



Research wings of 'ACT'



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**MULK RAJ ANAND'S HUMANISM**

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**INTRODUCTION**

The 1930's and 1940's were indeed very eventful in the history of India. The Indian English novel of the period was deeply influenced by an epoch-making political, social and ideological ferment caused by the Gandhian movement. It was only with the Gandhian struggle for freedom that the Indo - Anglian novel really came to its own. K.S. Venkatramani's (1891 - 1915) first novel, 'Murugan, The Tiller (1927)' is chronologically one of the earliest novels of the period is a copy-book example of this. But Bankim Chandra Chatterjee became the first novelist who wrote Rajmohan's wife published in 1864. This period was not only marked by a series of political upheavals culminating in the freedom of the nation but the appearance on the scene three great novelist: Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raj Rao, whose first novels were published in 1935, 1935 and 1938 respectively. They immediately bring to our mind the great novelists Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne of the 18<sup>th</sup> century English Literature.

Mulk Raj Anand (1905- 2004), the eldest of the three, was the most prolific and versatile of all the Indian novelists writing in English. He was one of the first Indian writers in English to gain International fame and readership. He was born in Peshawar in North India (now in Pakistan), in a Hindu coppersmith family. Anand tells us about his upbringing in 'Apology for Heroism (1946)'. "So I grew up like most of my contemporaries, a very superficial, ill-educated young man, without any bearings."

Anand's numerous novels form a fictional chronicle in which his eclectic humanism and his humanitarian compassion for the underdog are persistent themes. He wrote of the people, for the people and as a man of the people. Anand does not believe in the principle of "Art for the art sake" but he believes in "Art for the sake of humanity." Anand's humanistic approach reminds us that of Charles Dickens. Humanism means love of man, the whole man with all his weakness, instincts and impulses. It implies devotion to the concerns of mankind rather than upon the supernatural world.. Humanism is a Renaissance doctrine, which stresses, the essential worth and dignity of man. Renaissance humanists came to believe that man is capable of living a life of reason, dignity, morality and even happiness. Encyclopedia Britannica defines humanism as: "The attitude of mind, which attaches primary importance to man and to his faculties, temporal aspiration and well being." Anand defines humanism: "...By humanism I do not mean anything more or less than what it has always meant, illumination or enlightenment in the interest of man, true to his highest nature and his noblest vision."

Anand's humanism is a combination of "The Hellenic idea of man being the measure of all things; the Renaissance ideal of all-round human development and oriental ideas and attitudes such as the rejection of the supernatural, Buddha's advocacy of karuna, the rejection of caste-