Preface

Literature is one of the fine arts that employ language as a medium of expression. It is essentially an expression of human feelings, emotions, sufferings and joys. It appeals to the readers' senses. It knows no bounds of place and time, and so it is universal. Life is a perpetual journey. Problems are a part and parcel of human life. With the advent of industrial revolution society has been divided into rich and poor. This is a barrier for the progress of human life. Creative artists exist only in their historical era and the writings stand a testimony to the time in which they live. All that exist in the world have something common in them. Hence an attempt is essential to read the history of Charles Dickens' and Mulk Raj Anand's time and the problem they encounter and write about in their writings. Both the authors' childhood and youth had a very great encounter in their writings.

The present thesis aims to make a comparative study of the young protagonists of two great novelists Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand. Anand has often been called a veritable Dickens and there are many similarities in their portrayal, apart from many differences. Heroes like David Copperfield, Oliver Twist and the like in Dickens and Bakha, Ananta, Gangu and Munoo in Mulk Raj Anand are fascinating to study. Dickens and Anand are humanists to the core and their heroes are given the human touch making them very popular. The child psychology of the two writers makes an interesting study as the two writers belong to two different nations.

The thesis is conveniently divided into Seven Chapters.

The First chapter is an introduction. It seeks to introduce the lives, works, influences and major themes of Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand. Charles Dickens is acclaimed as the apostle of humanism. He is a writer with social commitment. Mulk Raj Anand portrays the social evils in India and has become a pioneer in Indian English fiction who has gained immense popularity for his novels. The young protagonists of Dickens are destitute orphans, and left outs but Anand's protagonists are untouchables and downtrodden. Charles Dickens belongs to the Victorian age, which is called an age of reason. He is a prolific 19th century author of short stories and fiction, who has gained immense popularity for his novels during his life time. Dickens became famous for the remarkable portrayal of characters. He never forgot this life as a working boy. He lashed
out at what he considered the worst social abuses of his time: imprisonment of debt, the ferocious penal code, the unsanitary slums which bred criminals, child labour, the widespread mistreatment of children, the unsafe machinery in factories, and the hideous schools. Mulk Raj Anand is a novelist, short story writer and art critic of the 20th Century. He is one of the pioneers in Indian English fiction. Anand has allowed a new class of characters who were forbidden from the Indo-Anglian fictional world in the past. His heroes are a sweeper, a coolie, a tea-plantation labourer and so on. He has got inspiration from freedom struggle and followed the footsteps of Mahathma Gandhi.

The Second chapter titled "Childhood Reminiscences in Charles Dickens' and Mulk Raj Anand's Novels" attempts to show the nostalgia and reminiscences of Dickens' and Anand's protagonists. Both Dickens and Anand trace the life of children by mixing their childhood in their respective novels, having children as prime characters. Though the concentration of Dickens is on all types of children, Anand cares more for the downtrodden. This chapter also questions the child labour which is the product of Industrialization. Here in this chapter the psychological approach is applied to the protagonists in the selected novels of both the writers. Dickens always cherishes the memories of his childhood. Childhood always charms him, enchants him, and holds him in its magic spell. Not a single impression is left out, not a single memory is forgotten. Everything appears fresh and lively. Hence, the actuality and poignancy of these pictures of childhood always impresses upon the readers in both the novelists' works.

The Third chapter entitled "Familial Relationships in Charles Dickens' and Mulk Raj Anand's Novels" makes a study of the relationship of protagonists with other family members. In projecting this theme this chapter also brings out the naked truth that weak and unhealthy family relationships leave the characters to lead an unhappy and miserable life. In majority of Charles Dickens' novels the protagonists have lost their parents soon after their birth and have become the bread winners of their family. Anand selects a particular untouchable boy, Bakha, as the central figure of Untouchable and selectively narrates certain incidents that happen to him in a day's span, and suggests the impact they have in effecting a gradual growth of the boy's personality and in producing in him an acute awareness of his low social status and the possible ways out of the situation. This chapter also presents how the family background has become drawback for the protagonists to lead a life of luxury.
The Fourth chapter entitled “Social Relationships of the young protagonists in Charles Dickens’ and Mulk Raj Anand’s Novels” presents the social relationships of the child protagonists in the selected novels. As people are materialistic and money minded, with the impact of Industrialization, this chapter specially focuses on how the society is in a state of transformation. The gap between the rich and the poor is further expanded and due to this the protagonists have led a miserable life. It is due to the lack of good social relationships, the protagonists suffer a lot. In relation to this the chapter brings out the ruthless exploitation of the poor by the rich, which has created a gloomy situation for the characters. Charles Dickens’ presents the life of people in London. Not only in villages and semi-urban towns, but also in metropolitan cities, people suffer from abject poverty and it serves as the right milieu in Coolie. Unable to fight against destiny and the powers of the rich, Munoo attains a premature death. Anand presents the hardship of Munoo with a touch of realism in a milieu of the down-trodden. Gangu in Two Leaves and a Bud is a poor worker who migrates with his family to work on the plantations in Assam to make a livelihood. Though Gangu suffers extremely owing to poverty he tries to uphold the virtue of his daughter and his honour, but dies at the end falling a victim to the bullets of Reggie Hunt, the British assistant planter.

The Fifth chapter entitled “Humanism in Charles Dickens’ and Mulk Raj Anand’s novels.” brings out the portrayal of humanism which is the central metaphor in Charles Dickens’ and Mulk Raj Anand’s novels. Both of them have focused on the dying of human values and their impact on the life of the young protagonists. Charles Dickens’ protagonists are merely victims in the hands of wealthy people. They are isolated and alienated with the impact of industrialization. On the other hand Mulk Raj Anand’s protagonists suffer a lot due to social inequality, casteism and western culture.

Humanism means love of man, the whole man with all his weaknesses, instincts and impulses. Dickens’ prose is lively, humorous, and most striking to a contemporary reader, relevant, his characters, whether they be fully fleshed out or merely stock, evoke empathy, compassion, affection, irritation and laughter always, and delightful, laughter. Most striking is Dickens’ social conscience about issues like education, marriage and divorce, child-rearing, the legal system, the poor and the morally impoverished. Anand’s humanism believes in the equality of all men. So it upholds the dignity of man, and denounces the system of caste, which underlines human dignity. Anand’s humanism
believes in the happiness of man in the context of his earthly existence. So, it describes such social evils as poverty and cruelty, pain and misery, and pleads for tenderness and compassion in human relations. Anand’s humanism believes that liberty - social, economic and political - is the birthright of all men. So, he denounces capitalism and imperialism as evils which make for the misery of a certain section of society. Anand’s humanism does not approve of superstition and obsolete tradition, orthodoxy and religiosity, since these blind beliefs impede man’s progress.

In the Sixth chapter the various types of narrative techniques that are adopted by both the novelists for their novels are analysed. In this chapter the traditional types of narrative techniques like first person, second person and the third person are described in the select novels of both Mulk Raj Anand and Charles Dickens. A study is also made of how both the writers have used the third person narrative technique with a brief analysis on the art forms like “Telling” and “Showing” in their novels. In addition to this their styles and forms are discussed. An attempt is made on stream of consciousness technique in reference to their novels.

The Last chapter is the summation of all the above chapters. This chapter aims at bringing out both the similarities and dissimilarities of the young protagonists in the selected novels of Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand. Charles Dickens’ novels are both personal and impersonal whereas Mulk Raj Anand’s novels are impersonal. Both the writers have portrayed the different spheres of life through their young characters in their novels. The result of looking at children in the writings of Dickens and Anand leads any sort of a researcher to come to a conclusion that the attempt of writing such novels is to raise pity in the minds of the readers. Moreover it also reflects the society in which they lived. When one traces the history or the growth of fiction writing, he or she can understand that still the trend, the treatment of children is same and the trend continues to exist in the affairs of the world.