Chapter III

The Mean Unearthed in Lalu

Aristotle’s views on virtue in *The Nicomachean Ethics* led to an age-long controversy regarding the stance that the hero has to prefer in his life--either intensity or duration of his experience. Before trying to analyze the pros and cons of these contrasting options offered to the protagonist, it is required to discuss certain Aristotelian concepts which were left out in the last chapter. In Jaffa’s study on Thomas Aquinas’ commentary on *EN*, the latter’s classification of virtues has been clearly illustrated. Jaffa records (46-47) that these virtues are broadly divided into two--moral and intellectual. Moral virtues with which this study is concerned are subdivided into virtues of interior passions and justice which is a virtue of exterior operation or action. Virtues of interior passions get subsequently divided into two--those of principal passions and those of secondary passions. Virtues related to principal passions or primary passions are associated with preservation of life and those related to secondary passions, with wealth and honour. It can be represented using the following tree diagram.
The virtues connected with preservation of life are rediscussed here, in relation to their application in the behaviour of the protagonists created by Mulk Raj Anand, to explore the extent to which these protagonists practise moderation to attain the most final good. Aquinas’ attempt to group courage and temperance under passions required for preservation from destruction is significant in this context:

passions concerned with preservation from destruction, [. . .]. Courage, [. . .] comes first. Temperance, which is the virtue of the passions arising from the things that preserve life (food, drink and sexual intercourse) comes next [. . .] they are both the virtues of the irrational part of the soul. Courage of the irascible: temperance of the concupiscible [. . .] the passions arising from pleasure and hence courage is more “primary” than temperance. (Jaffa 47-48)

Jaffa points out (49-50) that two more groups of virtues come under the classification of primary passions. The first is liberality and magnificence and the second is magnanimity and proper pride. Anand’s protagonists who belong to the lower strata of Indian society do not possess the latter group of virtues. It has already been shown in chapter I that Lal Singh in The Sword and the Sickle is caught between the urge for revolutionary protest and passion for Maya Devi (his sweetheart). In such an impasse the operative virtues are courage and temperance. Anand has utilised the pattern of operation of these virtues in other protagonists like Ananta, Gauri and Maqbool, to make them moderate heroes. It would be analytically valid to apply Aristotelian theories of courage and temperance in the discussion of Anandian protagonists, their social behaviour, their dualism and above all in accounting for their withdrawal from embracing tragic grandeur at certain critical junctures, which cut their difference from the role of the tragic hero.
This chapter begins with an analysis of Aristotle’s contradictory observations on courage. In book II Aristotle says: “The man who shuns and fears everything and never makes a stand becomes a coward; while the man who fears nothing at all, but will face anything, becomes foolhardy” (37). Then he continues to remark: “he who faces danger with pleasure, or, at any rate, without pain, is courageous, but he to whom this is painful is a coward” (38). Aristotle is attempting here to give his conception of virtue based on the principles that inspire it. This fact is supplemented by the following observation:

The only reasonable interpretation of the passage in Book II, it would seem, is that it refers to the moral virtues in their merely moral character by habituation on the basis of correct principles, but not on the basis of intellectual apprehension of those principles. (Jaffa 93)

The question here is what happens when the intellectual apprehension of it takes its effect. Jaffa brings in a metaphor to make it easy. He compares moral perfection to the sun scattering light rays in all directions, the different rays standing for different virtues. At the centre they are united with the practical wisdom. This is the ideal level of virtue. He further argues: “the nearer the rays are to the sun, the more they resemble each other [. . .]” (95). What is questionable is this critic’s view that human virtues “are defined with reference to their ‘distance’ from the sun, not their proximity to it [. . .]” (96). The spirit of this argument springs from the fact that the critic is carried away by the inevitable grandeur of heroic courage. But let’s talk from Aristotle’s point of view. The courage treated in book II can be identified as one that Aristotle calls “moral excellence”. According to Jaffa’s metaphor, its “proximity” to the sun or “distance” from it establishes its level of imperfection. When the intellectual apprehension of ideal virtue takes place in a protagonist, there will be an attempt from his part to practise it in the mundane level. Such attempts from the protagonist sharing differing intellectual
potentialities invite marked differences in his distance or proximity to the ideal level. If
the protagonist's courage exhibits "proximity" it becomes ordinary courage and when it
shows "distance" it goes closer to heroic courage.

Jaffa also agrees that for immediate practical purposes there are "two different
kinds of courage" (56). Aristotle tries to explain these two basic positions of courage in
two significant contexts in books III and IX in a highly interesting way. The bravery
exhibited by an individual is determined by "the peculiarities of the circumstances in
which the brave action takes place [...]" and moderate courage viewed from the
pinnacle of heroic bravery may appear to be corrupt. It is clear that the intensity of
practical intelligence brings individual differences at two basic levels and hence practical
wisdom prompts a man to be better adapted "to deal with peculiar exigencies from which
it draws its distinctive qualities" (Jaffa 97). This is how Aristotle's description of heroic
and ordinary levels of courage assumes two distinct positions in this hierarchy. In day-
to-day human life it can be observed: "there is a generally recognized standard, with
reference to which men are called brave. [...] take note of what that standard is" (Jaffa
112). This is common bravery and the protagonist's courage assumes a middle way
between cowardice and reckless confidence, with a target to achieve "the most final"
good (EN 13). The practical wisdom of the protagonist advises him to choose this
particular level taking into account the circumstances that regulate his action. Here the
instinct will be to preserve his life as long as possible. It remains impossible for him to
face the critical situation either with pleasure or without feeling pain as there is every
chance for a catastrophe in the course of his action. The observation made by Aristotle
in book III, highlighted by critics, is to be taken into account for further discussion by
relating it to the above view. Aristotle says in book III: "men are called courageous for
enduring painful things" (EN 89). Then he draws the conclusion: "the rule that the
exercise of a virtue is pleasant does not apply to all the virtues, except in so far as the end is attained” (90). The courage Aristotle speaks of in this context attains perfection only when the agent attains happiness through a long and complete life. The means adopted to attain the end vary from individual to individual. Hence individual differences count in determining the choice of the distinctive forms of courage. In fact, the guidance practical intelligence is able to give the protagonist differs based on the circumstance that calls for a courageous action, the potential of the protagonist for the choice of action and the intensity of his experience for initiating such an action. In consequence, the practical advice that a superman receives will always be in favour of expressing heroic courage while it will be in favour of observing moderate courage for the ordinary sort unless intense need is felt. (If his prudence is convinced of this need, heroic courage finds its expression replacing the other sort.) Hence the reaction of an ordinary man and a superman to a specific social situation marks a colossal difference. It is to signify these apparent dividing lines that Aristotle remarks in another context in book IX:

it is quite true to say of the good man that he does many things for the sake of his friends and of his country, and will, if need be, even die for them. He will throw away money and honour, and, in a word all the good things for which men compete, claiming for himself that which is noble; for he will prefer a brief period of intense pleasure, to a long period of mild pleasure, one year of noble life to many years of ordinary life, one great and noble action to many little ones. This, we may perhaps say, is what he gets who gives his life for others: and so he chooses for himself something that is noble on a grand scale. (306-07)

Thus the superman’s preference for martyrdom in lieu of the ordinary man’s preference for length of life through the exercise of moderation in normal situations brings the
former the heroic stature as envisaged in *Poetics*. Aristotle’s view that death and wounds are equally painful to the courageous man and against his will must not be forgotten here and accordingly the superman, despite this pain, is impelled to choose heroic conduct, depriving himself of the best things in life. As already inferred, Aristotle speaks about two distinct levels of courage in *EN* and they need to be understood in terms of the positions they assume, to dispel the difficulty to differentiate between the ordinary and the heroic levels. It must also be borne in mind that Aristotle, in his attempt to explain the theory of moderation, conceives an ideal context where the protagonist is equipped for the choice of the mean in the arithmetic middle between the opposite extremes.

The reason for confusion that we encounter with the specific contexts referred to in books III and IX of *EN* springs from the lack of understanding of the above facts. Jaffa maintains the view that courage is actually a disposition which gives a protagonist the potential to overcome fear of pain arising from a crucial situation to which the protagonist is exposed and this fear is greater in a truly brave man than in an ordinarily brave man. To this critic “the truly brave” signifies the superman capable of expressing heroic courage. He incorporates authoritative views in his work to substantiate that the truly brave is “knowingly losing the greatest goods and this is painful” (84). No doubt the truly brave chooses to suffer for the noble cause of common good and if he invites tragedy, the nobility that encompasses the action compensates for the suffering. This is why Jaffa brings in Aquinas’ view: “death in battle [. . .] actually is the noblest” (Jaffa 77). The problem to be taken up here is what the choice of an ordinarily brave man will be, in a circumstance that inspires him for the choice of courage. As hinted at earlier, Jaffa observes: “civil society can survive without military virtue” (87). An ordinarily brave man cannot find a better answer than this one unless the heroic course of action is inevitably demanded by the inspiring factor. Hence what brings in the paradox in
Aristotle’s discourse is that he talks about courage without making clear distinction between its ordinary and heroic levels. Both “have the same name [. . .]” (91) and Aristotle refers to “now one, now the other” and does not “provide absolute dividing lines” (Jaffa 92). Jaffa conceives heroic courage as something “‘above man’ [. . .] therefore something ‘divine’. But [. . .] human virtue is, for the mass of mankind, primarily moral virtue, and [. . .] the heroic virtue is primarily understood as superhuman virtue [. . .]” (119). It is implied here that heroic courage is not normally meant for the ordinary folk instead it is recommended for supermen or tragic heroes.

The protagonists created by Mulk Raj Anand are not quasi-divinities to be called supermen, but they are products of the author’s imaginative idealization of some actual people chosen from the common crowd, whom the author knew personally. Petrucci’s observation is true: “A novel or poem does not come spontaneously into being in the manner of a dice-throw--it has some proto--or pre-existence in the mind, [. . .]” (18). The bravery expected from Anandian characters must be one that pertains to the general standard of common people, which can be branded as ordinary virtue as against the standard of heroic courage. It is for this category of protagonists that Aristotle recommends mean or moderation. In ordinary situations the choice of heroic courage seems foolhardy to them, viewed from its opposite extreme. No doubt heroic courage can function “as motive for moral action, [. . .] in a moral atmosphere visible [. . .] in the most advanced stages of moral perceptiveness” (Jaffa 66). Consequently, in such a stage the protagonist allows ordinary courage to be replaced by heroic courage at the cost of the sacrifice of his preference for length of life.

Lal Singh (Lalu) in Anand’s trilogy possesses none of the qualifications essential for heroic bravery, but his behaviour as a common peasant with sufficient English education at school is unconventional from the very beginning. He dislikes the dictates
of Sikh religion and questions the need for “observing these conventions [. . .]? There was no religion in doing so. He had always felt impatient and embarrassed at having to wear long hair” (The Village 28). He is also dissatisfied with the follies of Mahant Nandgir (the spiritual head) at the monastery who “ate sumptuous food, dressed in yellow silks, smoked charas and drank hemp, and if reports were true, whored and fornicated. And he was kept as a holy man, the Guru of the community” (45). Lalu is filled with fury against this unlawful, unhampered exercise of authority, yet he suppresses his enthusiasm to voice his protest until he gets a suitable opportunity. On getting a chance to visit Diwali Fair in the neighbouring town in the company of his friend Gughi, he is opportuned with the freedom to express his reactionary nature for he decides: “Religion or no religion, I shall have it cut in town. I won’t return to the village with this long hair on” (66). The execution of this decision to cut the hair, the visible insignia of Sikhism, demands from the protagonist a very high price in return when he gets back to the village. In fact Lalu has not been concerned about these consequences when he carries out the decision in a hair cutting and shaving saloon. Krishna Sharma rightly remarks:

The years between 1818 and 1850 saw the rise of the age of reason, of rationalistic questioning and protest against the established order: of the era of great reforms, [. . .] Methodist and Evangelical movements in Europe, Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj gave momentum to social and moral reforms, recreating a new society in India (Introduction 11)

This impulse is dominant in Lalu when he breaks the religious taboo which forbids a Sikh from eating from a cook shop run by a Muslim, during the very same escapade to the town. But on his way home, there is a feeling of nervousness and he attempts to conquer it with the question: “why am I so nervous?” (The Village 88). When he
reaches home, first his father, then the family and finally the religious fanatics abuse him for having shaved away the “kaishas”. In their view it is the most shameful act for a Sikh. It brings disgrace to the whole family. This feeling develops into a social remonstrance against Lal Singh when Arjan Singh, “the walrus-moustached priest of the Sikh temple […]” (95), brings forward a donkey to teach the apostate a lesson. He is caught hold of tightly by the landlord’s son and when Lalu shakes him off, he is held tight by two stalwart peasants Bhagawant Singh and Gurumukh Singh. The protagonist’s face is blackened and when he struggles to get released, he is lifted and put on a donkey’s back by force. Without listening to the entreaties of his parents, the donkey is led to the lane to invite public ridicule on the whole family. The author describes the scene:

The donkey had darted ahead, frightened out of its wits. Lalu rolled on the ground and, slipping through the faltering eager hands of his enemies, stood up, dealing blows right and left, forward and backward and staggered out of the crowd which was now scattering in panic. (97)

Lalu climbs to the parapet of a well and from there to the roof of a building for escape. He moves from roof to roof, falls across a heap of cow dung cakes left for drying in the sun and from there jumps into a manure heap. He is able to run away safely from his adversaries who have been pursuing him. In fact “Lalu remains the angry-young man in the novel, commenting bitterly on the priest’s lechery, the money-lender’s dishonesty, the landlord’s greed […] and the villager’s own naivety and stupidity” (Cowasjee, So Many 104). The terrific thunder and lightning at this juncture and the heavy downpour that follows, give him an occasion to work out an escape from the tragic end which would have resulted from the wrath of his pursuers. Nevertheless, the angry young man feels later that he has failed to react violently against this inhuman treatment due to two
reasons: “the frequent use of rod on him by the school masters had broken down his power of resistance. And the feeling of respect to the wishes of the elders which his mother had inculcated in him had made him incapable of hitting back” (The Village 101). Anand here shows that Lalu is caught between his revolutionary instincts and submissiveness instilled in him by his early upbringing. Lal Singh who has the potential for violent reaction against the social evils checks his revolutionary urges in a crucial moment. He becomes aware of the futility of resisting public attack being one against many. He is not a coward for “if he had his hair cut in full faith in the rightness of his act, how could he be a coward?” (103). His aim has been to relieve his family of all their debts and after making them aware of the hollowness of their blind beliefs, lead them from present day worries to future happiness. He says: “I could soon work off their debts and relieve them of their troubles. And I could deal with the landlord’s family [. . .] and show up the filthy life of the Mahant [. . .]” (105). A violent protest which might lead to a catastrophe would obliterate his ambition and prudence makes him choose the ordinary course. The decision to cut his hair has been an act of choice springing from the rebellious impulse of the protagonist who has a background of modern English education. Mohan supports this view when he records: “Modernity is a new mental state or a new awareness which begins with the dawn of a scientific age i.e. the sense of inquiry and questioning about natural, human and social conditions” (18). His English education and the spirit of enquiry and protest notwithstanding, Lalu fails to risk familial concerns as it is typical of the moderate heroes. After his abortive attempt to protest and change the system, there is a shift from extremism to moderation in the actions and attitudes of Lalu. This is why Lalu strives to reconcile with the family. He accompanies his father and his eldest brother Sharm Singh to borrow money from Seth Chaman Lal (the moneylender) to celebrate the marriage of his elder brother Dayal Singh. The mother
knows that Lalu is the friend of the moneylender's son Churanji Lal. Lalu accepts her suggestion to accompany them though he always disapproves of the practice of the peasants' borrowing money to observe meaningless ceremonies connected with funerals and marriages. He abandons his earlier extremism and dissolves all differences with the family to prepare them to listen to his views aiming at a fundamental social change. Hence the reason for this change in attitude is his realization—"one coal does not burn well alone [...]") (The Village 107)—emphasizing the need for a moderate approach to bring the desired effect, beginning with his family. But to follow the method of total submission is impossible for a protagonist like Lal Singh in whom the impulse for expressing courage is always pronounced. This inherent nature makes Lalu object that the interest rate is exorbitant. The moneylender is offended at this insinuation. He insults Lalu by asking him whether he has forgotten the episode of the priest blackening his face for his rogueries. "Lalu walked away, flushed with shame that he had made a fool of himself by not restraining his impetuous outburst" (118).

The feeling of shame inspires in Lalu the determination to free his family from "the previous mortgages of land and jewellery [...]") (119-20). He decides to find a job for himself. Lalu's walking away from the moneylender amounts to his abandoning his rebellious attitude. The method adopted by the protagonist to control his reaction has a theoretical explanation. When the protagonist experiences a pull towards one extreme it is within his powers, according to Aristotle, to think of the opposite extreme to help himself fall safely into the middle course. This is the process at work when we observe the protagonist striving hard to cure himself of his rebelliousness to attain a moderate stance. It can explain why the protagonist experiences self-assurance even when he keeps away from rebelliousness, which is substantiated by another episode. The protagonist witnesses a quarrel between Lalla Padam Chand (the government auditor
who is on an official visit to the village) and Jandu (the carriage driver) over the question of not keeping the front seat reserved for the former for his return to the town free of cost. Jandu does not violently react to the attempt from the auditor to launch physical assault upon him but defends himself against the auditor’s stand with very strong arguments in an offensive language. He does not show any fear of consequence and this courage which is a mean between cowardice and recklessness “had somehow strengthened his [Lalu’s] self-assurance” (124). The growing certitude in Lalu is reinforced by the attitude of Mr. Hercules Long (the Deputy Commissioner) who pays a visit to the village to train the youth through Boy Scout Movement. Lalu happens to meet Mr. Long on the way and informs him that he has attended a Boy Scout Rally inspected by Mr. Long earlier. Mr. Long is also impressed by the fluency with which Lalu speaks English. When a Durbar (public meeting) is arranged in the village by the landlord (Bahadur Harbans Singh) to welcome the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Long announces to the gathering in the presence of Seth Chaman Lal (banker and general merchant of Nandpur), Churanji Lal (his son), Padre Annandale (the Head Master of Sherkot School), Lalla Balamukund (advocate, High Court of Lahore), Master Hukam Chand (the school teacher), Mahant Nandgir (the squint eyed saint) etc. that Sardar Lal Singh who has been a boy scout at school will administer the oath of the scout for all other boys in the village under twenty. “Lal Singh was elated at being singled out thus by the sahib. It seemed a confirmation of all the vague, impractical plans to reform the village, which he had evolved from his own passionate purpose and conviction” (142).

Lal Singh is nominated by Mr. Long as the patrol-leader of the troop and is entrusted with the job of teaching the group duties of boy scouts. The protagonist feels that this appointment will give him an influential position in the social life of the village.
to attempt a reformation in the most pragmatic way. But many elders dislike the idea of the village boys getting trained under Lal Singh. They think that Lal Singh will teach them only to do mischief. Particularly, Sardar Bahadur Harbans Singh (the landlord) disapproves of the idea from the very beginning. He fears that if the organization of the village boys gets patronage from the Deputy Commissioner, it will threaten his prestige as the only man in the village who has got direct link with the sarkar (government). He also likes to ruin the prospects of Lal Singh who is a member of a family with whom his family has been at dispute. This growing ill-will at the newly assuming respectability of Lal Singh reaches its pinnacle when Maya, the landlord’s daughter, is found one day playing pebbles with the protagonist. As Lalu mischievously cheats her in the play, “Maya fell upon him with a lovely helplessness, beating him, scratching him, digging her fists into his sides as he laughed and shook from side to side to ward her off”(154-55). This episode has its immediate consequence. The landlord not only admonished the girl against such exercise of freedom with the boy, which is a shameful act for grown-up girls according to the Indian custom, but also files a false charge of theft against the protagonist with the local police. This is done to tarnish Lal Singh’s image among the public who have begun to change their attitude towards him, following his appointment as patrol-leader of the boy scouts. When the police arrive to arrest the protagonist, he is not cowardly submissive or vehemently reactionary at the bull like attack of the landlord. Instead he abandons the village saying: “I won’t live in this cursed village [. . .]” (162) and races off down the lane. His attempt to liberate the villagers from their blind beliefs and worn out customs has been leading him nowhere and later regrets that he controlled his rage and did not strike the landlord when he insulted his father for defending him. Lalu asks himself: “why didn’t I strike the dog?” In fact prudence has won the control of his thoughts, which puts him safely in a middle course of action, leaving “such protests
to himself with a burning, flashing face that smarted with sweat" (163). When an opportunity for a job in the army opens up before him, he grabs it. The circumstance that leads to his joining the army cannot be regarded as an involuntary act. The protagonist could have chosen the job of a coolie or that of a mill-hand in some far away town. Instead when the recruiting officer (Havildar Lehna Singh) has been shouting to the young men in a raucous voice about the attraction in joining the army, Lalu chooses it voluntarily to gain two things: "police couldn’t lay hands on me [...]. And the money I could earn in the army may help to pay off our debts" (165). Thus he strives to regain the losing respectability of his family and that way set an example of how a man can attempt to conquer the evil forces which prevent any reform in the social structure, resorting to a moderate way. Yet Lalu finds that life is unhappy for his family. Lalu’s elder brother Dayal Singh’s marriage does not take place as the girl’s parents are “got at by mischief mongers” (197). Sharm Singh (his eldest brother) who is angry with the landlord Harbans Singh for bringing the shame upon their family, one day catches Hardit (the landlord’s son) and Mahant Nandgir “red-handed with Kesari [Sharm Singh’s wife] having a drinking festival on the banks of the river in the forest” (197). Sharm Singh gets hold of a chopper and kills Hardit when he is returning home. Nihal Singh (Lalu’s father) has to mortgage some of his land to pay the lawyer who defends Sharm Singh. Unfortunately the court sentences the boy to be hanged to death.

When Lalu gets a message that his father is seriously ill, he returns to his family on leave. He realizes that the villagers’ attitude towards him has changed considerably and all of them are full of respect for a soldier who has a regular income. On expiry of leave when he gets back to the cantonment, he receives the information that their Division is ordered to move to the war front to fight against Germany for the “Angrezi sarkar”. Lal Singh is a member of the 68th Rifles, part of the Ferozepur Brigade. He
feels excited about the prospect of going abroad. “His heart was thumping and he burned to get there, to be in the seething cauldron of things, for life seemed a wild adventure” (130). The Ferozepur Brigade is proposed to leave Karachi on 23rd August. Though Lalu waits to enjoy the adventure of going abroad, he does not want to die fighting. He has never been an extremist to shed blood and invite martyrdom nor a soldier who in Aristotelian expression risks his life for a small pay. His only hope has been to pay off the debts and regain the mortgages of his family property, saving money by practising thrift. To achieve his goals, he has to live and that is why he feels “the fear that he might die fighting in the war to which they were all going” (245).

Lal Singh does not choose the cowardly act of running away from the barracks. He conquers fear with the confidence of a man who faces the tests and trials with necessary strength of mind. This attitude is achieved as a result of observation of an interesting principle. Aristotle remarks in EN that when a man is exercising his faculties on two things, the pleasant business thwarts the other. This is why Aristotle says that pleasure from another source is almost equivalent to pain from the activity itself. In this context, to take a decision to exhibit heroism in war inviting catastrophe is the painful aspect of the activity. But increased pay and overseas allowances are offered during the war. These prospects inspire his hopes for the fulfilment of his dream in the near future, if he can manage to survive the war. It is a promise against a negation, a hope against a denial that it appeals to him as the mean between the extremes—running away from the barracks and active participation leading to martyrdom. He feels confident that he can exercise some sort of moderation in the battlefield to survive the war and to restore his family property. This is testified by the view: “If he came back after a little time abroad […] perhaps he could resign through the help of some officer, and go back to the land. He must do that. He was determined” (246). The news of his father’s demise upsets Lalu
for a while. He rebukes “himself for being happy when his father had [sic] just died” (249). The happiness had sprung up as a result of the prospects involved in the endeavour for the materialization of his ambition through the means of the war abroad. He decides to proceed with his plan to undergo the war experience. He insists on the choice of a strategy in the battlefield, which would offer him length of life as envisaged by Aristotle. The protagonist conveys this determination effectively when “he half-mumbled to the wind, as if it would carry his message to the village, ‘I will come back to you; but not yet, not for a while’” (252).

It must not be neglected in this context that Aristotle’s concept of the exercise of the mean—courage—encompasses in itself the scope for facing noble death in the battlefield. A courageous man must be prepared for all sudden emergencies that involve death, as he must behave appropriately as reason bids him. If the courageous man is thus expected to face an honourable death, it is expected that it will defeat the very purpose of observing the mean, i.e. attaining a long and complete life. It is here that the observations drawn at the opening part of this chapter seems valid. Lal Singh is no superman to prefer death to life, instead he is an ordinarily brave man and his choice will always be from a different standpoint than that of a superman. He has certain aspirations to fulfill, certain ambitious to attain, which have been the guiding motives in his choice of joining the army. His courage has some resemblance to the political courage envisaged by Aristotle but what makes it differ from this sort of courage is that he wills to survive the situation through the choice of some possible means. Hence he is able to resort to ordinary courage at all levels. It cannot be overlooked that “Lalu is still very much the adolescent in his initially gleeful embrace of a new experience—even that of war—and especially in his increasingly brooding preoccupation with his own destiny” (Fisher, The Wisdom 64). Jaffa’s view that the civil society can survive without the military virtue
can generally be accepted as Lal Singh is more civil than martial in his ambitions. This
civil virtue “is an indispensable ingredient of civil society” (87) and in consequence the
civil virtue in him dominates the military virtue which makes him less of a hero in the
battlefield. Hence the behaviour of Lal Singh in the second book must be analyzed with
the understanding that it is not heroic courage but ordinary courage that guides him
through the adventures abroad.

There are clear evidences in *Across the Black Waters*, the second book of the
trilogy, to explain that Lal Singh has never aimed at a heroic death in the battlefield,
when he is transported to Marseilles and from there to the trench warfare. No doubt,
Lalu could have tried to get leave to attend his father’s funeral. He had a chance to avert
the danger of risking his life in the battle field for “he had received the news of his
father’s death by wire just at the moment he boarded the steamer [...]” (*Across* 159).
He does not leave for home not exactly because he loved the war experience, but because
“he had really been eager to come to see Vilayat [...]” (158). Moreover, he was
instinctively certain that he would survive the war. Berry observes: “Lal is such a figure,
as concerned with achieving personal liberty, control over his own destiny, conquest of
his own weaknesses, as is with altering social institutions” (83-84). It
has been a right
decision since the experience of a different variety of life abroad qualifies him to view
the Indian standard of life with necessary detachment. The contrast it affords especially
with the rigidity of religious taboos in the Indian society and the flexibility of its Western
counterpart assures him that the reactionary approach which he has resorted to and for
which he has been penalized is justified. In India the “debts multiply, land is mortgaged
to pay the rent [...] the rent falls into arrears and the lawyer enters the picture. The
farmer is evicted [...]” (*Cowasjee, So Many* 105). What makes the Western farmers
happy and contented is the fact that
they do not borrow money from moneylenders, but from the Bank at very low interest. When I come back, I shall ask the Karnel Sahib to order the bania to give back our mortgages and to get the landlord to return the lands he has seized from us as a reward for fighting in this war. (Across 228)

Lalu is here confident of two things: return to India unwounded and strive to reform the zamindari system. Setting himself as an example after the English pattern, he wants to illustrate to the farmers how it is possible to lead a happy life as against the customary way of mortgaging everything. But the difficulty of observing moderation in a battlefield is the trial to which the protagonist is exposed in the course of the novel. In the role of a common soldier who is left with few options but to obey orders, he decides to keep away from killing the enemy at first. In his naïveté he believes: “if he did not shoot the enemy, the enemy would be a gentleman and not make him a target” (113). The pity is that he does not know the rules of the game he is playing. To him, a soldier who kills an enemy is in no way different from his brother who has killed the landlord’s son, which provokes his remark: “‘if one who slays one is a murderer then he who slays a thousand is not a hero,’[...]” (137). But he believes that he who has swooned to watch the hospital train coming from the warfront will be ordered to indulge in a more risky attack of the enemy. Later on, when pushed into action he is no longer abashed and launches an attack on the enemy: “To be sure none could go forward in the face of that fire. But having come so far Lalu felt he would have gone further. And strangely enough he had forgotten to be afraid” (145). Yet this courageous action is not one of choice but one of compulsion. It is normally impossible to observe the mean in compulsory activities. Aristotle agrees that death is more painful to a courageous man than to an ordinary man since death deprives him of a life which is worth living than that
of any other man leading a life of less virtue. Lal Singh attempts to surpass the compulsory element involved here. His strategy is to remain passive, careful of the enemy's bayonets, allowing the common soldier to run past him to gain the glory of martyrdom while he is able to lag behind. He has been "a different species of man [...] living to a different rhythm from the sepoys who came from the black hell of the trenches" (186). It is the only means to avert his catastrophe. He is thus making it sure that he does not get wounded making it easy to classify him as a pragmatist on the battlefield. The realization that a little bit of caution can prolong his life causes more tension in his crisis compared to that of the ordinary soldier who thinks of medals, posthumous awards and family pension and makes use of the situation as a means to gratify his ambition through self-sacrifice. Lalu's confusion is explicit when he feels: "life seemed a more intolerable burden [...] than fear of death" (134). No doubt, the more painful the death the more fearful it will be to think of it and all attempts to sustain life in the midst of surrounding death become more burdensome. This is why the protagonist has been careful while shovelling mud and frozen water from the trenches earlier, risking the bullets of the enemies. He has been striving hard to save his life throughout. While the ordinary enthusiastic soldiers have been running to the enemy front-line-trenches with bared bayonets to meet the enemy halfway through, the protagonist stays back. It saves him from the fate of his companions. It is an effective military strategy to assess the enemy's power before a full-fledged attack is launched. When the enemy proves to be more powerful than the Indian soldiers, orders are issued to them to retreat step by step, firing the while, to reduce the number of casualty. "Lalu withdrew his rifle from the sandbags, where it rested [...]" (168). Then he "crept out and followed the men, [...] resurrected from the very jaws of the monster Death". Lalu is careful even in his retreat lest he should run into some danger. He "explored the
ground carefully before each step [. . .]” (170). By the time the orders come again to occupy their original trenches, he has acquired mastery in being moderate in the battlefield. Anand acknowledges it: “Lalu was master of himself now. [. . .] he had felt this sureness in himself during the days when he used to lead mock battles [. . .] near the brick ovens in Nandpur” (180). A German fixed his aim on Lalu but pulls the trigger only after Lalu decides to go into a crater. Lalu stoops like a lion and kills him with his bayonet. This is only an attempt from a soldier for self-protection—the first of its kind from Lalu! “Germans still seemed to occupy long stretches of the allied frontline [. . .]” (182) and only two hundred and fifty out of the seven hundred and fifty Indian soldiers who have taken part in the action survive. Hence the soldiers are ordered to withdraw to the billets and a grace of two days rest is given to the troops.

When the regiment resumes duty once again in the trenches east of Festubert in Farishtabad, the Germans scatter some pamphlets from an aeroplane to win the moral support of the Indian soldiers in their favour. In other words, the approach of the Germans establishes a more congenial environment for the protagonist to observe moderation in the battlefield. The war has been going on between Germans and Connaughts and the latter face want of ammunition supply and are compelled to retreat step by step. Hence the Indian soldiers are not directly involved in the battle and they remain a supporting unit. But Lal Singh has to resume his strategies of survival once again as he is assigned the duty of joining the patrol party who have to “crawl out towards German trenches and see how far are the saps which they have built [. . .]” (282). When the German attack in the afternoon ceases, Lalu follows the crawling party headed by Lieutenant Hobson. Jamedar Subah Singh, who is drunk, lags behind resulting in split patrol. Hobson crawls enthusiastically far in advance of Lalu, reaches near the German trenches and throws a grenade into one of them. The German machine
guns speak and Hobson falls dead. Lalu carefully makes an attempt to save his life as he “moaned like a child and began to crawl back hurriedly” (288). He escapes to safety for he does not want to exchange his ambitions for military glory. This view is clearly expressed in the following remark in the novel: “he wanted to hang on to his life, so hang on to it at all cost” (292). His lack of military heroism which according to him would have proved foolhardiness is explicit when he retreats to his camp instead of throwing another grenade into the trenches to invite his glorious martyrdom. He succeeds to escape but realizes the difficulty of practising ordinary courage in trench warfare. This is why he feels that things would have been different if he had not joined the army. His punishment for the false accusation would not have been longer than three to six months imprisonment. After that term, Lalu says: “I should have gone back to look after my family. My eldest brother would not have murdered the landlord’s son in revenge and had been hanged and my father would not have been collapsed with the weight of misfortune and died” (301). There is the protagonist’s intense love for a peaceful family environment in these words. This love seems to be a dominant force which checks the martial ambition of achieving a glorious martyrdom. The conflict between Lalu’s two preferences--the scope for a future family life in his own village and the demand for heroic bravery normally expected from an ordinary soldier in the trench warfare--is finally settled in his choice of the middle way. The technique of this conflict can be explained only with more powerful and complex opposites to be brought in, as it appears premature at this stage. Hence a discussion in this regard is deferred to an advanced level of this study.

However it is significant to understand at this level that the choice of the middle way is not so promising or rewarding in a battlefield. Moreover the protagonist gets disappointed about the lack of voluntariness in the warfare to choose a means risklessly
for the fulfilment of his ambition. The informal ceasefire on Christmas day brings his hopes back but when he has to occupy the enemy trenches once again he can only believe that “he might be saved. [. . .] he would be [. . .]” (319). This certitude in his mastery in observing the mean makes him capable of designing an effective strategy in the final scene of the second book. Under the cover of their machine guns Lalu runs forward without a moment’s pause to reach the enemy trenches before they open fire. If slowness was his method on the earlier occasion, now it is replaced by quickness for he feels that the enemy will be cordial to the Indian soldiers as they have expressed this view indirectly through the pamphlets they have distributed. He falls “in surges splashing the mud by German saps” (321). His calculation about their attitude and his choice to resort to swiftness in action to save his life are undoubtedly the results of his deliberation. The German who shoots him on the calf intends to capture him alive—not to kill him—and this turns out to be the consequence of the observance of moderation resulting from the protagonist’s sound perception and timely action. He submits himself to his captors inoffensively and saves his life successfully. It must be remarked here that even the author maintains the view “that every man should shape a philosophy of life for himself [. . .]” (Paul, The Novels 58) and it is small wonder that the protagonist does shape one after Aristotle’s view of a happy life. This is why Packham tells that the author’s conception of the protagonist contains “an Aristotelian concern for man’s well being [. . .]” (60), which the protagonist strives to exercise in resolving his crises. To Anand, “the novel is not the vehicle of presenting directly philosophy or moral preaching or the writer’s doctrinaire opinions” (Sharma, Introduction xv). Instead Anand depicts his hero’s philosophy of life as different from his own even when “one evolves characters and traces their motivation from the reservoir of the collective unconscious [. . .]” (Anand, The Sources 22). This view establishes the author’s power to retain his
negative capability like Shakespeare and Keats. Here the author attributes his protagonist a potential for observing Aristotelian moderation whereas he fails to practise it in his private life. If it had been possible for him to observe it he could have averted the nervous breakdown which spoiled a long period of his creative career. It is obvious that Sharma's remark has been intended for the critics to dig and find out the working of the theory of moderation in Anandian protagonists as against the absence of it in the author's private life. The spirit of this observation is encompassed in Sharma's another remark: "Philosophy is inseparable from a great work of art but it should be implicit in it, and not explicit" (Introduction xv).

As a protagonist with unlimited potential for protest against social injustice, Lalu is exposed to the political upheaval in India in the forties in the third book of the trilogy. The philosophy of life practised by Lalu in the first two books is equally operative in the final book, *The Sword and the Sickle*. If love for a peaceful family life has been a submissive force that checks his heroic courage in the battlefield, a more compelling force of love is introduced in the third book to produce a miraculous effect. When the novelist exposes the protagonist to more serious challenges, offering him freedom to choose the means to attain the appropriate "ergon", he is incapacitated to choose as "hexis" the Aristotelian principle of virtue once again. This choice of the mean (virtue) to attain length of life is in stiff contrast with the concept of committing tragic flaw as it is explained in *Poetics*.

It is noteworthy that Lal Singh's family disintegrates into nothing consequent on the mortgages of their property and the tragedy that befalls the surviving members. Lalu succeeds in attaining a longer life by practising moderation in the warfare. After a period of imprisonment, the Germans draft him home with instruction to organize a revolt against the British-Indian government. When the novel opens he is on his way back
home but his plan is to lead a peaceful life as against the instruction of his captors. His ambition springs from the belief: "Dayal Singh and mother were safe at home and the family land was intact" (The Sword 32). To his disappointment, he is demobilized from the army and left helpless even without a pension "because he had been exposed to seditionist propaganda while a prisoner" (Cowasjee, So Many 113). He suffers another shock when he learns that his mother is no more. The family property has been auctioned to settle the debts and their house sold to the landlord to pay the fee of Balamukund, the advocate, who defended Sharm Singh in the murder case. Lalu's ambitions have been totally ruined and the prospects for a happy life with his family are torn to shreds! This is the background against which his joining the revolutionaries is to be analyzed. The only house to which Lalu is welcome is that of his uncle Harnam Singh who has been involved in organizing a struggle against the British government in India. Harnam Singh introduces Lalu to Verma Sahib--the learned Marxist theoretician and one of the leaders of the struggle--and brings him to the attention of the peasants who are collected together for a procession against British Imperialism in India. Verma Sahib is a friend of Barkat Ullah in Germany who has been trying to inspire revolutionary impulses in the war prisoners there. Lalu is apparently a destitute at this stage, who has nothing else to lose except his meaningless life. He is easily led into joining the revolutionary movement and is entrusted with new responsibilities. It is an accepted Marxian dogma that a man will easily choose to sacrifice his life in an impending revolution, if he has nothing precious to lose--either material possessions or loved ones. At this juncture this is the substantive reason why Lalu "has no choice other than the choice of fighting for his rights and rights of those like him" (Sinha 50). What we witness here is irony of fate: Lalu the pragmatist who made strategical moves on the warfront in order to lead a happy life with his family finds himself alone in his native village with his dear ones totally
eradicated. When this force of love for the family which earlier counterbalanced its opposite impulse to register extreme protest is no more, the need for an alternative force becomes more and more pronounced for the exercise of moderation. The novelist achieves it by counterbalancing the revolutionary urge in Lalu with his love for Maya Devi. When the scope for preserving moderation is established once again in the thematic structure of the novel, the void created by the disintegration of the family is effectively bridged converting the protagonist to a battlefield of two contrastive urges—martyrdom in the freedom struggle and family life with his lady-love. The novelist recreates the earlier conflict when Lalu had to choose between two extreme possibilities. The conflict between the positive and the negative impulses assumes complexity from this juncture onwards. Up to this point, the conflict of the extremes has been apparently simple because Lalu’s love for family life was not as intense as his love for Maya Devi.

Lalu’s affection for Maya is not a new development. Their mutual attraction sensed by the landlord, Maya’s father, was the reason why he fabricated an accusation of theft against Lalu in The Village. The reappearance of Maya as a widow in the third book rekindles his love for her. The love for his one time sweetheart and his yearning for a married life with her, cool down his revolutionary extremism. But the pity of his situation is that he could realize his love aspirations only if he fought and secured freedom from the feudal setup. Hence he requests the revolutionaries to give him permission to take Maya along with him to Rajagarh where they are planning their agitation. He is faced with conflicting responsibilities: fight and win the battle, but at the same time save his life for his own and Maya’s sake. He metamorphoses into a thorough revolutionary, being entrusted with the task of organizing the peasants. His occupational responsibilities keep him away from his mistress. When the protagonist exercises his faculties on two things at a time his choice of the mean is likely to depend upon the
result of the compromise between the two. Aristotle’s attempt to explain it with pleasure-pain mechanism appears too simple in this context. In Lal Singh’s case, the ambition to organize a revolt has been inspired in him earlier and the prospect of a happy life with his lady-love evolves later. He is aware of the interconnectedness of both the missions. When their marriage celebration in the Arya Samaj is over and the opportunity to enjoy sensual love is open to him, he seems only moderately inclined to lovemaking since he is obsessed with the task of organizing the peasants. Aristotle gives freedom for the enjoyment of conjugal love within the limits of his theory. As a result, when the excitement of honeymoon days is over, Lalu divides his involvement between familial and political responsibilities. The result is that the revolutionary leaders as well as the lady-love feel dissatisfied with his performance in these divergent roles, as he does not prefer to choose one of the extremes discarding the other.

The moderation exercised by the protagonist while organizing a revolt is obvious in his statement—“I must try to do something, try to live, try to get somewhere [. . .]” (The Sword 59). The theoretical explanation behind the protagonist’s attempt to observe the mean by holding together “two gorgeous peacocks, his woman and the Revolution [. . .]” (78) rules out Cowasjee’s objection: “The conflict in Lalu’s mind between his love for her and his devotion to the revolutionary movement is the least convincing thing in the book, and perhaps the only serious flaw in this very fine novel”. The two ambitions are for Lalu correlated and cannot have an independent existence and no wonder the protagonist tries to work out a compromise between the extremes. However, Cowasjee himself admits: “it would not have been easy for Lalu to marry Maya, his landlord’s daughter, and live in the village” (So Many 114), if he does not win equality with the feudal lords. When freedom and equality are acquired and he gets back the mortgaged property from the landlord through the revolt, he knows, he can lead a peaceful life in his
Lalu resorts to nonviolence instead of violence throughout his career as a revolutionary in order to achieve length of life. Lalu is convinced of the exigency of bringing about the transition through their endeavour “to knit the small landholders, the tenants, the evicted tenants and labourers together and formulate their immediate and local demands, [. . .]” (The Sword 90). Unfortunately, after the First World War money famine has been spreading in the nation and more farmers are evicted from their land for rent arrears, leaving their condition more and more miserable. In observing a mean between the two roles, Lalu fails to rise to the expectation of Maya’s concept of an ideal lover. She is often left alone in the Rajagarh while Lalu is involved in discussion with the revolutionaries about organizing the peasants. As a lady-love beginning to enjoy the warmth of her lover, she cannot think differently. Due to her influence, he feels at times that organizing the peasants for a revolution is “unworthy of his ambition [. . .]” (130). Yet he cannot shirk responsibility so long as his ambitions remain mutually related. Finally it is decided:

Verma Sahib was to go to Allahabad to arrange for the publication of *Naya Hind*. Ram Din was to explore the possibilities for finance; while Lal Singh was to arrange a meeting of peasants who would gather on the banks of the Ganges on the impending festival of the eclipse of the sun (127).

Lalu succeeds in arranging the meeting. He makes the peasants realize that they are burdened with poverty and debt and are always under the threat of eviction. He tells them about the idea of universal brotherhood of man, which was the guiding motive for the revolutionaries in Roos to overthrow oppression. Though the peasants give a patient listening to the speakers, soon there is an attempt for disruption by some religious fanatics for the Brahmins have been angry that the marriage of Lal Singh with Maya has
been celebrated in the Arya Samaj. Two policemen also arrive to create more trouble. Later on, the sub-inspector of police visits Rajagarh and informs Kanwar Rampal Singh that there is an arrest warrant against Lal Singh who has abducted the daughter of a landlord. But the count convinces him that the marriage of Lal Singh with Maya has already been registered with the authorities.

Verma Sahib returns from Allahabad bringing along with him Srijut Ladli Prashad Tiwari, lawyer, politician and secretary of Allahabad district branch of Indian National Congress. Lal Singh gets initiated into the views of the Congress. He is also introduced to comrade Sarshar, the organizer of the Communist party in U.P. Comrade Sarshar is against the parliamentary method advocated by the Congress and wants to overthrow the order responding to the method of revolutionary violence. Kanwar Rampal Singh is for a nonviolent struggle towards which he is able to win even Verma Sahib. So the leaders decide to organize a unit of All India Kisan Sabha in their village. This would be an important event in the history of the peasant movement in Oudh, as the non-cooperation movement of Gandhi was restricted to cities only.

A hunting expedition is arranged by Kanwar Rampal Singh to entertain Tiwari. During the expedition in the royal barge they are informed that the Nawab of Nasirabad is committing atrocities against poor peasants. One of them has been killed and they decide to take the dead body in a procession to Allahabad to draw the attention of the Congress leaders to the issue. Lal Singh takes the leadership of the march. Bhoori Singh, the gurkah of the Nawab, tries to prevent them and Lal Singh attacks him. His tiger like attack of the enemy can be explained with theoretical support from Aristotle. As a protagonist organizing the peasants, Lal Singh is expected to exhibit courage and he cannot withdraw in this crucial issue to the level of a coward. Even an ordinarily brave man would be far advanced from the level of cowardice. He takes up
the risk dauntlessly as on the occasion of the trench warfare. He is confident that it is within his powers to do so and chooses the act which in Aristotelian standard can be taken for granted as a courageous step to tackle an emergency.

In Allahabad, Lalu gets opportunity to meet Mahatma Gandhi. He is introduced to Gandhi as a revolutionary. When Lalu tells Gandhi that he chose the method of violence to tackle Bhoori Singh, Gandhi disapproves of it. Gandhi is willing to help the villagers only if they are ready to promise him that they will not hit back. Kanwar Rampal Singh and Verma Sahib feel that if Gandhi can be persuaded to visit their village, the formation of the Kisan Sabha will be easy. Finally Verma Sahib persuades Jawaharlal Nehru to address the peasants who are invited by Gandhi for a meal. Nehru expresses his inclination to visit their village in Pratapgarh district one or two days later. The leaders feel that they will be able to form the Kisan Sabha without much difficulty during Nehru's visit to Oudh.

When Lal Singh returns to Rajagarh he finds his mistress missing. He is informed that she has proceeded to Allahabad together with Kanwar Birpal Singh and his wife Prem Vati to inform Kanwar Rampal Singh of the new mischief that the Nawab of Nasirabad has brought. He has made the government issue orders to throw out all trouble makers from the Rajagarh estate. When they come back from Allahabad, they are accompanied by Kanwar Rampal Singh and Verma Sahib in the car. The reunion of Lalu and Maya is tensed with excitement and she is full of protest for his lack of attention for her in the wake of his new responsibility of organizing the peasants. It is true that his revolutionary mission weakens the intensity of his love for Maya and his enthusiasm for revolutionary violence is also impeded by his sensual aspirations. He feels sure that the "furnitures of fortune" as Aristotle would term it for setting up a home with Maya can be attained only through the establishment of a new order in the
contemporary India. It requires some political work to be executed. This sentiment of Lalu is reflected in his response to Maya’s entreaty to give her at least a child and raise her to the status of a mother. He decides: “as soon as the Kisan Sabha was formed, he would ask Kanwar Rampal Singh to secure him a holding which he could cultivate to provide for normal life […]” (The Sword 228). It is beyond all doubt that Lal Singh’s major interest after joining the revolutionary movement has been to prepare the circumstances for enjoying a contented family life. His choice of a moderate means has been to sustain his life throughout the struggle organized against the oppressive powers. Hence ideologically he has been for a revolution leading to a social change which endows him equality, freedom and friendliness with the privileged classes. But the means he prefers to choose is that of moderation involving minimum casualty as against that of the extremist Sarshar’s preference for heroic courage inviting loss of life. It is thus a middle way between his revolutionary ambition (the ambition for martyrdom) and sensual ambition (the ambition for lovemaking). This is why he remains unresponsive to Sarshar who disapproves of Kanwar Rampal Singh’s moderate ways:

“If you are convinced […] please believe in me that the first thing to do is to think out the significance of Revolution for the peasants. […] You can’t open hostilities against the most organized and deeply entrenched Imperialism with the resources of Kanwar Rampal Singh’s gang, […]” (355).

Sarshar fails to understand that Lal Singh is interested only in moderate protest and the method he resorts to is that of ordinary courage instead of heroic courage. Lalu “goes beyond Sarshar in embodying something he has learned from his boyhood days […]”, (Cawasjee, So Many 120) which are “forces of love and pacification […] in an explosive situation than the valiant exhortations (Chandra 34). It cannot be neglected
that in the attempt to observe moderation Lalu is impressed by the nonviolent method of Gandhi, which is a middle way between Sarshar’s method of revolutionary violence and passive endurance of alien tyranny without expressing any violent protest. Jha has remarked: “it is significant that it is only the non-violent method that are approved by characters who initiate social change in his [Anand’s] novels” (59). Mrs.Sudarshan Sharma also approves of this view when she makes the observation: “Though he [Lalu] profess to believe in revolution he is willing to accept some of the Gandhian principles [...]” (36). In other words, the protagonist excludes the Gandhian value of self-sacrifice and suffering in his effort to preserve moderation. Look how the novelist presents it: “he [Lalu] had never welcomed suffering. He had wanted to be happy, and he had suffered in this search of happiness, because all people around him did not believe in happiness [...]” (The Sword 200). But it must be understood that there is no vacillation exhibited by the protagonist between Marxism and Gandhism. He chooses a mean or middle stand between the two extremes where Gandhian humanism and Marxian humanism merge into a sweet reconciliation.

Lalu takes up the leadership of the construction of a building in the area where the leaders plan to establish Kisan Nagar with the help of the evicted peasants to rehabilitate them. The new building will function as their office. Nehru is proposed to inaugurate the Nagar as well as the office in the meeting of the peasants to be arranged for the formation of the Kisan Sabha. During the visit of Nehru, people belonging to different strata of Indian society assemble to welcome the leader and to listen to his speech. Even Maya feels the greatness of the leader. Unfortunately Panditji goes back in response to a telegram and the meeting arranged at Kisan Nagar is held in his absence. Lalu and other leaders move to Kisan Nagar and on the way they find that one of the peasants who refuses to carry the luggage of the sub inspector of co-operative societies,
who has been transferred from their village to the next village, is beaten black and blue by a “chaprasi”. It is understood that the peasant is compelled to do the job without any wages and Lalu gives the “chaprasi” a slap on the face for his impudence. The leaders finally proceed to Kisan Nagar in triumph. They succeed in forming the Kisan Sabha. When the meeting is in progress, the “chaprasi” brings policemen to arrest Lalu and others but Lalu insists on their production of warrant before carrying out the arrest. After the meeting Captain Effendi produces the arrest warrant at Rajagarh which makes Lalu feel that his association with the revolutionaries is preventing him from leading a normal life. He feels “horror as he got up and advanced” (271). He fears that his life is in danger if the arrest is carried out and is concerned about “what Maya would say at his going away” (272). His interest in remaining with the leaders of the struggle is mainly out of “the land hunger of the peasant in him [. . .]” (275). He has been afraid of killing any landlord for this purpose. Here horror is operated as a corrective force by Lalu to prevent himself from his excessive confidence leading to a reckless and foolhardy attempt to carryout killing and bloodshed as a forerunner of an impending revolution. Anyhow he does not want to remain cowardly. He has to protest, he wants justice, but he wants to live too. Once again Lalu succeeds in his mission when he is released on bail from the Pratapgarh police station. But Maya fails to recognize his urge for a happy life with her for she is misled into believing that he is more inclined towards the revolution as she cannot understand his philosophy of moderation involving the practice of detachment from either extreme. This is why she says: “you are impatient for the Revolution [. . .]” (288). Maya who is only beginning a life “could not believe in anything outside her own world [. . .]” (290). Later the trial that Lal Singh undergoes in the court, the arguments of Tiwari in the protagonist’s defence, the peasant Mithu’s evidence against the “chaprasi” etc. bring a novel experience to the peasants who gather
they feel enthused and high spirited at the heightening heroism of Lalu. When the warrant against the accused is withdrawn it is celebrated as a great victory on the peasants’ side and Lal Singh is glorified with heroic qualities. These glories are a liability too since he is compelled to keep up appearances before the public to safeguard the image of a hero. This is why he takes the responsibility of organizing a meeting of the peasants for celebrating the anniversary of Russian Revolution. Yet he checks himself, in times of need, from indulging in deeds of violence.

The most significant illustration of the exercise of moderation by Lalu is to be viewed in his nonviolent approach to Birpal Singh who has attempted to tease Maya in his absence. Here we can find the moderation in Lalu stretched to an unmanly extreme. Sukhua is a foil against whom Lalu is presented in the novel to illustrate the protagonist’s moderate stance. Lalu is reluctant to give up moderation because he knows that it is foolish to invite tragedy when there is scope for a peaceful future life with Maya. So he does not allow himself to be carried away by momentary emotions. He is conscious of the fact that his plans will fail miserably if he breaks his virtuous stance.

“He wanted to think about the future—was it possible for them [Lalu and Maya] to be together? Especially as he was going to persist in his work [. . .]” (309-10). Hence Lalu is a passive revolutionary bound to struggle for freedom adopting moderation as his stubborn strategy. He is also endowed with the responsibility of ploughing up the whole of the land attached to Kisan Nagar as more and more peasants are being evicted from their land, who are coming to Kanwar Rampal Singh (the Count) with requests for help. Later Birpal Singh too reports to the government that things are going against their interest in Rajagarh as he is offended by Sukhua’s attack. Hence orders are served to Kanwar Rampal Singh that he shall get out of Rajagarh “and remain instead in Kisan Nagar where police can keep watch [. . .]” (336). The Count cannot think of a
comfortable living being taken away all of a sudden. In the wake of this new crisis Lalu feels that he is losing his aspirations for a hoarding of land for himself, the prospect of which has been slowly opening up with the charge of ploughing the fields of Kisan Nagar bestowed upon him. Hence Lalu burns for a moment “driven by contrary urges [. . .]” (340). Mukherjee rightly observes: “Lalu meets different kinds of political workers--the non-violent satyagrahi, the arm-chair revolutionary and the communist” (The Twice 45). And the theme of the trilogy, she continues, is “Lalu’s journey through these conflicting ideologies until he finds his true mission” (46). His “true mission” lies in the quest for the mean to attain happiness through a long and complete life. Naik’s question deserves attention: “Does the writer wish to present a hero hopelessly confused by the welter of post-war situation in India?” Naik answers his question quoting Lalu: “Now is the time to change the world, to fight for Life and happiness [. . .]” (75). Two attempts are signified by this answer--to attain immediately length of life and in due course happiness which is the ultimate aim of human life, which Aristotle summed up in his oft quoted lines on “swallows” and “spring”.

Lalu fears that Maya may not be able to endure the eviction from Rajagarh. But to his surprise he finds that she is suddenly “infected with the gospel of Revolution” (The Sword 342). This change in Maya threatens Lalu’s hopes for a peaceful future life. Earlier, the hope of a hoarding of land for himself (to be secured from the Count) has been spoiled. The new turn of affairs brings in him a sense of insecurity. He becomes conscious of

the need for uniting the men around him for some kind of action because if their individual voices and deeds were allowed to become too shrill then there would be few more hand to hand tussles between the
oppressors and the oppressed in villages, a violent scuffle, bloodshed or murder and everything end in smoke. (346)

Lalu wants to prolong his life to attain the “ergon” and he is thinking of some kind of moderate resistance against the oppressors by flinching from the call for violence by Sarshar for “he recoiled against comrade Sarshar’s rabid virulence against the intense consciousness which seemed to possess this revolutionary [. . .]” (352). The spirit of moderation is most obvious in Lalu’s response to the news that Kanwar Rampal Singh, Ram Din and Razni have been arrested at Rae Bareilli. Lalu proceeds to Rae Bareilli after informing Maya that he would come back only the next day or the day after. He has been aware of his over involvement with these leaders, which is becoming detrimental in his attempt to observe the mean. Nevertheless Lalu takes a decision “to remedy the defects of my [Lalu’s] own nature” (360). This attempt has a therapeutic effect on Lalu, which prepares him for a defenceless surrender to the police to prolong his life when “The police and the army are called and a large number of peasants killed in shooting” (Cowasjee, So Many 114). It is substantiated that Lal Singh has always been thinking of a happy and prosperous life with Maya. She also has been waiting for him throughout The Sword and the Sickle. Hence in Rae Bareilli too the protagonist chooses to observe the Aristotelian virtue to escape martyrdom. Lalu feels sure that “his only chance of escape [. . .]” (365) lay in this choice.

When the peasants who gathered there detected Lal Singh’s presence among them they ran towards him. This drew the attention of the soldiers on Lal Singh. He realized that the soldiers were likely to shoot him dead. He shouted at the police at the pitch of his voice: “come brothers, I am ready to surrender” (375). It is significant that Lalu takes the decision to surrender to the police after due deliberation and his characteristic choice of the middle course is evident here. This is why P.K. Rajan’s
view—"These mature heroes are always engaged in an inner struggle to sort out right and wrong, they are haunted by a sense of guilt and failure, they suffer from an inner dividedness, they often appear like vacillating Hamlets" (Mulk Raj 181)—becomes questionable. It is possible to agree with his view that the protagonist is put to "intense inner and outer conflicts [. . .]" (112). But when he argues that Lalu has "a divided mind [. . .]" (102) which prevents him from taking a timely decision, we have to record our dissent note because it has been explained in this chapter with detailed illustrations how Lalu’s choice of action is timely and appropriate on all critical junctures in the trilogy. This quality is what makes Lalu different from Hamlet—there is no procrastination; there is no "To be, or not to be: [. . .]" (Shakespeare 886) question to be resolved. Lalu chooses to join the army rather than turning himself into a mill hand to defeat the consequences of the landlord’s wrath; he chooses to be the German captive instead of becoming a martyr in the warfare; he chooses to surrender to the police instead of being a target of their guns; at the right moments without any problem of indecision unlike that of Hamlet. Lalu is both a lover and a revolutionary. Had Hamlet been able to attain this stance, the play would have ended differently. But Hamlet is a tragic hero with “hamartia” most pronounced in his character while Lalu is a protagonist who resorts to Aristotle’s concept of virtue in EN. Aristotle envisages the choice of this virtue to replace the tragic flaw in order to avoid catastrophe. When Lalu transcends the Hamletian dilemma through the choice of the mean it contributes the prospects of a future life which P.K.Rajan too admits: “from the dark crowded cell of the prison, he makes a characteristically metaphysical, romantically poignant invocation to Maya to get ready for ‘fight for life and happiness’” (106). Sharma’s observation—"he [Lalu] is faced with dilemma of choosing [. . .]" (Protest 5)—like that of P.K.Rajan, is influenced by the popular notion that “Lalu is what Alastir Niven calls him, ‘an Indian Everyman’, 
for he embodies in his person the doubts, fears, and confusion of millions of Indians in the early twenties" (Cowasjee, *So Many* 121). But Lalu cannot be seen as an Indian Everyman for a number of reasons: his English education, his strategies of survival in the face of war and revolution, his unwavering awareness that his goal is not social change per se, but change of his personal fortune, etc. If he doubts, fears and is confused, it is because he has no genuine faith in what he finds himself doing. He suffers these feelings because he is a misfit both as a soldier and as a revolutionary. His is the dilemma of a moderate activist compelled to execute extreme deeds. Lalu must be viewed as the typical protagonist whom Anand has repeatedly portrayed in his fictional writings—the moderate hero lacking the impetus to risk “all to gain all”, [...]” (Myers 134). He is different from the underdeveloped protagonists in that Lalu does not totally give up the fight whereas the others withdraw from the rebellious path after an initial show of passion.

It would be a critical error to read too much of autobiography in Anand’s fictional characters. The notion that the inner dividedness of Anand is reflected in his protagonists serves only to oversimplify the sociopolitical, historical and individual conflict woven into the fabric of his fiction. Sharma rightly observes that Anand has “given full freedom to think, feel and act according to his [Lalu’s] own psychology, [...]” (Introduction xxii). Fisher warns the reader against too much autobiography in the trilogy in the remark: “it must be kept in mind that Lal Singh is a fictional creation and his confusion is not Anand’s” (*The Wisdom* 71).

The trilogy is not autobiographical but it is a social chronicle fictionalizing the conflict of the sensitive individual trapped between two monsters: the Indian feudal lords and the British rulers. The situation of Lalu is like that of Hamlet in the sense that every thing was rotten in the state of India. But they are different in that Hamlet was prince,
had the means and strength and cause and will to right the wrong. Lalu is no prince, does not have the means or strength--only cause and will--to right it. Lalu is most different from Hamlet in that he loves his life, his family and his “Ophelia” (Maya Devi).

If Lalu is moderate in his protest and in a sense was a dissembler, it is because he cannot stop loving life on the one hand and on the other he is naggingly aware of his lack of “means” and “strength” to realize his goals. He is an ordinary man--no Hamlet, no Hercules -- with modest dreams who has to confront a hostile world unarmed, unaided.

If he keeps youthful impetus for violent protest under check and in time shifts to a moderate stance, it is his strategy of survival. In other words, he practises moderation which alone in the given sociopolitical context could guarantee his happiness in future.

Anand has portrayed Lalu with a lot of sympathy by highlighting the struggles of a young man to find his place and meet his goals in his motherland.