suppression. Anand deals with the eternal themes of evil and suffering.

The residuum of old customs, sham religion, exploitation of the labour force and the anti-war campaign are the highlights of *The Trilogy*. Indeed, Anand has expressed his strong belief in the universal ideals of ‘Karuna’ and ‘Bhakti’. Margaret Berry focuses on Anand’s ability “to synthesize the religio-philosophical position as it emerges from ‘Samkhya’ and Western ideologies including Marxist and Christian socialism.”¹² Both the individual human beings and the social structure need to be changed. K.D. Verma remarks in this context that

*As a student of European intellectual thought, Anand is certainly, familiar with other forms of humanism—the Greek ideal of humanism, the eighteenth century notions of humanism. Marx’s humanism and Forster’s humanism, Anand’s liberal humanism emphasizes both individual freedom and a progressive reconstruction of a new social order.*¹³

Anand’s focus in *The Village* is, Religion — Morality or Ritual? Similar contempt for rituals is vividly delineated by Jnanpith award winner, Indira Goswami in her novel *The Man from Chinnamasta*. She is a close friend of Mulk Raj Anand and writes in a similar vein "I believe in Divine Power but wholeheartedly reject rituals and regard them as a disease afflicting our society.”¹⁴
The second volume of the Trilogy, *Across the Black Waters* depicts war as God of Death. It is a rare Indo-Anglican novel dealing with war. This novel is very successful because Anand could convey his seething criticism without being didactic. He is openly satirical about the romantic heroism associated with war. “Bravery, said Lachman; "What a bravery, Sepoy Usman Khan was hit by rifle fire. He was hit a second time but he stood like a Bahadur. A large piece of flesh was blown away from both his legs by a splinter and he had to be carried back by Karnel Sahib who has recommended him for a medal – 'He can decorate it on his.........' said Kirpu, 'now that he has no body left to decorate' (A,B.W., p. 120). What C.J. Goerge terms: “Uncle Kirpu's Falstaffism towards honour and war” appears repeatedly in the novel and crystallizes Anand’s attitude. Anand does not recognise the heroism of war. A new kind of heroism is perceived by Anand. The heroism of restoring peace and harmony. He hopes that India's peace efforts can stave off the drift towards jeopardising peace in the world. Anand is clear about his vision: "we need bread even without butter. We need paper for books for children. We need hospitals and no cremation grounds." 

*The Sword and the Sickle*, the last volume of trilogy, echoes Rent! Eviction! Death! Revolution! Ultimately, the sword could not yield the sickle force of India'. Alastair Niven, a critic of Anand, has remarked about Lal Singh that ‘he is an embodiment of an Indian Everyman’, for he embodies in his person the doubts, fears and confusion of millions of Indians in early twenties. In *The Sword and the Sickle*, the masses get together and form a revolutionary society. They are no longer abjectly indifferent and spineless. The new movement gives them a new faith. Today, the ‘movement’ has continued and will continue in the future. Anand explicitly shows the inevitability of revolution for the progress of man and the society. Infact, Anand’s ideology of
revolution is quite close to Olaf Stapledon, to whom Anand has dedicated his first edition of *Apology for Heroism*.

*If our revolution is to succeed, it must consist not merely of an economic change, though this is indeed necessary, but also of a widespread deepening of our consciousness of ourselves and one another. And unless that deepening consciousness controls the economic revolution, all will have been in vain.*

S. Menon Marath finds *The Trilogy* as “the finest and most balanced of Anand’s works.”

Anand told me, "Most of my women characters are slaves or semi-slaves to customs. Only Irene in *The Bubble* is a free women, whom the hero loves for her courage." Male chauvinism is pervasive in *Guari*. Anand's treatment of women in *Gauri*, is symbolic. He is fully aware of the full dimensions of the problem:

*There are no brief comments on the status of Indian women in our present set-up. Gauri in my own treatment resembles a few hundred families, few hundred young brides whom I may have noticed during my lifetime. Of course, the Indian village women Gauri is not in the same situation, as the large number of women in Islamic society such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Arabia. In Pakistan, if a women is raped, she has to prove for evidence for someone who saw her being raped, to prove the raper guilty. Islam has sunk to the most inhuman level in Afghanistan where a woman can't show her feet.*
The pertinent question is, that the scene today is no different from what Anand described in *Gauri*, nearly forty-three years ago. Shankar Sen, director of the institute of Social Sciences reports in *Nothing’s Changed, Wife Beating is Still On.* “almost 50 percent of women suffered abuse in the hands of their partners. And the precipitating factors were often trivial like ill-cooked food, purported neglect of children, et al.” Anand’s *Gauri* revolts, slowly but surely. Towards the end of the novel, she is a cow, no more. Gauri’s heirs too must take their fate in their own hands, equipped with education and confidence. Anand is deeply committed to this view.

Anand seems to be fighting mental wars with his various ego selves or projections, and the answers to his preliminary hypotheses, achieved through a continuous process of acceptance and rejection, are only illusions of truth, to ascertain which one needs what Nietzsche calls “extra-moral sense”.

A common thread in all his novels, is a process, through which the protagonists achieve some sense of dignity and their own worth. That is the beginning of the recognition of one’s moral strength. Anand’s fiction presents two opposing attitudes towards life. Man may accept life as he finds it, endure its imperfections and determine to survive it or reject the life of humiliation, rebel and work towards a better life. That is what Bakha does in *Untouchable*, Lai Singh in *The Trilogy* and Gauri in Anand’s *Gauri*. Forster makes a special note of Anand’s art of kindling the spark of rebellion. He writes in his preface to *Untouchable*:

*He (Anand) has just the right mixture of insight and detachment, and the fact that he has come to fiction through philosophy has given him depth. It might have*
given him vagueness – that curse of the generalising mind – but his hero is no suffering abstraction.24

This observation about Bakha is also very much true of Gauri; she is an individual, who has been perpetually victimized because of her gender. But Gauri, as Kher comments, “refuses to accept the hypocritical values of her society and its double standards of sexual morality”.25 The road she has chosen, if followed with diligence leads to self-determination, self-esteem and self-fulfilment or self-actualization.

This rebellion is reflected in the collective form, when the whole state of Shampur, breaks into rebellion, against feudalistic tyranny of the ruler, in Private Life of an Indian Prince. Though, such Princes’ are no more in existence, but the feudalistic pattern is still prevalent in many parts of India. Many other problems retain their original brutal figure. The predicament of jails is also not much improved from what is projected in Private Life of An Indian Prince. Infact, predicament of jails is alarming even today. Kiran Bedi’s Biography reveals certain facts in chapters "Jailhouse Shocks" and "The Inherited Legacy : Tihar Jail", It reflects that even though India has been independent and we have a democratic form of government for the past fifty six years, the condition of the prisoners and the prisons is reprehensible.

There are always two classes of prisoners in jails, the haves and the haves-nots. Some of the haves in Tihar were powerful criminals who still wielded influence outside. They generated a fear of money and muscle.... The atmosphere here breeds Criminality. Prisoners with lesser or petty crimes were indoctrinated by the more hardened...
The prisoners were beaten mercilessly. A youngster, sentenced to seven days on a passport case, was beaten to death. People would be thirsty and there would be no clean water. People were dying here, seriously, and no help came.

Anand and Kiran Bedi sound like contemporaries!

In his entire range of fiction, Anand conceives of 'love' in terms of pity and compassion, sacrifice and faith, patience and endurance. It is very seldom that he finds a mature recognition of fulfilled love, between man and woman. The writer does not identify love with romantic courtship and sexual activity only. It is significant that Anand has supported his exposition of this key issue in his *Kama Kala*. Though there is voluptuous sexual imagery in some of his novels. In *Two Leaves and a Bud*, Reggie Hunt's sexual encounter with a coolie woman is depicted in vivid detail:

*She yielded to him, her body limped and contorted into a silent despair, her eyes, agaze at the wild sensual heat in his face..... He made a sudden upcharge, as if he were dealing a death-blow to himself and her, and he swung her body hard, hard, harder tearing the flesh of her breasts, biting her checks and striking her buttocks till she was red and purple like a mangled corpse, ossified into a complete obedience by the volcanic eruption of his lust.*  

*(Two Leaves and a Bud, p.1 58).*

In *Gauri*, the sensuory description of the relationship of Panchi with his wife, is vivid:

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In a gush of lust he poured water on her and rubbed her down, fondling her breasts with an abandon that surprised Gauri, and so that she allowed herself to be caressed while uttering the most vociferous whispers of protest and fear. (Gauri, p. 289).

In Untouchable, the holy priest of the temple attempted to ravish Sohini's modesty. As she told Bakha: "And when I was bending down to work, he came and held me by my breasts" (Unt., p. 7)

In Private Life of an Indian Prince, the Prince's relationship with his mistress Ganga Dassi, is ecstatic and appears to be complete and fulfilled:

I had a satisfactory personal life. She used to bathe me with her own hands and fuss after me a good deal in the beginning. . . . . . . . the nights were relieved by the high-powered love-making and the reaching out to an insouciance where both of them felt calm and assured, having touched the ultimate limits of sex which held them both prisoners of each other. . . . . (Private Life of an Indian Prince, pp. 86-89).

Though the Prince deserts his married wife Indira, but she comes to his rescue in the end, when he goes insane after Ganga Dassi's desertion. Anand is not oblivious to the realities of Indian values and the fidelity of an Indian wife.

But to Anand, the greatest love is not based on mere senses. It is based on spiritual affinity between man and nature, between man and his fellow beings. The importance of love and compassion in a family and society is
recognised by Anand as a fundamental need. Anand in his novels, tried to convey his ideals not as a preacher, but as an accomplished artist. Teaching and instruction are important to him as the end product of his fiction. There is never a plea to advocate art for art’s sake. He told me that in one of his letters to Balarama Gupta he wrote “The Chinese philosopher Mencius, once said, “A sage is the instructor of hundred ages........’ I hope I can teach even a few people of my generations that tenderness is our only asset”.27

Anand is realistic throughout his fiction so far as the delineation of character is concerned. There are heroes and villains – white and black characters. He also covers the various shades of grey. The division between good and bad is not based on race. He has not spared his Indian characters many of them are coarse, brutal, and uncivilized. It can be a debauch priest in Untouchable or The Village or the barbar, Buta Ram, in Two Leaves and a Bud who has left his profession of traffic in women to shift into the profession of traffic in men. In Across the Black Waters, Lance Corporal Lok Nath is an abominable portrait. Subah Singh, son of the Subedar Major Arbel Singh, is equally tyrannical. In The Sword and the Sickle, Sukhua made a keen observation that the Englishmen "bring Hindustani" bearers and chaprasis who make friends with our watchman and demand flour and pulses. It is always one Hindustani who is at the throat of another”. (S & S, p. 116) On the other hand, the portraits of Colonel Hutchinson in Untouchable and Dr. De La Havre in Two Leaves and a Bud, are noticeable, because it shows that Anand is objective and free from bias against a race or a class. These characters are fully developed and are a real presence in the novel.

Anand made his use of English language sufficiently Indian, in order that it be an adequate instrument of national consciousness and awareness. He
Indianized the language, so that he could convey his themes to all the sections of the society. His aim was to express Indian sensibility through the process of Indianization of English. As Bakha tells Colonel 'Tum Udas' (Unt., p. 72) and addresses him as ‘Mai Baap’. In Coolie the conversation between Prabha and Ganpat, “Oh your shoe and my head”, (Coolie, p. 80) is a literal translation of vernacular expression. Literal translation of words and phraseology is another device, used by Anand. Words like ‘Baksheesh’, ‘Jalebis’, ‘Izzat’, ‘Hazoor’, figure in many of his novels. Anand’s language serves as a mirror to reflect the culture of the five rivers.

The discrimination and disparity caused by race, colour, caste and creed, as depicted in Untouchable and Two Leaves and the Bud, is glimpsed in Across the Black Waters also. Even though, the main theme of his later fictional accounts is different but the underlying themes remain constant. Anand has a uniformity of thought and ideas and the reel of secondary motifs is never broken. The prejudices of colour and race exist in the whole world even today. Anand continues to be highly critical of these, Geeta Bamezai points out:

*Racialism is another link in the chain of exploitation, preceded by casteism and class-consciousness in the Indian society. It breeds a system which equates race with more rights and facilities for a selected group. Anand presents an indictment of the British rule which had pretensions about ideals of liberty and equality but practised racial discrimination. In ‘Two Leaves and a Bud’ Anand draws an authentic picture of the working conditions of plantation workers under the British management. In ‘The Sword and the Sickle’ Anand talks of Angrezi Sarkar, as one which has*
built roads and began to push the peasants out of them by rolling up their land". (S & S, p. 192). Even the mills, the tea-estates, symbolise the degrading domination and exploitation of the Indian proletariat by British imperialism.

Sir Reginald White, President of the textile company where Munoo is employed and the English foreman are ruthless parasites, who terrorise and allow the seedy and deplorable working conditions in the factory to flourish. In Untouchable, Anand shows no sympathy for Englishmen even while ridiculing the warped Indian custom of caste.28

The concept of untouchability is very deeply embedded in Anand’s mind. In Untouchable, it is his focal point. But the same concept is reflected in The Village and The Sword and the Sickle. In The Village, he has clearly depicted the rotten surroundings of the sweepers. These cleaners of dirt live amidst dirt and squalor. In The Sword and the Sickle, Anand satirises the behaviour of the poorest of the poor peasants: Bhupendera and Ragubir, two poor peasants refuse to have food with the low caste people sitting with them.

\[ \ldots \ldots \text{not even the privations of the march through which they had eaten only roasted gram, would make Bhupendra and Raghu touch the food, while others gobbled handfuls of delicious rice mixed with gravies of different dishes, spiced with tastiest condiments. (S & S, p. 12).} \]

There is very little happiness in Anand’s novels, even though each of the protagonist is in search of it. Suffering is a constant thread in Anand’s fiction. As in Coolie:
We belong to suffering! We belong to suffering! My Love!
And she lay down by his side and took him in her arms
pressing to her bosom with a silent warmth which made
him ache with the hurt of her physical nearness......
(Coolie, p. 216).

Though, a different context in Gauri, her playmate Paro sums up their situation succinctly. "Suffering for us sister, suffering only suffering for us women" (Gauri, p. 116) Anand's characters bear all suffering, by sharing and tolerating it calmly. There is never a 'happy' ending, but there is a hope for better times and he concludes on a positive note. Anand (like Nietzsche), sees beyond tragedy to morality, beyond terror to joy. He regards life as a cruel joke, not prophesying the happy ending. It most often holds out the possibility of a few hard won moments of joy or a dim ray of hope in the temporal form of social improvement.

Undoubtedly, Anand portrays the seamier side of Indian life and its morality, but his novels cannot be termed pessimistic. They also sustain belief in the basic goodness of human beings. Anand's central concern is with 'Man', his alleviation, bettering the lot of the underdog and the exploited. In his sincere effort, Anand tended to suspect all concerned institutions, religious institutions, charitable societies, government offices, laws and reformatories. Anand feels that they attempt to do some good by imposition but get corrupted with the passage of time. He strongly proclaims in his novels that mechanical means cannot be of much help. The vital point is to create an urge among human beings to be good and truthful, to be answerable to one's conscience. All this spontaneous action, should come from the heart. Anand opines that compassion and fellow-feeling are the functions of the heart and not of intellect. We
understand such experiences only through participation and not by examining them as objects or abstract things.

Anand follows a symmetrical pattern in all his novels. There is always one redeeming character, who is larger than life. In Untouchable, it is Colonel Hutchinson, in Coolie, it is Seth Prabha Dyal, in Two Leaves and a Bud, Dr. John de la Havre, Dr. Mahindra in Gauri, and Dr. Shankar is the redeeming figure in Private Life of an Indian Prince. These characters also voice the author's concerns and his moral perceptions. There is a bit of Anand in many of them.

The idea of the liberty and equality of women is central to Anand's vision. In his correspondence with me, he specifically mentioned about the areas of further research in his fiction, the areas which he felt had not been fully chartered and explored. The 'Women Characters' in his novels he felt, was one such area. This would make a very interesting research project, because of the variety, variation and colourful specimens of womanhood in his novels.

Anand applauded the highly revolutionary writings of Indira Goswami, (a recipient of the coveted Jnanpith Award). Anand stated, "I read one third of your autobiography and found you to be a sensitive and truthful person...... for your kind of candour is not shown by many contemporaries." During my interview with Dr. Anand, I asked him about the purpose of creative writing and his literary heirs, his answer was quite explicit. He remarked:

Poetry and novels are expressions of the discontent of human beings who want to transcend their mediocre situation to some degree of human dignity. Men and Women are born, they exist and sometimes, in their existence, they want to transcend the
Abject condition imposed by bad customs, authoritarian religions and parental taboos, freedom from accepted conventions, becomes then an inevitable, as a struggle to be truly humane. As far as my literary heirs are concerned, I do not pretend to be a master. But I find some women writers like Indira Goswami, Kamala Markandaya, Kamla Das, Q.A. Haider, Shweta Devi, as the courageous writers. They have on their own being impelled to create a struggle of Indian women of conscious belief and action\textsuperscript{30}

Anand places ‘man’ above all, he has vigorously emphasised his total organic growth as ‘a whole man’. His vision persistently remained focused on the ideals of humanism and the universal values of freedom, equality, justice and truth. He talks about the literary virtues of love and compassion in a philosophical but pragmatic manner. He propounds the dictum that the quest for self and freedom of an individual being is the only way which fructifies his struggle to lead a peaceful and wholesome life. Love can save individual from self-torment. Anand insists upon cultivation of capacity and depth of love, which is present in all of us. Only a little spark can make it into big fire. And, when one dances in the circle of fire, like Natraj, there is complete absorption in the process of learning and melting. This is Anand’s version of perfect harmony and ecstasy. Compassion is important to heal pain.

Anand’s philosophy finds confirmation in many other artists and philosophers. Jean-Paul Sartre believed in making literature totally committed to 'change' without its becoming didactic:

\textit{Jean-Paul Sartre believed in making literature totally committed to 'change' without its becoming didactic:}
Anand has dealt with moral issues at two levels. The social institutions have to ensure the freedom of man down the social ladder through an ideal of determining everything to the test of universal good. And concomitantly each man had to cultivate in himself moral values to rise above distress; physical and psychological. Anand concerned himself with a moral vision not in absolute terms but in relation to challenges and tensions aligned with the emergence of a new nation. Not content with arms-chair diatribes, Anand took a significant lead in conducting a debate on every aspect of society, to create a just social order.

Anand has come to recognize the vitality of the creative imagination. It can be a powerful instrument of change for individual and society. It can help to liberate people of their fears. Anand as an artist and critic insists on the social and moral function of art and the artist. Anand is fully committed to the responsibility of preventing social and moral decay by awakening and arousing the social consciousness, through his fiction.

The fact that he practices what he has ‘preached’ makes his writings authentic. There is never a hollow ring to them. They are backed by ‘lived’ experience. The work of a writer is never done. Such a writer can never be lulled and must remain ever-vigilant. In the present context, he declared:

... If I am given this world, its injustices it is not so that I may contemplate them coldly, but that I may animate them with my indignation, that I may disclose them and create them with their nature as injustices that is, an abuse to be suppressed.31
A modern writer must go to the heart of the problems of our time, the problem of human sensibility in the present complex situations and the tragedy of modern man.\textsuperscript{32}

This is what Anand does!
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21. Ibid.


K.N.W. (Question) : How did you become a writer?

M.R.A. (Ans.) \"I do not think anyone decides suddenly that he or she is destined to be a writer. In my case the answer is that I asked questions from my father and my mother. On Sunday afternoon, my father used to take the family for boating at the boat bridge of Kabul and I would ask why the river flow north and north south. My father answered \"yes\" the earth is round as shown in a toy globe gifted on your birthday. If the earth is round, what about moon? My father answered, \"it also seems to me round\". Who lives there? He answered, \"no one knows\". And the sun? \"It also shines\", he answered. Where is it, is it farther from the moon? He answered no one knows. My mother opined it is all 'Maya' or an 'Illusion'. I did not persist anymore but decided to see in the geography book in the school. Even that did not answer my questions. I kept on thinking on my own and kept wondering, then recited to myself inanely \"Suvaray jo khule meri ankh khuli\". This verse opened up hope that tomorrow morning my eyes would open and I could see the world but the next morning when my eyes
opened it was the same world as the day before. I wondered, if there were human beings on the moon. I asked my father, he said no one knows. About the stars? He waved his head. There were no answers to my questions in the books. Later, in school, we learned to recite the poem of Dr. Iqbal "Sare Jahan Se Achha Hindustan Hamara".

As I had not seen the whole world, I could not say that Hindustan is the best. But I wanted to go around the world and see for myself and compare India with Africa, China, America and Europe. I realized that my country India was ruled by English Maharaja George Vth. How the king of Great Britain ruled India I did not know. I decided to find out, I asked my school teacher. He said that British merchants came to buy diamonds in our country for the rich in Vilayat and also cotton in our mills. To make permanent arrangements, they managed to make the whole of India their colony and our leader, Mahatma Gandhi wanted the British not to exploit India but to go back home and we will rule our country ourselves. My mother used to join hands to the photo of Mahatma Gandhi and also to the picture of Guru Nanak and photo of Agha Khan. I laughed at her worship of Agha Khan. I had heard Nanak was a saint but Agha Khan was a rich man who posed as an incarnation of God. One day I dared to ask her. She said your father's family was of silver-smiths and thinks that Agha Khan is God. Her family, she said are Sikhs and our Guru Nanak worships one god who is in heaven and not any other God. She told me Guru Nanak had gone from India to Sri-Lanka and climbed to high mountains and then to Mecca and Arabia. It seemed to me that Guru Nanak was a kind of prophet whom I would like to revere. My maternal uncle, Dayal Singh took me to the Golden Temple in Amritsar, we sat to hear hymns and sermons of Guru Nanak from the Guru Granth Sahib. These prayer songs seemed to be answering my questions about God. The whole world was God, I did not think that the dirty part of one
city could be God, but the Golden Temple certainly seemed to be a kind of house where God lives. Unlike the Hindus of that city who worship the images of Ram and Sita, the Sikhs did not worship any idol. For sometime, this religion seemed to me good solution to my questions about the world. There was earth, part of the world, where there were other lands beyond the sea. Even so, I doubted whether what I know was whole truth. Then my young cousin, a lovely girl suddenly died. I asked my aunt why she had died. She said God had taken her. I started hating God for taking my lovely cousin. My questions about life and death remained unanswered in text books even in the Guru Granth, the Gita, the Holy Bible or the Quran. These some of the religions said that God was created and people accepted that God, without questions. In my subjects for my graduation, I chose philosophy. In this course, there was logic and ethics and psychology and no metaphysics. In my fourth year, Mrs. Annie Basant came to Amritsar to pray for the dead in Jallianwala Bagh, who had been shot at by General Dyer when they assembled and enclosed area for a meeting. After her visit to the national Shrine, she was invited by our principal Mr. Watten to speak to the students. In a fiery address, denouncing British Imperialism for crushing freedom movements in India, especially the I.N.C., led by Mahatma Gandhi, she recited 'hymn of creation' from the Rig Veda in Sanskrit and English translations. In this sonorous poem the Vedic bard harassed how the world came to be from fire, from air or from Brahma or God in heaven on top of skies. There was no exact answer and the questions asked, as a young boy again and again, remained unanswered.

After she went away, our principal was back to Imperial Service. We students went on a strike, which turned violent. I was sent to jail for a month and when I came out, my father raised hand on my mother, he said that he is a servant of British Sarkar and what would be if he could not get his pay in the
army. I decided naively to go to London where lived the King, so that perhaps, I could throw a bomb on king George’s palace. I went and told Dr. Iqbal about my ambition. He said, “son certainly go and learn how to get rid of British rule but do not think of throwing bombs”. He gave me Rs. 101 towards my fare. My mother wept and gave me Rs. 300 saved from the house keeping. Our new principal Lala Manmohan gave me another Rs. 100. I left for Bombay without telling my father and with the help of an Englishman Mr. B.G. Hormiman, editor of Bombay Chronicle, I booked my fare by an Italian ship S.S. Victoria which would take me to Naples from where I would go by train to Calais port and then by boat to Dover, 80 miles from London.

During the voyage, I had time to think of my foolhardy courage and was disturbed, but soon the voyage in which I crossed the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea, I realized that our rulers have certainly used the knowledge of science to make ships go around the world, more wonderful still the French and the British who had dug Suez Canal, 50 miles long, to connect the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea on the way to Arabian Sea. This was a shortcut route for the imperialist to avoid going around Africa to India and China. I had heard that French conqueror Napoleon, had during his invasion on Egypt decided to reach India by the Suez Canal and Red Sea. So the canal was dug under French Engineer, Ferdinand Desleppus. This had cut short, one and a half month from the journey around the course of Africa, France, Holland and Portugal. What an achievement of science and technology. !

There was a legend that Napoleon wanted to discover the ancient philosophies of the East, about how the world began from Qoran beyond the story that God had sent his only son Jesus to redeem the world. I realized how European scientist had put forward new ideas in science and philosophy. I was
told on ship by an Italian professor how the believer in God Jesus and Mary, the Pope of Rome had ordered the scientist Galileo to be put to death because this thinker said that the earth goes around the sun and not the sun goes around the earth. So in Europe also as in India there had been speculation about the world, which was now accepted that Galileo was right.

Most people did not know what was happening. I recalled that similar phenomenon of debate when the Buddha had said that there is a change that another will now follow the wave, which goes in the water. In all the change it was my sheer good luck that British Professor of Philosophy, Dawes Hicks, accepted me tentatively for research in the philosophy of perception of Scot thinker David Hume. This daring philosopher said that we only have percepts which make a concept and that is how we sense things and think thoughts. This was very near to what Buddha had said. Professor Hicks set me to research in Hume’s theory of perception. I read ten-twelve hours a day, the books of Kant, Hegel, Schiller and Bradley’s appearance in reality and several other philosophers in the British Museum Library. At the same time, I read a novel a week before, borrowed from the Borough Library. The epic novel War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy thus lead me to read Tolstoy’s Childhood, Boyhood and Youth. I decided to follow Tolstoy’s examples. I began to write about my own growing up, from that narrative came my autobiographical novels and from these novels came other fictions about the people, I had known in the National Movement. I happened to join the Bloomsbury Circle of Virginia Woolf where literary problems were discussed, but there was no question asked about the political situation of India and even Great Britain. Upper class writers met to read their beautiful prose. I happened to go to Ireland and met the poet Yeats and A.E. George Russell. I told them about Bloomsbury, George Russell said soon you go back to India to Gandhi for some time and begin to understand the problems of
your country. I took leave from my professor by telling him that our ancient old thinkers have already answered the questions of how we perceived. Gautam Buddha had said, we have some percepts which together make concept, and concepts make knowledge. It was in 6th century B.C. and that was what Hume in Scotland was saying now. I consulted philosopher Bertrand Russel and he said instead, you go back to India and confirm Buddha's theory of perception. I wrote to Gandhi ji asking whether I could come to his Ashram, he wrote back saying, “come on Jan 1st 1927”. When I went to Ahmedabad, I was dressed in my corduroy suit. Mahatma asked me if I did not feel hot, without waiting for an answer, he asked Maha Dev Desai, his secretary to give me Indian clothes. When I came back dressed in khadi kurta pyajama, he asked me what do you want from me. I told him, I wanted to show him my novel about an untouchable boy, which was inspired by mahatma's stories of an untouchable lad Ukka. He read my novel and said that I have used big words to describe the feelings of a simple young man and he advised cutting of one third of my novel.

After three months of rewriting, or revision, I showed the novel to Mahatma and he nodded assent. He said to me you are born and bred in Punjab. You know north but not west, south and east. Go like a pilgrim, like Swami Vivekanand around India and then write novels. From this pilgrimage have come all the novels.”
A QUESTIONNAIRE ON DR. ANAND'S SELECTED NOVELS

K.N.W. Q.1 We all know that your first novel Untouchable was rejected by nearly 10 publishers and you almost contemplated suicide but finally, you made it. Was it really a long and eventually a fruitful struggle?

M.R.A. Ans. The story of Untouchable poured out like hot lava from the volcano of my crazed imagination and during its composition I hardly slept for more than six hours in three days. After all those initial hurdles, the book established for itself a popularity that probably remains unrivalled for a work of fiction by an Indian author.

K.N.W. Q.2. There is a scene where Bakha's relationship with his sister Sohini is projected in terms of his subliminal fantasies. The way in which the moral charge of the situation is defused, it brings out the Freudian undertones in rationalization of the libidinal thrust. Do you feel so?

M.R.A. Ans. In the novel Untouchable, I have recreated the feelings of a suppressed character who is insulted by caste Hindus, as he happened to touch upper caste man by accident. In showing the plight of his sister Sohini, I wanted to recreate the tender sympathy of the older brother for his sister who has taken the place of his mother after their mother's death. Such relationships are frequent in Indian social set up and seem very tender when they are in terms of the very poor people.
Q.3 In the post modernist criticism, it is averred that Bakha in Untouchable is not an untouchable rather the people whose mind you intended to change are untouchables. How do you react to the attitude of the post-modernist critics?

Ans.) Quite positive. But I feel that only socialist humanism such as Jawahar Lal Nehru's ideology or what is preached by Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore and Aurobindo can bring about some change.

Q.4 Your second novel Coolie has been regarded as your most representative work. How far do you think it has brought about a change in the society?

Ans.) The novel form is not intended to educate the readers but to reveal to them the possible sympathies, angers, hopes and wishes of characters. By alliance with the feelings of the character, the reader may perhaps sense his own sympathies or lack of them. Novels do not teach school lessons. They create empathies.

Q.5 There is a profound influence of Marxian philosophy on your writings, some critics have called you a communist, what do you feel?

Ans.) I am not a communist. I am a friend of all. I have my independent opinion and it is no fault of mine if the present rulers of our country think that anyone who does not belong to their group is their enemy. I have differences with the communists and if I ever had an intention of taking an active part in politics, I could have joined any political organisation. So, I will write novels and do my duty.
K.N.W. (Q.6) Critics have blamed that *Two Leaves and a Bud* whittels down to propaganda. Do you feel that actually in a state of chaos, you wanted to propound a specific morality for the society of poor labourers and their exploiters?

M.R.A. (Ans.) Those who regard my presentation of the attempted rape of the coolie's daughter by an incensed young Englishman as propaganda, are insensitive to the feelings of a young girl who is not a daughter of a Whiteman. Who is the critic who says what you asked me? Tell him or ask him, has he ever been to coolie's hut or known anyone of the underworld?

K.N.W. (Q.7.) Some of your novels like *Two Leaves and a Bud, Across the Black Water* etc. were banned initially, by the government. But when the ban was lifted, they got wide acclaim. You depicted truth and the truth always wins. How would you comment?

M.R.A. (Ans.) An artist should always remember these words of *The Great Mahabharata*:

Truth is always natural with the good. Truth is eternal duty. One should reverentially bow unto truth. Truth is the highest refuge. Truth is duty. Truth is penance. Truth is Yoga. Truth is the eternal Brahman. Truth is said to be sacrifice of a high order. Everything rests on Truth.

K.N.W. (Q.8) Your much debated English character Reggie Hunt's realistic immoral picture is marred when you project him as lawrentian male and he falls into clotted verbiage of many of Lawrence's lesser imitators. Do you feel this is true?
M.R.A.  (Ans.) Not the least, he is completely anti Lawrentian. A raper is fine, but not a Lawrentian character.

K.N.W.  (Q.9) To what extent do you agree that there is a dominant role of religion in your works?

M.R.A.  (Ans.) Religion as Guru Nanak preaches, is for sympathy and love among human beings. The fact that Guru Nanak lived among the poor, travelled on a donkey, went all the way to Lanka, Assam, upto lake Mansarovar and then to Mecca, shows him as a pilgrim who is trying to find out the human condition in a world which has been torn out between the impositions of Muslims on Hindus. Everyone knows that Guru Nanak was put into prison by Babar and later released when the invader found that Nanak was near Sufi.

K.N.W.  (Q.10.) You have denounced the organized religion, but religion is a healer also?

M.R.A.  (Ans.) I fully agree that Religion serves to soothe the emotions of man in times of his suffering and disappointments. It also contributes to the integration of his personality. The fortitude and equanimity with which deeply religious people are known to endure the most colossal misfortune is some thing incredible. Religion is relevant to our needs today as a psychological prop, a spiritual ladder and an instrument of social bonding. It covers a wide spectrum of our existence ranging from the sublime to the profane. The offensive part is the politicizing and the commercialization of the organized religion, the vested interests of the priests, and the exploitation of the ignorant people. So, I have criticised the ritualism of religion.
K.N.W.  (Q.11) In *The Village* the presence of the editorial comments by the author “They (the villagers) did not want to think … but delegated the responsibility of all their misfortunes as well as their blessings on karma and the God who didn't exist apart from his apostles.” (The Vill. p. 108) Don't such comments do some injury to the book in the context of the moral code of the society?

M.R.A.  (Ans.) My characters are free to think their thoughts and they are not my thoughts but thoughts of the character. It is true that Lal Singh is punished for cutting of his ritual hair by his own family and he is put on a donkey. I am showing a real incident of conflict between the young and old; from which the hero escaped and joined the army. Quite a few Sikhs, I know, cut off their hair when they went to Europe for education. Ritual is not religion.

K.N.W.  (Q.12) You wrote somewhat in the end of *The Village* Fight your enemies and the enemies of Truth and keep alive the name of your ancestors'. Is it a direct moral message or an Ironic comment?

M.R.A.  (Ans.) This is a quotation from Guru Nanak, his paraphrase.

K.N.W.  (Q.13) How do you think Spirituality and Religion are inter-related?

M.R.A.  (Ans.) The above quotation of Guru Nanak is quoted to instill courage and values in the readers. Spirituality is the main content of religion. It enables one to shed all man-made identities, to rise above all tenets and look upon all creation as a divine gift that needs to be cherished. Spirituality is more than a mere set of sacramental gestures. Though it does not negate miracles, the science of spirituality tries to give a scientific explanation of such
occurrences. It is above all dogmas and gives a dynamic structure to our thought process. It helps us to understand fellow beings better, leading to harmonious coexistence. It is a means of making the lower sensuous self yield to the higher rational self. The senses can sometimes cause hindrance to morality and religion. But they are to be controlled and not destroyed. Through spiritual self-improvement, Gandhiji inculcated fearlessness among the masses. Eventually, he achieved not only a moral victory over the British but also won us our long cherished freedom.

K.N.W.  
(Q.14) What was the actual scenario, when you wrote *The Village*?

M.R.A.  
(Ans.) Our faith had become ritual. The men were masters, the women were slaves and the children were considered as savages to be tamed .... Marriages were arranged ... Dowry and all by fond peasants and the young seldom grew up to be adult human beings.

K.N.W.  
(Q.15) Your novel *Across the Black Waters* carries the message of peace and non-violence. Do you feel this moral has more relevance today in the International/Universal context and in the age of war and violence?

M.R.A.  
(Ans.) It is so relevant that for a whole year a play based on my novel has been going around in U. K. on the eightieth anniversary of the First World War. On 12th December 2000, the same group in honour of my birthday performed it again in London. Britain is not as blind as India especially Punjab which has no translation of my books except *Untouchable* and *Coolie*. Shame on the Punjabi culture! Even Amrita Pritam or Kartar Singh Duggal's books sell a
hundred or two copies and there is no translation of any Punjabi novel except a few got done by Sahitya Academy.

K.N.W.  

(Q.16) What do you think is the world situation today?

M.R.A.  

(Ans.) There may not be a world conflict on the scale of the previous two world wars. It is possible that my estimate of the world situation is wish fulfilment. I will accept the charge of white livered humanitarianism because it is necessary for all intelligentia to promote peace and understanding among nations, by those of us who have supported the abolition of World Wars.

K.N.W.  

(Q.17.) Your view on the contemporary situation in Kashmir?

M.R.A.  

(Ans.) War alone is no solution to the menaces of terrorism. Most powerful men and nations in history are known to have become victims of the acts of desperate fanatics. Their main target is not some persons but a system and morale of the nation. If the system and morale are intact, they need not doubt India’s ability to win war on terror and Pakistan’s ability to sustain it too long. But let there be no illusion that defeat of terrorism alone will solve Kashmir problem. It will be a real test of Indian statesmanship.

K.N.W.  

(Q.18) What is the feasibility and the deterrence of nuclear war?

M.R.A.  

(Ans.) Nuclear bravado is stupid in the current situation. Moreover, millions of people are starving, millions of children still have no schools to go to and millions still die for want of medical care. Is it not late to retrieve the situation? Is it not late for India and Pakistan to agree to give up their nuclear arsenals and to begin cutting down on their dangerous and useless military rivalry. Better sense would tell us it is not.
K.N.W. (Q.19) The last of trilogy, *The Sword and the Sickle* it presents a whole tribe of revolutionaries of every colour. The Count's statement in the book ‘The bloody revolution seems to be a great deal moral than the crime of our present decaying society.’ Do you share Count's ambivalence about violence as a tool for bringing about the change in the moral outlook of the society?

M.R.A. (Ans.) Yes, hundred percent. I feel the Russian revolution changed the monarchist feudal order in Soviet Union to Socialist sharing society which even the French revolution of 1797 could not do.

K.N.W. (Q.20) If we interpret the status of *Gauri* the heroine of the book, in context of contemporary society, we realize still much is to be done. What are your brief comments on the status of woman and feminism?

M.R.A. (Ans) There are no brief comments on the status of Indian woman in our present setup. Gauri in my own treatment resembles a few hundred families, few hundred young brides whom I may have noticed during my lifetime. Of course, the Indian village woman or Gauri is not in the same situation as the large number of women in Islamic society such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Arabia. In Pakistan, if a woman is raped, she has to prove for evidence for some one who saw her being raped to prove the raper guilty. Islam has sunk to the most inhuman level in Afghanistan where a woman can't show her feet.

K.N.W. (Q.21) Suffering is implied in woman’s role as a bride also. What do you say?
(Ans.) *They are made to take a vow: In a palanquin, have I come to him; for a pyre alone will I leave him…*

K.N.W.  
(Q. 22) There is normally docility of woman in your fiction. Isn’t it?

M.R.A.  
(Ans.) Yes, indeed it is so. The docility of the woman or the acceptance of suffering by her is an important fact of life. The Indian woman after their marriage are given some magnificent clothes, some jewellery and all that, and are sent to live with their mothers – in law where they are deprived of life itself. Ever since the patriarchal period began – woman have been suffering. Naturally I present the women as they are – constrained on all sides.

K.N.W.  
(Q.23) How would you draw a line of demarcation between your ‘Sita’ in Gauri and R.K. Narayan’s ‘Sita’ in The Dark Room?

M.R.A.  
(Ans.) I have been asked this question fairly often, and I feel that the only thing I can say in this matter is that Narayan’s heroine goes to the dark room when she is insulted. After sometime she goes back to her husband. In my story Gauri the woman, after being beaten by her husband, goes to her mother, who sells her to a rich man, emerges into a hospital in the cave of an enlightened doctor, goes back because she is pregnant, is welcomed by her husband. But when he finds she is pregnant, he is cruel to her again and so she leaves home. My answer is: while Narayan’s heroine is true to South India in compromising with her husband, my Gauri is true of North India where the woman does not make a compromise but walks out. I will not let any of my heroines
become Sita, and they are not willing to 'become Sita. I am deliberately subverting the Ramayana myth.

K.N.W.  
(Q.24) In all your novels, you have been pleading for the equality of sexes. For that matter you have created in some of your novels some of the very interesting and beautiful women characters. Which has been your favourite woman character and why?

M.R.A.  
(Ans.) Most of my women characters are slaves or semi-slaves to customs. Only Irene, in the novel Bubble, is a free woman whom the hero loves for her courage and not only as a woman but as a political fighter. In India, we had some women like Aruna Ashif Ali, Kalpana Dutt and now the novelist of travelling Maha Sweta Devi who got the Sahitya Academy Award

K.N.W.  
(Q. 25) You have presented the relationship of the Prince with Ganga Dassi with great psychological insight and depth. The reasons given by Vicky for his closeness to Ganga are noticeable. 'I have behaved badly to my wives, and she had been bad........So I thought that two bad people might make a good pair........'. (P.L., p. 181) Is there any inherent moral flaw in these two characters or is this novel a projection of universal human weaknesses especially in our communion of man-woman relationship?

M.R.A.  
(Ans.) In Private Life of an Indian Prince I tried to show and reflect the sexual egotism of the Prince which makes him discard his married wife and choose to live with a nymphomaniac woman, who is psychologically ill and not subject to moral censure. I took all the characters even if they are forced to be evil, as victims of
social fate and not as wicked by intent. Ganga Dassi is a victim of nymphomania.

**(Q.26)** In your novel, your focus on morality is through the binocular of moral ethos, which can't be applied to the western moral code. For instance Mrs. Mainwaring in *Coolie* and Mrs. Hutchinson in *Untouchable* and Reggie Hunt in *Two Leaves and the Bud*, you have penetrated morality from Indian point of view regarding their overt and candid sexual relationships. How do you justify your moral and cultural understating of the two races?

**(M.R.A. Ans.)** I do not oppose the eastern and western in conflicting way. Both in east and west millions are subject to traditional moralities and one can only choose those social orders where men and women are tolerably free to choose their own life.

**(Q.27)** Would you agree to the contention that you have blended and overlapped both Eastern and Western culture for showing the supremacy of Indian morality?

**(M.R.A. Ans.)** I do not believe it to be superior. In fact anymorality which is open, of West, can be accepted but not the hypocritical arranged-marriage morality which passes for the acknowledged order in our Indian society.

**(Q.28)** Your novel it is generally alleged carries a plethora of invectives, used for the characters especially Indian ones. How far do you agree that such an intrusion of abusive words sequester the Indian view of morality and consequently mar the aesthetic tone of your novels?
To reproduce the fair words of the abuses of the characters, is not to be mistaken for the author's habit but the possible expression of several characters in human life, who are in despair. Not the least, to reproduce life as it is, to recreate the human situation and not to indulge in obscenity.

(Q.29) What do you think is the purpose of creative writing? And who are your literary heirs?

Poetry and novels are expressions of the discontent of human beings who want to transcend their mediocre situation to some degree of human dignity. Men and women are born, they exist and sometimes in their existence they want to transcend the abject conditions imposed by bad customs, authoritarian religions and parental taboos, freedom from accepted conventions, becomes then inevitable as a struggle to be truly humane. I do not pretend to be a master. But I find some woman writers like Kamala Markandaya, Kamla Das, Q.A. Haider, Sweta Devi as the courageous women writers who have on their own being impelled to create a struggle of Indian women of conscious belief and action.

(Q. 30) Your literary carrier spans .......Years. What seminal changes, if any, have been wrought?

I do not think it is possible to sum up a life time experience but in Apology for Heroism, I attempted to realize my tentative beliefs by way of hypothesis of living, not a full fledged philosophy but aspirations towards humane existence.

(Q. 31) The conspectus of your novels especially earlier ones, can be structured on the Schemata of the colonizer and colonized
M.R.A. (Ans.) The contradictions of the caste and the class in society and the evils we go through are inevitable in our setup. They are the phenomenon, which carry their own condemnation and not necessarily involve criticism. I show what casteism in our society involves by way of suffering and I hope that some readers may change their outlook.

K.N.W. (Q.32) How do you rate yourself as the spokesperson of the PUNJABIS?

M.R.A. (Ans.) I belong to the tradition of medieval Punjabi thinkers such as Baba Farid, Kabir and Guru Nanak. In so far they are in the Guru Granth, I think the teaching may be inherited.

K.N.W. (Q.33) You attach great importance to your vocation as a writer. Is it so?

M.R.A. (Ans.) I was offered the political career so many times, but I did not want to do that. I will write novels and do my moral duty to arouse the dormant vision of the masses. Thus writing novels is a self-imposed duty to eradicate all immoral practices and evils prevalent in our system.

K.N.W. (Q.34) You have conveyed your ideals as an accomplished artist and not as a preacher?

M.R.A. (Ans.) The Chinese philosopher Mencius, once said, ‘A sage is the instructor of hundred ages........’ I hope I can teach a few people of my generation that tenderness is our only asset.
(Q. 35) What do you think is the role of a modern writer?

M.R.A. (Ans.) A modern writer must go to the heart of the problems of our time, the problem of human sensibility in the present complex situations and the tragedy of modern man.

(Q. 36) What is the role of novelist’s sense of moral purpose?

M.R.A. (Ans.) In the struggle between ‘What reality offers’ and what he himself desires to make of it, the novelist's sense of moral purpose plays an important part.

(Q. 37) How do Guru Nanak’s verses influence you?

M.R.A. (Ans.) Whenever I saw cruelty, I thought of Baba Nanak looking tenderly at men and women of all faiths. Inside me, without telling anyone, I decided to look at everything with fresh eyes without the bias of all the ‘dasturs’ and rituals of Brahmins and injunctions of the Maulivis.

(Q. 38) Your comments on the positive aspect of life?

M.R.A. (Ans.) I would like to quote Milton: …till fire purge all things new both Heaven and Earth, wherein the gust shall dwell. I mean the end of the flood is rainbow, no more destruction.

(Q. 39) What is your message to the reading public?

M.R.A. (Ans.) I only want to convey to my readers that they must take care not to bruise the delicate souls which flourish in all conditions, under all compulsions and in all ages. To live a life is nothing, to be illustrious, scholarly and powerful is a small achievement. The finest things in man are humanity, pity, forgiveness and compassion. Intimacy, tenderness and tears are the sweetest things in the world.
Dear Kanwaljeet,

I wish you all the best for your dissertation and your plans for further research work. I wish you all success in life, but remember:

"Those who sail in the ocean of troubles, finally cast anchor in the harbour of success."

With love,

(Mulk Raj Anand)