

# Bakha's Identity as an Anglophilic Assimilado in the Context of a Colonized India: A Postcolonial Reading of Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*

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## Abstract

This study aimed to illustrate how Bakha's Subalternity is intricately woven with the establishment of his identity as an *assimilado* as well as Anglophilic in the context of a colonized India, and also exhibit how this Anglophilia and assimilation of Bakha have been illustrated by Mulk Raj Anand within his literary production titled *Untouchable* by conducting a postcolonial investigation of the selected text. It followed the unstructured mode of inquiry that is the Qualitative approach of research. The style used to design this paper is exploratory and descriptive. The findings of the paper revealed the way Bakha gets succumbed into the spiral of the culture and tradition of the British imperialists and starts to identify himself as an Anglophilic *assimilado* as a result of his failure to realize the oppressive, autocratic, and dominating natures of the British authoritative figures and the effects of colonization in India due to his subaltern status within the society, which is the outcome of the Repressive Ideology practiced by the Indian Hindu community promoting class discriminations and caste-conflicts. The study further revealed how Bakha's Anglophilia and assimilation have found their outlets within the selected text through the employment of numerous significant postcolonial terms and concepts including 'mimicry', 'mimic men', and the psychopathological concept associated with colonialism that reveals the psychological effects of colonialism, which results in psychological inadequacy that eventually causes Anglophilia and makes a colonized person an *assimilado*. Lastly, this particular paper is helpful for academicians willing to gather more knowledge about the postcolonial notions like subalternity, Anglophilia, and assimilation and study how they are related to one another.

**Keywords:** Subalternity, Assimilado, Anglophilia, Repressive Ideology, Mimicry, Psychological Inadequacy

## Introduction

One of the fundamental attributes of most postcolonial texts is that these literary productions tend to deal with issues like Anglophilia, assimilation and numerous other aspects associated with the subject matter of colonization besides incorporating the major facets including the atrocities conducted by the colonizers and the subsequent mistreatment and oppression of the colonized. Anglophilia can be defined as an attitude of deep reverence, extreme admiration or partiality towards England and their English ways. On the other hand, Assimilation in postcolonial terms can be defined as the process of taking in or embracing the British culture, customs, principles, values, language, religion, and lifestyle by a colonized native. The aspects associated with Anglophilia and assimilation have been so commonly

explored by the postcolonial authors so many times that these factors have now transformed into major pillars of postcolonial literary works along with the other aforementioned crucial facets. One such postcolonial text is *Untouchable*, postcolonial-subcontinental author Mulk Raj Anand's finest and most controversial novel published in the year 1935 during the colonial era of the British Raj in the Indian subcontinent. Although Anand's primary focus was to illustrate through his penmanship a realistic scenario of class discrimination and class struggle within the traditional Indian Hindu community: how devastating the fate of a person is if he or she unfortunately belongs to the lower caste Indian Hindu community by portraying a vivid picture of the cruelty and oppression a member of the outcaste Hindu society has to endure each day, Anand also eloquently explored and exhibited the aspects of Anglophilia and Assimilation in the context of a colonized India by intricately associating such subject matters with that of class struggle. Anand, through his literary production, intended to create a factual connection between two most significant facets of the selected postcolonial text: Subalternity demonstrated within the novel due to Class Struggle, and Anglophilia, and associated with this issue of Anglophilia is related yet another important aspect within the text, that is assimilation. The protagonist of Anand's *Untouchable* is called Bakha, who is an assimilado in the context of the colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent. The term 'Assimilado' indicates a colonial policy that consciously determined to make the colonized subject assimilate into the European culture [6]. The assimilado was one who had adopted the religion of the European colonizers, that is, Christianity, the language of the imperialists, as well as their culture [6]. He or she was then deemed to be a role model for other colonized people to emulate [6]. Bakha is a member of the Untouchable community within the Indian Hindu society, an outcaste, who further belongs to the lowest class in the class hierarchy practiced and followed in the society. Due to his profession as a sweeper, precisely as someone who cleans latrines, he is even oppressed by the people of his very own caste, by his fellow untouchables. Bakha is the victim of class struggle not only because of the caste he is member of, but also due to the profession he is bound to remain committed to all his life to due to cyclical oppression. Anand immaculately penned down a character who is doubly oppressed by the people who inherently consider themselves as superior in the society and also by those who are supposed to be his equal, the people belonging to the same caste as him. Anand's protagonist is so deprived, violated and oppressed that he is unable to comprehend the atrocities conducted upon the people of India by the British Imperialists. Due to his position in the Indian society as a Subaltern, Bakha is unable to point out the flaws of the British Raj and their misuse of power because he does not possess the luxury to think about such political issues as he has to fight each and every day for his survival: to ensure he and his Untouchable family has mere water to drink and food to eat. For him, the British Imperialists are superior because they have treated him like a human unlike the superstitious people of his very own community, the natives, who are supposed to be the one to treat him and his kind right. Anand, by means of his beautiful penmanship, has perfectly portrayed how Bakha's Anglophilia and his consequent attempt at assimilation is the direct outcome of his maltreatment by his own countrymen, how his affinity and infatuation towards British culture and customs is the result of his Subaltern position and the oppression he has to endure on a regular basis, inflicted upon him by the none other than the natives. In this way, Anand has attempted and successfully demonstrated how Bakha's identity as an assimilado is intricately associated with the way he is treated in the traditional Hindu community as an Untouchable, as a mere outcaste.

## Research Context

The idea of caste system has its origin in ancient myths of Hinduism. For example, in 'Rig Veda', caste is associated with the 'Myth of Purusa', the primal celestial man out of whom the universe was created. The demarcation of the whole human race into four different castes is associated with the sacrificial diagnosis of this cosmic creature. Regarding this, Wendy O' Flaherty (n.d.) says, "When (the gods) divided the Man... His mouth was the *Brahmin*..... His arms were made into *Kshatriyas*, his two thighs were the *Vaiśyas*, and from his feet the *Sudras* were born". The idea of caste identification in primitive India came from the diversified occupation of the inhabitants. In K.M. Sen's (n.d.) words, "The occupational divisions with which castes were associated give us a better view of the role of castes in the working of society". Caste system is considered a way of understanding Hinduism and India by the European Orientalists. Hence, Britain found a perfect propaganda in caste system to establish colonization in India and these issues associated with caste-conflicts and colonialism can be found within Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*.

Bakha is an eighteen-year-old untouchable, a member of the lower-caste Hindu society, an outcaste belonging to the Dalit community during the period of British colonization in India. By profession he is a sweeper boy, precisely someone who cleans latrines, and thus considered as belonging to the lowest caste even among the outcastes of the Indian Hindu society. Bakha had begun to work at the latrines since he was a six-year-old child and resigned himself to the "hereditary life of the craft" [1]. Bakha is a doubly oppressed subaltern within the society who is constantly dehumanized by his own countrymen on a regular basis at every facet of his daily life. He is stuck within the vicious cycle of oppression and torture and bound to serve as a sweeper for the rest of his life due to being the victim of cyclical oppression. Bakha, due to his subaltern position, is unable to escape from his profession as a sweeper boy that he has inherited from his ancestors and is compelled to continue with his job being stuck within this cyclical oppression. Bakha is exposed to the culture and customs of the European colonizers as a result of his job "in the barracks of a British regiment for some years on a sort of a probation with a remote uncle" where he gets "caught by the glamour of the 'white man's' life"[1]. In Anand's words, "Bakha had looked at the Toomies, stared at them with wonder and amazement when he first went to live at the British regimental barracks with his uncle", which reveals his first symptoms of Anglophilia [1]. The British soldiers refrained from dehumanizing him unlike his fellow countrymen, that is, at being merely treated as a human being and not like a stray animal, Bakha develops a feeling of deep infatuation and affinity for the culture and ways of living of the British colonizers. Bakha's journey as an Anglophilic *assimilado* starts with this exposition to British norms and traditions, which opens a scope to conduct a postcolonial investigation in order to evaluate how Bakha's subalternity is intricately connected to the formation of his identity as an Anglophilic *assimilado* and portray how his Anglophilia and assimilation have been demonstrated within the selected text by Mulk Raj Anand.

## Research Statement

This particular paper titled "Bakha's Identity as an Anglophilic *Assimilado* in the Context of a Colonized India: A Postcolonial Reading of Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*" attempts a postcolonial close reading of Anand's novel titled *Untouchable* in order to illustrate how the Subaltern position of the protagonist of the novel, namely Bakha, is intricately connected with his affinity and infatuation towards British culture and customs, that is his Anglophilia and tendency to assimilate. Bakha, as a member of the outcaste

Hindu community, is often dehumanized by the Indian upper-caste Hindus as well as the lower-caste Hindus due to the presence of inter-caste and intra-caste conflicts within the society. These aforementioned conflicts are caused due to the class struggle between the upper and the lower caste Hindus as well as the conflict between Hindus belonging to the same caste respectively, specifically lower caste in the context of this particular novel. This type of intra-caste conflict is caused due to discriminative attitudes of the society towards people of certain professions, and in this case, it is due to Bakha's profession as a sweeper in the society. Due to his sweeping profession, Bakha belongs to the lowest position among the lower castes in the class hierarchy of the society. Moreover, because of the inherent class discrimination and struggle that are at the root of traditional concept of Hinduism, Bakha as an Untouchable is deprived of his basic rights as a human being, including food, education etc. He is compelled to carry the burden of Untouchability no matter what and perform his responsibilities with an attitude of extreme servility. As he is mistreated by the people of his own country and is forced to struggle each and every day for the purpose of mere survival, Bakha's identity becomes equivalent to that of a slave, a dehumanized version of a human, a doubly oppressed Subaltern. Due to his identity as a Subaltern, Bakha fails to recognize the oppression inflicted upon the natives by the British colonizers, and the mere fact that the British Imperialists did not dehumanize him make him infatuated towards everything English. The British people within the novel do not oppress Bakha the way he is oppressed by the natives, and this fact of not being treated as something non-human makes him think that the English people treat him the right way, as a result of which they are superior. The British customs made Bakha see the culture and traditions of his own religion in a completely new light and he becomes infatuated with their norms and religion because their culture does not tend to discriminate and oppress anyone based upon their caste and class. At least from the perspective of an outsider, the English custom and religion attempt to preach the message of equality and Bakha as a result of his Subaltern position, fails to recognize the hidden colonial agenda of the Imperialists veiled under the innocent task of preaching the ideologies of Christianity. Therefore, tempted by the lack of class Struggle and at the prospect of being treated as a human, Bakha falls for the English custom and culture, still considering himself as an inferior and regarding the colonizers as the superior, an authoritative figure that might help him escape from the vicious cycle of cyclical oppression. Thus, he tries his level best to become like an English by mimicking their way of dressing, their way of ablutions, their way of drinking, and smoking etc., that is, their lifestyle. In this way, Anand's Bakha attempts to assimilate and eventually becomes able to assert his identity as an *assimilado* in the context of the colonized India.

### Research Questions

This particular paper attempted to achieve its goals by answering the following specific research questions:

1. How Bakha's position as a Subaltern within the colonized Indian society plays a role in the formation of his identity as an Anglophilic *assimilado*?
2. How Bakha's Anglophilia and assimilation have found their outlets within the selected text?

### Research Objectives

The general objective of this particular paper is to demonstrate how Bakha's Subalternity is intricately woven with the establishment of his identity as an *assimilado* as well as Anglophilic in the context of a colonized India, and also exhibit how this Anglophilia and assimilation of Bakha have been illustrated by Mulk Raj Anand within his literary production.

In order to achieve the aforementioned general objective by the end of the paper, there are certain objectives that must be fulfilled. These specific objectives are:

1. To portray how protagonist Bakha's Subalternity influences the establishment of his identity as an *assimilado* and Anglophilic within Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*.
2. To represent the ways in which Bakha's assimilation and Anglophilic tendencies have been illustrated within the selected text.

## Literature Review

*Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand is considered one of the most famous as well as significant literary pieces ever written by the postcolonial-subcontinental author, therefore naturally this particular literary masterpiece is extremely well-read, widely appreciated as well as critically analyzed by several accomplished critics and scholars all around the world including E.M. Forster, the writer of the infamous novel titled *A Passage to India*. Since the very first-time critics and scholars have gotten their hands on this literary treasure, it has been thoroughly enjoyed and debated by its critics and readers crossing all national and linguistic boundaries.

In an excellent article, Nisar Dar (2018) has discussed thoroughly how Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* demonstrates the voice of the subalterns of the then colonized India who were the victims of both British colonization and existing class discrimination within the Indian Hindu community [3]. According to Dar, subalternity is one of the most debated issues in the Indian Subcontinent, "particularly in the Union of India, not only for its religious and economical code but also for its oppression to overcome the subalterns as well as the lower caste people in both ancient and modern Indian society" [3]. He further asserts, "The novel *Untouchable* presents a remarkable opening for the Indian English writer to investigate new world of subalterns" [3]. In another amazing article written by Dr. SANDEEP KUMAR SHARMA (2017), Anand's immaculate exhibition of a true picture of the Indian society has been explored thoroughly [9]. According to SHARMA, Anand's *Untouchable* presents a true and crystal-clear picture of Pre Independence-Indian society where the condition of the untouchable and the subalterns was very pathetic because of their marginalized status" [9]. Further stretching the aforementioned subject matter, RATHIKA.E (2017) proceeded to elucidate the issues related to gender, subalternity, and silence associated with women's experience within the selected text [8]. Furthermore, D.M. Bawane (2020) within an article has beautifully analyzed "how the term subaltern is applicable in Indian context and how the selected novel expresses the voices of subaltern" [2]. C. Velusamy (2019) conducted an eloquent study by exploring the theme of social injustice within Anand's *Untouchable* [12]. Naveen (2017) intricately examined the plight of the untouchables as portrayed by Mulk Raj Anand within the selected text [4]. In a beautifully written paper by Gopika Unni P (2020), attention has been provided towards the issues of manual scavenging and untouchability within the novel in concern [7]. Dr. Kanak Lata Tiwari (2015) wrote a paper on Anand's *Untouchable* portraying how the novel is that of a social protest [11].

## Research Gap

From the previous section, it is quite evident that there is no previous works related to the selected text that focus solely on the representation of the protagonist Bakha's identity as an Anglophilic *assimilado* and attempts to establish a factual connection between his subaltern position as an untouchable outcaste in the Indian Hindu society with his Anglophilia and tendency to assimilate. That is to say, none of the works are based upon a postcolonial investigation regarding formation of a connection between Bakha's subalternity, assimilation, and Anglophilia within the selected text. This research will develop a framework that would better explain the aforementioned unexplored intricately connected issues that are worth investigating within the selected postcolonial text.

## Research Methodology

The research itself is qualitative in nature. The typology of the research is exploratory. This particular study draws non-numerical data from the contents by means of gathering an in-depth understanding of the contents through extensive reading. The data collection tool of this paper is textual analysis and the data analyzing tool is content analysis. The primary and secondary sources of data have been reviewed for drawing inferences and conclusions. The sample of this research is Mulk Raj Anand's finest and most controversial novel, namely *Untouchable*. In order to select the sample, purposive sampling procedure has been implemented. Since the data are qualitative, the data collected from the sample have been measured and analyzed by means of logical description. The investigation of the source has been done by theories related to the context. After conducting an extensive and thorough close reading of the selected text, theories related and relevant to the text have been used for analogy.

## Theoretical Framework

One of the most significant concepts the employment of which would help to evaluate protagonist Bakha's position as a subaltern within the traditional Indian Hindu society is the Marxist concept of Repressive Ideology or Undesirable Ideology. In Marxism, an ideology is a belief system, and all belief systems are products of cultural conditioning. However, not all ideologies are equally productive or desirable and these very Undesirable Ideologies promote repressive political agendas. Furthermore, in order to ensure the acceptance of these Repressive Ideologies among the citizenry, these ideologies are passed off as natural ways of seeing the world instead of acknowledging those as mere ideologies. By posing as natural ways of seeing the world, Repressive Ideologies prevent us from understanding the material and historical conditions in which we live. One such Repressive Ideology prominent within Anand's *Untouchable* is the concept of class discrimination or class struggle that promotes a problematic belief system within the Indian Hindu society. Class discrimination or class struggle is one of the most significant themes that perpetuates throughout the entirety of Anand's *Untouchable*. This class discrimination is fundamentally the result of the prevailing caste system in the traditional Hindu society that Anand has illustrated realistically with profound details within his literary production. This class hierarchy is also created based upon various professions, going beyond the prevailing Hindu caste system, creating a division among people depending upon the particular category of profession they belong to. Class discrimination, be it the result of the traditional Hindu caste system or the outcome of

the categorizations created among the holders of numerous different professions, creates conflict in the status quo of the society. Within Anand's *Untouchable*, two types of conflicts can be found as a result of the two different ways in which class discrimination or class struggle is created within the society, namely: Inter-caste conflict and Intra-caste conflict. Inter-caste conflict arises when the class struggle takes place between people belonging to two different classes or castes, for instance, the conflict between the upper-caste Hindu society and the lower-caste Hindu society. On the other hand, Intra-caste conflict is the result of the conflict that occurs between people belonging to similar class or caste, for instance, the conflict between two people can be labelled as Intra-caste if both of them belong to the lower-caste Hindu society. Within Anand's *Untouchable*, the intra-class conflict is mostly the outcome of the class hierarchy created within the lower-caste Hindu society due to their discriminative attitudes towards people of certain professions, for example, lower-caste people assigned with the task of sweeping.

Subalternity is one of the fundamental concepts of Anand's literary creation in order to explain Bakha's identity as an *assimilado* and his Anglophilic tendencies. The concept of subalternity as propounded by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak will help to explain Bakha's indifference and lack of knowledge regarding the atrocities conducted by the British Empire in colonized India and his growing affinity towards the culture and customs of the British imperialists. Spivak's notion will further help to elucidate Bakha's growing hatred and his distasteful attitude towards the culture and tradition of his own country. It will also help to evaluate the cultural and religious imperialism conducted by the British colonizers in the Indian subcontinent targeting the subalterns who are doubly oppressed, like Bakha. According to Spivak, a reasonable and rarefied definition of the word subaltern is: to be removed from all lines of social mobility [10]. Spivak argues that subalternity cannot be generalized according to the hegemonic logic and that is exactly what makes it subaltern [10]. Subalternity is a position without identity according to Spivak and she reached this conclusion through Marx [10]. Marx talks about class formation in two ways, about how the same group of people are, and are not a class, depending upon whether they have a class consciousness or not [10]. According to Marx, the subalterns cannot represent themselves, they must be represented [10]. In this way, the idea of subalternity became imbricated with the idea of non-recognition of agency [10]. As a result of which they are incapable of asserting their class interest in their own name [10].

In order to elucidate how Bakha's identity as an Anglophilic *assimilado* has been formed within the selected text, employment of postcolonial notions associated with the terms 'Mimicry' and 'Mimic Men' is necessary. The term 'Mimicry' gained currency in critical theory with the work of Homi K. Bhabha [6]. Although, before Bhabha propounded his idea regarding the notion of mimicry, Frantz Fanon had already hinted at this phenomenon when he spoke of the 'white masks' that 'black skins' wore within his 1967 book *Black Skin, White Masks* [6]. The fundamental aim of these ambitious colonized people who attempt at mimicking the colonizers is to speak the language of the colonizers the same way they speak, and lose all the native inflection and accent they inherently possess. Bhabha further elaborated upon this form of colonial subjection and described the reconstruction of natives on the lines of their European masters through an assimilation of European religion, education, literature, and cultural practices [6]. Bhabha further argued that native subjects seeking to be like their white master, Anglicized and Europeanized themselves [6]. Mimicry can be defined as the disciplined imitation of the white man by the native [6]. The native is taught, consistently, that he needs to try and ape the white man and his culture [6]. In this way, a total domination of the colonized by the colonizer takes place through

insidious means [6]. Through their cultural practices and modes such as religion, clothing etc., the white masters convinced the native subjects that they (the natives) would be more civilized if they abandoned their native ways and adopted European ones [6]. The outcome of this mimicry of Western cultural forms and manners by the colonized subjects led to the construction of what is known as ‘Mimic Men’[6]. The tendencies of ‘Mimic Men’ can be perfectly witnessed within the characterization of protagonist, Bakha. In the postcolonial era, writers explored the agonies of these mimic men who fitted neither into Western cultures nor their ‘native’ ones and Mulk Raj Anand is one of them because that is exactly what he has done within his *Untouchable* (104). Such mimic men in postcolonial writing represent the deepest tragedy of the colonized subjects, who were never at home in their own or their masters’ culture [6].

In order to evaluate Bakha’s demonstration of Anglophilia from a psychological perspective, the employment of Frantz Fanon and his significant notions regarding the psychopathology of colonialism is necessary. Fanon has represented his views on the psychological effects of colonialism upon the colonized. Fanon argued that the colonial master’s constant representation of the native as a non-human, animalized ‘thing’ annihilates the identity of the native [5]. When the colonizer paints the native as evil, pagan, and primitive, over a period of time the native beings to accept this prejudiced and racialized view as true, as a result of which, the native also comes to see himself as evil, pagan, and primitive [5]. The native then loses his sense of self and identity as he can only see himself through the eyes of the white man [5]. Fanon argues that for the native the term ‘Man’ itself begins to mean ‘White Man’ because he does not see himself as a ‘Man’ at all [5]. In terms of culture, the native extends this accepted notion to believe that the only values that matter are those of the white man, rejecting his own culture and tradition, thus becoming an Anglophilic, and this very facet is evident within Mulk Raj Anand’s Bakha within his novel titled *Untouchable* [5]. For the native the only way of dealing with this psychological inadequacy is by trying to be as ‘White’ as possible, as a result of which he takes on western values, religion, the language, and practices of the white colonizers and rejects his own traditions [5]. He puts on, in Fanon’s phrase, ‘White Masks’ and Bakha within the selected text can be seen putting on this very mask to deal his psychological inadequacies and also in order to project his Anglophilia [5].

## Discussion

Bakha, the protagonist of Mulk Raj Anand’s novel titled *Untouchable*, lives in the outcaste’s colony due to his identity as an untouchable, that is an outcaste of the traditional Indian Hindu society. There he lives with the other outcastes from Hindu society in an unhygienic area with the lack of a drainage system and filled with filth, dirt, and extremely bad odour: a place not at all healthy and suitable for residential purposes of human beings. The slum particularly created for untouchables like Bakha is also completely separated from the mainstream town area as well as the cantonment and situated outside their boundaries. The colony he resides in is “an ‘uncongenial’ place to live in” in Anand’s own words[1]. Therefore, Bakha’s identity as a Hindu untouchable denies him the opportunity to live a comfortable life in a suitable residential area and compels him to reside in an unhealthy, polluted environment comprising of mud-walled houses and rows of public latrines. Again, the Hindus belonging to the upper castes in the societal hierarchy demean and insult untouchables like Bakha every chance they get due to the repressive ideologies associated with inherited racial and class superiority they firmly believe in that



have been continuing for a prolonged time period of six thousand years, causing inter-caste conflicts between the people of the two castes. “The prejudice of the ‘twice-born’ high-caste Hindu against stink” is what makes them treat Bakha like a slave and helps to identify their own selves as the masters due to their identities as the Brahmins or the Kshatriyas[1]. According to the philosophy, that is the repressive ideology harbored by this upper caste Hindu society that considers themselves as superior to the outcastes, the untouchables themselves are responsible for their inferior position in the society as they failed to be reincarnated as a member of the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas due to their sheer lack of good deeds in their multiple past lives. In this way the upper caste Hindu society justifies the oppression they inflict upon people like Bakha by preaching their repressive belief system associated with caste conflicts as axiom. Bakha, due to “the sub-human status to which he was condemned from birth” accompanied by his “filthy profession” as a sweeper-boy, is socially and economically deprived in the society and is treated as a bottom dog, that is, not considered a proper human being deserving of the human rights enjoyed by the upper-caste Hindus [1]. Bakha and his kind are so oppressed that the upper-class society even denies them access to mere drinking water, which is a necessity for survival. Within the novel, the lower-caste people like Bakha are not “allowed access to the near-by brook” situated beside their very own living area “as their use of it would contaminate the stream” according to the upper-caste Hindu regulations[1]. Due to their status as the destitute of the society, they are also unable to have a well of their own because of sheer lack of money. They are also “not allowed to mount the platform surrounding the” already existing well because “if they ever draw water from it, the Hindus of the three upper castes would consider the water polluted” (14). Having no other way out, the outcastes “had to collect at the foot of the caste Hindus’ well and depend on the bounty of some of their superiors to pour water into their pitchers” (15). In order to further amplify the gravity of the situation and illustrate the extent up to which Bakha and his kind are oppressed in the society for something as miniscule as drinking water, Anand further narrates, “the outcastes had to wait for chance to bring some caste Hindu to the well, for luck to decide that he was kind, for Fate to ordain that he had time”, desperately begging for a pitcher of water by “joining their hands with servile humility” towards every “possible benefactor” [1]. Untouchables like Bakha are so maltreated that they are considered underserving of something as mere as drinking water and the gravity of discrimination runs so deep that it is believed that their mere touch will contaminate the entire waterbody and make it unworthy of the purpose of mitigating the thirsts of the upper-caste Hindu society. Therefore, in order to ensure that the water remains worthy of drinking for the upper-caste Hindus, the outcastes are required to remain thirsty even after doing manual labor the whole day. Untouchables like Bakha are considered undeserving of touching and collecting water from the brook and the well although they are the ones who work hard physically to ensure the upper-caste Hindu society can live an easy, comfortable life. Furthermore, Bakha is deprived of his right to receive institutional education due to his status as an untouchable in the society. Bakha “had wept and cried to be allowed to go to school” but his father, the Jemadar of all the sweepers in the town and the cantonment, had told him that, “schools were meant for babus, not for the lowly sweepers” and the heartbreaking implication lying underneath was that “He was a sweeper’s son and could never be a babu” [1]. In the words of the author, “he (Bakha) realized that there was no school which would admit him because the parents of the other children would not allow their sons to be contaminated by the touch of the low-caste man’s sons” and “the masters wouldn’t teach the outcastes, lest their fingers which guided the students across the text should touch the leaves of the outcastes’ books and they be polluted” [1]. Thus, untouchables like Bakha are so deprived of everything that they are not even permitted to go to school

for the purpose of receiving education and are doomed to a life of illiteracy, which makes them incapable of doing anything else except the hereditary job they have been assigned to do and ensures that they remain stuck in the cycle of cyclical oppression so that class struggles and caste conflict can persist within the society. Bakha, because of his untouchability and his position as an outcaste within the society, often has to pay the price of his untouchability. The untouchables of the society are even deceived by the shopkeepers, who instead of being sympathetic and considerate towards the sweepers and poor people by giving them a certain amount of discount, always deceive them by charging them much higher prices, “as if to compensate themselves for the pollution they courted by dealing with the outcastes” [1]. Therefore, not only they have limited access to the most basic amenities, including water, sanitation, and education, they are also required to pay the price of their untouchability and are unable to raise their voices to protest against the deception committed against them by the shopkeepers, even after realizing that they are being deceived. The untouchables are also unable to buy anything from the market without going through some form of humiliation and experiencing inferiority complex. Due to the judgmental attitude of the society towards them, they often feel ashamed and self-conscious at being seen buying something. For this very reason, they also tend to talk in a low voice when in public, keeping their head low, embracing the actions and body language that demonstrate their position as lowly creatures within the society. They are always expected to wear a curious smile of humility in the presence of high-caste men even if spoken to roughly. Bakha as an untouchable also needs to carry the burden of his untouchability, which includes, announcing his approach in order to make sure that he is not being touched by any Hindu person belonging to the upper-caste society. It is the responsibility of the untouchables to ensure that they are not accidentally touched by the higher caste Hindus and failing to do so leads to their extreme humiliation and dehumanization. They also become the victim of physical abuse if they fail to carry this burden forcefully imposed on their backs and this reveals how tortured and oppressed outcastes like Bakha are in the traditional Indian Hindu community. Bakha is even deprived of something as basic as food because untouchables like him need to depend upon the leftovers of the upper-caste Hindus in order to feed themselves. They have to wait the entire day to collect food and by the end of the day they are given only the leftovers and stale food that the higher-caste Hindus fail to consume. Thus, untouchables like Bakha are not even able to consume fresh and healthy food for their survival and have to depend upon the higher-caste Hindus for their sustenance. Besides these, untouchables are also not allowed to enter the house of any higher-caste Hindus because they believe that their presence inside their homes is ominous and will contaminate the purity of their humble abodes. If they require to meet any Hindu belonging to the upper-caste community, then they have to wait until the person comes out of their home by himself. They are not even allowed to enter their temples, which are made to give offerings and pray to God, even though they are also Hindus. According to their Holy Books, “A temple can be polluted ..... by a low-caste man coming within sixty-nine yards of it” and a sacrificial fire is necessary to purify the shrine if any untouchable dares to enter the temple [1]. Moreover, as the son of a sweeper and naturally being a sweeper himself, Bakha is considered a member of the lowest caste even among the outcastes based upon the hierarchy created according to professions. Being unable to escape from the vicious cycle of cyclical oppression, Bakha is doomed to spend the rest of his life being a sweeper boy, cleaning latrines, roads, and such. On one hand, he is stuck with the job he inherited from his sweeper ancestors, on the other hand because of this very job he is demeaned even by his fellow outcastes involved in other various professions. The leatherworkers, washermen, barbers, watercarriers, grass-cutters, and people involved with other non-sweeping

professions consider themselves superior to outcastes like Bakha as the profession of cleaning is ironically perceived as the filthiest even in the outcastes' society. Thus, Bakha belongs to the lowest position in the hierarchy of the castes among the low castes, that is, he is not only oppressed by the people belonging to the upper-caste Hindu society, but also demeaned and insulted by his fellow outcastes who at least are supposed to understand the cruelty of the caste system and how it feels to be born as one of India's untouchables. Rather, his fellow outcastes have created a class hierarchy of their own based upon various professions although they themselves are untouchables. As a result of which, Bakha, as an outcaste sweeper, is not only the sufferer of the cruelty inflicted upon his kind due to the inter-class struggle, but also the victim of the intra-class struggles due to the class discrimination based upon professions created by his fellow untouchables. All these aforementioned incidents solidify Bakha's position as a subaltern within the traditional Indian Hindu society. As a result of his dominated subaltern position within the society and the constant oppression and cruelty he has to come face to face with on a regular basis at almost every facet of his daily life, Bakha develops a kind of hatred and unappreciation for the Hindu traditional culture and customs due to the discriminative attitude of the Hindus towards him and the torture inflicted by them upon him. Due to him being repeatedly dehumanized and doubly oppressed by the natives who were supposed to be considerate towards him, Bakha loses his respect for his fellow Hindus and starts to look for flaws within their traditional norms and customs. In fact, due to his status as a subaltern, Bakha is unable to realize the atrocities and oppressions inflicted upon the natives by the colonizers, and thus fails to realize the dark facet of colonization. Bakha does not understand the impact of colonization because he is being oppressed by his very countrymen even before the arrival of the colonizers in India. Bakha is a subaltern within the Indian society with or without the influence of colonization by the British imperialists. As a result of his failure to figure out the oppressive, dominating natures of the British authoritative figures due to his subaltern status, Bakha gets succumbed into the spiral of the culture and tradition of the British imperialists and starts to identify himself as an Anglophilic *assimilado*.

Bakha's Anglophilic tendencies and his attempt to assimilate have found their outlets within Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* in several notable ways. One of the most significant ways in which Anand has tried to illustrate Bakha's attempt at assimilating with the British culture and customs is by demonstrating his toils in order to mimic the norms and traditions of every visible facet of the British culture. For instance, Bakha strives to mimic the attire of the British colonizers by hook or by crook, even if it is at the expense of his comfort and health. In Anand's words, "he could sacrifice a good many comforts for the sake of what he called 'fashun,' by which he understood the art of wearing trousers, breeches, coat, puttees, boots, etc., as worn by the British and Indian soldiers in India" [1]. Bakha even attempts to mimic the language of the European colonizers – though in vain due to his lack of institutional schooling as he has been deprived of his rights of education by the native Indians because of his untouchability – mispronouncing what is termed as 'fashion' as 'fashun'. At some point he is also seen regarding the 'natives' as 'natus' when he thinks, "Whatever they (the British colonizers) did was 'fashun.' But his own countrymen – they were natus (natives)" [1]. The author's words regarding Bakha's infatuation towards the English language of the colonizers establishes his Anglophilia as he says, "he had felt a burning desire, while he was in the British barracks, to speak the tish-mish, tish-mish which the Tommies spoke" [1]. It is fundamentally due to his mistreatment by his own countrymen that he rejects the traditional Indian clothing and develops a condescending attitude towards it. Anand further narrates, "The clear-cut styles of European dress had impressed his naïve mind" [1]. Bakha considers

himself “a devotee of ‘fashun’” and in order to become one, “he tried to copy them (the Whites) in everything, to copy them as well as he could in the exigencies of his peculiarly Indian circumstances”, and this tendency of Bakha trying to copy or mimic everything associated with the Whites aligns with the notions of mimicry as given by Homi K. Bhabha. Bakha develops a kind of ambition within himself to live like an Englishman and he thinks that mimicking the appearance and behaviors of the British soldiers by wearing English clothes and smoking ‘Red-Lamp’ cigarettes like them will turn him into one. He considers the European colonizers far superior to his own countrymen and addresses them as ‘Sahibs’ as well as aspires to become one. His Anglophilia becomes potent when he secretly tells himself “I will look like a sahib” [1]. Again, by considering the British imperialists as the ‘Sahibs’, that is superior people, Bakha is automatically regarding himself and his fellow countrymen as the inferior ones. By condemning the Indian traditions and customs and embracing the European ones, he is exhibiting the European norms and culture as the superior ones and portraying the Indian customs and traditions as the inferior ones. This aspect of considering himself and the natives as inferior beings and embracing and believing everything the colonizers say as axioms becomes evident when Bakha hears the familiar abuse of the natives by the British soldiers: “black man, you who relieve yourself on the ground” and agrees with it, although it is an insult to his own countrymen [1]. This sense of inferiority that Bakha harbors is the psychological effect of colonization upon the colonized and aligns perfectly with the notions propounded by Frantz Fanon regarding the psychopathology of colonialism. In order to deal with the psychological inadequacies experienced by Bakha due to these psychological effects of colonization, Bakha takes on the western norms and practices and rejects his own traditions. This rejection is evident in the way how Bakha condemns the Indian way of performing ablutions and is simultaneously ashamed of it, in the way how he is skeptical about the florid ornaments worn by the natives that is too fancy and vibrant according to him as opposed to the minimalistic English style, in the way how he does not appreciate the Indian style of drink tea within the selected text. By the end of the novel, Bakha even contemplates rejecting his own religion – the very religion that outcasted him from the society, bestowed him with the ‘Untouchable’ status, is the reason behind his subaltern position within the society and also the fundamental cause behind the oppression and cruelty inflicted upon him on a regular basis due to the repressive ideologies and doctrines preached by Hinduism regarding caste system which creates class discriminations, conflicts and struggles and make the life of a person belonging to the lower caste miserable – and considers embracing the religion of the European colonizers, that is Christianity. Therefore, Bakha’s Anglophilia and formation of his identity as an *assimilado* in the context of a colonized India under the British rule have found their outlets by means of his attempt at mimicry and establishing himself as a mimic man by mimicking every aspect of the European colonizers’ ways of living life through an assimilation of their language, clothing, culture, traditions, norms, religion, and customs; by considering himself and his countrymen as inferior beings while considering the British imperialists as the superior people due to the psychological effect of colonization upon the colonized and trying to deal with these psychological inadequacies through assimilating and mimicking every visible facet of the European life style, and thus by simultaneously rejecting and condemning the traditional Indian life style and culture and treating their norms in a condescending manner.

## Results and Findings

Bakha, the fundamental protagonist of Mulk Raj Anand's novel titled *Untouchable* is an untouchable, an outcaste belonging to the Dalit community within the Indian Hindu society, who has to live in the outcastes' colony: an unhygienic, polluted, and filthy slum, separated from the mainstream town area and the cantonment. Due to his status as an untouchable within the society, he is the victim of inter-caste conflicts, that is, he is oppressed, tortured, and dehumanized by the Hindus belonging to the upper caste in the social hierarchy. On the other hand, Bakha is also the victim of intra-class conflicts as he is demeaned and insulted by his fellow untouchables who like him are also the members of lower caste Hindu society and are outcastes themselves, because of the categorization that is created due to the existence of numerous different professions within the society, where Bakha's profession is considered as filthy and dirty compared to the professions held by the other untouchables as he is a sweeper boy who usually cleans latrines. Due to these repressive ideologies associated with class discriminations and caste conflicts, Bakha becomes the victim of class struggle as he is considered belonging to the lowest position in the class hierarchy of the society as per the repressive belief system that is preached as facts within the society. Bakha is further deprived of the basic necessities needed for one's sustenance, for instance, pure drinking water, fresh and healthy food, proper sanitation, institutional education and many more due to his untouchability and the presence of the repressive ideologies associated with class discrimination within the society. Bakha is also bound to pay the price of his untouchability as shopkeepers deceive untouchables like him by taking more money from them than the actual price of the product as a form of compensation for dealing with the outcastes. Bakha, due to his status as an outcaste, is not allowed to even protest against such acts of deception and is bound to endure, keep being silenced, and remain stuck within this vicious cyclical oppression inflicted upon him. Again, because of the judgmental attitude of the society, untouchables like Bakha become self-conscious and suffer from inferiority complex due to the constant humiliation they have to come face to face with. They are also expected to act and talk in a certain manner, maintaining a definitive body language and exhibiting a particular posture that portray their positions as slaves in need of mercy from the upper-class people within the society. Bakha as an untouchable, must also carry on his back the burden of his untouchability, for instance, announcing his approach beforehand in order to make sure that he is not accidentally touched by any upper caste Hindus of the society. Untouchables like Bakha are also not allowed to enter any temples and houses of any upper caste Hindu person because it is their belief that the presence of an untouchable will contaminate the purity of the aforementioned places. Moreover, because of the presence of the cyclical oppression, Bakha is also unable to change his profession and is bound to spend the rest of his life as a sweeper boy due to the hereditary nature of the job he inherited from his ancestors. All these aforementioned instances solidify Bakha's position and identity as a subaltern within the society. Because of this very subalternity, Bakha develops a sort of condescending attitude towards the culture and tradition of his own country and decides to condemn and reject them. He starts considering the Indian norms and practices as inferior and loses all kinds of respect for those. As a result of this rejection, he gradually becomes infatuated with the British colonizers' culture, values, and tradition and starts considering those as superior practices as opposed to the Indian ones because the British treated him like a human as opposed to the dehumanizing attitude of his own countrymen towards him. Due to his subaltern position, he is unable to realize the bad effects of colonization and the atrocities inflicted upon the colonized by the British imperialists because even without the presence of the European colonizers, Bakha would be doubly oppressed by his own countrymen no matter what. Finally, his subalternity, which is the result of the repressive ideologies harbored by the people of his

own religion, is what pushes him to become an Anglophilic *assimilado* in the context of the colonized Indian subcontinent, which reveals how the notions of Bakha's subalternity and his identity as an Anglophilic *assimilado* are intricately connected with one another.

Bakha's Anglophilia and his tendency to assimilate with British customs, values, and practices have been demonstrated within the selected text through his attempt at mimicking their language, clothing, hair style, way of smoking, way of sleeping, way of drinking tea and many more. As a result of which, Bakha can be identified as a 'Mimic Man' in postcolonial terms due to his repetitive practice of the postcolonial notion known as 'Mimicry'. The psychological effect of colonialism can also be seen within Bakha as he suffers from psychological inadequacy – which is the impact of colonialism on the psychology of the colonized – and starts considering himself and his countrymen as inferior and the British as the superiors. As a result of this feeling of inferiority due to psychological inadequacy, Bakha rejects the culture and tradition of his own country and tries to embrace the values, the religion, and the practices of the European imperialists that he considers superior and second to none. In this way, Bakha constructs his identity as an Anglophilic *Assimilado* by rejecting his own culture and embracing the norms and customs of the colonizers. Therefore, by the employment of 'Mimicry' and psychological effects of colonialism, Bakha's Anglophilia and his identity as an *Assimilado* have been constructed within Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*.

## Conclusion

Exploratory textual analysis of Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* in this particular paper has helped to establish factual connections between two very significant aspects of the novel, namely, Subalternity and construction of Bakha's identity as an Anglophilic *assimilado*. This particular paper has the potential to contribute prominently to the realm of literature due to its qualitative and descriptive approach towards a topic for which a lot of interest in the research field is evident. This specific study has minutely scrutinized how Mulk Raj Anand demonstrated the intricately woven relationship between Bakha's Subalternity and the establishment of his identity as an *assimilado* as well as Anglophilic in the context of a colonized India by portraying how the repressive ideologies associated with the notions of class discrimination and class struggle, resulting in inter-caste and intra-caste conflicts within the society, have helped to establish Bakha's position as a doubly oppressed subaltern and how this subalternity resulted in Bakha's eventual Anglophilia and assimilation. The paper has further investigated how Anand exhibited Bakha's Anglophilia within his literary production by associating his Anglophilic actions and assimilation with the notions of postcolonial concepts of 'mimicry' and 'mimic men'. The study further evaluates Bakha's condescending attitude towards traditional Indian culture and customs by analyzing his Anglophilic tendencies and identity as an *assimilado* through the lens of Psychopathological concept of colonialism.

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