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## Psychological Trauma in Anand's *Across the Black Waters*

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### Abstract

This paper explores the issue of psychological trauma in Mulk Raj Anand's novel "*Across the Black Waters*," shedding light on the profound impact of World War I on Indian soldiers under British rule. Central to the narrative is Lalu, a sepoy whose journey unveils the stark realities of trench warfare, the constant specter of death, and the brutalities of battle. The soldiers navigate the complex terrain of dislocation and alienation, torn between allegiance to their homeland and serving the British Empire, all while contending with prejudice within the military hierarchy. The aftermath of the war reverberates in the soldiers' lives, marked by the enduring symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)—nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety, and depression. Through the lens of Lalu's perspective, this paper exposes the emotional toll exacted on these individuals amidst the multifaceted challenges of war and colonialism. Importantly, the paper employs a novel approach, applying trauma theory as a conceptual framework to delve into the psychological dimensions of the narrative, thereby offering a nuanced understanding of the characters' experiences in "*Across the Black Waters*."

**Keywords:** Dislocation, Psychological trauma, Sepoy, Alienation, Dislocation, Disintegration

## Introduction

This paper tries to explore the issues of psychological trauma in Mulk Raj Anand's *Across the Black Waters* by analyzing the story knitted in the novel and attempts to explore the psychological traumatic effect over the protagonist Lalu because of war. It is the study of Mulk Raj Anand's *Across the Black Waters*. Anand has written about the life struggle and the panic situation (during war) of the protagonist Lalu during war. This project makes significant contribution to study the psychological effects of the protagonist Lalu due to war. In the book, *Across the Black Waters* the author has written about the village boy named Lalu and his struggle to return his property and to make the family happy. He joins army. Unfortunately, he along with his group, is sent to fight against Germany from the side of British. The troop is sent from place-to-place fear dominates over him. For example, Lalu had lain in a half sleep in the cellar, when he awakened with a sudden jerk and found his body convulsed with the tremors of a nightmare" (Anand, 2008, p. 141). Pain-racked face spreads a trembling dread and sorrow (Anand, 2008, p. 125). His brain was in a whirl (Anand, 2008, p. 94). He loses his consciousness. (Anand, 2008, p. 14) The above-mentioned lines proves that he is a psychological problem because of war.

This research probes into the issue of how the colonial culture of India is profoundly affected by the traumatic effects of war in which innocent Indian sepoy fight hectically with full devotion to the crown of British Raj. Prior to the war, Indians used to assert their loyalty to the crown of British imperialism. Following the war, they come to know how they are hoodwinked by the colonial politics which is the politics of deception and deprivation. Since then, Indians have begun to cultivate the culture of resistance. The effect of the First World War, where sepoy sacrificed their lives, brings forth profound level of chaotic and troubled understanding of how much Indian culture is affected by the hatred and horror resulting from the catastrophic loss of sepoy's lives. This research focuses on the issue of the impact of traumatic experience caused by the claustrophobia of men in the frontline projected in *Across the Black Waters*. It foregrounds an emotional wound or shock of sepoy who died in the trenches of France and Flanders.

*Across the Black Water* is part of a trilogy along with *The Village* and *The Sword and the Sickle* that chronicles the life of Lalu as he struggles to rise from the bottom of Indian society. (2018, p. 163) In the background is India's fight for independence. This book is the only Indian English novel that is set in World War I and portrays the experiences of Lalu,

who only wants to reclaim the piece of land his family lost as a reward for serving. But when he returns from war, he finds his family destroyed and his parents.

### Literature Review

Different critics have analyzed the text from the multiple perspectives that preserve the universal nature of the novel. Among them, A.L. McLeod is a critic who has made an extensive survey of the entire literary oeuvre of Mulk Raj Anand. He makes the following observation with respect to the novel, He says “To assist the British in their war against Germany, presumably World War I, Indian sepoys, who were ruled by British back then, were sent across the black waters” (Anand, 2008, p. 32). McLeod examines the novel in terms of the literary coverage of sepoy's contribution to the British Raj during the Second World War. Both the bravery and audacity of the sepoys are put at the heart of the novel. The loyalty to the throne of British Raj is the most beautiful virtue of sepoy that needs appreciation. It is an undeniable fact that sepoys fought against German soldiers who are well-equipped with artillery and ammunitions.

Since the publication of *Across the Black Water*, different critics have expressed their notion on this work. Raj Singh argues that In *Across the Black Waters*, Mulk Raj Anand clearly creates the character Lal Singh as a true to life character who depicts most of the soldiers who are originally farmers. “The setting of the novel is during the period of the Gandhian movement which had started to gain momentum and the nationalist fervor in the country was high with sporadic nonviolent movements taking place to oust the British from the country” (Singh, 2015). Unlike the idea of this research, Raj Singh sees this work from the perspective of war. He argues this book is only about war which is related to the Indian people who win place and achieve its great interest. Suresht Renjen Bald argues from a different perspective. He argues:

Lalu the central figure in Mulk Raj Anand's trilogy accepts revolution of rebellions in the village. As an adolescent, he defines the moves of his Sikh village community shaving his long hair eating meat cooked by a Muslim and flirting with the landlork's daughter on being severely punished for his behaviour by the headman of the village his father and elder brothers. Lalu rejects familial and communicable discipline. He ran away from home to seek liberation in this Army. (Bald, 1974)

Bald talks about the protagonist of this novel Lalu accepts revolution going against society by shavings his long hair, eating meat which was cooked by Muslim. So, he damn cares the society, escape from the society, village and family and search liberation in the army. Saleha Ilhaam has expressed his idea in his own way. He states that “It is based on the experiences of Indian sepoy who are transported to Europe to fight in the First World War. The central character is Lalu, a young Hindu boy who has already with strict practice of Hindu eating at Muslim’s shop while at home. In Europe we see how the soldiers are treated by their English masters within the army, but Anand also depicts the strict hierarchies among the Indian themselves in terms of caste, class and rank (Ilhaam, 2021, p. 193). Dominik LaCapra basing this theory of trauma on Freud’s psychoanalysis stress the need for “acting out” and “working through” of trauma for leading a healthy life. Trauma is in strinsically multidisciplinary. So, it needs to displace older paradigms and attend to know configuration of cultural knowledge. Unlike the psychoanalytic formalist approach, historical approach examines the undercurrent the distorted by contextualizing in the network of cultural political Sigmund Freud in Mourning and Melancholy describes two opposite forces that act simulated to convert traumatic experiences in all forms of writing, Lacapra asserts:

The literary forms get in strength from the struggle between the urge to cry out from burning core of traumatic experiences one to one hand and the drive to rationally construct the core of the trauma as a symbolic representation model in language, thus keeping it at a same distance from fact to fiction. (LaCapra, 1999)

In this sense, trauma brings the limitations of our understanding and at the same time it dislocates the so called traditionally disciplinary boundaries leading it to rethink our notion of experiences and of communication. In a person’s telling of trauma what remains to be said in the disaster rain of words and demise of writing for both the speaker and writer in the course of conversation.

Trauma theory is a privileged critical category which includes diverse fields with its special focus on psychological, philosophical, ethical and questions about the nature and representation of traumatic events. In other words, all forms of remembering trauma the first result in the process of “Working through” the other is based on denial and result in “acting out.” Both concepts come from Freud and have been developed in such way that could be used in historical studies.

Verbitsky et al present that PTSD is a complex phenotype that is difficult to model in rodents because it is diagnosed by patient interview and influenced by both environmental and genetic factors (Verbitsky et al., 2020). It deviates the thought of the people. The sepoy or the British Indian army were afflicted with this disease.

PTSD is studied in the American contexts by Jones and other writers, they say “post-traumatic stress disorder is a common and disabling mental health disorder, with about one in fifteen U.S. adults meeting criteria for PTSD during the lifetime” (Jones et al., 2022). Trauma was originally the term for a surgical wound. Conceived on the model of rapture of the skin or protective envelope of the body resulting in a catastrophic global reaction in the entire organism Swartz while studying Freud and trauma writes in *Trauma*:

Freud famously abandoned the very theory of sexual seduction that is crucial to today's recovered memory moment. Yet, if we are to evaluate Freud's role in the genealogy of trauma as we must it is essential to understand that the terms in which modern trauma theorist tend to describe Freud's betrayal reveal a fundamental misunderstanding of his thought. (Schwartz, 2002)

According to Freud, what he called deferred action trauma was constituted by a relationship between two events or experiences, a first event that was no necessary traumatic because it came too early in child's development to be understand and assimilated and the second event that also assimilated the second event that was not inherently traumatic but that triggered a memory of the first event that only then was given traumatic meaning and hence repressed by a dialectic between two events neither of which was intrinsically traumatic and a temporal delay or latency through which the past was available only by a deferred act of understanding and interpretation .

### **Methodology**

The researcher makes use of the theory of Psychological Trauma borrowing the lenses from Eyrmen, LaCapra and Caruth. The researcher assumes that the theory of Psychological Trauma is pertinent for this research because even the text *Across the Black Waters* deals with the problems of effects of war, psychological pangs and pains. This research explores and examines how the undivided devotion on the part of sepoys towards the British Empire leads to the most embarrassing and self-destructive conditions. Colonial subjects in India under the colonial rule of Britain used to think that they are members of

British Raj. They also used to think that they have duty and responsibility towards stability and integrity of British Empire. That is why they fight vigorously for Britain during the First World War against the aggressive German soldiers. Sepoys shed blood for the fate and future of British Raj. They sacrifice their lives for the bright future of Britain. But after the way, sepoys who died and are safe now get nothing.

Over one hundred years have passed since Sigmund Freud first created psychoanalysis. The new profession flourished within the increasing secularization of Western culture (Roazen, 2018, p. 301). More than a century has gone by since Sigmund Freud first developed psychoanalysis. This fresh approach to understanding the human mind gained popularity as Western society became more secular, meaning there was a decline in the influence of religious beliefs and practices. During this time, psychoanalysis thrived as a profession, finding its place in the changing cultural landscape of the West. Human being had displaced mentality.

After the war, those sepoys get just indifference, negligence and condescending attitude of British soldiers. Prior to the war, colonial subjects had unshakable belief in the power and glory of British Empire. When sepoys know the ground reality of war, they no longer remain loyal to the Raj of British queen. A kind of resistance and rebellious conscience develop. The colonial culture is profoundly changed. The indifference of British soldiers towards sepoys marks the beginning of profound transformation in the underlying norms and ideals of colonial trauma. Sepoys' negligence and misery implant a kind of culture of hatred and vengeance on the part of Indians against the callous and insensitive colonizers.

When Lalu, in his heady new role as patrol leader, attracts the romantic attention of his daughter Maya, Harbans Singh frames Lalu for theft, forcing him leave the village. He turns his back on the place where everyone knows him and marches into the anonymity of the British Army. He does not see the way the Boy Scouts also served to control him; instead, all of his anger is directed toward Harbans Singh and the rest of Nandpur who will not resist the landlord's tyranny. He has been traumatized because of this condition. Here van der Kolk, B.A., Brown, P. & van der Hart, O in the article Pierre Janet on post-traumatic stress Say: Janet claimed that vehement emotions interfere with proper appraisal and appropriate action. Failure to confront the experience fully leads to dissociation of the traumatic memories and their return as fragmentary reliving experiences Janet proposed

that intense emotions can disrupt our ability to assess situations accurately and take appropriate actions. (van der Kolk et al., 1989, p. 368) When we don't fully confront these overwhelming experiences, they can become fragmented memories that later resurface as disjointed and vivid reliving episodes. In simpler terms, if we don't deal with our strong emotions directly, they can come back to us in a fragmented and intense way.

British rule in India, first of all, resulted in breaking the barrier of that closed society. Then the greatest psychological impact came with the establishment of four universities and with the introduction of western educational system. The English language provided the natives with a way to the western literature and to the western culture, of course. English education created a class of native bourgeoisie, the majority of which turned to their mother tongue while giving birth to a native literature, applying the western aesthetic norms. But a few among them thought it appropriate to give expressions to their feelings and experiences in English. Thus, the peculiar body of Indo-Anglian literature was created while its contents were to be Indian, its medium of expression was English.

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As the novel progresses and Lalu comes to know European peasants, he realizes the stories are colonial myths that poverty exists in Europe as surely as in his homeland. It is the realization that drives him toward Marxism. The other myth Lalu rejects in the midst of war is that the European war is another Mahabharata:

The principles of light and darkness, right and wrong, were arrayed on opposite sides, fighting for supremacy, and all the powerful kingdoms within reach were drawn into the struggle as in the old days of the great war of Kurukshetra. Right, it was devoutly argued would triumph in the end, especially as Sri Krishna as incarnated in the Indians would show his hand. (Anand, 2008)

This belief in right and wrong lasts as the Indians board ship, lasts as they arrive in Europe, and lasts as the French cheer their arrival. When they report to the front lines and the shrapnel begins to fall all around the trench in which Lalu waits for the order to charge.

### **Data Analysis and Presentation**

If we delve in the context of the novel, *Across the Black Water*, Lalu's time in the army cures him of his romantic ideal of Europe. He no longer envies the sahibs and believes their lives are richer. In the army, Lalu recognizes the way the Boy Scouts have been preparing him to die for a country of which he is not a citizen. He has seen the horrors their system has brought upon themselves, and he returns to India prepared to resist it. The time in the army brings another important realization for Lalu Singh that will follow him throughout the next novel:

If his father had been alive and present, he would certainly have prophesied disaster for all those who had crossed the black waters, and he would have regarded this war to which they were going as a curse laid upon the sahibs for trying to defy nature. But why am I turning suspicious and thinking such thoughts? He had always defied his father and preened himself on his schooling. He did not realize



that he had inherited many of his father's qualities, not only the enduring ones such as his short, lithe wiry frame, his love of the land, his generosity, and his humor but also his faith and his naivete. (Anand, 2008)

His father dies and his death brings forth catastrophic change in his viewpoint. His trust and faith in the duty and responsibility dwindle down so easily. He has lived for a while as a German prisoner and for this he is humiliatingly discharged. Afterwards he turns back toward the life he rejected earlier.

Eyerman formulates his theory's basic assumption against the backdrop of a critique of what he sums up as lay trauma theory. The common denominator for this lay theory is, as contended by Eyerman, "the belief that events that are traumatic have a more or less given natural fallacy to be so. Thus according to the lay theory, the trauma potential is understood as an intrinsic part of the events themselves" (Eyerman, 2001). Eyerman rejects any form of lay trauma theory and argues for a more theoretically reflexive alternative. In accordance with his initial definition cultural trauma is "always to be understood as something that is socially constructed. It means that social construction is to be understood as a social process in form of mediation through representations" (Eyerman, 2001). Thus, it is only through representations that the experience of the traumatic event can be conveyed.

Lalu has been excited to visit Europe, for his colonial schooling has told him that all good things come from the lands of the sahibs:

And the ship was urging him forward into the unknown. He was going to Vilayat after all, England, the glamorous land of his dreams, where the sahibs come from, where people wore coats and pantaloons and led active, fashionable lives – even, so it was said, the peasants and the poor sahibs. He wondered what was his destiny. (Anand, 2008)

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People think the fact that the traumatic experience is constantly forcing itself upon the patient even in his sleep is a proof of the strength of that experience: the patient is, as one might say, fixated to his trauma. I am not aware, however, that patients suffering from traumatic neurosis are much occupied in their waking lives with memories of their accident. Perhaps they are more concerned with *not* thinking of it (Anand, 2008). If a life threat to the body and the survival of this threat are experienced as the direct infliction and the healing of a wound, trauma is suffered in the psyche precisely, it would seem, because it is not directly available to experience.

In *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, LaCapra recapitulates these points to meditate more broadly if primarily through the legacy of the Holocaust on the critical methodology most appropriate for the traumatic inheritance of contemporary culture, a reflection that potentially encompasses other traumas such as slavery, nuclear destruction, or apartheid. Readers familiar with his considerable body of work on the Holocaust will thus find useful reformulations of terms and concepts that can then be applied to other traumatic contexts. LaCapra proposes a theoretically minded, yet historical approach to trauma. It would commemorate the particularity of historical wounds. LaCapra remarks:

This unmiserable past continues to shape our current experiential and conceptual landscape. However, this past and its losses would also be subject to a collective process of mourning, working through, and moving on, a trajectory that would ultimately release us from a cycle of perpetual traumatization and allow us to turn to future-oriented ethical and political projects. (LaCapra, 1999)

LaCapra suggests that literature has been the privileged domain or safe haven for trauma's rehearsal and performative transmission. Two critical concepts emerge in response to the tension between traumatic and historical modes of addressing the past. They are the notion of the middle voice and that of empathic unsettlement. With many precautions and qualifications, LaCapra proposes the discursive analogue of a middle voice a voice hovering between active and passive modes as a vehicle for writing trauma. The middle voice would thus be the in between voice of undecidability and the unavailability or radical ambivalence of clear-cut positions. LaCapra is careful to point out that to privilege a stance of identification, ambivalence.

Not only the British soldiers but the captives too disclosed their true nature. Once, some of the captives died of fever, typhus and other minor diseases. The lack of medicine is another cause for the growth in the numbers of dead patients. That is why they paid least attention to the sickness and sufferings of the captives. "Through the inculcation of habits of discipline, Salvation Army reformatories sought to reform criminal tribespeople into subjected and productive bodies. Processes of reform were linked to the spatiotemporal expansion of the British Empire and the constitution of new forms of productive relations" (Tolen, 1991). There was quibble who will own the sleepers and rags. Some captives quarreled for the space of the dead man because after his death there would be place for someone to sleep. The extreme dearth of minimum requirements of life made captives to show their true human nature. In the midst of poverty, dearth and paucity of resource, raw human nature comes out in its crude and cunning form. The dramatic exhibition of the crude and raw human nature amidst the captives themselves calls into question any gross idealization of nature of human beings. The following lines illustrate this point:

Lalu including other sepoys spent some time in a hut for typhus patients who ran very high temperatures and were often delirious, many of them moribund. After one of them had just died, Lalu watched without any emotional upset the scene that followed, which was repeated over and over again with each death. One by one the prisoners approached the still warm body. One grabbed the remains of a messy meal of potatoes; another decided that the corpse's wooden shoes were an improvement on his own. (K. D. Verma, 2000, p. 90)

The vicious cycle of dehumanization is mentioned in this above-cited part. The British soldiers in charge of British Empire created terrible atmosphere in the army camp. Everything is scarce in the camp. From sleeping bed and wearing blanket to the eatable item and medicine there was paucity. Poverty, lack of the minimum provision of life, harsh treatment of captives collectively produced harmful effect in prisoners. In the miserable condition, the captives faced scarcity everywhere in the camp. That is why they began to act and think in an inhuman way. Some sepoys are dying while others are freely waiting for the moment to snatch the rag and other things which are used in the daily lives of the camp. Inhuman and callous deeds generate insensitive atmosphere which in turn compels prisoners to act and think in a diabolic way.

Following his entry into the camp, all these illusions disappeared and a naked

truth loomed threateningly shocking all the captives. Amidst all the sadistic and inhuman treatment which the sepoys-captives had to encounter, the narrator says that he grew formidably curious. Fatal and grim sense of humor welled up in his psyche. As a consequence, he exerted a good deal of curiosity. The growing sense of strange humor and grim curiosity held Lalu consciousness in a state of suspension. Even several years after his redemption from the concentration camp, this kind of curiosity and humor haunted to his own utter surprise and shock. The following lines illustrate this point in a dramatic way:

Thus, the illusions some of us still held were destroyed one by one, and then, quite unexpectedly, most of us were overcome by a grim sense of humor. Sepoys knew that we had nothing to lose except our so ridiculously naked lives. When the showers started to run, they all tried very hard to make fun, both about themselves and about each other. After all, real water did flow from the sprays? Apart from that strange kind of humor, another sensation seized us: Curiosity. (Anand, 2008) Lalu goes on to narrate that he is seized by a bizarre kind of sensation. The peculiar sensation seized him. He is at a loss to know what is happening to him. He dares to know if his mind is working at a proper and normal rate or not. He managed to know also. But the more he dwells upon this condition, the more confused and confounded the narrator becomes. Without doubt he comes to know that there are some of the ways which have been producing some strange sensations.

Verma further mentions: “At some points in Lalu’s mind, the narrator feels increasingly invaded by fatal sense of curiosity and grim sense of humor. In the moment of brutality” (K. D. Verma, 2000). The narrator is feeling unbelievably curious and incredibly humorous. The occurrence of both inhumanity and degrading sense of humor is extremely traumatic to the Lalu.

While Lalu resists attacking the landlord, he does renew his relationship with Maya. When he leaves Nandpur again, she goes along. Lalu goes to work organizing the peasants in another province into communes for Kanwar Rampal Singh, the Count in another province. Niven’s own prose illustrates the problem the Count cannot overcome. He has more knowledge of Lord Byron’s England, than he does of his own region. The revolutionary examples the Count looks to are European, and he is blind to the culture of his own country:

The Count kept up a running commentary on Revolution and Revolutionaries, until he

began to find difficulties in negotiating his way across the highway, which was completely devoid of such modern conveniences he had got used to in Europe – signposts. Not only could he not turn his head back to make speeches here on lack of signposts, but he could hardly take his eyes off the old road.(Anand, 2008)

The Count looks for signposts along the road to revolution that do not exist in India; his revolution is set in a fantasy land. The Count is without the creativity to negotiate a revolutionary space without a map. Ultimately, he is unable to find alternatives to those European road signs, and consequently he cannot find his way to the Revolution. Das Mentions that “The encounter with Europe in Anand’s novel has to be filtered through this understanding. Narration of events are almost always through a European perspective)”(Das, 2018, p. 355). He refuses to confront the hypocrisy of clinging to his aristocratic title and lands and serving as landlord to landless peasants, while simultaneously talking revolution. He consistently discounts the peasants.

In an increasingly bourgeois world, the Count tries to capture the former prestige of the rajahs by leaping to the defense of the peasants. Unlike Lalu Singh, the Count has no conception of what means to be a peasant, or even what it means to work. While this may be noble, it ignores the reality that it is the peasants who suffer. Gandhi strives to appear like a peasant, but he knows little of peasant life. He complains that the peasants are not strong enough to fight the battles he wants to fight. This dismissal of the peasants enrages Lalu Singh.

And as he contemplated the in the half-dark, deepened by the dead night outside, he seemed to get faith and become hard. They seemed so gentle and innocent and immune from any of the violence he felt in his nature as they dozed or slept, breathing with half-opened mouths and widely dilated nostrils. They would be so naive if one talked to them about their plight and they would not dare to let themselves to be mastered by their hatred against those whom they had come to accept as their superiors(Anand, 2008). They were stubborn and would walk away if one of their prejudices was offended. They would resort to murder if they had a quarrel over a trickle of water in the fields. Behind the abjectness into which the gentleness of their religious faith, the power of their priests had schooled them. Behind the ashen deadness of their feeble frames there still shouldered the energy of long generations.

Lalu empathizes with the peasantry the revolution is supposedly going to free.

He knows their problems and their difficulties in resisting because he grew up a peasant. Lalu offers a different path to social change than the Count and Mahatma Gandhi. In the postwar period, the entire colonial of India undergoes shock, mobility and then anti-colonial unrest. But it takes decade long time for India to recovery from the shock of psychological trauma.

### **Traces of pessimism in *Across the Black Waters***

The major thrust of this research is to expose harsh realities about the effects of cultural trauma. In Anand's *Across the Black Waters*, the cultural effects of trauma inflicted by war are explored at a great length. The way Anand treats the cultural effects of war and trauma sounds convincing and life like. It truly deserves appeal, sympathy and attention. In no way, war and its traumatic effect can be justified. Dirks inculcates in his article, "*Across the Black Waters* is about empire, about war, about all the idiosyncratic details of character and community that get lost in such wide-sweeping nouns. But it is also and perhaps above all about the English language" (Dirks, 2007). It further states the cultural effects of far-reaching repercussions. Native cultural ethos of India, diverse cultural patterns and practices and other diversity of norms are torn asunder by the aggressive colonial ideology of British Empire. Lalu is a witness to all the shifting reality of India's cultural norms and history.

War threatens the British Raj and Lalu and other sepoys manage to assist British soldiers. Imperialism destroyed the basis of the old village life and mechanically imposed a superstructure from the top. It sapped the whole foundation of the self-sufficient feudal village, but left feudalism in its place. It destroyed the ancient forms, but left the festering sores of an age-long decay beneath the surface without making any serious attempt to heal the sick body, except treating it with patent medicines. It broke up and changed India, but refused to renew it.

The implementation of this superstructure had reverberations throughout the Indian rural economy. Viewing the local agricultural practices as unsophisticated, the British instituted new agricultural policies and altered the relationship of the peasants to the land they worked. These changes were described by the colonizers as modernization. In fact, the transformation of agricultural practices was part of a grand development scheme known as the Green Revolution. The millennia old agricultural knowledge honed over the

centuries to fit into the climate and culture of each region on the subcontinent.

Verma, one of the prominent critics says, “Anand the well-deserved recognition and status of a novelist who is capable of portraying something very genuine and authentic about human nature and the Indian social scene” (V. Verma, 2014, p. 277). In *Across the Black Water*, such a process is represented in a crystal-clear way pessimistic vision. The destruction of diversity and the creation of uniformity simultaneously involve the destruction of stability and the creation of vulnerability. Local knowledge on the other hand, focuses on multiple-use of diversity. Rice is not just grain; it provides straw for thatching and mat-making, fodder for livestock, bran for fish ponds, and husk for fuel. Local knowledge systems have evolved tall varieties of rice and wheat to satisfy multiple needs. They have evolved sweet Cassava varieties whose leaves are palatable as fresh greens. However, all dominant research on cassava has focused on breeding new varieties for tuber yields, with leaves which are unpalatable.

The cultures conquered by Europe and the United States in the great waves of capitalist colonization in the 15th through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries had developed agricultures, which fitted elegantly into the needs of the culture and the demands of the ecosystem? The destruction of diversity and the creation of uniformity simultaneously involve the destruction of stability and the creation of vulnerability. Local knowledge on the other hand, focuses on multiple-use of diversity. Rice is not just grain. It provides straw for thatching and mat-making, fodder for livestock, bran for fish ponds, and husk for fuel. Local knowledge systems have evolved tall varieties of rice and wheat to satisfy multiple needs.

While much of Mulk Raj Anand's *Across the Black Waters* speaks directly to the implications for cultural and economic independence inherent in imported agricultural technologies. The Punjab trilogy traces the life of a character searching for another India. “Anand's protagonist in *Across the Black Waters* looks at the situation in the Punjab from an ever-widening orbit, only to recognize that global movements devalue the very people they purport to help. In the end he rejects theory for action, returning to the peasant society he fled as a youth” (Vanroye, 2017). The scene of trilogy can vividly be seen in this novel.

“The Trilogy has been brought together by Saros Cowasjee noted Anand scholar who has also written an insightful and inclusive introduction as the Punjab Trilogy” (Kaur, 2018) can be read as a Bildungsroman. *Across the Black Water* is also a part and parcel of

this trilogy. Lalu points out how the conflation of these two political systems has great significance in postcolonial countries. Third World institutions mimic the paradigms of the West. These tautological definitions are unproblematic if one leaves out people, especially poor people. If one ignores ecological and cultural diversity and distinct civilization and natural histories of our planet which have created diverse and distinctive cultures and ecosystems. In every instance, the pessimistic facts are found in this novel, *Across the Black Water*.

### Conclusion

“*Across the Black Waters*” by Mulk Raj Anand, depicts condition aftermath the World War I. This paper views this novel through psychological trauma with its significant theme, especially in the context of the experiences of the Indian soldiers. The novel delves on the impact of war on the mental and emotional well-being of the soldiers, particularly through the character of Lalu, the protagonist. Lalu undergoes various traumatic experiences on the battlefield, witnessing the horrors of war, facing the challenges of being in a foreign land, and dealing with the racism and discrimination from his British counterparts. These experiences contribute to the psychological trauma that Lalu and other soldiers endure. Anand portrays the internal struggles of the characters, depicting how the war disrupts their sense of identity, belonging, and sanity. The psychological trauma is depicted through flashbacks, nightmares, and moments of intense emotional turmoil, offering a poignant commentary on the lasting effects of war on the human psyche.

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