

# Treatment of Injustice and Violence as depicted in Coolie by Mulk Raj Anand

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*Abstract— The paper deals with the depiction of injustice and violence in society through the protagonist Munoo created by Mulk Raj Anand in his very famous novel Coolie. Mulk Raj Anand was likely the first of the writers to write in English and depict the real troubled lives of the suppressed Indians. The nineteen thirties were a tremulous time for India. India was in the last years of his freedom fight and literary culture was on its high. Novels, Poems, Drama had a higher impact on the masses since it was a means of mass communication. Coolie was such a benchmark at establishing the true nature of the society of the time. Through Munoo Mulk Raj Anand has portrayed the picture of a protagonist who suffered the injustice of the society and died as a barren without any recognition ever.*

*Keywords— Injustice, Violence, Coolie, India, Mulk Raj Anand, Society.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Mulk Raj Anand is a very devoted follower of Mahatma Gandhi and Gandhism. He Believes in teaching and values as preached by Gandhi and tries to portray the same in his writings. He writes to provoke sentiments and to create a change in society. Coolie was written at a very turbulent time in India. The fight for freedom was at an all-time high. Social injustice and violence were at their highest. There were very few writers like Anand who had the gall to write the true nature of the injustice and violence bestrewed in the society. Anand paints and ugly but true picture for the masses and forces them to acknowledge the truth. It is only by acknowledging the truth that the bedrock for change can be laid out.

Violence and injustice is not something we are unaware of. Sometimes it's based on caste, creed, gender, religion, etc but in Coolie, it takes an entirely new prerogative. Coolie is neither a caste or a gender or a religion. It's below all of them. It is someone who is unskilled labor and doesn't know better than to carry the burden of others. A coolie doesn't have a name, neither a personality. It is below any mark of distinction that we provide humankind with. Anand has very efficiently described the injustice done with the protagonist Munoo. Our protagonist Munoo is no older than fourteen but his childhood is already robbed of him.

Munoo is pushed into the web of slavery at such a young age. How is that justice towards any child? Anand has portrayed a brilliant character who is full of life but is

devoid of opportunities that end in a life of suffering and eventual death. While keeping Munoo as the center of the plot Anand gives us an experience of the violence and injustice spread across the nation in the latter years of the British raj.

Munoo lives in the hills of Kangra village in Bilaspur with his Uncle and Aunt who cater to his upbringing but soon he is taken to a nearby town to earn his living. Here he starts his journey towards a life of hardship and violence as a slave at the house of a Bank clerk Babu Nathoo Ram. There he is introduced to the first instances of violence that he has to suffer as a part of his job. Although his aunt was rude to him, Munoo still had a family in her but at Nathoo Ram's house, he was nothing more but a servant. Suddenly he is no more a child but an independent earning individual who is punished for his mistakes with violence.

His experience at Nathoo Ram's house was no less than torture but he learns the true colors of society. He understands the injustice of caste, color, and money. He is introduced to a new spectrum in his life where he saw everyone in their different and true colors. The only Silver lining in his life is Prem Chand who is a doctor and brother of Nathoo Ram. He is the only one who treats Munoo with respect or shows some care towards him. Munoo has had enough when he is beaten badly for accidentally injuring Sheila daughter of Nathoo Ram and he decides to run away. Here ends the first phase of Munoo life which was his introduction to the widespread social injustice in society.

While on run Munoo is taken in by Prabha who is a small pickle factory owner. Prabha and his Wife are empathetic towards Munoo but his hardships don't end here. He works in his factory dungeons from dawn to midnight. He rarely sees the day of light and works as full-fledged labor for him. Prabha is a victim of class injustice. He works hard but has to appease his neighbor Public Prosecutor Sir Todar Mal with pickles and jams from his factory free of cost so that he doesn't complain about the smoke produced from his factory. The ultimate victim is Munoo since he has to work harder to compensate for all these free goods. Where in Nathoo Ram was an Anglophile, Sir Todar Mal is a status chauvinist. Prabha has to bear with Sir Todar Mal's injustice because he is lower in status and caste. Eventually, the factory ends up getting shut down and Munoo was once again on streets. Here ends the second phase of his life which introduces Munoo to hard physical labor and the injustice of the caste system.

Munoo meets an elephant rider who is going to Bombay with a circus crew. Munoo tags along and when he reaches Bombay, He is in awe of it but soon realizes the true sentiments of the city. Bombay is where munoo meets his identity as a coolie. He realizes himself to be a labor who is below caste and status. Here he meets the true injustice towards humankind i.e. to bereft them of identity. Munoo is nothing but a coolie. He is devoid of a name or a stature. This phase does not last long since the riots break out and he is lost on the streets. Munoo gets hit by a car that is owned by Mrs. Mainwarring who leads him to the fourth and last phase of Munoo's life.

Mrs. Mainwarring is a victim as well as a victimizer of social injustice. She forces her superiority on Munoo and when is subjected to the same by society, behaves as a victim. Munoo is bought to Shimla by Mrs. Mainwarring and provided a job as a multitasker servant. He is treated well by Mrs. Mainwarring but never accepted as an individual. She would sexually abuse him and then present him to hard manual labor to show her superiority over him. Munoo contracted tuberculosis while in Shimla and eventually died of it at the naïve age of sixteen.

Munoo has seen much of social injustice and violence in two years than what people have contracted in a lifetime. Coolie is a devastating account of the injustice and exploitation faced, not just by Munoo, but by thousands like him.

## II. CONCLUSION

Munoo has lived a life of poverty, misery, and contempt. When in his village he was a child with dreams and ambitions but his introduction to town came as a slave

with lead his life and his ambitions to ruins. At the beginning with his encounter with Prem Chand Munoo still though becoming a Doctor but by the time he left Nathoo Ram's house, all Munoo could think of was surviving. The social injustice that Munoo was subjected too changed his perspective from having a life to surviving life. Though Prabha cared for him, he pushed him in endless labor in factory dungeon. Munoo experienced violence even in empathy. In Bombay, he idolized Rajat which ended in riots only and munoo becoming its victim again. Munoo could have a bright future if only he was provided with an opportunity and some care but Munoo died wanting to survive only because of the injustice and violence of society towards him.

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