Chapter I
Emergence of Anandian Protagonists

The social life of India in the colonial period was predominantly characterized by political unrest. While political action went its way toward the goal of independence, writers of the period lent them moral support and vigour by voicing patriotic sentiments in their literary creations. Mulk Raj Anand's creative attempts inspired by his proletarian sympathies require a subclassification for the meticulous analysis of Indian social scene. As already hinted at in the "Introduction" Anand's oeuvre can be configurated as below:

![Diagram of Anand's oeuvre]

The classification of creative works into three subclasses is based on their thematic structure which they reveal by themselves. Works which describe the author's biographical experiences in a matter of fact manner are factual in every sense to be branded factual works. When there is an attempt to retell the material through an autobiographical protagonist, there is the mingling of some imaginative element which dispels the author's inhibitions for a plain confession. They form confessional works.
When the author chooses to portray characters and episodes that he knew in person during his childhood and youth, we get the entire corpus of his fictional works. Anand acknowledges it in the preface to the second edition of *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1951). He says: “All these heroes, as other men and women who had emerged in my novels and short stories, were dear to me because they were reflections of the real people I had known during my childhood and youth” (qtd. in Iyengar, *Indian Writing* 334). The novelist maintains the art of detachment in the process of giving life to these characters in fictional works. Anand asserts that an author is like God Brahma “who creates mankind, but [...] does not determine their destiny” (*Author to Critic* 14 -15). Hence he chooses his protagonists from the gallery of real people he knew and places them within the world of these novels with complete freedom to react in accordance with their practical intelligence to the surrounding social situations. The way that they respond to social realities differ from the ways of the author or the ways of any other men or women who have been their contemporaries. It is this factor that leads to the emergence of Anandian protagonists in Indian fiction in English. Therefore the scope for evaluation of these protagonists is limited to the fictional works of the author.

It cannot be neglected that the intimacy that the author maintained with these protagonists and his identification of their family environment are worked out in factual and confessional works. An understanding of the background of these protagonists can provide an enhanced appreciation of their behaviour in fictional works. Inevitably, any study about the idiosyncrasies exhibited by the Anandian protagonists calls for a survey of factual and confessional works at the outset. This discussion begins with a brief survey of the above two categories of works and proceeds to examine fictional works in general. The problem of investigation will be arrived at, towards the close of this chapter.
Factual works are comprised of a good number of articles about the author himself, published in various scholarly journals, newspapers and magazines; autobiography of ideas (Apology for Heroism), the author’s talk in western intellectual circles (Conversations in Bloomsbury), and in his attempt to consolidate these perceptions in the autobiography (Pilpali Sahab). Unfortunately, only two volumes of this work have been published so far, as the author has shifted his interest to its imaginative retelling in Seven Ages of Man.

Apology for Heroism was published in 1946. In the preface (7-24) to the third edition of this work Anand confesses that he had already given up professional philosophy for proletarian humanism. Insisted on for an explanation by a young editor, the author confessed that he had once again turned to himself and acknowledged his false starts in life. Here Anand traces the course of his ideological development from his early childhood to the middle age, leading to the choice of his vocation. But Fisher remarks: “his two ventures in autobiography Apology for Heroism and Conversations in Bloomsbury are significantly fictional” (“Mulk Raj Anand as Autobiographer” 177). This remark requires reconsideration. It should be noticed that the material exposed in this work with much emphasis is not the author’s life history. Instead he works out the influences exerted on him by various philosophies and dogmas which led him to the decision that he ought to recreate the sufferings of the underdog in the Indian context through the medium of his novels. Anand applied western techniques to experiment this attempt and the philosophic background for getting an enhanced understanding of these works, as Asnani points out, “lie scattered in numerous essays, articles, letters, introductions and a long […] treatise Apology for Heroism” (“A Critique” 116 ). This is why Fisher’s argument that Apology is a fictional narrative becomes questionable.
The work records the systematic growth of the author’s mind from innocence to experience through its exposure to conflicting ideologies.

Anand’s statement in *Apology* (137-55) can be summated as follows: he reached England for higher studies with some imprints left on him by the Buddha and Gandhi, got acquainted with the philosophies of Western thinkers like Freud, Jung, Koler, Einstein and Marx. He also got an opportunity to come in contact with V.K. Krishna Menon in India League Office abroad. Simultaneously with Western philosophy, he undertook a study of the Mahabharatha, the Gita and stories and fables of the Puranas and found that “no single doctrine emerges from their vast storehouse of culture” (67). This revelation brought him the wisdom: “the Absolute is above God [...]
is beyond Time [...] Goodness and Truth and Beauty cannot be realized except outside Time” (72). Anand felt the need for world brotherhood, the spirit of which was in Russell, Forster, Leonard Woolf, Edward Thompson, Brailsford and Lowes Dickinson. All of them felt that society was greater than the state. Eric Gill made him conscious of the value of the creative artist in the modern world. Anand analyzed everything through the “sieve of philosophical doubt” (97) and felt the value of freedom. Thus he started to believe in Man. The essence of human life is soul or “Atman” as he puts it. He placed his faith in creative imagination of man and felt that his vocation ought to be something in favour of the finest cause in the world, i.e. the liberation of mankind to enhance individual freedom. He also realized that by combining deepest socialism and deepest human personality, a stable civilization would arise.

Anand is moved by the fact that cash nexus in modern society kills love (162). He recalls that Indian Freedom Movement was rooted in Gandhi’s awareness of Christ’s message “Love one another” and the Bhakti movement treating “God as Love” (163). These findings make him aware of the importance of love in day-to-day life. Despite
these valid observations, the author strove to reconcile his contrastive preferences.

P.K. Rajan remarks:

His encounter with Marxist literature [. . .] affiliation to leftism [. . .] participation in the Spanish civil war [. . .] affinity for Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru [. . .] his admiration for the profundity of objective social criticism in Tolstoy and Blazac [. . .] new social ethos in Ruskin and Morris [. . .] he seems to be exposed to pulls in different directions at the same time. (Mulk Raj Anand: A Revaluation 16)

There is vacillation exhibited by Anand amongst these ideological pulls. At the same time these pulls led him to the conclusion: “socialism implied spiritual change” (Apology 167). Anand came to socialism through Tolstoy, Ruskin Morris and Gandhi and “accepted Marxism as a fairly good historical yardstick but considered humanism [. . .] as the more comprehensive ideology” (“Postscript” Apology 185). Though there is remarkable failure on the part of the author to work out a compromise between these opposites in his personal life, in his creative writing, he has been successful in depicting proletarian humanism to establish the dignity of the subalternate and to explain the deepest level of truth. Hence his characters were able to exercise a choice between the contrary extremes and were saved from the vacillation that the author experienced in his private life.

Conversations in Bloomsbury Published in 1981 is an authentic record of the conversations that went on among the Bloomsbury intellectuals. Paranjape writes in the notes appended to his study on Eliot: “I believe that the conversations are indeed authentic” (“T.S. Eliot” 67). Anand has made use of this material in several places including his confessional novel The Bubble. These conversations have taken place so many years before it was published. Narasimhaiah asks: “how did Mulk reproduce all
these conversations with authenticity in print?” (Rev. of Conversations 76). The answer is simple. Some of these conversations have been recorded, some written down in a diary and a part recaptured from his memory years later. Asnani documents it: “Anand in one of his recent letters, assures me that these are the results of all the three possibilities, and remained concealed in the big pile of his still unpublished work” (Rev. of Conversations 196). So Fisher’s observation—“Conversations in Bloomsbury are [sic] significantly fictional” (“Mulk Raj Anand as Autobiographer” 177)—cannot stand the trial of truth. Hence the inclusion of this work under factual works.

There are no dates given as to when Anand’s meeting with these famous literary figures happened. However taking into account textual evidences it can be concluded that these discussions began around 1926. In 1925, i.e. five years after the “Bloomsbury met together [. . .] to found the memoir club” (Rosenbaum, “Foreword” ii) Anand reached England to study philosophy. At the suggestion of his girlfriend Irene, he acquired the habit of writing diary, letters etc. leading to an attempt in giving form to a two thousand page long confessional in the background of Indian freedom struggle. When he saw the suppression of coal miners’ strike in England in 1926, he was reminded of the seven stripes he got from police in connection with Indian freedom struggle. The value of the Buddha’s teaching about sorrow was another factor which activated the creative ability in him. There is a detailed discourse on these points in “Mulk Raj Anand Remembers” (177-78).

Soon Irene had to depart for Ireland due to her father’s demise. This was the immediate provocation for Anand to establish contact with the Bloomsbury. Anand writes: “‘I have already begun a confession about my childhood, [. . .] about my mother and playmates [. . .] I blushed because I had decided to emulate Joyce’s example’. I had taken inspiration from his self-examination” (Conversations 13). Anand’s conversations
in the Bloomsbury circle gave him the background to compose the rudiments for a confessional work "which was to become the series *Seven Ages of Man*" (6) in later years. The conversations continued until 1935 and were authentically preserved by Anand. They illustrate how the Bloomsbury considered "the pleasures of literature and art [...] ends in themselves" (Asnani, Rev. of *Conversations* 193).

The most significant factual work that Anand has written is the *Autobiography: Part One: Story of a Childhood Under the "Raj": Pilpali Sahab* published in 1985 and republished in 1990 with a change of title: *Pilpali Sahab: The Story of a Big Ego in a Small Body*. The author reveals that it covers a period of the first nine years of his life (Pilpali Sahab 324). It is the author's recorded diary which functioned as the raw material for its imaginative retelling in his confessional -- *Seven Summers* (1951). One of the amusing factors here is that the factual work *Pilpali Sahab* was published thirty four years after the publication of the confessional work. As Nandakumar observes, it illustrates the difference between "finished product and raw material, fiction and fact, conscious artistry and recorded diary, novel and autobiography" (Rev. of *Autobiography* 41). Anand originally proposed to publish two more parts of the autobiography as announced on the back cover of the 1985 edition. Even the titles were fixed: *Part Two: Story of a Boyhood under the "Raj": The Spark* and *Part Three: Story of Youth Under the "Raj": The Rebel*. But these books have not come out so far. Had they been published, they would have been the sequels of diary entries to *Morning Face* (1968) and *Confession of a Lover* (1976), the second and third parts of *Seven Ages of Man*.

The wealth of Anand's biography lay scattered in a number of journals out of which a profound history of the author can be carved out. It is interesting to watch his growth from the innocence of his childhood to the stature of a man of unequated
sensibility. Mulk Raj Anand was born on 12 December 1905 in Peshawar. He was the third son of Lal Chand, an Indian havildar clerk of 38th Dogra Regiment of British Indian Army. His mother was an ignorant Sikh peasant woman inclined partially to the Muslim prophet Aga Khan and partially to Guru Nanak. She was able to recite Bhagavad Gita in a grand way, an art she learned from her husband. The family belonged to Kshathriya coppersmith brotherhood which came under the second division of the Hindu society—Brahmins or priests, Kshathriyas or warriors, Vaisyas or tradesmen and sudras or menials. From early childhood onwards Anand mingled with the untouchable children of the menials in Nowshera cantonment. These playmates made permanent impressions on his mind which contributed immensely to the proletarian sympathies evident in his fictional writing.

Anand’s school education was completed in a local primary school in Nowshera, G.H.S., Ludhinana, Pandit Baji Nath High School, Amritsar and Govt. H.S. Jhelum. Though he was brought up in the English system of education, he became aware of the British tyranny over the natives when the Adjutant sahib of his father’s regiment flung his cane at him for disrespectfully saluting him on the way. Later when Indian freedom struggle was acquiring momentum Anand broke the curfew in Amritsar in April 1919 for which he was detained in Kotwali police station and given seven stripes of cane. When the agitation culminated in a massacre in Jalianwala Bagh, the episode of seven stripes opened to him an opportunity for establishing acquaintance with some of the leaders of the struggle. Subsequently he joined Khalsa College, Amritsar. Inspired by the speech of Mrs. Annie Besant at the college, he responded to the call of Mahatma Gandhi and came into the mainstream of the National Struggle. Anand records in Caliban: “The cue of passion from my wish to do something to help the poor, came from the Mahatma, great soul, […]” (125). Impulsively he joined a terrorist group at Lahore. He went to a
cellar where a crude bomb was being made. Anand writes: "I learnt to make a bomb. But my learned adopted uncle Dev Dutt, told me about Gandhi: That the Mahatma said one must not hit back" ("Looking Back" 7). He was arrested and imprisoned in Lahore central jail for his connection with the terrorists but he escaped punishment at the interference of the poet Iqbal. Anand says: "I felt that only Gandhiji’s sacrifice, fasts and sincere work might give me the courage to die for freedom [...]") (Seven Stripes 246).

His mother too had shown allegiance to Gandhi by rejecting silk clothes, making a bonfire out of them and beginning to wear the homespun. His father was a pseudo-Arya Samajist. He was always at the mercy of his British officers and failed to reconcile with his son and wife’s ways. He abused them for bringing disgrace upon him as he was a devoted servant of the British-Indian army hopeful of winning the Meritorious Service Medal. He slapped his son for disobedience and launched physical assaults upon his wife that provoked Anand’s sensitive mind to think about some sort of retaliation. Anand confesses in CRY: “my father was disloyal to India, [...] he was serving the British, who would not give freedom to India” (2).

It is interesting to sum up Anand’s confession in “About ‘the Lost Child’” (26-27) that the withering away of his little cousin Kaushalya at the age of nine due to consumption, the death of his uncle Partap allegedly poisoned by Partap’s wife Devaki and the suicide of Devaki herself for being excommunicated from the coppersmith brotherhood, had their impacts upon him. The reasons for the ostracism imposed upon the author’s aunt were her keeping company with a Muslim lady Nargis (the step-mother of Anand’s college friend Noor Muhammad) and her alleged illicit relation with a rogue (Ananta) who was her cousin. Anand observes: “If legend was correct, [...] my aunt Devaki drank in the company of [...] Ananta, [...]” (City 140). The incidents brought three successive shocks in the author’s life. The first shock came when he was at the age
of eleven which resulted in Anand’s first literary outpouring for the author reveals that it was however a letter addressed to God Almighty asking him why he had caused the death of his little cousin so early in her life (“Why I Write” 2). It is also observed that one or two critical illnesses that the author acutely suffered in his childhood were bringing him to a reflective turn of mind (Apology 37). This sensibility got intensified when:

my maternal uncle, Sardar Dayal Singh taught me the divine discontent of Guru Nanak, Kabir, Farid and “bhakti”. The “inward” bent was encouraged by one or two novels of Rabindranath Tagore, which I read, especially Gora, in English translation at that time. (“About ‘the Lost Child’” 28)

Soon Anand fell in love with Yasmin, the sister-in-law of his college friend Noor Muhammad. She was engaged to a Railway Guard. Anand tried to persuade her to break the arranged marriage. He failed in the attempt and in his disappointment ran away to Bombay. He was also an accomplice in the bomb case at Lahore inviting his father’s un-abatable wrath that expedited this action. In Bombay, he came in contact with B.G. Horniman, a journalist of Bombay Chronicle. Anand observes in this context: “I began to write reviews and notes for this paper. My father passed out and I was reconciled through Horniman’s good offices to the idea of returning to Amritsar, to take my Bachelor of Arts Degree” (“About ‘the Lost Child’” 28). On his return from Bombay, “unable to forget Yasmin, he made up his mind to elope with her to Kashmir, [. . .] knowing Yasmin’s plan, her husband killed her on the day she was to flee” (George 9). Apart from the Bombay experience which he gave artistic expression on his return, and a few love-letters written in poetry addressed to Yasmin, no creative attempts
have been noticed in this phase of Anand's life. The author himself remarks ("The Making" 34) that the philosophical poem "Asrar-i-Khudi" in Persian written by Muhammad Iqbal influenced him. This poem, he continues, translated into English by Professor Nichols was posing questions about the identity of an individual asked in the Upanishads, in the Koran and by the Persian poets-- Rumi, Hafiz, Amir Khusrau, Ghalib and Hali. These questions which he began to ask himself found artistic expression in his loose thoughts as recorded in his private diary. However, the rift with his father was compelling him to escape from the country. Anand remarks in Apology for Heroism that the immediate cause of his impetuous decision was that his father hit his mother in an argument about his having gone to jail in Gandhi Movement and having fallen in love with the Muslim girl in Lahore (45). On getting B.A. (Honours) degree, the poet Iqbal, Anand's mother and Lalla Man Mohan (the Principal of Khalsa College) helped him to go abroad to United Kingdom to study philosophy. It was in the early autumn of 1925. Under G. Dawes Hicks he got a scholarship to do research on the thoughts of Locke, Hume, Berkeley and Russell. The professor sent him to North Wales to equip him with the background of the Western thought. Anand confesses: "I had not read much of original Greek or modern thought, or even Indian thought. So Professor Hicks sent me away with a boxful of books to North Wales to study and make up the lacunae in my Indian education" ("About 'the Lost Child'" 29). Here Anand fell in love with Irene Rhys, an artist girl who became his true counterpart physically and spiritually. Anand was later troubled by the study of many systems of philosophy. He remarks in "Why I Write" that he was confused to realize that he did not know classical languages, physics, mathematics or biology and therefore was not able to study anything worthy of consideration in academic philosophy (3-4). This fact is further emphasized by Anand in "The Making":
And there were doubts about whether any logical statement could be made about anything except as a tentative working proposition. [. . .] I was confused at home, through the decay of the most of our faiths into rituals, discrimination between superiors and inferiors, and dead certainties of the quarrelling religions. (35)

Irene insisted upon him that he should put down his memories about women and read them to her. When he started this attempt his confusion springing from the study of various systems of philosophy was dispelled. On reading Anand’s article “About ‘the Lost Child’” (29-31) it is understood that the author was busily engaged in writing the confessional than reading books on philosophy for his doctoral dissertation. When the work was complete he read it to Irene. She found the poetic parts of the work good for prose poems. The aphorism of Guru Nanak: “we are all the children lost in the world fair” (“Why I Write” 4) was the inspiration for the 2000 pages long confessional. It was in this mood that he wrote the allegorical pieces, “The Lost Child”, “The Eternal Way” and “The Conqueror”. Eric Gill, one of Anand’s wise counsellors, offered to publish “The Lost Child” in his hand press. Six months later Odhams Press published it as the first one in a fat volume entitled Great Short Stories of the World.

Anand confesses in another article that Tolstoy’s Childhood Boyhood and Youth has been another dominant source of inspiration to compose the confessional (“The Making” 35). The work impressed Irene so deeply that she chose to pay her tribute by undertaking the job of typing the manuscript—a daunting task even for a professional. Irene believed that it would also be published some day like “The Lost Child”. But no publisher looked into the bulky matter. Irene suggested to Anand to write one or two novels about some of the characters in the confessional that had attracted her attention
and Anand accepted the suggestion. He chose Bakha whom he admired in his boyhood for the recitation of the epic poem “Heer Ranja” by the Punjabi poet Waris Shah and for the mastery in playing hockey in the cantonment. It was after this character that Bakha assumed the stature of the protagonist in his first novel. The title of the novel Bakha was later changed to Untouchable. Anand had high expectations about this subaltern protagonist. He sincerely records: “I had read Leo Tolstoy’s Haji Murad. And though my hero was not like this rebel chief, Bakha might, I felt, become aware of his lot and grow into a mood of rebellion” (“The Making” 35).

As observed earlier, it was to escape from the mental distress created by the absence of Irene that Anand associated with the Bloomsbury intellectuals. This connection gave him opportunity to work in Hogarth Press which Mrs. Virginia Woolf started in 1917. He became a regular participant in the At Homes (the meeting of the Bloomsbury friends) in Mrs. Woolf’s residence (“Remembers” 154-55). There Anand was impressed by James Joyce and adopted his style and technique for his first novel. The time cycle of one day in the life of Bakha was also an adaptation from Joyce as documented in “The Making” (36). After the general strike of 1926, Anand “began attending a study in Marxist thought at the home of Allen Hutt [...]. But the full impact of Marx was not felt until 1932 when he accidentally fell upon Marx’s Letters on India” (Cowasjee, “The Hard Road” 85). During one of the At Homes in Mrs. Virginia woolf’s drawing room, says Anand (“Remembers” 178), a young critic Edward Sackville asked him what he was writing. When he said that he was writing about an untouchable, the critic’s remarks discouraged him. He disapproved of any novel about the poor. He felt that one could only laugh at the cockneys like Dickens did.
In the autumn of 1926 Anand visited Irene in Ireland. This was a novel experience to the author which he relates in “The Making”. In the company of Maud Gonne he heard that in Lady Gregory’s play Spreading the News, the peasants of her own village were presented as characters. She transliterated their expressions in English and felt that there was resemblance between the speech of these characters and that of the peasants of his mother’s village in central Punjab. Anand’s friendship with W.B. Yeats, A.E. (George Russell) and Paedar o’ Donnel also started during this phase of his life. They were also trying to transliterate some of the native expressions into English language evolving a kind of English which Francis Stuart called “pigeon Irish” (37). Anand felt that it was impossible to interpret Irish characters without transliterating Irish people’s original speech. This spirit is there in A.K. Ramanujan’s view: “modern fiction, is bound to reality in a very important way. You have to get tones, dialects” (Martin 141). During this period Anand happened to read in Young India Mahatma-Gandhi’s description of Uka, an untouchable sweeper boy whom Gandhi adopted in his Ashram. He told A. E. the remarks of Edward Sackville. A.E consoled him saying: “there is no room for poor outcastes in Bloomsbury. You go to Gandhi who equates the struggle against untouchability with the struggle for freedom” (“Looking Back” 7). Anand understood that a novelist should not escape the squalid reality in his work which brought him “a kind of sudden fit of revulsion against my [his] existence in elitist Bloomsbury” (“Why I Write” 5). Gandhi had described Uka so realistically and truthfully that Anand was overpowered by the desire to meet him. A. E. was particular that Anand should meet the old man involved in the struggle against imperialism and rejection of outcastes simultaneously. Anand wrote a letter to Mahatma Gandhi seeking permission to visit him. A. E. wrote a recommendation separately. Finally a postcard
came in March inviting Anand to visit Sabarmati Ashram at the end of May or early June. Anand records that he paid the visit in the spring of 1929 ("The Making" 38).

In Gandhi Ashram Anand was admitted under three conditions. He should neither look at women with desire nor drink alcohol in the Ashram. Moreover he must clean latrines once a week. Gandhi believed that "the young should conserve sex energy and use it for service of others" (Little Plays 130). Anand was happy to accept the third condition more willingly as it would integrate the hero's experience into his own self. Mahatma Gandhi corrected the draft of the novel and finally the 250 pages long work got reduced to 150 pages. The objections raised by Gandhi and the lessons the author learned from the Mahatma are narrated in detail in "The Making". Gandhi objected to the artificial language of Joyce. Gandhi did not think that an untouchable latrine cleaner was likely to speak in sophisticated expressions. Anand revised the entire novel. Bakha's speeches were altered to suit an uneducated Indian villager. Further, the author managed to portray Bakha's real feelings using direct speech in the manner of "pigeon Irish". Anand calls this language "pigeon Indian". Anand has preserved stream of consciousness technique adopted by Joyce in devising the narrative strategy of the novel (37). The residue of Gandhi's teachings can be observed in the novelist's sincerity and truthfulness in depicting the subaltern protagonist in Untouchable. Anand was able to keep detachment while allowing the protagonist face his predicament from his individualistic perspective and find expression for the emotion he felt in verbal equivalents suitable for a sweeper boy. Hence Anand was breaking off from Joycean complexity to Gandhian sincerity of expression. Moreover Gandhi succeeded in teaching Anand that a novelist should explore the unattempted areas of life. He should not alienate from it. Anand himself has acknowledged this fact. He further observes: "Joyce who attempted in the novel the relativity of Einstein, or of Picasso's cubist planes
alienated the novel form from life”. Joyce was making his work “art for art sake” by using a synthetic language “which takes the novel to the obscure areas of non-communication” (43). Thus Gandhi brought Anand back from “Bloomsbury intellectualizations” to the realistic planes of Indian life and setting. When Anand brought back Untouchable to London nineteen publishers returned it for the next four years with the usual rejection slip. The twentieth publisher accepted it because E. M. Forster wrote the preface. Finally it came out in print. Pillai records that it has entered into 40 languages of the world till date and is printed in the series Penguin Contemporary Classics in London and World Book in America (169).


Untouchable (1935) published by The Bodley Head marked the formal beginning of Anand’s literary career. It brought the author an unprecedented popularity which inspired him to come forth with a series of novels: Coolie (1936), Two Leaves and a Bud (1937), The Village (1939), Across the Black Waters (1940), The Sword and the Sickle (1942), The Big Heart (1945) etc. Cowasjee records that Anand went across French frontiers into Spain in March 1937:

to join the International Brigade in the University trenches, possibly stirred by the German émigré writer Ludwig Renn’s exhortation that the contemporary writer’s role was no longer to make history. He had been
in the trenches for only a fortnight when the Communist Party shaken by the death of its intellectuals [...] withdrew Anand and the other writers from the fighting line and gave them journalistic assignments. [...] Anand stayed for three months in Spain ("The Hard Road" 88-89).

Anand was then fully convinced that art must be for the welfare of life. The author reveals ("Remembers" 179-182) that he joined hands with the progressive thinkers like Sajjad Zaheer (Oxford), Dr. Ghosh (who taught Bengali), Cedric Dover (an Anglo-Indian from Calcutta), Dr. M.D. Thaseer (Urdu poet) etc. and framed a manifesto to explain their stance. The chief architects of the manifesto were Dr. Ghosh and Anand. They exhorted the writers to confront the realities of Indian life. Eventually Anand attended the World Writers Conference (1937) held in Madrid in Spain: "He represented India in the International Writers Conference against Fascism (This gave him opportunity to come into close contact with Kathleen Van Gelder, [...]. Their admiration for each other eventually led to their marriage)" (George 12). Anand came to India in 1938, associated himself with Nehru and other leaders of Indian freedom struggle and organized All India Progressive Writers Conference in Calcutta. It was presided by Rabindranath Tagore. Leftist parties including the Communist Party of India supported the movement. This marked the completion of Anand’s retreat from the Bloomsbury intellectual school and the transformation to a proletarian humanist and radicalist.

From 1941 onwards Anand was taking up assignments with the B.B.C. Cowasjee’s observations on the biographic details ("The Hard Road" 90-96) can be summated here for information. Sir. Malcolm Darling, the Indian Editor of B.B.C from 1940 to 1944, asked Anand for short plays designed to enlist India’s support in Britain’s war against Germany. Anand explained his difficulty to work in the Indian broadcasting section. His allegiances were with Indian National Congress and Gandhi in their fight
against the British supremacy in India. When Hitler invaded Russia in 1941 Anand, inspired by Orwell, supported Britain as they were on the anti-Fascist side. By then the Indians in England also began to achieve equality with the English in their anti-Fascist movements. Writers of the thirties like E.M. Forster whose “perspective was generally that of a liberal humanist [. . .]” (Panwar 88) too felt deep sympathy for communism in its efforts to fight Fascism. Nevertheless, Anand’s anti-British sentiments expressed in *Letters on India* (1942) to bring freedom to the nation from British rule brought displeasure among many of his Bloomsbury friends. Finally he came back to India in 1946 and settled down in Bombay. Anand met a clever and talented girl (Anil de Silva) in Bombay. On her advice he started the art magazine—*Marg*. In 1948 Anand “returned to London to seek divorce from Kathleen Van Gelder, a charming communist girl he married in 1938” (93). But without waiting for the author to come back, the nymphomaniac Anil de Silva met a French man in Bombay and proceeded to Paris to marry him. Anand, failing to dissuade the girl from this step, had a nervous breakdown. Later Anand was nursed in Bombay by a Greek dancer named Melpo. On her advice he sought purgation to his system by the articulation of his anguish in *Private Life of an Indian Prince*. Cowasjee rightly records: “Anand has caricatured some aspects of his own emotional life; [. . .]” in this work (Introduction. *Private Life* 19). But this confessional came out in print only several years later. The novelist creates an autobiographical protagonist Maharaja Ashok Kumar (Prince Victor) in this work. As autobiographical characters do not come under the purview of this study, Prince Victor is excluded from the behaviour analysis made on the forthcoming pages.

The Progressive Writers Association condemned Anand for his decadent morals even though he had been a proletarian humanist. They also could not approve of the way how he was portraying the poor, as Anand’s characters appeared in his fiction entirely
different from what the Communist partyline demanded. A group of Congressmen too
encouraged the personal defamation. Consequently Anand suffered from another
nervous breakdown. By then he had gained popularity as the foremost writer from India.
Nehru brought him back to the cultural activities making him a member of Indian
delegation to attend international conferences. Anand renounced the editorship of *Marg*
in 1982 to devote completely to his confessional in *Seven Ages of Man*.

It is Anand's life history. This material is imaginatively retold in *Seven Ages of Man* under the garb of an autobiographical character Krishan Chander Azad. As this study is an investigation into the psyche of the protagonists developed by Anand, this hero who is Anand himself has been excluded here. But it is interesting to examine factual and confessional works to attempt a comparison which illustrates the art of transforming fact into fiction. Iyengar explains how good literature can be made out of “puranic or historical times, political or social life, antiquity or the living moment” seizing them imaginatively to be “rendered with glow of feeling and intensity of a new vision” (“Indian Writing in English and Modern” 42). *Seven Ages of Man* represents the seven stages in the life of Man as Shakespeare envisaged in *As You Like It*. But only five volumes of the work have come out so far-- *Seven Summers* (1957) *Morning Face* (1968) *Confession of a Lover* (1976) *The Bubble* (1984) and *So He Plays His Part*. The last work has been published in two volumes-- *Little Plays of Mahatma Gandhi* (1991) and *Caliban and Gandhi* (1992). Anand exquisitely carries out the “glow” and “intensity” that Iyengar conceives in transmuting fact into fiction in these books.

The most significant achievement of Mulk Raj Anand is undisputably his fictional writing. Anand who has chosen his protagonists from among the underdogs and imaginatively idealized them has placed them conveniently in fiction to face certain
critical situations that they have to face there. They respond to these crises in a distinctive way— in a way that is different from how majority of subalternates are compelled to react in such contexts. The author seems to present certain models for the common subalternate for the rewriting of the existing social codes which segregate them as second rate citizens. A close analysis of these protagonists reveals that they behave according to some standards which can be explained using a theoretical framework extensively developed in this study. It seems to be the author’s effort to delineate the protagonist as different from himself and the ordinary underdog at the same time. The attempt justifies the author’s view that art must be for improving life. In a feudalistic and colonial Indian setup, to improve the lifestyle and nature of reaction of a group of people who are marginalized due to their lower caste or lower economic status, the need for highlighting men with greater sensibility becomes essential. In Seven Ages of Man Anand’s intimate association with such men who have been more sensitive to their problems than the commoner in the crowd is clearly explained. In fictional works these characters attain fuller expression of their personality. This attempt from the author provides a behavioural uniformity to these protagonists presented in one novel after another. Though it seems to be an unconscious attempt, it provides a kind of continuity and succession beginning with Bakha.

Anand’s fictional works are comprised of novels ranging from Untouchable (1935) to Death of a Hero (1963), the eight volumes of short stories from The Lost Child and Other Stories (1934) to Between Tears and Laughter (1973)—if Selected Short Stories published in 1954 is also included—and miscellaneous works such as Indian Fairy Tales (1946), Aesop’s Fables (1960), Folk Tales of Punjab (1973) etc. But the study excludes miscellaneous works since they are collected, borrowed or retold material where the prototypes of the Anandian protagonists do not surface. In the short stories the
author introduces the protagonist but the world of the narrative into which the protagonist is placed is not elaborate enough for a meticulous study as in the novels. In addition many of the themes of these short stories find fuller expression in the novels. Niven observes: “The themes of all these novels find many echoes in the volumes of collected short stories” (The Yoke 25). Hence it seems unnecessary to include short stories for a detailed critique. The study is ultimately intended to explore the behavioural pattern of the protagonists in Anand’s fiction limited to the ten volumes of novels classified under fictional works. The ensuing part of this chapter undertakes a survey of these novels with special emphasis on the author’s familiarity with the flesh and blood counterparts of his fictional characters. It further analyzes how the author has succeeded in keeping detachment in the process of creation. The theoretical support is supplemented towards the close of this chapter to suggest a link in the choice of action of these protagonists placed against differing crises in these different novels.

_Untouchable_ came in print on 1 May 1935. Bakha’s quest in the novel is the progress of his self in search of the real meaning of life, opines Jonejn in “Fictional Strategies” (200). The “epic of this suffering” (qtd. in Dulai 188) illustrates the sweeper boy’s mental journey from ignorance to knowledge; from the hero’s “anglomania” (Sood 13) to his lost native. According to Larson, in the Third World novel importance was given to communal consciousness in the primary stage. In presenting the problems of colonial intrusion, characterization occupied only a secondary place. Later on there occurred a shift from “the collective consciousness to individual consciousness” (qtd. in Jonejn 195). Hence focus fell back on character development and “conflict is triggered by personal problems” (195). The story is the shared experience of the Indian sweepers but the burden is presented as the personal crisis of Bakha who realizes his marginalized position in the society. The action of the novel covers only twenty-four hours in the life of the hero. Pachori observes that John Locke, George Berkeley and David Hume have
influenced Anand and it has made the author apply sensory psychology and empiricism to Bakha’s psyche (42). It is true that Bakha gets a strange knowledge about his subalternity during these twenty four hours of experience even though the marginalization is an everyday experience to him. As a result of his social alienation Bakha begins to think of finding some way out from his subaltern state to which he is condemned. Pachori attempts to illustrate that Anand’s story supports Kantian/Fichtian position that sense without thought is blind. He observes that thinking has an important part in understanding the nature of experience (43). Though Bakha has no substantial educational background to facilitate the thinking procedure to find out a panacea for the ultimate problem that he has to resolve, he is able to compare some creative suggestions put before him.

The Christian salvationist exhorts Bakha to give up Hinduism and join Christianity to escape from the untouchability to which he is condemned. Gandhi speaks nice words about the untouchables. He urges the caste Hindus to treat untouchables more kindly from the understanding that scavenging is not a mean job. Bakha does not feel pleased by either of these suggestions. There is a third suggestion from a poet (Iqbal Nath Sarshar). It is Marx’s materialistic method of the use of machines—in the given social context, the flush system. It can eradicate untouchability through bringing an end to scavenging. Bakha fails to comprehend fully the complex use of machine which can bring an end to untouchability. Hence there is no initiation from the part of the protagonist for liberation of at least himself from the social evil that surrounds him. Instead he decides to inform his father of what Gandhi and Iqbal suggested towards bringing an end to untouchability. The question remains: What fails the protagonist from taking the initiative? Sunaina Singh comments: “Anand’s protagonists have a dominant urge to transform the prevalent system but are torn between the impulse to bring a change for the good and the knowledge that they alone cannot do it” (139). But
Anandian protagonists often choose a middle way in such ideological crises instead of remaining undecided as suggested by the phrase “torn between”. Anand knew Bakha personally from his childhood and was impressed by his dexterity in carrying out any mission he was entrusted with. It is neither an Indian way of responding to situations by feeling that an individual alone couldn’t transform the prevalent system. There are instances to illustrate that the untouchables in India had the mettle to retaliate. In *Young India* dated 14 May 1925, there is sufficient material to explain that the untouchables had enough potential for violence to overthrow the existing system. Mukherjee quotes it: “If the higher classes did not mend their behaviour towards them [untouchables], they would use physical force and teach them [the higher classes] a lesson” (qtd. in “The Exclusions” 42). Moreover, the powerful Dalit movements in the pre-Independence period “sought to transform the basic structure of the Indian social system, replacing caste and the accompanying social oppression, economic exploitation and political domination by an equalitarian society” (Omvedt, Introduction 10). Then why did Anand exclude revolutionary violence of the protagonists not only in *Untouchable* but also in all the novels to follow? In *The Sword and the Sickle*, Anand presents the conflict between Gandhian and Marxian dogmas in organizing the struggle for freedom against the British in India. Mukherjee proceeds to remark: “The possibility of revolutionary violence, however, is totally absent from Anand’s text, just as are absent the dissenting and angry voices of the contemporary untouchable leadership” (42). This significant view has been explored in this study in analyzing the moderation exhibited by these protagonists.

*Coolie* was first published in 1936. Anand was inspired to write the novel by Robert Tressell’s *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* and Jack London’s *Iron Heel*. In a letter to Saros Cowasjee, Anand writes frankly that there is no direct influence traceable behind its creation (*Author to Critic* 79). Anand confesses later that the novel
was “written in reaction to the poet T.S. Eliot’s praise of Kipling’s novel *Kim* ("Novel Form" 10). Many influences were at work when Anand wrote the novel. Anand resorts to conventional mode of narration as against the stream of consciousness technique adopted in *Untouchable*. The protagonist Munoo too is chosen from among Anand’s childhood acquaintances. In *Confession of a Lover* Anand alludes to a pickle factory run by a man named Prabha, next to Aunt Devaki’s house when Anand was staying at his aunt’s to attend Khalsa college. He used to slip into this factory: “I escaped into the pickle factory next door for my ablutions. And [. . .] where Prabha and Ganpat, the owners of the factory, did their accounts”. (49) There is one more allusion in the work, which is significant here: “I slunk away in to the caverns of the pickle factory, to my roots in the free physical life of the hillmen coolies, to eat mango jam and to drink sherbet with the essence of roses” (52). Anand’s connection with Munoo begins here. After the death of Aunt Devaki, the boy used to sleep with the author. Though the house remained desolate, Anand continued to stay there to complete his studies. He began to show sleep walking symptoms. He liked his handsome uncle and aunt Devaki who “was lovely”(*Seven Summers* 24). He had nightmares and used to act them out. Anand narrates: “Munoo complained to me in the morning that I had got up and sat on the chair by the table and then returned to bed and nearly trampled on him” (*Confession* 120). Anand’s intimacy with Munoo developed during his adolescence. He has fictionalized him in *Coolie* even without any change of name.

The novel depicts the physical and mental maturing of Munoo--a hill boy--through his social experiences. Tajinder Singh brands the work as bildungsroman (119) and Gupta observes that the boy tries to adjust himself with every one of his situations ("*Coolie--A Prose*” 97). The protagonist becomes more and more estranged and his labour becomes estranged labour in Riemenschneider’s view. In the Marxian vein he
further remarks that the owners of the means of production always determine what and how he has to work and produce. Since “the worker cannot decide which articles he has to produce the working process itself becomes something alienative to him” (“The Function” 68). Hence Munoo is exploited from the moment he turns an orphan to his death at the service of Mrs. Mainwaring. Anand, as a reactionary against the inward looking art of the thirties, observes Dhawan, turned to Munoo whose father met with a slow death of bitterness and disappointment, failing to pay the interest he owed to his landlord from whom he had borrowed money. His mother too was a hapless victim of the situation after his fathers death (“Coolie” 12). Later, Munoo’s uncle, a class IV employee in a bank, supplies him as a servant in the sub-accountant’s house in the hope of getting a promotion. Munoo is only in a state of childish innocence at this stage. The exposure of Munoo to this family environment has a wider significance. The cruel treatment in the household drives him to search for love and comfort elsewhere. Hence he is occasioned to be the pet of Prabha and his loving wife for sometime. Finally he becomes the servant of Mrs. Mainwaring. The intimacy that Munoo develops for this woman makes him wilfully accept her tendency to exploit him. The author creates the antagonist Mohan as an “alter-ego figure” (Dhawan 17) to highlight Munoo’s reluctance to react against her. But Munoo realizes the injustice shown towards him. It is obvious from his reflection:

As the other coolies are given leave to go and rest at the rickshaw stand till they were wanted, Munoo’s heart sank. But he went through it all with a grim effort not to look morose and unwilling for he felt that after all he was the Memsahib’s personal servant, and in a way superior to other coolies. (Coolie 306)
This feeling of superiority is only a justification offered by his intellect. His actual feeling is different—he feels unhappy with his life in Simla as Mrs. Mainwaring’s personal servant. He writes to Ratan about “how he was unhappy because he was alone, and how he would like [. . .] to go back to Bombay” (308). Finally due to consumption, “when he had begun to bleed, and the knowledge of death confronted him, he had hated her [Mainwaring] [. . .]” (316). This hate is the product of his revolutionary sympathies on realization of the need for Marxian class struggle to bring an end to the exploitation of the proletariat. The awareness that a radical transformation of the society is required comes to Munoo when he listens to the speech of Sauda, the Trade Union leader. Sauda comments:

There are only two kinds of people in the world: the rich and the poor, [. . .] and between the two there is no connection. The rich and the powerful, the magnificent and the glorious, whose opulence is built on robbery and theft and open warfare, are honoured and admired by the whole world, and by themselves. [. . .] Stand up then, stand up for your rights, you roofless wretches, stand up for justice!.(Coolie 266-67)

Still Munoo does not resort to any violent protest and remains a passive sufferer. His awareness notwithstanding, he is incapable of protest either moderately or heroically since he is dissipating under the grip of consumption. Consequently his submissive suffering of Mrs. Mainwaring’s inhuman treatment becomes untypical of the other Anandian protagonists discussed here.

In Two Leaves and a Bud (1937) Anand fictionalizes the sub-human existence of coolies in tea estates. It is “a true reflection of what was obtaining in a typical Indian tea plantation in the pre-Independence period” (Reddy 21). There is marked evidence of the
novel's documentary quality. Cowasjee records: "It was a real story, which he [Anand] was writing, in thinly veiled fiction [. . .] he had first hand knowledge of the tea estates in Assam and Ceylon ("Anand's Two Leaves" 136). Cowasjee further explains that Anand has utilised materials from Whitley report to paint the pen picture in the novel. He observes that Anand has avoided exaggeration and has tried to minimize the brutalities done to the coolies by the English planters. S.M.Akhtar's Ph.D thesis published under the title Emigrant Labour from Assam Tea Gardens is another source that Cowasjee refers to (137). A news item published in a British newspaper one year after the publication of Two Leaves and a Bud would be relevant in this respect:

JOHART, February 16. Agreeing with the juror's verdict of guilty on a charge of culpable homicide, the Additional Sessions Judge of Johart has sentenced J.D. Young, Assistant Manager of a tea-garden, to three years imprisonment in connection with the death of a coolie girl about 16, in his bungalow on the night of December 10 last. There were multiple injuries over her body. Young is the Scotchman, and has been in Assam for 5 years. (Qtd. in Cowasjee, "Anand's Two Leaves" 138)

The Assistant Manager in Anand's novel attempts to seduce the protagonist's daughter. This episode has invited much disapproval from Englishmen. But the truth of the newspaper report explains the fact that such incidents were common in these tea plantations, especially before Independence.

Gangu, the main character in the novel "is an older version of Munoo. The innocence of Munoo displayed in Coolie is replaced here by experience" (George 65). Munoo meets his tragic end at the age of sixteen while Gangu is a middle aged man with wife and two children. They come to the plantation in search of job attracted by the false
hopes setup by Bhuta Ram, the recruiting agent. Anand’s awareness of their predicament is sincerely recorded when he quotes Morgan: “I found the boys in the Tea plantation in Ceylon running riot [. . .]. No coolie woman was safe” (qtd. in Bubble 402). In Cowasjee’s observation, Orwells *Burmese Days* also deals with similar experience (“Anand’s Two Leaves” 140). No wonder it is the story of exploitation in Rubber plantations to suggest its parallelism. George records (71) that the novel *Red Tea* published by Dr. P.H. Daniel--a medical officer who served in Assam tea gardens from 1941 to 1965--tells the story of exploitation there. Dr. Daniel interviewed a number of coolies and amalgamated their experience into his text. All these evidences support the view that Anand is fictionalizing true incidents in the novel.

Gangu belongs to the Rajput order, a clan famous for its members’ chivalry and valour. They consider it their proud destiny to fight evil. But Gangu is less like the typical members of his clan and more like the typical Anandian heroes--moderate at the face of evil. This is illustrated by the protagonist’s attitude when a rebellion is in progress in the estate. He withdraws himself from the leadership of the riot at a critical juncture, exhibiting the choice of the middle way as was done by Bakha. This aspect of their personas will be taken up for an analytical discussion in chapter V.

Anand’s *Lament on the Death of a Master of Arts* (1938) is a novelette occasioned by the death of his classmate Noor Muhammad. He is transcreated here as Nur. The author enjoyed very intimate personal relations with him while he was studying in Khalsa College, Amritsar. In a letter to Cowasjee, Anand relates the genesis of the story: Anand’s friend had been under a prolonged illness of T.B. But he used to recollect the days they spent together for he used to write to the author recalling those happy days. At the news of his death, Anand jotted down a few lines in memoriam about
his friend's painful experiences. It was during a sea voyage from Tilbury to Bombay harbour that he received the impulse to write the work. The author was bored with the talk of the tea planters on the P & O boat and was under the influence of Lorca's *Lament on the Death of a Bull Fighter* which he had finished reading at that time. He started elaborating an earlier poem into a long Whitman ballad that finally took the form of this work. Anand says:

> When I reached Lucknow, I read it to a beautiful woman, Attia Hussain. My friend, the scientist Hussain Zaheer, also read it and Bunne Sajjad Zaheer. And in a fit of generosity, Ahmad Ali suggested publishing it in the university magazine. Instead Dr. Zaheer's wife, Sayida, however, offered to pay for its printing in book form. (Author to Critic 107)

Anand felt that it was "the intensest if not the best" (108) work where he made education its central theme. Premila Paul rightly observes that in his book *On Education* the author gives an account of the lamentable condition of the educational system in India. She adds "*Lament* is an emphatic illustration, in fictional terms, of the horrid consequences of such a system of Education" ("Anand's *Lament*" 70).

The protagonist in this novella is excluded from this study for a significant reason. He remains a victim of the affliction with which he is burdened and is bedridden throughout the story making him incapable of any physical action. Yet one point must be taken into account. While the protagonist suffers so intensely, he begins to understand that "The whole world is in search of happiness" (*Lament* 36). This is the guiding motive for all Anandian protagonists who choose the path of moderation when they could react violently. They avoid violence to prolong their life in their search for
happiness. The study of Lal Singh in Anand's trilogy testifies to this fact. The trilogy consists of The Village (1939), Across the Black Waters (1941) and The Sword and the Sickle (1942). In the three novels the author seems to achieve perfection in his rationale for the delineation of the protagonist which he started with Bakha and proceeded to Munoo and Gangu in the earlier novels. In all the six novels Anand portrays the underprivileged as protagonists segregated by caste or some other evil in the society. All of them are marginalized due to their subalternity in profession or economic status. But there is a regular progress in their social status if an analysis is attempted in the chronology of their composition -- from the latrine cleaner Bakha to the coolie Munoo and from him to the tea-estate labourer Gangu and finally to the farmer's son Lal Singh. Psychologically too they attain progressive levels of maturity at the different stages in this hierarchy. Here Anand was depicting the psychology of the subalternate at four different stages in these six novels, out of his "compassion for the underdog and his annoyance and frustration at the way the poor Indians are exploited" (Sharma, The Influence 29). Bakha's literacy is very poor and his mind is underdeveloped to devote himself to any grave thought. Munoo, though a hill boy, has undergone "more schooling than Bakha, having gone as far as the fifth class" (Fisher, The Wisdom 41). Hence the protagonist is capable of some serious thought at least towards the end of the novel. Gangu, the middle aged worker, is remarkable for his independent thought and has concern over the welfare of his family from the very beginning. This situation culminates in Lal Singh with his infinite capacity for complex thought. This development suggests that these protagonists are not to be evaluated in isolation. They are the constituents of a whole which forms the author's concept of the moderate hero. This awareness forms the basis of this study.
In a long letter addressed to Saros Cowasjee Anand explains the circumstances which inspired him to write the trilogy with Lal Singh as the central character (Author to Critic 89-93). The protagonist undergoes three successive experiences. First as a rebel, then as a sepoy in the trench warfare and finally as a revolutionary to organize the peasants with an ultimate aim to lead an agitation for the overthrow of the British rule in India and to restore normalcy for leading a calm and peaceful life in his village. The author reveals in the letter that he spent some of his happiest days of his childhood, boyhood and youth in his mother's village in Central Punjab among the tradesmen of the North Frontier and in Kangra Valley:

The tang of the twelve seasons of the land of Five Rivers has always been in my nostrils. The Punjabi poetry I had heard, specially the 'Baramasa' poem of Guru Nanak, had filled me with images of the beauty of the Northern earth. The proverbs, the folk-tales, and the epic poems had been distilled into my consciousness through the recitals of my three maternal uncles. (89)

Anand further explains that his fellow students always inspired him with their talk about harvest and drinking lassi and sugarcane in their villages and he felt that these villagers were more innocent than the clever businessmen of the towns. Their spirit of service was nobler than that of the world of cash-nexus prevailing in the cities. The moneylenders usually deprived them of their small holding of land from which they took so little for the amount of work they put in. At first, out of the nostalgia during his exile in U.K., he thought of composing a novel of twelve seasons in the land of five rivers. Then he thought he would be getting back to the eternalist pattern and the old myth would become dominant. His mother's family was then undergoing some changes. His
grandfather fought against the British, his cousin betrayed the Sikhs and got land from the British Indian government, and his maternal uncles followed the alternative trade of bronze smithy by which craft only they could sustain their honest lives. Members of almost all peasant families were going through self-humiliation due to loss of land and unemployment. Anand thought of presenting this drama of “conflict between the old ‘fate’ and the new ‘fate’ of money, brought to India by the Sarkar—dethroning all the gods” (90). Anand believed that a novelist ought to apply himself to the understanding of human beings and when a human being entered as a character in a book, the novel itself would assume another kind of life. Hence Anand invented a protagonist—Lal Singh—to impersonate their experience. In the author’s own words: “As you know, the hero of the Trilogy emerges from the old fatalism, into a new world of freedom” (90). The protagonist possesses glimmerings of wisdom from his modest education and in defiance of the elders, he has his ritualistic hair cut off, for which he is humiliated by blackening his face and putting him on a donkey. His falling in love with his own cousin Maya is yet another crime. Anand adds that he would have been murdered, had he not run away and joined the army as “a mercenary soldier, drilled to commit organized violence, for Rs. 15/- a month, plus uniform, he has no choice at all. And when the First World War comes, he is drafted to the Western Front without being asked whether he wished to go” (91). This war experience is presented in the second book of the trilogy, *Across the Black Waters*. Dwivedi quotes the author as explaining that this book was sketched out in rough in Barcelona, Madrid during January and April 1937 and entirely written in Chinnor, Oxon between July and December 1939 (227). Anand had firsthand knowledge of the trench warfare in Spain for, as Harrex remarks, after he had returned to England in 1933, he was involved in the Spanish Civil War and other leftist causes (1: 76) for eleven years and this experience equipped him to present realistically:
the claustrophobic tension of men in the frontline, the immanence [sic] of
death and the pervading sense of inevitability which, though it is the
source of Anand’s anger, is at the same time at the root of so much Indian
fiction. (Niven 18)

Shivpuri makes the right observation when he comments: “Anand was brought up in a
military surrounding, and had himself fought in the Spanish Civil War. This novel sums
up his impression of army-life.” (“Across: The Hero” 128). The Punjab Government, in
1968, kept the Village under ban and one year after, in 1969, Across the Black Waters
was also banned.

In the battlefield abroad Lal Singh ends up a prisoner of war of the Germans. He
returns from the prison camp to India. Finding his family disintegrated and their land
irrecoverably lost, he comes in to contact with a few political agitators and learns the
doctrine of struggle. In The Sword and the Sickle there is abundant political matter and
for a proper understanding of this novel it is necessary to know the political situation of
the 1930s. The title Anand originally planned for the third volume was All Men are
Brothers based on the slogan that Lal Singh asks the peasants to repeat. George refers to
Animal Farm where Orwell brings in the slogan--all men are enemies and all animals are
comrades--and points out that it was Orwell who suggested the new title taking his cue from Blake’s “Gnomic Verses--Merlin’s Prophecy”:

The sword sang on the barren heath,

The sickle in the fruitful field,

The sword he sung a song of death,

But could not make the sickle yield. (Qtd. in George, 100)
In this novel the protagonist appears in dual roles—that of a lover and that of a political agitator. George further remarks: "His revolutionary role often reminds him, his mistake of eloping with Maya and in his extreme moments, he is sorry that his role as an agitator is a hindrance to his happiness" (112). Lal Singh is pulled by the opposing forces of reason and emotion. "The anxiety for a revolutionary movement of the right kind pulls him in one direction and the anxiety for Maya pulls him in the other" (Shivpuri, "The Sword: The Dynamic" 175). The urge to possess Maya stands for the urge for a comfortable life. Lal Singh stands partially possessed by affinities with revolt and martyrdom on the one hand and a happy and comfortable life on the other. The conflict in him assumes critical dimensions when he is informed that Kanwar Rampal Singh and other leaders are arrested at Rae Bareilli for not obeying the police orders of eviction from Rajagarh. Lal Singh immediately proceeds to Rae Bareilli. He finds that the peasants of his village have gathered there, to crowd round the jail where the leaders are imprisoned, to demand their immediate release. The gathering is under assault from the police and Lal Singh as a leader fails to resist the police attempt. He surrenders meekly crying out: "I am ready to surrender" (The Sword 375). Lal Singh manages to reconcile his conflicting urges in the third book because he prefers happiness to martyrdom. If he were a coward he would have stayed back instead of coming to the place of action and if he were reckless, he would have resisted the arrest. Instead he opts at a critical moment for the moderate stance like his predecessors in the canon. The heroes in the remaining four novels also conform to the theory of moderation uncharacteristic of tragic heroes. Anand wrote The Big Heart (1945) at the end of the Second World War when he was shocked by the endless devastation brought by modern man's machine civilization. The author was not against the use of machines for the welfare of man, nonetheless, the conflict in the novel is built up in the background of the machine age, when some
extremists strive to destroy machines. No doubt, the author has seen machine wrecking in Amritsar (Author to Critic 121) and was aware of the luddites riot—when the unemployed youth destroyed machines in despair—in the wake of the Industrial Revolution in England. In India, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru maintained opposing views regarding industrialization. The Mahatma aimed at the development of villages through the traditional crafts including the introduction of the spinning wheel. Nehru was in favour of establishing modern industries for a faster development and this had been substantiated by his policy through the implementation of Five Year Plans after India became independent. Anand seems to make a detached evaluation of these views and for this purpose he chooses a character named Ananta whom the author knew for his drunkenness, trade unionism and rebelliousness. This character appears originally in Confession of a Lover as aunt Devaki’s cousin. In this novel he lives outside wedlock with a woman Janki in the thathiār community. In a letter addressed to Cowasjee, Anand writes: “I had the hunch that my hero Ananta, has rescued enough nobility from the small life to which he was condemned by his adventures as a manual worker in Jamshedpur, Bombay and other places”. The author brings from the treasure of characters in confessional works, Ananta’s concubine Janki. He attributes her widowhood and consumption to add to her other miseries in her life with her partner. In this novel Ananta brings her to his hometown from the industrial cities where he had been working for a long time. In the hometown he faces a sudden curtail of wages and subsequent unemployment in the wake of opening a factory by a few wealthy thathiārs on partnership. In the midst of the agonizing circumstance, Ananta, “a negative hero” (Author to Critic 121) attempts to dissuade the coppersmiths from the extreme step of wrecking the machines. He strives to organize them as a force for collective bargaining
for employment amidst loss of job and starvation. In this novel also the author restricts his hero's reaction to a moderate one keeping safety and social amelioration in view.

*The Old Woman and the Cow* (1960) republished under the title *Gauri* (1961) was originally inspired by the nineteenth century writer Nicholas Nekrassov's epic poem *The Peasant Woman* translated by Mrs. Soskice. Anand makes a reference to the retelling of the story in his dedicatory letter to Sardar Jafri (*Gauri* 5) and Niven annotates it later in "Myth in the Moral" which can be summed up as follows: Gauri is Anand’s only woman protagonist and reminds us of Shaw’s Candida and Ibsen’s Nora who make choice at certain junctures in their lives. Gauri is a successor of Nora not Candida but she abandons her husband with a difference (99). Niven further observes: “The difference is that Gauri will not turn her back on the young generation, as Nora does, but bear her child in the new world and rear it with values and aspirations imbibed from Dr. Mehindra [sic]” (100). Anand has made an effective use of Sita myth from the *Ramayana* to model his heroine especially in her sufferings at the hand of her husband. Anand was witness to the womanly sufferings of his mother and aunt Devaki which also might have contributed to his portrayal of Gauri. C.K. Rajan makes a very significant reading in "Myth in Mulk Raj Anand’s Gauri." He observes that the author has explored in the novel the Parvati myth more continuously and meaningfully, and refers to the act that even the name of Gauri is a synonym of the goddess who stands for energy or power responsible for creation as well as destruction. He further remarks that the character Panchi is uninspiring and Gauri is the “shakti” or power of the whole novel (97).

It will be useful to have a glimpse on Anand’s view about the status of the Indian woman in *The Bride’s Book of Beauty* (1946). It centres round the concept of equality of man and woman. He remarks that the Indian woman has been adored as a goddess or
pampered as a doll or kept under oppression (16). Then he comments that compared with the European woman the Indian woman becomes more and more a man’s slave (41) and hence the success of her marriage depends upon her economic independence. Anand’s message in the novel is to this effect. P.K.Rajan records: “his humanistic passion for the liberation of women from their bondage to tradition [passion for protest] and his rather latent adulation for the traditional virtues [love for unconditional submission to the husband] of Indian womanhood” (“The Two Voices” 267) leave the author in a dilemma. But in Gauri, the Sita and the Parvati myths and the teaching of Dr. Mahindra are used as effective vehicles to carry out a compromise between extreme protest and total submission. Hence Gauri breaks off from her husband to give birth to her baby in Dr. Mahindra’s hospital where she has prospects of working as a nurse and achieving economic independence to sustain her life. She does not prefer extreme steps instead she chooses a middle way between violent protest and passive submission. It is a stance resembling that of the other protagonists already discussed, which Gauri also exercises to get release from the agonising situation to which she is put, with the hope of leading a peaceful life in future. A detailed discussion about the moderation exercised by Gauri in her life is taken up in chapter IV.

The Road (1961) was published twenty-six years after Untouchable. Even after a lapse of fourteen years since India gained independence, the fundamental social situation in our country with the domination of the caste Hindus over the downtrodden, with their narrow outlook and feeling of untouchability, remained unchanged to a very complex extent. This situation provoked the author to compose the book on untouchability theme once again. Anand observes that he was shocked when he had gone to live in Haryana to find that the caste Hindus in North India were more narrow minded than those of South India. He adds: “they would not touch the stones quarried by the
untouchables”. The place where Anand observed this situation was only twenty miles from Delhi, “the human empire of Nehru”, but when the author pointed out the fact to Nehru even he could not believe it. Anand records that he mirrored this drama of the road at various levels of consciousness of the people, incorporating “the unpalpable world of the characters involved” (Author to Critic 124). Kohli rightly observes that the social milieu is only an extension of that of Untouchable (“The Road” 232). Yet Bhikhu is slightly different from Bakha. He is the gang-leader of the group of “Chamars” consisting of Babu, Dasrath, Pandu, Shiva Ram, Bapu and Shankar. In the opening part of the novel the protagonist exhibits courage to defy the caste Hindus when Sajnu, son of the landlord Thakur Singh, accompanied by a few others, try to block him in his attempt to lead his mother to the shrine of God Krishna, built by Sajnu’s ancestors. “‘Don’t bar my way!’ Bhikhu said firmly, his face reddening” (The Road 6). In the portrayal of Bhikhu, Anand is drawing from the daring attempt of a group of untouchables in Haryana who make a road from Govardhan to Gurgaon to carry milk. Among them he identifies a dextrous workman, a replica of Bakha, actively making stones into rubbles. This working group was catching attention, in the words of Sajnu, for “their strength, their simplicity and the sound of their hammers” (The Road 77). The Road is an extension of Untouchable in another sense also. In the construction of the road Anand is exploring one of the panaeaces he offered to Bhakha—-the use of machine. Gupta observes: “the outcasts take the help of a road-engine to complete the construction” (qtd. in Kohli, “The Road: A Fresh” 210). But the use of machine which was acceptable to Bakha fails miserably in bringing an end to untouchability in The Road. What is noteworthy in the novel is that Bhikhu does not resort to violence on realization of the failure, instead he endures the burden as in the case of Bakha. Finally he escapes from the burning problem by walking along the newly constructed road to Gurgaon which is
the way to Delhi where none would find out his caste so that he can live without being branded an untouchable. It is noteworthy that there is something in his unconscious which aborts his initial range. This aspect is taken up for a further discussion in chapter V.

Death of a Hero: Epitaph for Maqbool Sherwani (1963) was written in 1947. It was revised in Khandala in 1961. The work was composed in the background of the partition of India and the national calamity that the country witnessed as a consequence. The historic incident narrated in the English edition of Malayala Manorama Year Book 2001 records:

The State of Jammu and Kashmir, which had earlier been under Hindu rulers and Muslim sultans, became part of Mughal Empire under Akbar. After a period of Afghan rule from 1756, it was annexed to the Sikh kingdom of the Punjab in 1819. In 1846 Ranjit Singh made over the territory of Jammu to Maharaja Gulab Singh. After the decisive battle of Sabroon in 1846 Kashmir also was made over to Maharaja Gulab Singh under the treaty of Amritsar. British supremacy was recognized until Indian Independence Act of 1947.

When all the States decided on accession to India or Pakistan, Kashmir asked for standstill agreements with both. In the mean time, the state became the subject of an armed attack from Pakistan and Maharaja acceded to India on 26th October 1947 by signing the instrument of accession. (“Jammu and Kashmir” 648)

Aston evaluates the situation (2: 101) and proceeds to remark that Jinnah wanted Kashmir to be a part of Pakistan. The critic’s observation can be summed up as follows:
The majority of people who lived there were Muslims but Kashmir was under the rule of Hari Singh, who did not want to join Pakistan. A tribal group from northwestern frontier attacked Kashmir and the King who had no potential for defence, escaped from Srinagar to get help from India. It was in return for the help that he offered to join Indian Union. The Indian soldiers invaded Kashmir and ousted Pakistani troops. A part of Kashmir thus became part of India and a part of Kashmir continued to be under Pakistan. The people of that part could not accept the idea of being a part of India (2: 101-02). Jung points out that Harsh Uday Singh Gaur and Sujjan Singh were two historic figures who died fighting militants in Kashmir. He records that Baramula witnessed another glorious martyrdom when Maqbool Sherwani—a Muslim poet and patriot—was shot by Pathan terrorists. “Mulk who spent three months in Kashmir in 1947, knew Sherwani as a young poet who was part of the Progressive Writers’ Movement, […]” (20). It was this acquaintance which inspired the author to resurrect the protagonist in this novel. The protagonist does not carry any weapon yet wants to face violence with violence. But there is the pervading love of life which is a domineering impulse in him to make him feel “when death is opposed to life then life must oppose death” (Death 80). Hence he runs away from Baramula to Srinagar during the crisis of Pakistani invasion, to evaluate the situation in Srinagar and come back later on. He leaves the responsibility of resisting the invaders to the Indian army. This attempt to escape martyrdom springs from his fondness for life. His preference of life to martyrdom fits into Anand’s line of moderate heroes who play it safe when extreme actions are demanded of them.

It is significant to notice Asanani’s remark: “Anand has been a forerunner of protest literature” (“Social Protest” 22). A close observation of the behaviour of the protagonists from Bakha to Maqbool Sherwani, who register their protest in their own characteristic way against the social injustices, shows their inherent potential to react
against those problems vehemently, though it dwindles to moderation in due course. Sunaina Singh observes:

Anand’s *Untouchable* deals with the curse of caste system, *Coolie* and *The Big Heart* with class struggle and capitalist industry, *Two Leaves and a Bud* with ruthless colonial mentality and the Lalu trilogy with the exploitation of the land owners and money lenders, *Gowri* [sic] with the subjugation of woman in a tradition bound society. All these concerns together with the insights they provide, make Anand’s novels a part of protest literature. (“Protest in the Novels” 132)

The spirit of violence and the inclination to extremism which form the basic instincts of a protest hero illustrate themselves to a certain level in the portrayal of Anand’s heroes. In *Untouchable* for instance, Bakha’s sister Sohini complains about the Brahmin priest’s attempt to molest her: “And when I was bending down to work he came to me and held me by my breasts.” Bakha has the instinctive fury to go to any extreme extent. He shouts: “Brahmin dog! [. . .] ‘I will go and kill him!’ And he rushed blindly towards the courtyard” (71). But it is typical of Anandian heroes to fall short of that extreme. Bakha halts somewhere between the urge for revenge and its execution for he does not kill the priest. He does not even attack the priest when he confronts him. Instead his fury and wounded pride notwithstanding, he remains moderate. Munoo in *Coolie* is only a hill boy but when he is put to abuses and physical assaults in the sub-accountant’s house, he realizes that there are two classes of people in this world. “Munoo felt that [. . .], at Sham Nagar, [. . .]” (*Coolie* 267). Thus he too has in him the fire and enthusiasm essential for a protest hero. But he does not retaliate. In spite of his suffering from T.B. there are psychological reasons also for his inaction. They are discussed towards the
close of chapter V. Gangu in *Two Leaves and a Bud* is a Rajput—a clan reputed for its fighting spirit. But he too suppresses his instincts for violence due to his moderate stance, as already explained in this chapter. Among these protagonists, Lal Singh alone possesses the capacity to revolt against social injustice. Lal Singh is the highest embodiment of the protest hero created by Anand with the instinctive impulse to react against the social injustice but he too is compelled to the customary exercise of moderation of a representative Anandian protagonist. Mehta catches the spirit of this observation when he remarks: “If Mundu [sic], the coolie is a more effeminate replica of Lal Singh, the turbulent giant Ananta is a muscular edition of Lal Singh, whereas Gangu working in the tea garden possesses the same characteristic” (“Mulk Raj Anand--the Novelist” 156). It is this reading that substantiates the view that these protagonists are not to be studied individually as they are constituents of one whole, which together make up the hero concept of the author. The linking factor among the characters in this hierarchy is the exercise of moderation in their behaviour in resolving their respective crises. Viewed from this angle the elements of the hero concept achieve ultimate perfection in Lal Singh, qualifying him to be branded the typical Anandian protagonist. In the other advanced protagonists--Ananta, Gauri and Maqbool Sherwani--the author is only attributing many of the traits of Lal Singh as he has done conversely with his earlier protagonists. As referred to earlier, he has been working out the conscience of the subalternate or the underdog, awakening at different stages of their psychological maturity and presenting their progress regularly from one protagonist to the next, culminating in Lal Singh. Hence the protagonists depicted by the author before and after the portrayal of Lal Singh also share certain traits of Lal Singh’s psyche, most obviously with regard to his preference for moderation in resolving the ultimate crisis. Accordingly, any study relating to the behaviour of the protagonists of Anand can be
done only with the character of Lal Singh as the touch-stone. It can explain the theoretical reasons for many of the aberrations noticed in the behaviour of the earlier and the later protagonists. As we know, Lal Singh is burdened with the responsibility of organizing the peasants for the struggle against the British rule in India. He finds his loyalties split between his commitment to Revolution and love for Maya Devi in the final book and surrenders to police to prolong his life. This behaviour is rather unconventional of an enthusiast like Lal Singh who ought to have heroically chosen martyrdom in this crisis. This middle way between sensuality and fiery patriotism fits in with Aristotle's concept of moderation as envisaged in *The Nocomachean Ethics*. There is the undercurrent of this view in a remark made by Kanwar Rampal Singh (the Count) in *The Sword and the Sickle*. Engaged in an endeavour to organize All India Kisan Sabha, he advises the extremists: “we must pursue the golden mean” (333). This advice is intended to achieve their ultimate end without inviting violence. In this instance Anand goes to the extent of stuffing the philosophy of moderation into the mouth of one of his characters using the exact Aristotelian term. Lack of violence against injustice in these characters thus becomes the author's preferred option in resolving social crises.