

The resemblance between Anand's '*Untouchable*' and Dickens' '*Oliver Twist*'

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Abstract

The remarkable English novelist of the Victorian era, Charles Dickens, tries to get his readers' attention by making poverty a prominent issue in some of his books. A prominent Indian author writing in English, Mulk Raj Anand is known for his novels that focus on the lower castes of traditional Indian culture. This essay intends to draw parallels between the poor and oppressed characters in Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* and Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*. Charles Dickens used the serious issue of poverty in late 19th-century English society as the basis for several of his books, including *Oliver Twist*. (1839). Poverty and extreme riches coexist in this novel about Victorian England. In his first book, *Untouchable*, Mulk Raj Anand details the systematic oppression, injustice, and exploitation of India's untouchable caste. This book spans the years 1930–1940, a time of extreme deprivation and inhumane mass exploitation. Similar themes of poverty, hardship, and depravity permeate the books by both authors. Economically, the outcasts are also abused by the majority of society. The exploitation of man, especially of the impoverished and the illiterate, is considered immoral and forbidden by both authors. They both show how the wealthy and the impoverished life.

Keywords: Poverty, Untouchability, Exploitation, Oppression, Deprivation.

Introduction:

Charles Dickens, a remarkable Victorian author, explores poverty in a number of his books. He was able to accurately portray the working class during the Industrial Revolution, which earned him a lot of respect. He successfully uses fiction to critique the economic, social, and moral abuses of the Victorian era as a social commentator. He is not the only author to portray the impoverishment of England's lower classes, but his novels are more effective than those of his contemporaries at highlighting the problems associated with industrialization, such as poverty. Poverty becomes a major social and economic issue in late-19th-century English culture. In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens portrays the subjugation of the poor and the oppressive character of Victorian-era England.

Dickens was not only the first great urban novelist in England, but he was also one of the most influential social commentators of the Victorian period. Dickens was born in 1812 and died in 1870. Dickens effectively criticizes the economic, social, and moral abuses that were prominent during the period by using fiction as his medium. Dickens was a compassionate and empathetic individual who worried about the less fortunate and weaker members of English society. He wrote many of his works with this concern. As a direct consequence of this, he was an essential contributor to the formulation of several significant societal advances.

Dickens, a firm believer in the power of literature, and the novel in particular, for societal and political change, used his works of fiction to initiate discussions on these topics. His works include *Great Expectations*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *David Copperfield*. Through the socially conscientious stories he wrote, Dickens evolved into an outspoken opponent of exploitative economic and social practices.

Even though Dickens wasn't the first author to write about the plight of the working class in England, he was the most effective in bringing to light issues such as classism, poverty, inadequate sanitation, privilege, meritocracy, and urban life in modern industrial society. Dickens' works include *A Christmas Carol*, *Great Expectations*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Dickens, along with a large number of other authors who worked during the nineteenth century, mined the novel for societal commentary.

Mulk Raj Anand, who cares deeply about social justice, has written extensively. He's published over a dozen novels and roughly seventy short tales. He zeroed in on how the exploitation of India's lower-class citizens had led to widespread misery and destitution for the impoverished. Poverty, social hunger, and exploitation are recurring topics in his work. Charles Dickens is regarded as one of the finest novelists ever written in English. He focused on realism in his writing. He chronicled the plight of the impoverished and the injustices of society.

Charles Dickens continues to concentrate on and try to get his readers to pay attention to the issue of poverty. In the late 19th century, poverty became a major social and fiscal issue in England. Both authors dealt with issues of societal exploitation and oppression of the poor, so their works are compared here. Many have compared Mulk Raj Anand to Charles Dickens of India. Unlike Dickens' previous works, *Oliver Twist* (1837–1839) contains social commentary akin to that found in his later *Condition-of-England* novels. While Dickens examines many societal issues in *Oliver Twist*, the abuses of the new Poor Law System, the criminal underworld in London, and the victimization of children stand out as the most prominent. In the first few chapters of *Oliver Twist*, the author presents his criticism of the Poor Law of 1834 and the workhouse system. Dickens provides the most scathing indictment of the Victorian workhouse, which was governed by a system of enforced starvation, beatings, shame, and duplicity. Instead of leaving with that

horrible man, Oliver got down on his knees and begged that he would be ordered back to the dark room, where he could be starved, beaten, or even killed.

In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens paints a macabre picture of the upbringing of many Victorian children. A solitary serving of gruel is all the orphans get for dinner. A child named Oliver is severely punished for having the nerve to beg for more gruel.

It was nighttime, and the guys settled in. A lengthy grace was said over the short commons as the master, dressed as a cook, took his place at the copper and his pauper helpers took their places behind him. Oliver's neighbors nudged him as the gruel vanished and the lads winked and whispered to one another. As a young child, he was starving and miserable to the point of recklessness. He got up from the table and went up to the master with a basin and utensil, saying, "Please, sir, I want some more." He was a little taken aback by his audacity. The Victorians were deeply moved by this scene, which has become "the most familiar incident in any English novel." The Victorian concept of charity for the "deserving poor" was challenged by Dickens. He made a compelling case that the workhouse was an unsuccessful response to the issue of infant abandonment and poverty. The book *Untouchable* is Anand's passionate defense of the helpless and powerless against centuries of discrimination. Even Anand notices A great writer brings attention to the plight of society's ignorant, lonely, and disenfranchised members. One of the author's primary worries is exposing the snobbery, hypocrisy, ostentation, and fabrication of the aristocracy, which they do not hesitate to use to their advantage. A writer, the monarch of the pen, speaks for the voiceless millions, especially those who have been victimized by unjust authority and oppression since the beginning of recorded history. And that's why Mulk Raj Anand gave that dreadful account of the homeless.

Many parallels between Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* and Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* can be found in this essay. In *Oliver Twist*, Charles Dickens depicts Victorian-era English society, which is full of extremes, from extreme poverty to ostentatious wealth, and from spiritual riches to material desperation. Dickens raises the issue of whether or not poverty is a sin that causes people to fall further and further down the social ladder, or whether or not it is simply a person's poor material portion.

The years 1930–1940 are depicted in Mulk Raj Anand's book *Untouchable*, a time when poverty slavers and the inhuman exploitation of the masses were at their worst in sin. The protagonists and antagonists of *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand are all members of the lower classes. This novel depicts poverty and enslavement, as well as the tyranny of the wealthy over the poor, as well as hunger and destitution. Thus, both authors addressed issues of destitution, malnutrition, societal standing, and human excrement in their respective works of fiction.

In his writings, Charles Dickens exposes the oppressive character of 19th-century society, particularly its treatment of the poor. While Mulk Raj Anand portrayed the

subjugation of the impoverished by modern society. *Oliver Twist* and *Untouchable* both vividly depict the plight of the working class in contrast to the opulence of the upper and middle classes and the nobility. Olive, the heroine of *Oliver Twist*, is an orphan. For many days, *Oliver Twist* and his friends were subjected to the agonies of starvation. Dickens' masterful use of pathos and vivid images in his depiction of *Oliver* serves to heighten the dramatic stakes of *Oliver's* predicament. The starvation of the impoverished in the workhouses mirrored the famine that the paupers outside the workhouses experienced.

The main character of *Impenetrable* is Bakha. When it comes to depicting the stigma of this evil and how it separates a man from his society, Anand is the first Indian writer to do so. His protagonists come from oppressed social classes in his books. The characters are realistic portrayals of everyday people who are oblivious to the social circumstances in which they live. Bakha begs and screams for sustenance. He had been starving all day until the lady came out and threw a chapatti at him. In his book, "*Untouchable*," M.K. Nak says, "Irony is the weapon of this indictment against Hindu society."

From the moment of his birth, until he enters the workhouse and meets ten rotund men, including one with an especially round, red face, *Oliver Twist* was subjected to a barrage of insults. Contrast the well-fed adults with the malnourished kids at the poor houses, as seen in the scene where the older kids coerced *Oliver* into asking for more food. Small amounts of oatmeal, three meals of thin gravel a day, and half a roll on Sundays are all that the immature are said to have eaten throughout the book. Bakha, a latrine cleaner and sweeper boy, begins his day greeted by the abuses of his latrines with a brush and a bucket, much as *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand also portrays the related circumstances. After he has cleaned the streets and the bathrooms in the home, he will go to an adjacent alley and beg for food. Bakha informs his dad when he gets home. They consider us to be nothing more than soil because we remove their filth. Weary from his busy schedule, he lays down on the wooden platform in front of a home and begins shouting for food, but no one answers. A sadhu summons the lady, and she emerges from her home. She yells at Bakha, accusing him of making her home unclean. To earn some bread, she has him scrub the sink pipe. A woman from the next-door home offers him a chapatti in the meantime. "I wanted to create the folk, the lumens, and the suppressed, oppressed, repressed, those who have seldom appeared in our literature," Mulk raj Anand writes in his essay "*The Source of Protest in my Novels*."

In *Oliver's twist*, the poor were oppressed; those who did not reside in the workhouse were compelled to work, and charity was no longer an option. Authorities in the Victorian era mistook the paupers' lack of desire to work for laziness, failing to realize that their lack of resources meant that the paupers could only find low-paying work like sweeping streets or fixing potholes. The poor laws, which were passed to combat poverty, ultimately did not affect the lives of the impoverished. Physical and psychological violence

was used as a tool in the exploitation of the impoverished. The child's ungrateful mother yells at him for dirtying her home. Poor, hungry, and low- class, he was mistreated by his superiors who threw bread slices at him for his labor, just as they do with animals. Oh! And now look what you've done, you slave-muncher! You have desecrated the homes and injured my son; now give me my kid.[6] There were several incidents in one day that occurred to Bakha during the time of Mulk Raj's untouchable in India, which lasted from the 1930s until the 1960s. A strike from on high is delivered to him. Because the Brahmin desecrated him with his contact, he finally realized who he was. A further incident at a further moment of shame on the temple stairs inflames his spirit. When he once prevented an accident involving a kid.

The character of Sohini Bakha, Sohra's sister, is particularly effective at elaborating the film's themes of abuse. She is a perfect example of both caste and sexual abuse. It's only normal for Gulabo, a washerwoman, to look down on shine, a member of the low caste among the outcastes. Due to her low social status and lack of resources, she is targeted for sexual abuse.

The childhood events that shaped Mulk Raj's portrayal of Amma in "Untouchable" are his own. Bakha is based on one of Anand's childhood companion, whom Anand looked up to and who was ridiculed by his own mother for working as a sweeper boy. Anand's family humiliated and insulted a young cleaning boy, and the incident left a lasting impression on him. In his first book, *Untouchable*, he used the protagonist Bakha to speak out against the exploitation of a sweeper boy.

Dickens examines many societal issues in *Oliver Twist*, the abuses of the new Poor Law system, the criminal underworld in London, and the victimization of children stand out as the most prominent. Dickens provides the most scathing indictment of the Victorian workhouse, which was governed by a system of enforced starvation, beatings, shame, and duplicity. While Mulk Raj does explore social themes in *Untouchable*, he focuses on the plight of the impoverished as a result of the exploitation of the lowest social strata in India. He frequently writes about social issues such as religious hypocrisy, the feudal system, the East-West encounter, the status of women, folk beliefs, extreme poverty, starvation, and exploitation.

Bakha in *Untouchable* is mistreated for no reason. When the high-caste Brahmin slaps him for defiling him with his contact, he realizes who he really is. Not long after, he endures another moment of shame on the temple stairs, further fuelling the fire of rage within him. However, after witnessing the cleric molest his sister, he reacted violently. However, his inalienable status as a serf makes it difficult for him to act on impulses of revolt. Both Oliver in "*Oliver Twist*" and Bakha in "*Untouchability*" eventually rebel against their leaders' treatment of them. He's a victim and an upstart all at once. The inflexible caste structure has him as its scapegoat. He acts defiant because of the injustices he has suffered. He is considering violence because of the constant barrage of insults and

vehicles. He feels like a caged animal at those times. But he's a tiger in a cage, safely incarcerated by the conventions his superiors have built up to protect themselves from the fury of those whom they exploit, as Saros Cowasjee puts it so aptly in her book *So Many Freedoms*.

Conclusion:

Many aspects of poverty and oppression are shared in the books *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens and *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand, as shown in this comparison. Both authors used poverty, hunger, societal standing, and human exploitation as central themes in their works. Both authors, in their books, center on the plight of the poor and the pain they endure. *Oliver Twist* and *Untouchable* both do a good job of depicting the plight of the lower classes in contrast to the opulence of the upper and middle classes and the nobility. Both *Oliver Twist* and *Bakha* in *Untouchable* rebel against their leaders' treatment of them. Although each country has its unique customs and history, poverty is universal. *Oliver Twist* and *Bakha*, the novel's protagonists, both endure hardships brought on by poverty and tyranny. Both authors believe that exploiting people, especially the impoverished and the uneducated, is wrong.

They both show how the wealthy and the impoverished life.

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