Introduction

Mulk Raj Anand is a social chronicler. His fame rests primarily on his novels dealing with the sociopolitical realities of colonial India. The struggle of the contemporary Indian to get release from the evils of (i) the feudalistic social structure (ii) the imperialistic British rule and (iii) the dehumanising caste system forms the major theme of his fiction. Colonial writing usually tends towards protest literature. This genre of political writing usually intends to inspire the servile populace to a spirited resistance of the injustices meted out to them by alien rulers. Writers achieve this goal by creating heroic characters who take up the task of uniting the oppressed and fighting spirited wars against colonial injustices and winning glorious victories. Anand’s fiction is not protest literature in the sense described above. They are only forerunners to this concept. As a social realist Anand created a number of heroes and heroines who, checked by manifold forces, find it fruitless to give vent to their revolutionary urges against evil of every sort. Being conscious of the odds against which they have to live their revolutionary existence, if they choose one, they are shown more often as reclining to a passive attitude to the evil they would like to have fought against. Attempts to explain this attitude render variant and sometimes controversial reading due to the immense suggestiveness of these works. A truly genuine work of art is marked by its susceptibility to multiple interpretations. Anand’s novels and short stories contain the rich ambiguity inevitable for this greatness. Hence a paradigm which has not been explored by scholars in evaluating these works is used to reinterpret the behaviour of Anand’s heroes taking also into account the real life people Anand seems to have modelled his protagonists on. This introductory part is intended to attempt a classification of Anand’s works in general and to give a chapter-wise outline of the arguments underlying this study.
Anand has contributed a large corpus of works to the reading public. The entire body of Anand’s written word can be classified into two: noncreative works and creative works. The noncreative works include books and articles dealing with subjects ranging from cookery to fine arts. They are nonfictional in nature and there is no delineation of the protagonist in them. Hence the noncreative works are excluded from this discourse.

The creative works in general are based on the author’s firsthand experiences from his early boyhood to the present. These works fall into three sub divisions: (a) factual works (b) confessional works and (c) fictional works. In factual works the author gives a realistic first person narration of his life history. In confessional works he gives an imaginative rendering of the same material through an assumed character. In fictional works a few characters that the author knew in his boyhood and youth, recurring in many works belonging to the former two categories of narratives, are chosen and developed as protagonists rendering them in an aura of idealization. The author’s detachment in this process makes his characters assume a personality of their own which marks their difference in their reaction in resolving their crises. The study is meant to explore the difference in Anandian protagonists’ stance that appears to mark their identity as different from typical tragic heroes.

The first chapter entitled “Emergence of Anandian Protagonists” begins with a general discussion of factual and confessional works. It examines the various systems of philosophies that influenced the author throughout his life in India until the twenties and those which subsequently made impressions upon his mind as a student of Western philosophy in Europe. A brief survey of the author’s autobiography is also attempted in this part to probe into his intimacy with many real life people, probably the prototypes of many of his characters. These works are also discussed in general at this level to make the reader conversant with their background and to explain how in the process of creative
activity the author has striven to retain artistic detachment. The protagonists delineated by the author beginning with Bakha in *Untouchable* to Maqbool Sherwani in *Death of a Hero* are assessed one by one, in chronological order, to explain the difference in their behaviour from that of heroic characters.

These Anandian protagonists are subalternate in the sense that they are marginalized from the main stream of society. The potential exhibited by the typical Anandian moderate protagonist Lal Singh to protest against the social injustice to which he is exposed, seems to lack the element of extremism. This attitude seems to be shared by all the Anandian protagonists including Ananta and Maqbool Sherwani except in their heroic protest in the final scene. The minds of these protagonists beginning with Bakha attain gradual maturing from novel to novel to attain completion of this growth in Lal Singh whose character is fully developed in the “Lalu trilogy.” It is noteworthy in this respect that in *The Sword and the Sickle*, one of Lal Singh’s comrades specifically suggests “golden mean” as a viable strategy. The attempt to exclude extremism in registering protest against the existing social system thus draws its theoretical framework from Aristotle’s concept of virtue, i.e. the choice of the mean between the extremes. It is possible to trace elements of moderation in Bakha Bhikhu, Munoo and Gangu, applying this yardstick. Their choice of the mean becomes apparent in the nature of the stance they assume, at least once in their lives, in the different contexts in which they are presented in the respective novels. But the protagonists Ananta and Maqbool shift their stance from moderation to heroism in the final scene. In the case of Gauri, even her final protest is within the limits of moderation as in Lal Singh. Hence there is no shift in her choice of stance in the ultimate level as in Ananta and Maqbool.

There is a fundamental feature worth mentioning in this context regarding their ability in choosing the mean or moderation. In protagonists who have attained
psychological maturity through their exposure to worldly experience and/or education they --Lal Singh, Ananta, Gauri and Maqbool--get, the potential for registering moderate protest seems to be most pronounced. In the cases of Ananta and Maqbool, there is a belated shift from moderation to a heroic stance and an attempt has been made to explain this shift at an advanced level of this study. In protagonists who have not attained psychological maturity due to their narrow worldly experience or poor schooling, this capacity seems to be suppressed. In other words, the latter category of protagonists--Bakha, Bhikhu, Munoo and Gangu--does not possess the power of their intellectual equipment to protest except on a single occasion of intense challenge that they have to resolve in their respective novels. Based on this distinction the protagonists created by Mulk Raj Anand are classified into underprivileged/underdeveloped protagonists and advanced protagonists. The underdeveloped protagonists share the potential for moderate protest only in an indistinct way while in the advanced protagonists this potential is well pronounced. Hence the study calls for a detailed analysis of the behaviour of Lal Singh who can be regarded as the typical Anandian (moderate) protagonist. Making use of the operative theory of moderation in Lal Singh’s psyche it is attempted to estimate the extent to which it is applicable in other advanced protagonists --Ananta, Gauri and Maqbool.

In the first chapter, only a preliminary effort is made to examine the observation of moderation in the underdeveloped protagonists. The technique of its operation is elucidated in the fifth chapter after exploring the behaviour of the advanced protagonists in whom the intricacy of its functioning is conspicuous for a meticulous study. A detailed discussion of the theory of moderation is required for this purpose and accordingly the second chapter is devoted to a summation of the relevant books of
The Nicomachean Ethics supplemented by authoritative critical commentary wherever it is needed.

The second chapter, "The Theory of Moderation", explains the theory as Aristotle elaborated it in The Nicomachean Ethics. The virtue Aristotle recommends is in contrast to what he felt as a flaw (in Poetics) which brings forth catastrophe to the tragic hero. Aristotle's fundamental question is what "the most final good" or ultimate good is which can be appropriately called "ergon" or the ultimate result of the exercise of virtue. The application of virtue or "hexis" is the right means to attain the "ergon". Aristotle rightly points out that the most final good in virtuous living is happiness and it can be achieved only through a long and complete life. The virtue Aristotle recommends in a protagonist to attain length of life is the discretion to choose a middle way between the extremes which are only vices. Aristotle does not neglect the fact that the most complete virtue is the trained faculty for philosophic speculation which brings highest happiness to man. Contemplation is an activity of God. Among human beings very few are capable of indulging in it. Aristotle's classification of human life into three kinds is relevant in this context: (a) life of enjoyment (b) life of the statesman (c) contemplative life. It is the practical life of moral virtue which Aristotle brands as the "life of the statesman" that he recommends as the second best life possible for this is within the reach of all human beings.

A hero who strives for the above sort of life has to observe the mean or moderation in his choice of action. This wilful choice of the middle way between the extremes involves the application of prudence or practical intelligence as a guiding factor. It is the rightful choice between excess and deficiency that Aristotle suggests in order to fall into the middle way or the mean effortlessly. The extreme which is more removed from the mean is the one which is more opposed to the mean and this extreme
must be dismissed as the first step in the process of exercising the choice. Then it will be easy to choose between the better of the two remaining possibilities. What Aristotle suggests through this method is that the mean is normally relative and not exactly arithmetic or in the exact middle between the extremes. This observation seems to carry a converse suggestion that the mean can be arithmetic only in an ideal situation. Hence the method for the choice of the mean cannot be as simple as is proposed here.

Aristotle enlists a few moderate virtues in *The Nicomachean Ethics*. He says that between fear and confidence the mean is courage and between profligacy and void of sensibility, it is temperance. Aristotle further recommends the "furnitures of fortune" such as friends, wealth, political influence etc. that contribute pleasure, an accompaniment to happiness. The conflict between pleasure and pain is one principle that enables a protagonist to acquire the knowledge of the mean between the two opposing extremes. This is why Aristotle states that pleasure from the opposite source is like pain from the activity itself. The dismissal of the extreme that is more opposed to the mean seems possible when a virtue is to be chosen as against two vices. But in exercising a choice between two virtues, i.e. those virtues that afford pain and those that afford pleasure (more specifically, between courage and temperance), there is no scope for dismissal of one of them. Instead, their conflict with each other leads the protagonist ultimately to the choice of a mean he evolves in the pressure of the situation. The theoretician does not explain the technique of its operation which enables the protagonist to work out a compromise in the conflict established by these impulses. An attempt has been made in this study to illustrate its operation in the psyche of Anandian protagonists.

The kind of life Aristotle seems to recommend is the one between the life of passions (the life of enjoyment) and the contemplative life. The criteria he seems to use in the ranking of the virtues involved are those of courage and temperance. Attempts
have been made in the third and fourth chapters to apply these criteria to Anandian advanced protagonists, beginning with the case study of Lal Singh. The most significant problem in applying courage as a standard of evaluation is that Aristotle's former and latter reflections on courage in two contexts in *The Nicomachean Ethics* appear to be in contradiction with each other. Hence the third chapter begins with an attempt to explain the ambiguity involved in its interpretation before proceeding to its application in the psyche of Lal Singh.

"The Mean Unearthed in Lalu" begins with a brief discourse on the virtues dealing with the principal passions which are concerned with the preservation of human life. Among the principal passions, courage and temperance come first and liberality, magnificence, magnanimity and proper pride come second. A close observation of Anandian protagonists leads one to the conclusion that the operative virtues in these protagonists are courage and temperance. The chapter proceeds to examine Aristotle's concept of courage in book II of *The Nicomachean Ethics* and goes ahead to his views presented in two specific contexts in books III and IX. His precept of courage in book II is that of ideal courage where there is perfect union between virtues and practical intelligence. Aristotle brands it moral excellence. But the hero's attempts to practice it at the mundane level normally fall short of the ideal level. This happens because human courage illustrates two basic dimensions: either close or distant in its resemblance with the ideal courage. Ordinary people opt for the former sort and tragic heroes the latter. The choice is solely left to the protagonist and it depends upon the hero's attitude towards life. Hence these two forms of courage can be branded ordinary and heroic respectively. Valid critical views have been incorporated in this study to prove that Aristotle refers to one form in one context and the other form in another context without specifically illustrating the difference therein. Thus Aristotle's invariable use of the
general term “courage” in explaining his ethical theory has made the comprehension of
the distinction between the variant forms of it rather difficult.

It is a generally accepted view that the “civil society can survive without military
virtue” (Jaffa 87) and the protagonists created by Anand are ordinary men and women in
whom the courage that seems to find its expression is only ordinary in preference to the
heroic. The representative Anandian protagonist Lal Singh is a character who exhibits
preference for the choice of moderate courage in resolving all crises throughout the
trilogy. This seems to be the reason for the unconventional behaviour of the protagonist
even when he is inspired by revolutionary ideals propagated by the extremists. From the
protest he registers against the Sikh custom by shaving his beard in the beginning of The
Village, to his unconditional surrender to the police in the end of The Sword and the
Sickle, there are a number of episodes to illustrate the protagonist’s choice of
moderation. When the landlord makes a false accusation of theft against him and brings
the police, he runs away from the village. He finally chooses to join the army with the
twin intentions of escaping arrest and saving enough money to pay off the family debts.
During the World War I, when the protagonist has been drafted to Marseilles, he finds it
difficult to observe moderation in the trench warfare. But he makes use of his worldly
ambition to control the martial ambition (to turn himself into a martyr) leading him to
develop a philosophy of his own—if he does not shoot the enemy, the enemy will be
gentlemanly “and not make him a target” (Across 113). This conviction comes true
when the Germans capture him alive and later sends him back to India unoffended.

Thus the protagonist is released from the war prison in Germany with instructions
to join the struggle against British tyranny in India. On his arrival, he is demobilized
from his regiment in India without even a pension as he has been listening to seditionist
propaganda abroad. On reaching his native village he learns that the wreck of his family
has been total and even their land has been auctioned. In order to counterbalance his desperation, Anand introduces a ladylove (Maya Devi) into the thematic structure of The Sword and the Sickle. Lalu joins the side of the revolutionaries who organize against the British tyranny in India and with their permission marries Maya and takes her along with him to Rajagarh where they are planning their action. After the marriage the protagonist does not turn to be a full time organizer as his two ambitions are correlated and cannot be kept separate. Hence he chooses to find a compromise between these impulses to attain the “ergon” (happiness) in future. Consequently, in the final scene he surrenders to the police in the midst of calamities to escape the danger of being shot dead. This seems to be a middle stance between his ambitions--revolutionary and worldly. He is caught between the opposing pulls of these urges. The prudence of the protagonist which interferes in the conflict between the contrary urges in his psyche strives to work out a settlement between the two. This is the procedure involved in the choice of the mean. The complexity that underlies this attempt is explained in the fifth chapter.

The fourth chapter “The Moderate Trio: Ananta, Gauri and Maqbool” examines the operation of courage and temperance in the protagonists. Ananta in The Big Heart has to make a compromise between his commitment to his mistress who is dying of consumption and his revolutionary instincts. The action unfolds in the wake of unemployment of the traditional coppersmiths resulting from the mechanization of their craft. The responsibility endowed with the protagonist in looking after the mistress out of his sheer love for her seems to prevent him from violence as opposed to the extremists’ stance who want to wreck the machinery and start a riot. The conflict results in his choice of a course of action--form the union of the coppersmiths to organize their
collective force for a bargain with the employers. But in the end Ananta is catapulted from moderation to heroism.

In Gauri, the conflict goes on between the opposing forces within herself. She wants to protest against her husband’s atrocities and at the same time likes to prolong her joys in his company. When she acquires worldly experience in Dr. Mahindra’s hospital and becomes an enlightened woman she matures into exercising a moderate choice. She does not choose to harm her husband or kill herself as an oversensitive woman does; instead she chooses to abandon him in the context of her being elevated to the status of a would-be mother. The love for the expected baby seems to prevent her from resorting to the extreme protest. The choice of a middle way between the possibilities of passive submission and violent reaction is in strict conformity with Aristotle’s theory of moderation.

Maqbool too does not appear to be a different sort of person. Even though he is full of patriotic enthusiasm to defend his motherland Kashmir against Pathan invasion, he does not take arms for he seems to possess a liking for his sister. Though there is no manifest sister fixation in his love for her, it is very intense and is capable of preventing him from the choice of the revolutionary extreme. At the same time, the protagonist’s patriotic spirit keeps his love for his sister within the limits of moderation. This conflict leads him to choose a middle way—to remain ordinarily courageous—leaving the job of defence to the Indian Army. In the final juncture there appears a shift in his stance from moderation to heroism as in the case of Ananta. The reasons for these two protagonists’ shift from the choice of ordinary courage to heroic courage are analyzed in the fifth chapter.

The chapter “The Working Principle of Individuation” begins with a discussion of Henry Alonzo Myers’s view that it is impossible for a protagonist to choose
moderation in preference to heroic courage in a crucial context. But only Ananta and Maqbool among Anandian protagonists shift their stance from moderation to heroic courage in resolving their ultimate crises. Lal Singh and Gauri continue to practise moderation even in facing their final crises.

The above aspect is explained making use of Nietzschean principle of individuation which involves Apollonian and Dionysian artistic impulses and their conflict in the psyche of the protagonist. The struggle between these diverse energies makes the protagonist comprehend their necessary interdependence. Apollo is the God of Ecstasy and promise of life. Nietzsche holds that the rival deity to Dionysus is not Apollo but Christ. If the opposing forces are equally powerful, in a tussle between these artistic impulses, Apollo succeeds in sharing the wisdom of Dionysus--a wisdom emphasizing length of life. But in a converse situation where the struggle happens between uneven artistic impulses, Dionysian ecstatic power which gets reinforced by the intensity of the protagonist’s experience is equipped to share Apollonian wisdom or tragic wisdom ultimately. In Nietzschean terminology, these two states of protagonist-behaviour can be branded tragico-Dionysian and Dionyso-tragic respectively. Thus Lal Singh and Gauri are tragico-Dionysians and Ananta and Maqbool, Dionyso-tragic protagonists. Hence it is this principle which functions behind the moderate protagonist’s choice--either to attain length of life or to embrace martyrdom--in the final scene. Aristotle too suggests the choice of these two divergent possibilities for a protagonist. But we often fail to associate the option for martyrdom to Aristotle’s moderate protagonist. Aristotle offers the moderate protagonist the freedom to choose martyrdom only if it is essentially required, i.e., when moderate course will not suffice in his case. This is how Nietzschean point of view can be used to illustrate Aristotlian theory. The working of this principle in underdeveloped protagonists is also traced to explain how
these protagonists become the forerunners to the advanced protagonists. In the "conclusion" the findings are summed up and Lacanian theory of unconscious castration complex is explored to substantiate them in an advanced scientific light. It is shown that the conflict between the antagonistic impulses (revolutionary and worldly) results in their mutual castration in a symbolic level, proportionate to the equivalence or imbalance of the contesting forces. In an ultimate tussle between these symbolically castrated impulses, moderation will be chosen if these forces are evenly castrated, and heroism, if the revolutionary instinct is castrated slightly less than its rival. In the latter case, the dominating revolutionary spirit of the protagonist establishes its mastery in enslaving its opposite instinct, which determines the protagonist's preference to shed blood. This explanation leads to the conclusion that neither Aristotle nor Nietzsche is outdated in the estimate of protagonist-behaviour even from Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective.