Mulk Raj Anand is undoubtedly one of the most prolific and versatile Indian novelists in English. He has a voluminous output of fifteen novels, which are passionately concerned with the unending human problems, both physical and psychological. His genuine concern for both the underdog and the peasant makes his early novels unmistakably realistic and natural. It can be said that he is perhaps the first Indian novelist in English who could deeply study the dark and negative part of the Indian society which is responsible for the victimization of the innocent, helpless, illiterate, superstitious and gullible proletariat and peasants. His novels have at their best a harshness that has outlasted the sentimentality that infects them. Concerning themselves with exploitation and human tragedy, they provide a deep insight into the Indian life both rural and urban. His two novels, The Village and Gauri, are concerned with the Indian village life while his Coolie deals with the Indian urban life. The three novels exhibit Anand's astounding knowledge of the two diametrically opposed ways of life - the country and the city.

Anand's trilogy comprises The Village, Across the Black Waters and The Sword and the Sickle which are commonly binded by Lal Singh, the protagonist. The Village, first of the three, unfolds the life of the peasants in the Punjab during the colonial regime. It mainly deals with the life of "the peasants as seen through the eyes of the protagonist, Lal Singh, known affectionately as Lalu". The novel shows how poverty, exploitation by the rich and the static nature of his family drive Lalu out of his village.
The Village depicts the tragic story of Lal Singh, a Sikh peasant boy of Nandapur, a village in the Punjab. Nihal Singh, father of Lal Singh, is represented as a typical Indian villager. He meekly submits himself before the evil forces — landlords, money-lenders, priests — who exploit the innocent villagers. But his son, Lalu, opposes these evil forces with all contempt and vigour. For his revolutionary and irreverent attitude, Sardar Harbans Singh, the landlord, and Mahant Nandagir, the Sikh priest, wait for an opportunity to teach him a lesson. They succeed in their attempt by publicly disgracing him for his committing an act of sacrilege by getting his bun of hair cut. His love affair with Maya, daughter of the landlord, pushes him into further trouble. The landlord implicates Lalu in a theft case and gets the warrant for his arrest. Terror-stricken Lalu escapes the arrest by joining the Imperial Army.

In the later part of the novel, Anand describes the cruel and inhuman treatment meted out to the soldiers in the army. After a five-month nightmarish life in the army, Lalu is called back to his village only to witness the miserable and tragic plight of his beloved family. He finds his father on deathbed. Added to this, he comes to know that his brother, Sharam Singh, has been hanged for murdering the landlord’s son who had an illegal affair with his wife. He is doubly shocked to know that his family is in a debt-trap. After a brief stay in the village, he returns to the army. When he is about to leave for a foreign destination to fight a battle, the sad news of his father’s death is conveyed to him. Dejected, he watches the horizon and, at the same time, optimistically thinks of the future.
In this way, The Village, as its title suggests, is primarily a rural novel presenting an authentic picture of life of the people of Nandapur, a village in the Punjab during the colonial rule. It depicts the pitiable condition of Indian peasants and their heartless exploitation by landlords, sahukars and priests.

Thus, it can be said that Anand, perhaps, is the first Indian novelist in English who is much concerned with the exploited peasant.

The novel also highlights the strong attachment of the villagers to their native soil. They always feel that "water is the father, great earth the mother, and the air inspires" (p.42) their clay. Nihal Singh's love for his village and its soil is such that he

sniffed the air as if it were nectar and gazed upon the landscape as if it were heaven full of the ineffable bliss of life, full of men and women and children and animals and fruits and flowers (p.12)

This passage rightly indicates the ardent affinity and attachment of a rustic for his village and its surroundings.

Anand, by describing the love of Nihal Singh for his village, exhibits his own love for the Indian village life. By delineating the beautiful environment of the village, he invests the novel with the pastoral motive which "runs through narrative and forms the main impulse behind the poetry of the novel".

Like Nihal Singh, his son, Lal, is undetachably drawn towards the idyllic beauty of his village. Even while in troubles, he enjoys the natural beauty of his village:
As he wandered afar, deeper and deeper into the land and into himself, happy to hear the lark’s warble, exhilarated by the fresh air creeping into his blood, running shot capers with sudden shrill cries of joy and rapture, even dancing a step to see the vast acres of broad plains rolling in the lap of the heavens and singing aloud, he would suddenly wish to do something dramatic, to assert himself in the world (p.148)

Anand’s observation of the rural life is very keen and realistic. For instance, he presents a graphic picture of Nandapur when cattle come home in the evening.

*The particles of dust raised by the herd which was just entering the village flew like grains of gold, and the flat roofs of the village houses emerged in their contrast of mud and old and new brick above the sparse green mottled by pools of sunlight in the hushed afternoon air.* (p.31)

This is a picture which reveals Anand’s first hand knowledge of a village. Any villager has but to appreciate the way he presents it.

Cattle become a significant part of a farmer’s life. Lalu’s association with them is more human, and his love for them is humane. The novelist presents a realistic account of the affinity he has for his bullocks, Rondu and Thiba. Animals, though dumb, are capable of exhibiting their feelings to their masters. This is evident when the novelist describes how
the oxen shivered with pleasure every time he touched them,
licked his arms with their long tongues as he prepared the fodder
and always looked at him with widely dilated, big, glassy eyes as
much as to ask, 'what are you thinking brother?' (p.100).

Unless one has a deep insight into the actual life of the farming
community, one can't simply delineate such feelings as those of bullocks.
The passage is also one of the finest ones as it displays the kind of affinity
that exists between a peasant and his cattle.

The peasant becomes a part and parcel of his field. Anand's
presentation of the work of the farmers in their field is quite accurate and
picturesque. The way the farmer ploughs his field is described with minute
accuracy in the novel. Lalu is presented as a typical farmer while ploughing
the field. Besides it, he is also depicted as a modern peasant who thinks in
terms of modern ways of sowing, reaping and threshing. The traditional and
outdated methods of agricultural operations of his village never suit his
dynamic and intelligent attitude. Without having any personal experience of
the methods of cultivation of the farmers of America and Vilayat, he longs for
their ways of cultivation as he has read in books about them. He, while
walking in his field, thinks thus:

_ The farmers of Amrika and Vilayat, it was said, wore long boots.

_ He wondered what they were like, and what they were made of.

_ But it was no use thinking of them, because so long as his
  eldest brother lived, and the old peasants, they would only mock

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at the idea. They wouldn’t understand that the farmers of
Vilayat wore one set of clothes for work and another set during
their leisure hours. (p.29)

As a writer of rustic life, Anand exposes the evil of exploitation in the
rural world. He mercilessly attacks the money-lenders and the landlords who
suck the blood of the poor peasants. The force of circumstances makes the
hapless peasant seek help from them. As Sir Malcolm Darling, a
distinguished sociologist, observers “Nowhere has money lending been
brought to a finer and more diabolical art than in India”.4 Chaman Lal,
the sahukar of Nandapur, lends money at a high rate of interest by getting the
jewels mortgaged. When Nihal Singh approaches him to borrow money for
his son’s marriage, Lalu strongly feels “to go a borrowing was to go a
sorrowing” (p.108). Being progressive and sensitive in nature, Lalu tries in
vain to dissuade his family from borrowing.

The money -lender hurts the farmer where it hurts him most by taking
advantage of his helpless condition. He becomes an artist when he sings a
homily on the troubles he has to face if he lends money to the peasants. He
also delineates the rigidities and restrictions brought about by the
Government. “The Sarkar has made it increasingly difficult for us folks by
passing that law by which the money- lender can’t even attach the debtor’s
property. We can’t ever acquire the mortgage of the peasant’s land”. (p.114)

This passage reveals how the poor peasant is exploited by the greedy
money-lenders in connivance with the rulers. The farmer is also forced to
execute bonds which in turn paves the way for the money-lender to multiply his amount by deceptive calculations which the innocent peasant can never comprehend.

Not only the money-lenders but also the landlords cheat the innocent peasants. Villagers sardonically refer to them as 'hounds' and 'vultures'. Besides these, the police and the priests play havoc with the lives of the helpless peasants.

Like most of the peasants in the village, Lalu's family becomes a terrible victim of the landlord's exploitation. Besides fleecing a lot of money from the peasants every year towards lease, he drags them to courts. Owing to scanty rains and poor harvests, the peasants fail to pay the rent to the landlord. Naturally, the landlord gets an opportunity to grab their lands employing deceptive methods. Besides this, the landlords in villages always try to assert their position as superior beings. Any one who questions their authority, finds it hard to survive in the village. In his village, Lalu is considered adamant and rebellious only because it is he who questions the authority of the landlord and the other exploiters. His open and uncompromising nature drives him out of his village. His love for Maya becomes unfruitful because there is a big gap between the social status of the two families.

Anand leaves no stone unturned to expose the unnecessary and burdensome religious practices prevalent in Indian villages. Taking advantage of the strong attachment of the villagers to their religion, the false and
wretched priests exploit them for their own selfish ends. According to a critic, "the spiritual and temporal mentors of the Sikh community play havoc with the life of the innocent peasants." In the name of religion and family prestige, poor peasants spend huge amounts on festive occasions and push themselves into the inevitable debt-trap. Lalu helplessly bemoans the sad plight of his family. However, he is bold enough to come out overtly against the dictates of his religion. He deliberately and aggressively violates the basic principles of his religion by eating in the shop of a Muslim and having his hair cut. He vehemently opposes the convictions and conventions with regard to religion by denouncing it thus:

A religion of donkeys; a religion of bullocks.... What was the use of observing these conventions now that there was no further need for them?...they did not involve any active inconvenience. (p.28)

Lalu's impulsive and open nature hurts the feelings of not only the whole community but also, surprisingly, of his own family. To highlight the dominance and cruelty inflicted on the villagers in the name of religion, Anand makes Lalu a victim of meaningless and useless traditional beliefs of his village. The villagers chase, beat and parade him on the thoroughfare on a donkey's back after smearing his face with black soot.

The Village has close resemblance with Premchand's Godan in which Hori, like Nihal Singh, suffers at the hands of the landlord, the money-lender and the priest. Like Anand, Premchand attributes the sad lot of Hori, father of
Gobar, to his "own fatalism, his submissiveness and his proneness to compromise and to make peace with his oppressors." Gobar in Godan is a foil to Lalu in The Village, as both are fired by the spirit of change.

As G.L. Gautam points out, Lal Singh, the protagonist of The Village, like Gobar, has ceased to have faith in religious rites and social conventions of the Sikh community. Both Premchand and Anand try to expose the hypocrisy, viciousness, hollowness and lechery of the so-called custodians of spiritual and worldly values.

One significant aspect of The Village is that one finds in it the superstitious beliefs of the villagers. They take every kind of age-old belief for granted and blindly follow it. The people of Nandapur believe that an encounter with a black dog brings success in one's own venture. They also believe that if one comes across a woman with a pot full of water on her head, one will always gain a lot in one's own mission. The villagers also strongly believe in supernatural powers. They ardently feel that every movement of their life is guided and controlled by some unseen power. This attitude of the people becomes a boon for those who want to claim superiority over them and exploit them. In the novel, the peasants believe that Chandi, a village woman, has magical powers. She is believed to cure snake bites. Another instance of such a belief in the village is that the villagers have faith in amulets and their efficacy. When Nihal Singh suffers from fever, his wife, Gujri,
consults a Muslim, believed to have magical powers, and gets an amulet tied round his arm. In order to get cured of diseases, the people of the village, on the advice of Salam Maivi, offer goats to the shrine of Shamus Tabriz in the mosque. These are various incidents which Anand cites only to highlight the superstitious, ignorant and gullible nature of the villagers.

As Harish Raizada rightly points out,

the greedy and wicked religious priests join hands with the landlord and the sahukar and help them in exploiting poor peasants. They misguide villagers and make them fatalists so that they may not find fault with the landlord or any other human agency for their miseries but curse their own wretched fate. 9

Anand in the novel presents an ideal rural society which symbolizes togetherness, unity and integrity. Unlike the people in the urban world, the rural people show their solidarity by getting united on occasions such as marriages and festivals. In *The Village*, Anand describes how the peasants celebrate the marriage of Dayal Singh, second brother of Lal Singh, with all enthusiasm and gaiety. Anand also describes how people evince interest in the celebrations, well in advance.

*And even humanity, the dull humanity of the village, was full of goodwill as the peasants called to each other and to the lowing cattle from where they scattered dung ....... And there was an air of recklessness and abandon about the house because of the*
forthcoming marriage. There was babbling, shrieking, singing and laughter, the coming and going of men, women and children especially of women who dropped in to help the overburdened Gujri. (pp.151-152)

Thus, one can notice a sense of solidarity, which a small community naturally develops on important occasions like, marriage.

Another instance of oneness of the village community can be observed when Lalu, after a brief visit to his village, sets out to rejoin the army. The novelist delineates convincingly, how the whole village come forward to see him off, forgetting their caste, creed, social status and religious barriers. Thus, the novelist brings home to the reader this common happy feature of rustic life in India.

The novel highlights the acute problems that batter the life of the villagers. The failure of monsoons, the vagaries in the market and the land taxes trouble the Indian peasant. In utter helpless condition, he submits himself before the feudal forces. The Sarkar mercilessly "sends down the patwari to collect rent and takes money on the yield without bothering about what prices the grain has fetched" (p.213). In the words of William Walsh,

**Mulk Raj Anand is passionately concerned with the villagers, with the ferocious poverty ....the personal sufferings induced by economics.**

Lack of medical facilities, belief of the villagers in quacks and traditional methods of treatment, make them suffer from deadly diseases and ultimately
succumb to them. Rightly does Mr. Hercules Long, Deputy Commissioner, who visits Nandapur, bemoan the lot of the villagers thus:

I have counted fourteen rubbish heaps in the vicinity of your village and three big and small dirty tanks, all of which receive their water from the black, smelling sewers which flow down from your lanes and alleys. Your overcrowded mudhouses are crumbling to pieces. Your wells are dangerously near the drains and must receive all the mud and slush of your narrow streets when the rain falls. You have no open spaces outside your village for you to take the air or for your children to play in. Your village then is a place fit only for animals to live in, and if that be so, since you live here in this dirt, you are all animals and not men. (p.140)

Alastair Niven is justified in saying that throughout the novel we are aware of poverty and disease as strongly as in the earlier books. Thus, the village and its people come out very much alive under the magic pen of Anand in all its idyllic beauty and ugliness of dirt, disease, debauchery and debts.

An important feature of the novel is that the rustic characters in the novel cling to the age-old customs, traditions and beliefs and they strongly resist any move that attempts to change them. They blindly and strongly oppose Lalu's efforts to reform them. Virtually one finds the villagers too idle
to think, to feel, to do anything, but relegated the responsibility for all their misfortunes as well as their blessings, on Karma and a God who didn’t exist". (p.146) In this way, they cling to “the old conventions slavishly and look with suspicion at the new changes in the social life of the country”\[13\].

The elders of the village are opposed to the modern education as they strongly believe that learning “spoilt the boys and enfeebled them and made them, useless for work in the fields by giving them the airs of babus”. (p.26)

Indian villages are known for warmth and hospitality. This aspect of rural life is emphasized in the novel. The whole village community instantly develops a sense of hospitality whenever a stranger enters their village. The visit of Mr. Hercules Long, Deputy Commissioner, highlights this point. All villagers zealously throng towards him to shower hospitality upon him.

In spite of the hard struggle for existence, the peasants in the novel show full-blooded zest for life. The novelist vividly describes this happy feature of the villagers by describing the journey of the peasants to the fair in their carts at night. They indulge in merry making and forget the tediousness of the journey and the passage of time by hilariously singing songs. One peasant starts singing a folk song, another peasant catches its rhythm. After a while,

*the throats of another peasant party travelling to the fair on some far-off invisible road responded with an echo, which called forth yet, another echo from another party farther afield. And the atmosphere throbbed and melted with the piercing melody,* with
the jerky words and the shrill laughter of the chorus, and the whole earth was filled with a sudden happiness, a shrill rapture of bucolic heartiness (p.61).

Lalu who is practically exasperated by religious fanaticism on the one hand and the vengeance of the landlord on the other joins the army. He, in the end, is led to the warfront abroad. His love for his village is indelible in spite of his miserable and sad life in it. He becomes nostalgic and his vision interspersed with towns and villages to explore Nandpur .....His vision could not define the contours of the village. It rested now on Gughi’s face, now on the hind legs of Thiba and Rondu going round and round on the well; ..... The shapes were intangible, blurred in the distance, and faded quickly, leaving behind them mixed feelings which excited his nerves... (p.250)

Anand is equally powerful in his portrayal of the urban life in the novel. He successfully presents a quite opposite view of life of the villagers. He looks at the town from the point of view of a traditional villager. Nihal Singh, an orthodox Sikh after visiting a nearby town says “It is such a relief from that congested town, ...The air and water are good and clean here” (p.3). His remark clearly brings in the contrast of life between a town and a village. In the same fashion his wife, Gujri, brings out a contrasting picture of the city life to that of her own. “We have had enough of these city girls (p.17)” “The city folk have raised their heads to the skies, they have neither religion left, nor shame...” (p.18)
It is explicit from the comments of Nihal and Gujri that they are totally opposed to a way of life which is different from theirs. While the town folk feel that it is the village which is meant for dirt and disease, the villagers strongly feel that they are fortunate enough to be born as rustic folks to live an isolated life which is free from the hustle and bustle of urban life. The villagers conceive urban life to be deceptive and uncondusive.

Lalu's visit to the town is an important episode in the novel. It makes him understand the city life. He considers it to be an evil and dark one. People in towns cheat the innocent rural folk by selling them foul medicines. Like Munoo in Coolie, Lalu in The Village passes through the streets of pleasure where he finds

\begin{quote}
well to do peasants dressed in their best white homespuns stalked leisurely along, staffs in their hands, making eyes at the cheap whores who sat dressed in their gaudy array of coloured clothes and glittering counterfeit electro-plated ornaments, daubed with greasy, garish powders, paints and chewing betel leaf. And they did not disdain to sprinkle the content of their spittles from their windows down on their admirers in those sharp, pumped-out sprays at which they were adepts (p.84)
\end{quote}

One significant aspect of the city life that draws the attention of Lal Singh is the overcrowded streets through which, along with friends, he struggles to move ahead "heaving, pushing, pulling themselves through the sea of humanity". (p.84)
Anand also quite aptly draws a contrast between a villager and a townsman. He describes Churanji, a boy, who is quick to play cards with the boys of the village, fails to sing folk songs which is the sport of the rustics. Anand rightly finds the difference between the two types of boys:

*There was a gap between the peasant boys and Churanji, the son of a father and mother who originally came from a city. He was not inured to the more natural manners of the village, for though born there, he had not inherited the kind of phosphorus which could kindle into life through a breath of the elements. And the crude, hilarious song inspired in him a vague discomfiture.* (p.61)

Interestingly, Lalu has a great fascination for city life. He, with all his modern outlook, curses his own people for not appreciating the positive aspects of city life. It is this kind of thinking that forces him to violate the cannons of his religion by eating meat in a Muslim shop.

Anand's use of language in the novel suits the rural environment. The novelist draws a dividing line between the language of the villagers and Mr.Hercules Long. The rural characters in the novel use colloquial Hindi and Punjabi words which become part of their life. For instance, when Mr.Long visits the village, the landlord speaks thus:

*Mishta Hercules Long Sahib, Ha-Sey-Esh, Dipty Conacter Sahib Bahadur and Chief Magister of Manabad, Tehsil Sherkot, District Manabad, began the Sardar Bahadur in that curiously*
raucous Punjabized English which played havoc with the vowels as well as the consonants and which, rolling thunderously across from under the Sardar Bahadur's forest of moustache and beard, achieved the peculiar sonority of gong notes, 'Welcome'. (p.135)

This type of expression is typical of a villager "which played havoc with the vowels as well as the consonants" (p.135). The language in the novel is also full of sayings and proverbs which the villagers often use in their daily routine.

You will grow wiser as you grow old (p.102); Lust, fire and theft can never be concealed; (p161) Half a loaf is better than a hungry belly (p.213)

Sayings such as these are very common in any Indian village.

To conclude, it can be said that The Village presents an "authentic picture of the Indian village in early twentieth century"14. It is essentially a novel depicting the life of the peasants in a Punjabi village, with its religious orthodoxy, sensitivity to Nature, its faith in superstitious beliefs, and above all, the exploitation of the poor villagers by the landlord and the money-lender. Anand continues rural tradition in his other novel, The Old Woman and the Cow (or Gauri) which is a post-independence novel.

Like The Village, Anand's The Old Woman and the Cow depicts rural life in its entirety. It reveals the travails of Gauri, the heroine, and her
continuous and unyielding struggle with the hard realities of life. In the novel, the atmosphere of the village life bristles

with the flavours of a folk tradition, with its artless tales of loves and hates, its age old rituals and superstitions, its native flowerings of traditional wisdom.¹⁵

The story of the novel centers round the two villages – Chota Piplan and Piplan Kalan - which are tradition-bound. In the words of M.K.Naik,

Anand's picture of rustic life in the two villages of Chota Piplan and Piplan Kalan highlights some of the problems and limitations of traditional Indian rustic society already presented in the earlier novels ¹⁶

The novel is about Gauri, a meek docile girl of Piplan Kalan. She is given in marriage to Panchi, a peasant boy of her neighbouring village, Chota Piplan. She undergoes in her husband's house traumatic experiences, which paradoxically make her stronger and stronger. Kesaro, her mother-in-law, incessantly harries her. In sheer jealousy, She instigates her nephew against his wife and makes him beat her by insinuating her supposed infidelity and inauspiciousness. Gauri, however, faces the situation boldly and succeeds in getting her husband separated from the joint family. Despite strong resistance from Kesaro, the couple move out and take shelter with Rafiq Chacha, the potter of the village.

Gauri and Panchi enjoy the bliss of married life for a brief period despite the unfavourable circumstances and unremitting poverty. It is here, in
the barn of Rafi q chacha, she realizes the value of the glow of freedom which turns her ‘wheat colour into gold’. But, unfortunately, the drought persists and the hard struggle for existence continues to haunt the happy couple. Besides these, superstitious beliefs, Kesaro’s aspersions on Gauri make Panchi drive her out saying, “Go to your mother’s home, you of the evil stars! If the rains come then I shall not believe my aunt Kesaro!” (p.88). She pleads her innocence in vain and like a docile cow, she sets out for her native village where a still worse fate awaits her. She is consid red unlucky by her uncle Amru, and burdensome by her mother, Laxmi. They secretly make an agreement with a banker of Hoshiapur to sell Gauri “in lieu of cash and the wiping out the mortgage on their two houses as well as the cow, Chandri.” (p.108). The lecherous money-lender repeatedly makes amorous advances towards Gauri which she violently opposes. As luck would have it, she is rescued by Dr. Mahindra, a local doctor and philanthropist, and makes her a nurse in his hospital. But as her ill-luck still persists, she is almost molested by Dr. Batra, a partner and assistant of Dr. Mahindra.

Laxmi, Gauri’s mother, and Adam Singh, a well wisher of Laxmi, go to the clinic of Dr. Mahindra and request him to send Gauri with them so that they can help her rejoin her husband who is anxiously waiting for her. On her own, Gauri leaves the nursing home and returns to her husband. Soon, she becomes pregnant and her pregnancy creates problems to her once again. The village mid-wife, Rakhi, puts the seed of suspicion in the mind of Panchi by making defamatory comments upon Gauri’s exile, her pregnancy and
questioning the child's very paternity. She, once again, becomes a victim of the abusive criticism of the village mid-wife. Blinded by the criticism and suspicion, he orders her to prove her chastity as Rama did to his wife, Sita. But unlike Sita, Gauri, with all her modern outlook, disowns her cowardly husband and leaves for Dr. Mahindra's hospital with a view to serving the patients and putting the child, she has been carrying, in an atmosphere of peace and security.

Many a critic are of the view that the novel is based on the Ramayana myth in which Sita, the consort of Rama, is asked to prove her chastity. Gauri like Sita, is put to the severest test of proving her chastity which she bluntly refuses. No doubt, this forms one of the themes of the novel but, the major theme that pervades the novel is, the theme of Indian village life. The novel unfolds the plight of the peasants in times of famine and drought. As a critic points out;

Like Hardy, Anand is preoccupied with the plight of the victim of the decay of agricultural culture ...... His chief preoccupation is with the problem of the so called superfluous people in rural India, people without land or with little land – condemned to starvation. His peasants are loaded with debt and disease, harvesting little grain but reaping a prolific crop of troubles all the year round. 17

The novelist, in this novel, graphically presents the horrible and helpless condition of the poor peasants of Chota Piplan. As drought persists,
their condition turns from bad to worse. It makes them look toward the sky desperately for the help of an unseen force. The severe drought condition of the village is aptly summed up in the novel thus:

> All was baked in the sun, which shone with the relentless fury of a demon, pitiless and unforgiving, the rays becoming stronger and stronger every day till the crescendo of the drought seemed to have been reached. And yet the thunder in the air, into which the heat often matures, did not appear (p.63)

This is a common sight in any village which is caught in the grip of drought.

The theme of drought recurs in the novel. Mola Ram, uncle of Panchi, feels that the drought has not only paralysed the normal life of the village but also crippled the cattle in the village. The novelist delineates, in detail, the horrible condition of the cattle — the main source of strength of the peasant — in the drought-hit villages. Sona and Chandi, the two bullocks of Panchi due to their starved condition, can’t pull the plough and “step fast because they had only had a meal of dried hay without any grain or rye cakes for days”. (p.27)

Similar is the condition of the poor peasants in the village as they have nothing to seek for. They are forced to send their cattle to the slaughterhouses in towns as they badly run short of fodder and water. Rafique Chacha, an old Muslaman of the village, dwells at length upon the
condition of the peasants who are battered by the persistent drought. In the words of the novelist,

the drought seemed to become permanent, the rains would not come; more birds were found dead with the heat in the fields: the wells were drying up completely: and the cattle was dwindling through the owners taking their cows, buffaloes and bullocks away to villages further down the valley towards Hoshiapur town to sell them to the slaughter house (p.84)

This passage powerfully demonstrates Anand's first hand knowledge of Indian village life. He seems to indicate that the state of all villages is synonymous in times of famine and drought which subject the sons of the soil to unbearable troubles.

The very opening of the novel is quite interesting as it realistically presents the system of marriage in a Punjabi village. In a way, the novel comes to us as a social document, especially in its recording of the beliefs and predilections of the rural masses towards marriage. The novelist, as a close observer of the system, presents a detailed account of the marriage of Panchi with Gauri. It is really interesting to note how the villagers are particularly keen in observing certain procedures while performing a marriage. The marriage starts with the negotiations between the two parties – the bridegroom and the bride. Certain differences take place at the personal level and a mediator is readily available there to settle the disputes between the two parties.
In the marriage, the negotiations begin and Adam Singh, the mediator, settles the differences between Mola Ram, uncle of Panchi, and Laxmi, mother of Gauri. During the marriage, clashes occur between the two parties either for gold or for bride price. Amru, uncle of Gauri, picks a quarrel with the bridegroom's party and asks the priest to stop gyrations of the couple around the fire as he is not satisfied with the gilt-edged jewellery. However, the marriage ends on a happy note and the arrangements for the feast have been made at Amru's house. Volunteers from Piplan Kalan serve them delicacies like kheer, crude sugar plums, cream cakes, luchis, sweet semolina and fried dumplings in curds. As it is customary in the village to ask the bride-groom to unriddle three riddles in order to have a glance at the visage of the bride, Panchi is forced to solve the riddle, and uncover the face of his bride. In a way, the presentation of the system of marriage is extremely graphic and realistic. Thus, Anand's picture of Gauri's marriage, "faithful in every detail, is suffused with the rural culture of the Punjab".

Another significant aspect of rural life presented in the novel is superstitions, which the rural folk follow blindly and take them for granted. They suspect anything that does not go as usual. For instance, when the pony on which Panchi, the bride-groom, is riding refuses to move, the peasants consider it ominous. Similarly, Panchi's stepping over the threshold before oil has been poured on the doorway is considered ill-luck.

_Panchi stepped over the threshold before Laxmi had poured oil on the corners of the doorway _ and that was the beginning of_
his troubles so for as the women of Piplan Kalan were concerned. (P.17)

In any Indian village, the arrival of a bride into a family is associated with the bringing of good-luck or otherwise. It is this strong belief of Kesaro, which victimizes Gauri, who is docile and innocent. Kesaro wishes to bring home the idea that Gauri is unlucky by indirectly commenting on the unfortunate condition of the family due to the famine. She instigates Panchi against Gauri saying "you know the crops have withered and burnt up. The bullocks have fever. And there is no sign of rain!!". (p.35) Thus, she tries to make him understand that Gauri is responsible for the troubles of the family as she is considered unlucky. She is also of the view that a grey-green eyed woman is bound to be unworthy of character. These remarks of Kesaro against his wife strongly influence the weak-minded Panchi as a result of which, he kicks Gauri out of the house. As C.J.George puts it,

the villagers are blinded by superstition and they mistake superstition for religion to such a people Kesaro telling that from the day Gauri set foot in their house, they have had bad luck, is bound to sound sensible 19.

The people in villages believe that God as the supreme ruler of the world, looks after their welfare. Hence, it becomes natural for the rural people to believe that God will come to their rescue whenever they are in trouble. The belief, that the rain God, Indra, will help them in times of drought, makes
them invoke Him when the drought persists in Chota Piplan. Panchi, the hero, waits for the rain to come and

began to perform some rites to invoke the rain God, Indra, which his mother used to carry out, with Gauri as an assistant, on the riverside, offering coconut and milk to the deity, at the dawn of every day which was supposed to be the propitious hour (p.64)

An important feature of Gauri is that it realistically presents the system of joint-family that still obtains in our villages. It is this system which makes people live either intimately or get divided due to the narrow-mindedness of one or two members of the family. Panchi, soon after his father's death, is left to the care of his uncle, Mola Ram. He and his wife lead a miserable life in his uncle's house as Kesaro, his aunt, cruelly ill-treats and abuses Gauri. According to a critic,

in a joint-family, the misery of a woman begins from the moment she incurs the displeasure of the mother-in-law. Very often the mother-in-law's ill-treatment of the daughter-in-law is due to fear and jealousy. This naturally results in the split of the joint-family. Panchi and Gauri leave the house of Mola Ram and take shelter with Rafique Chacha, the village potter.

With an unflinching fidelity, Anand records numerous problems that a joint-family encounters in a village. Just as Panchi is under the control of his
uncle, Laxmi, mother of Gauri, is under the control of Amru, after the death of her husband. When Gauri, having been thrown out of her house by Panchi returns to her mother, Amru, her uncle, does not hesitate to sell her off to an old Seth of fifty, "in lieu of cash and the wiping out of the mortgage on their two houses as well as the cow, Chandri." (p.108)

Anand grippingly presents the relationship between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, which is rarely cordial in a joint-family. Kesaro, the mother-in-law of Gauri rouses the feelings of suspicion in the mind of Panchi towards the character of his wife by informing how Gauri has shamelessly gone about without putting the dupatta on her face. She also strongly recommends a purificatory ceremony to wipe off the crime that her daughter-in-law has committed in the presence of Rajguru, a friend of Panchi. It is evident when she says,

Only, ask her to be careful about drawing her head cloth over her forehead. And she must not be so secretive and spoil the atmosphere of my house!..... I have had to clean up all the utensils again. And I have had to have the house purified by asking Panditani Ram Devi to come and do puja. (p.36)

This clearly shows how Kesaro hates her daughter-in-law and how she blindly believes in the purificatory ceremony. She expects Gauri to be submissive and obedient to her. She orders her nephew to "control her if you can! ...This bride of yours!....She has begun to answer me now, when she was meek and obstinately silent before!...(p.35). Naturally a "traditional
mother-in-law will be at home with her daughter-in-law if only she is an obedient, gentle and meek person". To put it in a nutshell, the position of Gauri is typical of the helpless low status of woman in the traditional Hindu rural society. But, Anand makes Gauri a heroic peasant woman who boldly faces her mother-in-law and gets out of her purview.

As a writer of the poor and the proletariat, Anand is conscious of the exploitation in villages. Gauri, like his other novels, highlights this aspect. Most of the peasants in the village, except for a few fortunate ones, are the victims of exploiters. The power of money makes the rich and the money-lender sway the rod of power over the poor and helpless peasants.

In times of need, the peasants are forced to mortgage their valuable belongings to the money-lender for a meagre amount. Mola Ram and Panchi of Chota Piplan and Laxmi and Amru of Piplan Kalan are typical examples of the exploited. Unable to face the severe drought conditions, Panchi pledges the earrings of his wife for money; but the greedy money-lender, Lala Birbal sieging the opportunity, tells him that he adjusts the amount against the interest that has accrued on the unpaid sum of the mortgage on his small holdings.

Amru, uncle of Gauri, is also pitted against the greed of the landlord. He too has pledged his two houses and Chandri, his cow, to Seth Jai Ramdas, a money-lender in the town. Poor peasants are so ill-fated and helpless that they do not hesitate to sell off the members of the family as the debts pile up. In the words of a critic, “The introduction of money into the
rural economy is responsible for the moral decadence in village life. Amru and Laxmi do not bother about morals when they mercilessly sell off Gauri to a greedy old Seth of Hoshiapur, only because, they are crushed under the heavy weight of the power of money. Her problems in her mother's house "arise out of poverty and desperation, which are a part of the village scene."

Amru tells Gauri,

> now you should reconcile yourself to Seth Jai Ram Das. We are poor and cannot choose any differently. These Banias are blood-sucking leeches. But we are humble folk, the servants of the rich Seths. (p.112)

This passage aptly throws light on the horrible condition of the helpless peasants – both men and women - who are continuously under the control of blood-sucking banias.

Since time immemorial, the rural masses find themselves wriggling in the clutches of zamindars and money-lenders. They have by bitter experience come to realise stoically their helplessness in the face of the power of money. As Mrs. Meenakshi Mukherjee puts it,

> they suffer because they cannot accept and be resigned, yet often find themselves unable to act. Added to the suffering imposed upon them by society is their own helplessness.

There is an undercurrent of Anand's voice whenever he presents the world of exploitation. He is critical of those who exploit the poor village folk.
Dr. Mahindra's voice in the novel is the voice of the novelist himself. One finds his views reflected when Dr. Mahindra speaks thus:

*Where there is poverty there is a money-lender, a priest and a landlord – and God is always on their side.* (p.206)

Besides exploitation, the hypocrisy of the village priest is exposed in the novel. It is evident when Gauri recollects how Pandit Bhola Nath, the temple priest, approached her lustfully when she was a young girl. Since then "the garb of religiosity had always seemed to her a cover for sexual desire" (p.116). But unfortunately such men as Pandit Bhola Nath are considered good as they are believed to be the mediators between God and the villagers. This is a common theme in both *The Village* and *Gauri*. In fact, this is a pet theme for Anand to expose the hypocrisy of the priests in the name of religion. As a critic rightly points out,

> Anand exposes and describes the hard-heartedness, greediness, lechery, callousness, arrogance, hypocrisy, selfishness and meanness of these agents of cruelty and exploitation.  

Anand is critical not only of those who exploit but also of those who are exploited. With all his practical and realistic thinking, he exposes the follies of the Indian rural society. He strongly believes that it is the unhealthy belief of the villagers in the doctrine of Karma or fate that has stunted their development. In the novel, Panchi and others are naive enough to account for all their miseries in terms of Karma thereby consoling themselves. They
ardently believe that it is their unfortunate fate that has brought drought and famine. They simply resign everything to fate and sit idle “borrowing, squabbling, squandering and drinking”. (p.207) The novelist rightly presents the state of mind of Panchi in times of drought as follows

*And he righteously felt the contradiction of life: the burning apperception of his own youth and strength, of his ability to do things, his capacity to eat and love and roll about in the shades of the mango groves and the degrading fact that this was all denied, for no fault of his or of any other peasant, but their Karma, fate, which brought drought after drought. (p.78)*

Like all Indian villages, the peasants of Chota Piplan are conscious of caste distinctions and religious dogma. Their chill penury cannot prevent them from observing the strict orthodox rules of caste and religion. Anyone who violates them is treated as an enemy of the village and, in this novel, it is Panchi who incurs the wrath of the villagers for his taking shelter in the barn of Rafique Chacha, an elderly Muslim potter of the village, after his separation from his uncle and aunt. Kesaro, asked by her nephew, Panchi, to visit his house, says, “Son, our religion is like that! How could I come to a Muslim household?” (p.81) Like Kesaro, the other elders of the village attack Panchi by taking “the side of Mola Ram against his ‘rascally young nephew’, who had not only been known to insult the elders but had often defied convention by ‘eating and drinking with the Muhammadans and other low caste scoundrels.’(p.53)
A significant feature of any village is the strong resistance of its people to any change that deviates them from their traditional and conventional path. They leave no stone unturned to protect their age-old customs and conventions. This, in a way, is responsible for their ignorance and utter poverty. People are found fixed in an unchanging predicament of life. This is explicit when Gauri is strongly resisted for all her rational and modern outlook after her return from the town. She fails miserably to adjust herself to the dull and static life of the village. She sheepishly looks at the walls of the house built with chunks of mud-plaster without any change since her marriage. This symbolically indicates the unchanging and poverty-stricken rural world where there is no scope for a change. This is succinctly summed up by Dr. Mahindra; “Look at the sun in the morning and at the stars at night and, in between, work, play and eat and sleep and love.” (pp.192-193)

Trivial matters gain ascendancy in the rural world as the peasants due to their ignorance are gossip and scandal-mongers. They evince keen interest in the affairs of others; they are always inquisitive to know the day-to-day matters of the villagers, especially those pertaining to family quarrels and sexual affairs. For instance, when Mola Ram and Panchi get divided,

*The whole village knew of this sensational happening, the partition of Mola Ram and Panchi. And the incident seemed to create almost the kind of bitterness as the previous partition of East and West Punjab.* (p.53)
Anand describes how Adam Singh and Laxmi accompanied by Gauri prefer to wait to enter Chota Piplan till twilight so that nobody will observe them. They feel that the return of Gauri from the town will make the villagers inquisitive and scandalous. So,

*Laxmi and Adam Singh had deliberately chosen the hour after cow dust, because the darkness would afford the necessary screen against the stares of the inquisitive villagers whose main passion in life was a scandal.* (p.198)

It is this quality of the villagers that makes Panchi suspect the character of Gauri and send her out of his house after hearing the insinuations of Rakhi against Gauri. Women like Rakhi are found in every village whose sole aim in life is to make the life of others a hell and derive sadistic satisfaction. When Panchi is oscillating between his love and hatred for his wife, Rakhi settles the matter saying,

*When Sita was abducted by Ravan, and her husband went and fetched her back, what did people say? ........

They are all wondering, sister, if the child is Panchi’s or some one else’s!* (p.211)

Although Gauri is predominantly rural, it presents a few aspects of urban life. If it is drought and famine that subject the rural people to miseries, the lustful Seths like Jai Ram Das suck the blood of the people in towns. After her rescue from the Seth, Gauri joins the hospital of Dr.Mahindra, a philanthropist, and humane doctor. Here, she finds life in total contrast to the
life she has experienced in the rural world. She finds the urban world to be a magnificent one with all its free life. She is awe-struck when she finds the medical equipment in the hospital. She becomes a mouthpiece of the novelist when she tells Hoor Banu,


\[
\text{Ni Chachi, the bulbs of electricity shine like stars at night. The roads outside the town are clean – you can see your face reflected in them! .... And I had to boil all the instruments in the hospital before big Daktar Sahib would touch them. Even one's breath is poisonous for a wound – so we nurses had to wear a clean white cloth to cover the nose and the mouth when the Kernal Sahib performed operations on the sick folk – .} \ (p.208)
\]

Gauri also tells her how women in towns unlike the rustic women, move about without covering their faces. She also elaborately talks of the importance of education and rational thinking. It is this experience of urban life that makes her question Panchi as to why she should cover her face in his presence. Her modern outlook is very much revealed when she questions Panchi,

\[
\text{I saw hundreds of men without covering my face where I worked in Dr. Mahindra's haspatal. Now why should I cover my face before you?} \ (p.206)
\]

These remarks of Gauri about the urban world make one understand that while the rural world stands for tradition, the urban world represents modernity. Thus, these two ways of life stand in contrast to each other.
As a modernist, Anand is much aware of the predicament of women in the Indian rural society. Like a feminist, he describes how a peasant woman suffers at the hands of both her parents and parents-in-law, and above all, at the hands of her own husband. Gauri is one of his typical rural women who is no way different from the other women of her village when she endlessly suffers at all levels. She is considered by her husband "a girl whom he could fold in his arms at night and kick during the day, who would adorn his house and help him with the land." (p.10) She is also mercilessly suspected and beaten again and again. Thus, she stands as an example of those who have been subjected to harsh and inhuman treatment by the male dominant rural set-up.

Among the women characters of Anand, Gauri stands alone as she undergoes metamorphosis when once she enjoys the bliss of freedom at Mahindra's hospital. Her modern outlook does encourage her to kick the doors open and move out of the traditional, superstitious and rigid rustic world. Here, Anand employs the technique of myth only to show that Gauri is not like Sita in the Ramayana who readily agrees to prove her chastity. While her husband remains in the cage of tradition, Gauri

steps out of the corrosive walls of tradition into open and liberating modernity. She refuses to accept the hypocritical values of her society and its double standards of sexual morality.\textsuperscript{26}
Thus, she stands out as a symbol of Goddess Gauri who is strong enough to destroy the dominant, unlike Sita who is represented as meek and submissive.

Anand's use of language in the novel is in tune with the characters and situations. One remarkable feature of it is that it suits the rural characters. The kind of abusive language used, and the day-to-day proverbs mark the life of people in Indian villages. For instance, sayings such as

- *Fire and a dry stick can't stay too long together* (p.50)
- *Straiten a dog's tail for three years and still it will curl!* (p.54)
- *Strength of mind is the king of qualities* (p.216)
- *If speech be one rupee, then silence is two!* (p.223)

are full of village wisdom and practicality.

The imagery in the novel is fully integrated into the structure of the novel. While the tiger, the panther and the bull refer to Panchi, the cow and the parrot refer to Gauri. There is a likeness of characters to the qualities of animals and birds repeatedly mentioned in the novel. As we read the novel, we observe Gauri having "the reputation of being as gentle as a cow in her village". Her marriage with Panchi was "as though a docile calf had been joined to a wild bull!" (p.106) Here qualities like meekness, docility, subservience and mildness are associated with the character of Gauri. But, wolf's greed, bull's ferocity, panther's prey, tiger's wildness are the typical qualities that go with Panchi. Thus, the use of animal imagery in the novel becomes an adequate form of expression for its inner meaning.
Anand's Gauri can be compared with Hardy's Tess and Susan. Like Tess, she abandons the gods of her religion and yet she seems predestined by a malevolent fate to attract the attentions of those she would most dearly wish to resist.28

She, like Susan of The Mayor of Casterbridge, is sold though not by her husband, but by her own kith and kin. Her resistance goes in vain as in the case of Hardy's Susan. A critic compares the novel to The Waiting Earth of P.Wijenaike from Sri Lanka. Both Gauri and The Waiting Earth show a great "concern for the bitterness of rural lives"29. Both writers "have a powerful capacity to recognize the latent strength within the bitterness"30.

To conclude, it may be said that the novel, Gauri, presents a realistic and graphic account of the peasants of Chota Piplan and Piplan Kalan whose life highlights their humble, ignorant, superstitious and gullible qualities. Gauri, the principal character in the novel, becomes a prey to their whimsical qualities. Thus, the novel presents a vivid picture of the principal plight of the Indian-woman, especially in the rural society, and hints at the changes that are in the offing through the heroic struggle of Gauri against man's selfishness, greed, hypocrisy, hard bound traditions and superstitious dogmas.31
It also brings about the petty jealousies, caste barriers and drought that stifle life in an Indian village. To sum up, the novel "creates the legend of a heroic peasant woman in a small minded village. It has a definite epic strain to it." 32.

While The Village and Gauri are predominantly rural, his novel Coolie, is an urban one, portraying the Indian urban life powerfully and realistically.

Although both reviewers and critics have interpreted Anand’s second novel, Coolie, in many ways, a significant aspect that has not drawn much of their attention is the Indian urban life presented in the novel. It can perhaps be said that it is one of the first Indo-Anglian novels to depict the merciless, mechanical and artificial urban world. It highlights the theme of man's inhumanity to man in the world of towns and cities where Munoo, the protagonist, finds himself confused, helpless and oppressed. In the words of K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar,

Munoo is the exploited all the time, one way or the other, by one person or another; and his fate is typical of the fate of millions whose only distinguishing badge is patient sufferance 33.

The story of the novel moves swiftly from Munoo's idyllic world of Bilasapur to the cruel urban world of Sham Nagar, Daulatpur, Bombay and finally to Simla where he dies of consumption. In the words of K.Venkata Reddy,
Munoo is made to pass through diverse situations - as a domestic servant in an urban middle class family in Sham Nagar, as a worker in a small pickle factory and as a coolie fighting for work in the city market in Daulatpur, as a labourer in a cotton mill in Bombay and as a rickshaw coolie in the employ of a promiscuous Eurasian in Simla.

In each place, Munoo is exposed to a veritable hell. Like the child characters of Charles Dickens's novels, Munoo suffers, and Anand, like Dickens, uses the urban world as a backdrop to present the wretched, enslaving and merciless life of the poor.

Coolie depicts the life of Munoo, a common rustic boy who, as an orphan, is forced to move to a town by his uncle Dayaram, a peon in the Imperial Bank of India. Before he leaves for the town, Munoo is full of gusto and vigour that a villager naturally possesses. He is an active and intelligent rustic full of high spirits and zest for life. In the words of the novelist,

*Munoo was a genius at climbing trees. He would hop on to the trunk like a monkey, climb the bigger branches on all fours, swing himself to the thinner offshoots as if he were dancing on a trapeze, and then, diving dangerously into space, he would jump from one tree to another. (p.4)*

Munoo's first encounter with the urban world starts when he is placed in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram, a sub-accountant in the Imperial Bank in Sham Nagar. He is ill-treated in the house by the mistress, Bibi Uttam Kaur,
for his rustic behaviour. As a critic puts it, “Munoo's total ignorance of urban ways brands him as a stupid rustic”\(^{35}\).

In a state of confusion and fear, he misbehaves and often incurs the wrath of his mistress. Finally, he flees the house when he is beaten with a cudgel for his innocently playing in an intimate way with the daughter of the house. Though this is only the first phase of his hard life, he understands, “he was to be a slave, a servant who should do the work, all the odd jobs, someone to be abused, even beaten”. (p.31) and that “there must only be two kinds of people in the world, the rich and the poor”. (p.56) The realization that love has no place in the world where he lives, drives him to the extreme stage of seeing only apathy, cruelty and death all around.

Munoo, then on, is taken to the feudal city of Daulatpur by Prabha Dayal, a passenger in the train, who, taking pity on him, offers shelter in his house. He joins as a worker in Dayal's pickle factory and lives happily for a short while. Unfortunately, he is put to troubles in the factory by Ganapat, a wicked partner of Prabha and, it is due to his deceptive nature, the factory is closed. Munoo is again left to his fate in the city. He then becomes a coolie in the market and a porter at the railway station.

The next phase of Munoo's life begins when he reaches Bombay with the help of an elephant trainer. In the enormous world of the metropolitan city, he finds the job of a worker with the help of Hari, a worker at George White Cotton Mills. Here he is exposed to the wretched life of factory workers. Anand presents a poignant picture of the life of slum dwellers in
Bombay and his "aim in Coolie is to bring home to the reader the living conditions of the poor and the heartlessness of the rich". Munoo observes people in Bombay to be more indifferent and selfish than those he has encountered in Daulatpur. Munoo's misadventures in Bombay are marked by the evil that the machine civilization turns out to be. It is the evil of the social system corrupted by the machine that finishes off Munoo.

Unable to cope with the situations, the workers in the factory resort to violent agitation which, in turn, becomes a communal riot and, poor Munoo in order to escape, runs up Malabar Hill only to be knocked down by the car of an Eurasian, Mrs. Mainwaring.

In the last phase of Munoo's tragic life, he is taken to Simla to be a servant in the house of Mrs. Mainwaring. As he is handsome and young, she makes him an object of her sexual desire and later her rickshaw-puller. Thus "at every turn he comes across only pain and cruelty which make his life a saga of suffering." At a tender age of fifteen, poor Munoo who has 'a wild urge to live' succumbs to consumption.

What one notices in the novel is a realistic presentation of urban life. In the words of C.D. Narasimhaiah:

the situations Anand creates are convincing on the whole and reveal aspects of life hitherto generally kept out of fiction as though they were tabooed from it.
Munoo, the protagonist, sets out for Sham Nagar leaving behind his village, Bilasapur, in the hope of a better life in the town. It is quite natural for a villager to think that a town is something of a dreamland where there are “beautiful things to eat, beautiful things to wear and beautiful toys to play with” (p.2). As a critic points out,

The lure of town life was an incentive which retains its edge till his death but the reluctance to leave his childhood home and friends was equally strong.40

Anand gives a vivid description of Sham Nagar as seen through the eyes of Munoo. As Munoo enters Sham Nagar, he finds a totally different world which he thinks is wonderful and attractive. He

stared wide-eyed and open, mouthed at the marvels of different carriages, two-wheeled, box-like bamboo carts and tongas, four-wheeled phaetons and landaus, and huge, rubber-wheeled, black-bodied phat-phatics which seemed to him curious as they ran without horses on the main road. And, wonder of all wonders, he saw a black iron vehicle with two round humps like the humps of a desert camel, with hosts of little brown houses studded with glass windows behind it, rushing along furiously, puffing out a foul black smoke and shrieking hysterically. It blew a shrill whistle and made his heart leap to his throat” (p.6) and “he felt as if he were walking in a dream, in a land of romance
where everything was gilded and grand, so different was this world from the world of the mountains (p.9).

But soon, his dreams are shattered as he realises that his rustic habits and the urban habits of people do not go together. He feels suffocated when he does not know where to relieve himself. In utter panic, he relieves himself at the doorstep of his master for which his mistress, Bibi Uttam Kaur, throws a volley of abuses at him.

In spite of the hard struggle in the town, interestingly, Munoo still has a fascination for urban life. For instance, when he observes Chota Babu shaving with a razor, he wonders that

the little machine with the teeth seemed the most marvellous, the most wonderful. In his village, the barber shaved the beards of men with a long, sharp razor. This machine he had never seen. 'It cannot be very dangerous,' he thought, 'if the Babu is rubbing it on his face, so quickly, up and down, down and up. (p.27)

To him every building, every street, every human being and every object seem to be both wonderful and frightening.

Anand, quite convincingly, depicts how the servants are ill-treated in the indifferent and cruel urban world. In the house of the Babu, Munoo is kept at a distance as he is considered an unclean rustic stupid boy. However, he is forced to do all household work. But, Munoo does not understand why he is treated this way. His
miserable life at the eternally nagging Bibiji’s house makes him contemplate his position in the world. He realises that money indeed is everything; and his suffering is due to his poverty. He thinks that there are only two kinds of people in the world whether it is a village or a town. In the words of Munoo,

_Whether there were more rich or more poor people, however, there seemed to be only two kinds of people in the world... the rich and the poor._ (pp.55-56)

Like Lalu in _The Village_, who flees the village for his having behaved intimately with the landlord’s daughter, Maya, Munoo in _Coolie_ takes his destiny into his own hands and runs away from the house of his master for his innocent and intimate behaviour with the daughter of the house, Sheila. He runs through the streets observing the wonderful town, which has failed to provide him with shelter and freedom. Anand describes vividly how Munoo helplessly longs for his disappearance from the cris-cross of humanity which does not identify him as a human being. This is well presented in the following passage.

_He longed for silence, he longed for darkness to conceal him._

_He wanted to get away from this riot of human beings with their vermilion turbans, white and black caps, rustling red silks and fawn-coloured muslins which jostled against each other._ (p.59)
Anand realistically presents the plight of the poor children in towns and cities which is reminiscent of the plight of Dickens's child characters. In Daulatpur, Munoo is employed as a worker in the pickle factory of Prabha and Ganapat. Though Prabha is kind, Ganapat, his partner, known for his sharp practice, does not like Munoo. The child labourers along with Munoo are subjected to a harsh life. Ganapat shouts at them when he finds them asleep:

‘Come along, you swine!’ …..‘The sunshine has spread far and wide and you are still asleep’. I will break your hard bones for you if you don’t rise early every morning and get down to work (p.77)

The novelist also gives a graphic picture of the factory environment in which the children work. The children are made to work under unhygienic conditions. While working in the factory, Munoo experiences the horrible smell and the power of smoke that comes out of the aperture. He also hears the loud noise of the factory that comes out of the machines. He feels it to be dangerous and suffocating. In the words of a critic,

Anand’s child heroes also undergo physical and psychological tortures, like the child heroes of Dickens. Both Dickens and Anand try to draw the attention of their readers to the social evils by making their child heroes victims of their societies 42
A remarkable feature of the city is its vastness. When Munoo enters the city of Daulatpur, he is surprised to see the enormity and vast size of the city, the kind of which he has never seen before. He feels confused and bewildered by its mosques and temples, its old shops and new shops. (p.73)

Another aspect of the urban world in the novel is pollution. Unlike in villages where everything is quiet and calm, the atmosphere in cities is full of pollution. The people who live near the pickle factory always complain of smoke and dust. This becomes an important issue for the lock-out of the factory. This is evident when the wife of a lawyer, Sir. Todar Mal, of the locality shouts:

Eater of your masters! Eater of your masters! You dirty hill men!
You scum! You filth! The smoke! The smoke! Your smoke! It has entered my house even through the closed doors and windows.
Hail! Hail! May you die! May you never live! May the fire of your ovens consume you! You have ruined our houses! We have had the walls white-washed only last spring! And now they are black.
Hail! Hail! Where are you?(p.79)

The novelist highlights the problem of the people for shelter and employment in the city. Anand describes vividly how Munoo finds it extremely difficult to secure a place, not to live, but to work and sleep after the closure of the pickle factory. He observes people sleep wherever they find a place, ignoring convenience and comfort. He also observes how they stick narrowly
to their places without caring for their fellow beings who are desperately in need of a place to rest. In their earnest effort to possess something, they become indifferent, and sometimes selfish and inhuman.

Anand highlights the competition that the labourers face for work in towns and cities. In the novel, one observes the labourers finding a cut-throat competition to get some work or the other - even the work of a coolie. Tulasi, a friend of Munoo, tries in the market to push himself through a clamorous crowd of workers to reach a godown. He

*found it difficult to get through to the front, so wild was the rush for jobs by the taller and heftier coolies. He tried to push, to scrape through the edges, to crawl under the legs of the crowd. He sweated with activity. But he did not get anywhere near the vantage point.* (p.121)

Urban life is marked by its markets and a variety of people who gather there to sell or buy or do some work. The novelist presents a graphic account of the market place in Daulatpur where various varieties of vegetables are collected for sale. The vegetable market is known for not only its colourful vegetables but also for a variety of life. What is emphatic here is the presentation of life of the two kinds of people - the rich and the poor. In the words of the novelist, in the market place there

*were the endless streams of ill-clad servant boys, ragged men, black-skinned old widows who bargained for a commission, and rich bourgeois women in many-coloured silk shirts and tinted*
aprons, chaperoning their daughters or daughters-in-law, loaded with gold embroidered silks and garlands of jewels, haggling with the wild-eyed shopkeepers over the price of potatoes. (p.125)

To a villager like Munoo, the conditions of city life are peculiar and strange. He is unaware that a coolie should have a licence to work. He is shocked and bewildered when he is caught by a policeman and attacked thus, 

You have no licence! You son of a pig. You were deceiving me...... 'I have seen you lift bundles here for a month, you base born!.....‘You swine, you trickster, I will put you in the lock-up....(136)

The novel provides a close look into the city of Bombay. The city is shown at once as a social fact and a human landscape. The protagonist's journey from one city to another changes according to the vastness of the place in which he lives. Every time his life turns from bad to worse as he moves from one city to another. Munoo, as usual, hopes for a better life in the metropolitan city of Bombay. He understands it to be a wonderful city "one should visit before one died" (p.140) But the words of the elephant trainer who takes him to Bombay are very significant. He warns Munoo of the dangers hidden in the outwardly attractive city of Bombay. "The bigger a city is, the more cruel it is to the sons of Adam--------, You have to pay even for the breath that you breathe." (p.152)
As Munoo passes on observing the grandeur of Bombay, he finds himself to be insignificant and small. His feeling is one of wonder and confusion, when he looks at its miscellaneity and variety.

Every aspect of the city seems to threaten the very existence of its people. Very busy streets with vehicular traffic pose a major threat to the lives of the people, especially those who come to the city from the villages to earn their livelihood. Every minute, life becomes precarious and insecure in the streets where devil-like vehicles move. Anand highlights this aspect in the novel by describing the streets. Munoo while walking on the street

  suddenly heard the loud bellowing of raucous motor horns, the tan-tan of tramway bells, the angry yells of phaeton drivers and shouts of 'dem fool', black man, where are you going?' He stood dumb and still in the deathliest fear of having got into the way of the traffic. He felt as if he were dead or dying. (p.158)

The city is also depicted as a place where the shelterless poor are subjected to deceptive and harsh treatment by the loafers in the city for their taking shelter near the houses of the rich. This is well revealed when Hari tells Munoo,

  'we cannot sleep near the houses of the rich. Many thefts take place here and honest folk are caught up with the dishonest loafers and thrown into prison. For us the street there, where shops close early and the boards are empty. (p.162)
People's struggle for survival in the urban world becomes a dominant theme in the novel. Like the coolies in Daulatpur, workers in Bombay face a heavy competition for work. The novel abounds in such scenes where people struggle for work or for a place of shelter. Hari, a worker says,

*We are late. It will be difficult to find a place here. This street is full of men. We will have to wait till the shops in the bazaar that we have left behind close for the night, unless all the shelters there are taken by the coolies who work round about.* (p.162)

Anand's description of the industrial cities is quite Dickensian. One is reminded of Dickens's *Hard Times* in which Coke Town is described as a place of factories with long chimneys, smoke and soot. He describes it as a *town of red brick or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it, but as matters stood it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of savage.*

In the same way, Anand describes the buildings in Bombay:

*the high, four-storied buildings were plain enough and devoid of the city styles, but crumbling on the sides and seamed with mortar that looked a leprous white against, the sooty black of the main structure of brick* (p.169).

The day-to-day life of people in cities is quite horrible, especially in an over-crowded city like Bombay. Anand's observation of the lifestyle of the labourers is well reflected in the novel. Munoo and his companion, Hari, live
in a dirty low-lying area where they do not have the minimum requirements necessary for a simple life. They live in huts, which are poorly built and highly paid. To answer the call of nature and to take bath, they have to go to a dirty pond. The novelist presents a realistic account of the pond:

_He looked deeper into space and saw, behind a small hillock, a sunken pool of murky, green water over which a thick, slimy cream had settled. The crows wheeled over the pond in great profusion, pecking at the sores of the cows and bullocks who either sat in the water or grazed on the grass by the festering marshes around the water._ (p.170)

Anand's concern for the urban poor and the oppressed is immense. The coolies in towns are forced to live in small huts surrounded by dirt and squalor. Munoo along with the family of Hari, lives in a hut which is neither big nor hygienic. The novelist describes it vividly thus:

_The roof of clumsy straw mats, which drooped dangerously on the sides from the cracked beams supporting it in the middle, was not high enough for Munoo or Hari's wife to stand in, though Hari, whose back was bent, escaped hitting his head against it. The mud floor was at a level lower than the pathway outside, overgrown with grass which was nourished by the inflow of rain water. The cottage boasted not a window nor a chimney to let in the air and light and to eject the smoke._ (p.176)
This naturally reveals the influence of Dickens on Anand. Thus, Anand's description of the life of slum-dwellers in Bombay shows some of Dickens's remarkable falcility for portraying slum life, and to present a host of details to make his picture convincing.\(^4\)

An important aspect of the novel is the description of machines which stand as 'wonders of our civilization'. Human beings are reduced to the level of tools in the machine world of factories. One is naturally reminded of the ill-effects of the Industrial Revolution of the West when the placid and serene rural world was replaced by the industrial world. Munoo, the protagonist, wonders at the way a machine works in the cotton mill. Anand's account of the machine world where Munoo works is vivid.

*He lifted his eyes to the horizontal, circular, cylindrical, octagonal, diagonal shapes of the different parts of the machine.*

*The first impact was fascinating. Then the bold gesticulation of a hundred knobs and shafts of the engine deafened him with its uproar. But the wooden columns which stood beyond him, extending from the middle of the monstrous steel plant to the low ceiling of corrugated-iron sheets, seemed to alleviate his confusion a little. Soon, however, they gave him the feeling of being shut in a cage.*\(^{(p.185)}\)

The novel presents the dangerous world of machines where the workers are constantly prone to some risk or the other. For instance, when
Munoo's shirt is accidentally caught in the machine, the other workers run to him shouting “keep your senses, you bastard; you will lose your life if you do that”. (p.187) Munoo, on his own, feels that “the many-headed, many-armed machine god was chuckling with laughter at the grim joke it had played on him by divesting him of his shirt”. (p.187) In the words of M.K. Naik,

*the factory is a huge octopus with its numerous tentacles clutching the labourer in its deadly grasp, slowly paralysing and poisoning him.*

Just as the coolies are exploited in the market in Daulatpur, the workers are exploited in Bombay by the foreman and his assistants. The labourers are forced to work long hours for low wages. They are also deprived of the minimum working conditions required. As a result, their life becomes arduous and dangerous. The novel, thus, shows a

*realistic picture of the sad lot of Indian peasants who were uprooted from their soils and entered the world of capitalist exploitation.*

Anand does not see much difference between a village and a town while depicting the life of the poor who are crushed by the money-lenders. Hari, Munoo and a host of others are doubly exploited both by the money-lenders and the factory authorities. The following conversation, between the Pathan, the money-lender, and Hari, reveals how the poor are mercilessly exploited.
'That is not all', the Pathan said. The interest alone is five rupees. There is more money in your loincloth. Give it to me. 'My wages have been cut, khan Sahib', said Hari joining his hands with the note pressed between them. 'I had some money deducted for damaged cloth. I can't pay this month. I shall pay next month'. (p.206)

The novelist as an ardent supporter of the working class, exposes the merciless exploitation of the poor and the oppressed by the rich in Bombay. As a critic puts it, the novel depicts,

the harsh life of the workers and their families, the squalor of the Bombay slums, the depredations of violent Afghan money-lenders.  

Another type of exploitation to be found in cities is sexual exploitation of women. The novelist gives a vivid account of the street of pleasure, where women lure men for money. Munoo along with Ratan, his companion in the factory, visits Grant Road to be welcomed by the owners of brothel houses. Munoo, as first time visitor, is surprised and embarrassed to see a totally different world. He is like Ravi, and Ratan is like Damodar in Kamala Markandaya's *A Handful of Rice*. Munoo and Ravi are influenced by Ratan and Damodar in a similar way. When Munoo and Ratan reach the street of pleasure, Piari Jan, a pimp, welcomes them and makes them happy by showing two girls. Anand describes how these girls are adorned with a variety of dress and jewellery to attract the customers. He also describes how
broken they are in spirit due to their helpless condition. This is well depicted in the following passage.

Two lovely apparitions darted into the salon, their legs encumbered by the glittering sequins of silken trousers, their upright bodies swathed in the thin folds of flashing, starched, stiff, pink aprons, and with brave smiles on their faces which scarcely hid the pathos of their broken spirit (p.212)

The above passage also makes the point clear that the poor and the helpless women in cities, though outwardly attractive and pleasant, are actually broken in spirit due to their exploitation.

Those that fight against exploitation and demand for just wages are treated as enemies of the factories and are sacked mercilessly. Ratan, the wrestler, fights for just wages and becomes a victim of the factory owners. Sometimes even factories are locked-out and the workers are left to their fate. This aspect of the factory world is aptly delineated in the novel thus:

The coolies were pouring into the compound from the sheds, after hearing the announcement about short work. They gesticulated behind the Chimta Sahib. They saw the long, black, polished body of the Daimler swerve round. They rushed towards it, vaguely aware that the master of the mill was being driven away after pronouncing their doom. They would have fallen at his feet with joined hands if the car had not slid away. They rushed at the Chimta Sahib and begged him with
entreaties and prayers not to declare the factory on short work

(p.226)

The passage aptly suggests the pathetic condition of the coolies in factories.

Some violent incidents, which rarely occur in villages, often take place in cities. Communal riots are a common feature of many Indian cities. Anand's association with the city life makes him understand the severity of communal riots. In Coolie, the riots break out at the meeting organised by the trade union leader, Mr. Sauda. Someone, without confirming the fact, announces that a Hindu child has been kidnapped. It is blindly repeated by many and ultimately the Muslims who are present there revolt against the Hindus and the result is the communal violence. The novelist's description of the communal riot is powerful and realistic:

_Munoo rushed up to Ratan and clung to his tunic, trembling. As he looked back he saw that the crowd was swirling in tides upon tides of faces, to and fro, in an utter panic of abandonment. He stood terrified and still, watching the rubbings of the hundreds of bodies, the pushings of the panting swarm that now pressed all around, crying loud and bitter oaths and abuses. It was sheer bedlam, only illuminated by the word 'kidnapped'. He seemed suddenly to have forgotten the invigorating air of that song of the charter and felt engulfed in an uncertain atmosphere of_
destruction, which the flourishing of arms, the glistening of eyes,
the sharp hysteria of the voices had created. (p.235)

The novel also concerns itself with the busy and indifferent life of the people in cities. Unlike the people in villages, the people in cities do not live in a closed area with all intimate relations. They live in vast areas mechanically and do not bother about their fellow beings. Munoo, walking through the streets of Bombay, observes the town which

was coming to life in the streets. White men, brown men, chocolate men, black men, in loincloths or short trousers, were jostling along. Some opulent merchants were being carried in motor cars. Troops of schoolboys and girls in uniforms were strolling along, now leisurely and unwillingly, now eagerly...... They seemed peopled by swarms of men and women layer upon layer, in a sort of vertical overcrowding literally on top of each other. They did not greet each other as they walked in and out of the buildings. (p.168)

Anand accurately delineates a variety of life to be found on the pavements of Bombay. What is remarkable is the way people of various occupations occupy some place on the pavement and go on with their business mechanically. Even coolies try their luck to have a place to rest or sleep.

For a rustic like Munoo, every object in the city is a wonder: a rail engine, a phonogram, a bicycle, a razor etc. In contrast, he thinks of cattle,
plough, fields of his village. Munoo's first experience of the urban world is well described as he enters Sham Nagar. He

felt as if he were walking in a dream in a land of romance where everything was gilded and grand, so different was this world from the world of the mountains. (p.9)

It is customary in Indian villages to offer food to guests whatever time of the day they arrive but in towns it is not so. When Munoo joins the house of Babu Nathoo Ram, he is not offered food, instead he is asked to go on an errand. Munoo thinks "perhaps the customs in the towns are different". (p.13)

Whenever Munoo is in troubles, he thinks of his village where life is free and pleasant. When his uncle, Daya Ram, keeps him as a servant in the house of Babu Nathoo Ram in the town, through the tears he

could see the high rocks, the great granite hills, grey in the blaze of the sun, and the silver line of the Beas, on the banks of which his herds had mooed defiance to the earth and the sky, wandering, wandering freely for miles and miles....(p.14)

Rain in villages is a matter of joy and people celebrate the season of rains. In cities rain is not an important aspect of life. On the other hand, it does cause havoc to those who live in slums and huts. Anand gives a pathetic picture of the life of people in Bombay when floods come roaring.

Drenched to the skin, soaking wet, trembling with fear at the wild noise of the rain, the sudden claps of gurgling thunder, the sharp, tearing rents of bright, white-red lighting overhead and
the uncertain earth of the mill land under their feet, the family sought shelter under a grove of plantain and palm trees, which stood upon a hill surrounding the temple at the edge of the pond. Hundreds of other workers whose huts had been damaged by the monsoon were gathering in the darkness. (p.193)

Leisure becomes a rare commodity for the city dwellers, while it is an integral part of the village life. In spite of the hard work in the fields, the villagers find time to breathe leisurely. Munoo consoles himself by feeling that he deserved this leisure after months of having to get up early at dawn. It was like the old days in the village, he felt, when he used to laze around in the afternoon and have a siesta while the cattle grazed. The wild pastures of the green sea had indeed something of the freedom of the open fields. (p.243)

Thus, Anand is successful in his use of the technique of contrast in the novel. He aptly contrasts the rural world of Munoo with his urban world. He presents the two diametrically opposed worlds in one framework in a realistic way. The protagonist now and then recalls his idyllic life, which becomes a solace for him to forget momentarily his hard insipid city life. In the words of C.D. Narasimhaih,

Anand uses a larger canvas so as to accommodate an incredible range of Indian life from the extreme North to
Bombay in the South-West, using it on another layer as transition from the pastoral to the industrial phase.\textsuperscript{48}

Anand juxtaposes the country and the city in certain aspects. For the poor, according to the novelist, life does not change much except in some physical conditions. Both in villages and towns, poverty, exploitation and hard life are similar in one way or another. Munoo thinks of how his parents had been ruined by the selfish landlord in his village.

*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 had not been forthcoming when the rains had been scanty and the harvests bad. And he knew how his father had died a slow death of bitterness and disappointment and left his mother a penniless beggar, to support a young brother-in-law and a child in arms. (pp2-3)*

If the village was a death-trap for his parents, the urban world becomes something of a nightmare for Munoo.

People like Ganapat in Daulatpur and Jimmy Thomas, the foreman, in Bombay, are what the landlords are in villages. Munoo suffers at the hands of Ganapat and, Hari at the hands of the foreman for no fault of theirs. Jimmy Thomas in the garb of a foreman, exploits the poor labourers in the factory by exacting commissions and gifts from them.

A remarkable feature of Anand's language is that he translates into English some Punjabi and Hindi words which are part and parcel of
conversation of the ordinary villagers. He makes use of curses and abuses “to achieve the purpose of giving the reader a taste of the Punjabi villagers’ ordinary conversations”.49

But some critics are of the opinion that Anand’s use of local expression does not always suit his characters.

Anand’s practice of indiscriminate use of Hindi words and of the vulgarisation of English words does not create the illusion of reality he aims at for the simple reason that the dialogue itself is in English and that it is known that the villagers and coolies cannot speak English.50

In order to give the colour of realism, Anand vulgarizes English words such as General into Jernal, hospital into haspatal, doctor into daktar which may not be as realistic as they are intended to be. According to a critic, where Anand fails to evolve an Indian English or to attain an Indian atmosphere is in his vulgarasation of English words like ‘engine’ into ‘injan’ ‘fashion’ into ‘fashun’ and ‘motor’ car into ‘moturcar’. Again the use of uncommon words like ‘Vagabondizing or coinages like ‘gooder’ or literal translations of vernacular idioms ‘eat a little freshair’ do not have a pleasing effect. 51

What is peculiar about him is his use of abusive language. In his earnest desire to present the plight of his oppressed and depressed characters and to defame the leech-like landlords and money-lenders, he
uses powerful abusive words which always do not produce the desired effect. Further, there is a chance that the reader might consider such a language too elaborate and undesirable. One cannot appreciate his use of the same abusive language indiscriminately for almost all characters - a landlord, a money-lender, a housewife, an officer, etc. For example, in the novel, the mistress of the house at Sham Nagar starts abusing Munoo when he relieves himself at her doorstep. She shouts,

\[
\text{Vay you eater of your masters: Vay, you shameless brute! You pig! You dog! Vay, you shameless, shameless, vulgar, stupid hillboy! May the vessel of your life never float in the sea of existence! May you die! What have you done! Why didn't you ask me where to go? May you fade away! May you burn! We didn't know we were taking on an animal in our employ, an utter brute, a savage! What will the Sahibs think who pass by our doors every morning and afternoon! The Babuji has his prestige to keep up with the Sahibs. Hai! What a horrible, horrible mess he has made outside my door! (p.17)}
\]

Lady Todarmal, almost in the same language, abuses the factory people, and it is the same with the factory owner who speaks in Bombay. Not withstanding all this, his language makes his novel all the more powerful. In the words of Paul Verghese,

\[
\text{the earliest novelist who consciously strove to adapt} \\
\text{English to suit his purpose was Mulk Raj Anand. An}
\]
examination of his style reveals the possibility of this adaptability though we notice certain drawbacks  

Anand uses suitable imagery to expose the nature of people in urban areas. In *Coolie*, he uses animal and bird imagery to make the novel appealing. The coolies, that work in factories are like mild animals and birds, who are afraid of the ‘Whistle’ whose sound is like the ‘lion’s roar’. This is evident when Hari’s wife “heard the sharp steel song of the factory whistle, she started as a deer must when it hears the lion’s roar in a jungle” (p.181)

In the factory, at the approach of the foreman, Jimmy Thomas, the workers would “suddenly lift their hands, salaam him and simultaneously lift their feet and rush into the factory like chickens frightened by a shadow” p.(183)

The word ‘whistle’ becomes a refrain in the Bombay episode. It is the law, the order, the discipline for the coolies. Anand narrates how self-conscious they become when they hear the sound of the whistle. He gives a graphic account of the movement of the workers according to the rhythm of the whistle thus:

*The third and final whistle greeted them a few yards from the factory, as they walked with the swarm of other coolies, with uncertain footsteps through the slime and mud of the unpaved pathways, in the dew-covered fields. They were all silent, with furrows of fear fixed on their brows, with the heavy weight of thought in their bent heads.* (p.183)
Anand also uses derogatory animal imagery for those who exploit the coolies and lead a luxurious life. In the words of Mr. Sauda, a trade union leader, Lalla Omkarnath, the president of the union, has never

*seen the wily demon of poverty drag you through the murky waters of that hell where the scorpions of hunger bite you, where the leeches suck your blood away, where the big sharks devour you.* (p. 232)

The images of wild animals such as lions, tigers, snakes, sharks and the images of mild animals such as deer and chicks present a contrast of life in the novel. While money-lenders and factory owners, like lions and sharks, devour the poor, the wretched and helpless workers, like deer and chicks, become their victims.

One can also understand from a close reading of the novel that there are some episodes, which are not so necessary as to make the novel powerful. In the Daultapur episode, the visit of Dr. Majoribanks, the Health Officer, to the Cat Killer's Lane, is perhaps only to show how a Westerner looks at the seamy side of Indian life. The officer could have taken action against the factory owners even without visiting the place personally. While depicting the miserable life of coolies in Bombay, what Anand has already described about the wretched life of the coolies in Daulatpur, has been repeated by Sauda, the trade union leader.

In spite of these inadequacies, the novel commands appreciation and remains powerful, for Anand has quite convincingly described the cruel and
inhuman social forces which are responsible for the tragic denouement. His artistic treatment of urban life makes *Coolie* as successful as any of his novels. Thus,

the pattern he adopts indicates his desire to exploit the Indian scene for panoramic as well as to give narrative verisimilitude.\(^53\)

Like Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya too in his *A Goddess Named Gold, So Many Hungers!* and *Music for Mohini* delineates the rural and urban life in an authentic and convincing way in the following chapter.
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22. C.J. George, p. 167.


29. Ibid, p. 113.


40. Ibid, p.119.


44. Saros Cowasjee, p.73.


50. Ibid, p. 102.


52. Ibid, p. 100.