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**Portrayal of Horrendous Education System and Tyrant Pedagogues
in Mulkraj Anand's *Morning Face***

Kruti M. Trivedi

Assistant Professor,

Shree J.D. Gabani Commerce & S.A.S. College of Management,

Surat, Gujarat.



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Abstract:

Mulk Raj Anand, advent of social realism, projects two categories of characters in his novel - one who is exploited and the other who is exploiter. Anand is sensitive to the evils that prevail in our society. Human sufferings appeal him most and that he has reflected in his novels as a major theme. His protagonists are very much human made of blood and bone who are victims of social injustice. Among various themes of Anand, education system as disappointing and evil aspect of the society has been portrayed. *Morning Face* by Mulk Raj Anand is one of the novels that traces growth of a child from infancy to adolescence and highly acclaimed as a bildungsroman. Through this novel Anand has criticized contemporary education system. Throughout the novel, Krishan, child protagonist of the novel is presented as a victim of education system, teachers and society. Education system of imparting knowledge has been handled as an issue that affects growth of children. Attending school and particularly classes of certain teachers become a horrendous nightmare for the protagonist and his fellow classmates.

Keywords: Education, Exploitation, Sexual Abuse, Pedagogues

Morning Face (1970) by Mulk Raj Anand is one of the novels that traces growth of a child from infancy to adolescence and highly acclaimed as a bildungsroman. Through this novel Anand has criticized contemporary education system. Throughout the novel, Krishan, child protagonist of the novel is presented as a victim of education system, teachers and society. Anand himself being victim of this education system condemns vehemently:

If education is the transmission of life from the living,
through the living, to the living, then we do not know
how to describe the system of teaching that prevails here.
It is carrying death from the dead, through the dead, to
the dead. (Anand, 13.)

Being a sensitive writer, Anand is very much concerned with highly disappointing educational system of India. George remarked on Indian education system: "The 'bastard type' of early education at schools and the 'false and stupid' type of education that he had at college provoked him to think of the system of



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education our country needs.” (George, 23) His autobiographical novels: *The Seven Summers*, *The Morning Face*, *Confessions of a Lover* and *Lament on the Death of a Master of Arts* reflect the same theme that is futility of Indian education system which fails to provide multitudinous development of children with reasonable practicality. *The Morning Face* can be read as an articulation of those evils that a child, especially a middle-class child with learned parent who values education, has to face every day. Mulk Raj Anand, advent of social realism, projects two categories of characters in his novel - one who is exploited and the other who is exploiter. "He made his novels a war against all those were symbols of man's inhumanity to man-but they are not mere propaganda: his characters are human beings to the extent fictional characters may be." (Shukla, 03) Anand is sensitive to the evils that prevail in our society. Human sufferings appeal him most and that he has reflected in his novels as a major theme. His protagonists are very much human made of blood and bone who are victims of social injustice. Among various themes of Anand education system as disappointing and evil aspect of the society has been portrayed. Premila Paul aptly comments:

Anand is unhappy that education, expected to be a powerful instrument of social reconstruction, has not served its purpose. The prevalent educational system is an imitative one and so unrelated to the life of the Indians. The acquisition of sapless bookish knowledge does not offer much help and as recruitment to jobs is made on the basis of recommendations rather than on merit the country faces the twin problems of unemployment and under employment. (Premila Paul, 6)

Education system of imparting knowledge has been handled as an issue that affects growth of children. Attending school and particularly classes of certain teachers become a horrendous nightmare for the protagonist and his fellow classmates. "Anand's attack on them (teachers) is vehement as he does not tolerate the sanctity of the profession being sullied. Anand himself has passed through purgatorial school days and the autobiographical touches make his descriptions authentic." (Premila Paul, 93) Anand criticizes bitterly



education system and masters who impart education. Krishna is beaten by Master Bishan Singh on the very first day. The master calls him "Choochia" which is an insult to Krishan only because his physic was weaker than other students. He knew the the boys would make a nickname of this appellation. Master Bhishan Singh strikes the cane on Krishan's hand:

As I was too frightened of the cane to bring out either hand,
he bent over me from his towering height and, dragging
my right hand, held it before him, and struck a stinging stoke
on it...! (He) dragged out my left hand and dealt another stroke. (MF, 62)

Krishan, being aware of his insult, opposes the master. Ganesh his elder brother also tries to save his brother but he gets stroke on his neck. All these terrors were spread by the master as he wanted higher ratio of the students to seek his private tuitions. His tuitions are marketed in following words: "English is not a language that comes natural to the sons of donkey! For the sake of making students proficient in English I sacrifice my rest, after school hours, and teach at home." (MF, 63)

Fees for the whole month cost twenty rupees. Master Bishan Singh will spare those students from tyranny who takes tuitions from him but those unfortunate one who cannot afford fees has to suffer torture in the classroom. Krishan Chander becomes worried and agreed to pay the fees amidst maintaining household expenditure. It is admitted by, his neighbour, uncle Dev Dutt:

...as the town teacher is after money, and more
money, he beats, even as Bishan Singh beats you,
because his pay is meagre and he wants to coerce
you into taking private tuition from him! And there
is no reason why you should be equally good in all
subjects. (MF, 71)



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Here Anand insists on imbibing wisdom in one's own way through making Dev Dutt his mouthpiece. He has portrayed the issue of qualitative education which is not imparted by the masters. Anand has described the bitter reality that how teachers are after earning money. Master Bishan Singh, enraged with complaint done against him, beat pupils black and blue. As soon as more students from, the class begin to protest against master's beating, he lost his temper. Using his cane he starts beating the students of the class. At this occasion, Kishan Chander feels: "Somehow, I imagined that I could learn everything if there was a romance attached to it, not barren teaching with the cane but with stories lovingly told." (75) Here apprehensive method of teaching has been pointed out by Anand. According to him barren teaching with canes cannot do anything good to the students rather teaching mixed with affection and livelier examples can interest the students.

Another issue portrayed in the novel is prevalent exam system. As Jayapalan observes: "The aim of our education has become only to pass examinations. Mostly, only one examination is held in a year with the result, the students are not able to acquire proper and real knowledge." (Jayapalan, 35)

Futility of examination system has been depicted when Mr. Marsden, Inspector of schools came to the school for inspection. The exam was given for the promotion to the fifth primary class. Here also Mr. Marsden beat and kick the boys like animals. One of the boys, Mohkam Chand was declared fail as he lagged behind and could not take his seat quickly enough. The students are instructed with shout that: "Chup! Don't behave like a Punjabi bullock! Be like the boys of English schools! (MF, 110) While examining the students, their caliber and knowledge are not taken in consideration but the manners are judged as primary one. While taking the test of maths, boys were allowed to peep in to each other's note book: The sum was quite easy, and, more over the boys whispered the solution to each other, the supervisor's convincing on this malpractice, because their own increment of pay depended on all the students passing. (MF, 111)

With such malpractices whatever the result may be becomes meaningless as weak students can't be recognized and without basic knowledge of the subject, moves to the higher class. While giving the test of reading in English with intention to examine pronunciation, only those students who were good at reading were selected. Only Kishan Chander and Gyan Chand were selected for the recitation of the poem. Mulraj Anand reflects on the education system in India:



What is the education.... we do want for our children?

The answer is that we want the kind of education which releases their potential creative energies, which does not impose anything on them that they do not want but which liberates them instead, which demands little from them but gives them much... such an education does not consist of adult moralizing and the exercise of an authority which is mostly the rationalization of our self co placement belief in our own importance and from the point of view of which we think children good or bad as long as they fulfill our adult standards of respectable behavior. Suppression and repression and cane driven sense are not education at all. (Anand, 122)

Even at Ludhiana, same education system is prevalent. Anand is very much against those teachers who cannot maintain dignity of the profession. At Ludhiana, Krishan and Ganesh were harassed by Master Budh Singh who often demands various gifts as a bribe from the students:

Now, I am saying to all of you, remember, tomorrow you are to bring any gifts you can. From you, and your greedy father, Batalia, I expected nothing very much, but from little "Choochia": and Ganesh his elder brother, the jailor, I expect a pair of jail blankets which I need



badly.... And you Naeemand your brother, Aslam,
are the sons of a doctor, so get me some quinine and
tincture iodine if you cannot supply me a whole medicine chest.
And Jani, you must bring me some otto of roses from your
sister's box. (MF, 211)

Master Budh Singh, like previous masters, to gain advantages from students, beats them as much as possible. Master Budh Singh is a C.I.D. man of Britishers so no one could take any step against him and he could be violent without any limit. He has been described as "a monster" and "a tyrant." In the class"... he could not see who was whispering, the demon ran round with a maddened fury, and struck out, right and left, the boys crumpling and falling or weeping in anticipation of the blow... he threw him on the floor with such violence that Naeem's forehead struck the leg of the master's table and blood began to flow." (MF, 215) such merciless violence cannot be the medium to impart knowledge or to teach discipline. In the name of education students are either targeted for sadism or exploited for personal selfish means:

The teachers in Anand's novels are terrorizing tyrants
who take a sadistic delight in punishing the pupils.
By their 'cautionary don'ts and ruthless behavior they
either twist the child's innate genius out of shape or
smother the child's gifts and talents, where as actually
they are expected to nourish and nurture them. (MF, 92)

Another shocking issue reverted by Anand is that some of the masters are even involved in sexual abuse of small boys which is most sinful thing across the whole world. As it is noted by Ambuj Kumar Sharma:

Worst of all, the school masters indulge in
sodomy with their pupils. They compel the



children to come to their houses and

indulge in such immoral activities. (Sharma, 55)

Krishan Sen was invited at home by master Budh Singh with an excuse of learning missed lessons. But his intention was to exploit Krishan to gratify his lust. At his home Krishan could not understand reason behind his modesty. He tells Krishan to sit nearby and:

... as I advanced, he took me between his legs...

'can't you feel', he said, his breath blowing like

the hot breeze of summer on my neck... he

pushed me down in his lap... I was not so

frightened now as I was disgusted. I wished

I had never come here. But I also knew that

if I hadn't, I would have got the cane the next day. (MF, 275)

Aslam, one of the boy from the school has been victim of such sexual exploitation by Master Budh Singh. As soon as all students start gossiping about his character and misdeeds, Budh Singh canes students and threatens them. For Krishan, being hyper-sensitive amongst all, was affected most and he keeps thinking of killing himself. In contrary to this, educational atmosphere of Jehlum was quite positive and that helps to the growth of Krishan's inner self. At Amritsar and Ludhiana life of Krishna becomes dreadful and full of struggle. Till clearing exam he spends most of his time in thinking about horrible punishment he could achieve. Anand has revealed two major issues relevant to education first is school corporal punishment and sexual abuse done by the teachers. The whole portrayal of our education system is depressive and meaningless.

Krishan is such a boy that cannot be fit into traditional ideologies. He has his own ideologies and the education system in which he is indulged is destroying his inner personality. The corporal punishments given by the teachers, bribe taking and molesting teachers could not appeal his hungry spirit.



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