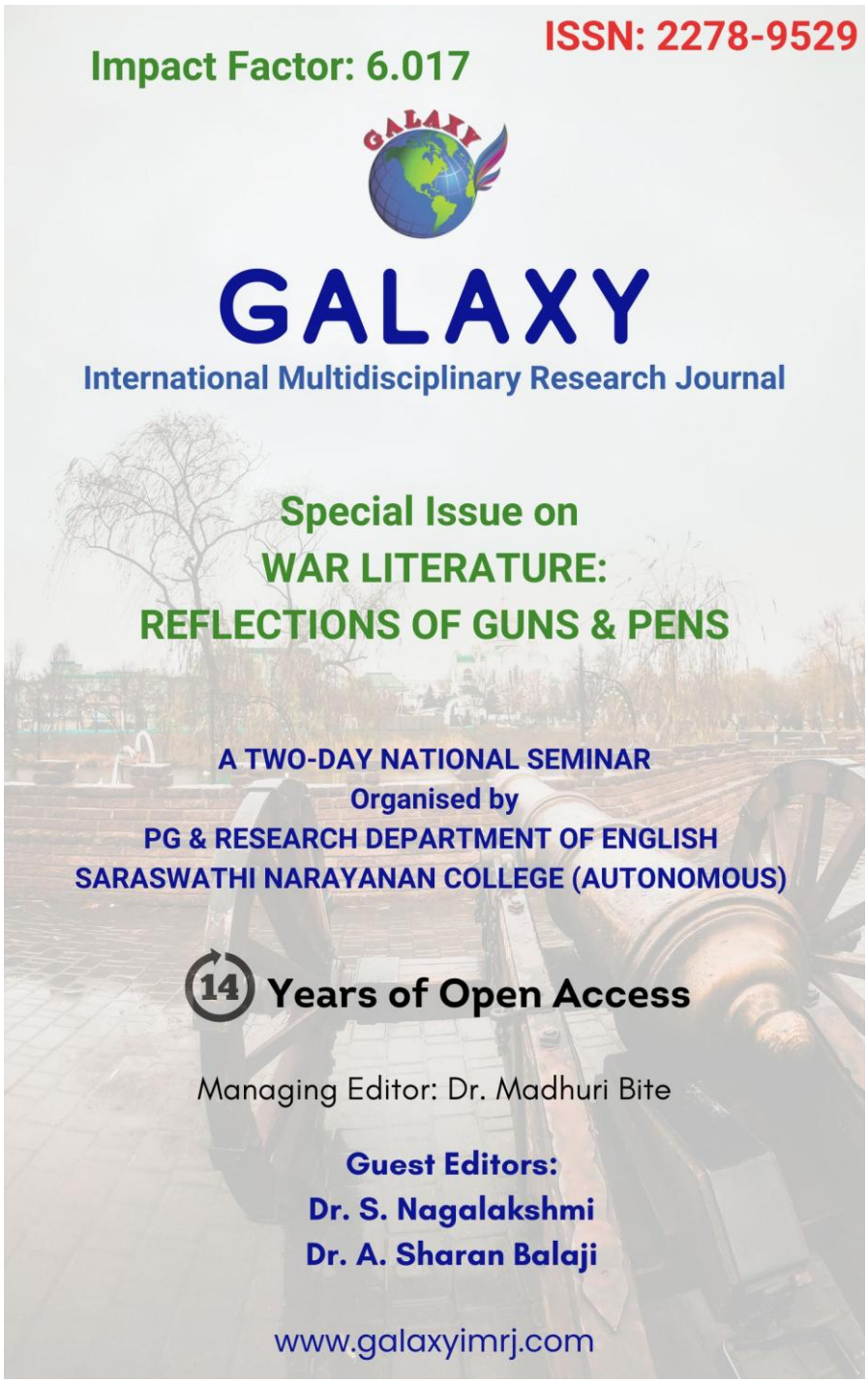


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Depiction of Indian Soldiers in Mulk Raj Anand's *Across the Black Waters*

R. Saranraj
Department of Linguistics,
Madurai Kamraj University,
Madurai.

Abstract:

Mulk Raj Anand's *Across the Black Waters* is a critical analysis to depict the complicated ways that the British imperial wars showed Indian fighters. Anand uses his soldiers in this study to challenge and change the way people think about colonial fighting forces. The story shows that Indian troops were more than just tools of British rule by showing them as balanced men who had to deal with different parts of their military duties. The soldiers give a detailed account that shows how they feel like they are from another place and how detached they are from Europe while they support the British Raj without knowing their Indian roots. The abstract shows how military personnel become disappointed after seeing the horrible things that happen in industrial warfare, and they start to wonder if the imperial goal is really important for their required military service. Through his story, Anand shows how serving in the British military exposed the Indian troops to systemic racial and social discrimination. Official war stories don't always show how brave Indian men were, and their experiences during the war aren't always included in official stories either. By showing these soldiers as real people, Anand's work goes against the colonial propaganda picture of loyal sepoys that was encouraged by colonial rhetoric. This study shows that *Across the Black Waters* is an important look at British war stories in which Indian soldiers are shown to be victims of empire who had to deal with its effects after colonial war. Anand uses his descriptions of specific soldiers to make important points about what it's like to be in war that help both postcolonial fiction and historical interpretations.

Keywords: British rule, Indian soldiers, social discrimination, post-colonial.

Introduction

During the very chaotic First World War, European countries brought in soldiers from faraway imperial regions, such as India, which was an important source of soldiers. India was the most valuable gem in the British colonial system, so they sent more than a million men to fight in other countries. European accounts of the war are more important than other points of view, so the stories of Indian sepoys and what they did on the battlefield are not included in official history records. The British Indian Army formed as an imperial armed force after colonial rule and has had a complicated history. Soldiers in the British Indian Army, who came from different parts of India and social classes, were put through a completely new kind of war as industrial warfare. It was very different from what they had been through before. The trenches in Flanders, the deserts of Mesopotamia, and the battlefields of Africa were all places where their patriotism, courage, and humanistic values were put to the test. This study looks at how the complicated descriptions of soldiers in Anand's novel show how their military experiences don't match up with common ideas about colonial warfare service.

One can learn a lot about how empire shape's identity through this story, which is more than just a war story. It also shows how destructive war can be. Anand uses his story to disprove British ideas about loyal sepoys, which helps him paint a more realistic picture of people. Through the story, the author shows how military people dealt with internal conflict and feelings of being out of place and foreign as their imperial service lost its appeal. In addition to analyse the novel, the study serves a second purpose as a corrective restoration drive. The study looks at personal military stories to find out how Indian soldiers' service affected society and their mental health. Anand shows in his writings that the British military used race and social systems to mistreat Indian soldiers and ignore their important role. The

analysis looks at how the novel shows soldiers' identities change as they face both the contradictions of colonialism and the revolutionary effects of modern war.

This study is very important because it gives us important details about a key part of World War I that has been ignored for too long. By looking at how *Across the Black Waters* shows Indian troops, one can better understand the human cost of imperialism and the long-lasting effects of colonial wars. The study looks at the war from many angles to show the different kinds of battle experiences soldiers had and to figure out the many things that affected their outcomes during the war.

The British Indian Army:

The British Indian Army grew into a complicated military organization as British control over India grew over time. A lot of different racial and religious groups made up the organization, and they stuck to their old ways of fighting. The East India Company turned these private troops into an important military organization that gave the British control over a large part of India and allowed the empire to grow across its land. Farmers who lived in rural areas volunteered to join the military because their towns had a history of military service and they needed both military duty and money to live on. British officers were in charge of the military, and Indian soldiers called sepoys were in charge of the lower lines. This showed that Britain had an imperial power.

The method that worked well to keep things in order to cause problems with social equality and anger among the people. Based on Anand’s story, the troops knew they were lower-ranking soldiers under British command. The men knew that they were working as low-paid "coolies" during the war (Anand, p. 112). However, the forces had two roles, they were both a fighting force and a social group that affected both service members and their

families. People in the regimental system formed customs and bonds of friendship that helped them get over the feeling of being a stranger in British soil.

When the army sent men, they did their jobs all over the British Empire, except in India. As soldiers who served in many different British colonies, they learned about a lot of different cultures and landscapes, which really showed how big the empire was. The soldiers in *Across the Black Waters* had to change how they saw the world and their place in it because they were sent away. The military history of India has many contrasting aspects, including its constructive parts in society and its less orderly sides. Even though this school was important to British power, it also gave Indian soldiers the chance to learn about nationalist ideas that made them question the colonial government.

Taking part in World War I as an Indian:

When World War I broke out in 1914, it caused big changes in the British Indian Army division. India became even more important from a strategic point of view when the war needed a huge deployment of troops. This made Indian soldiers essential to operations in the West, the Middle East, and Africa. During World War I, the British used more than a million Indian men on many fronts, from the Western Front to the Middle East and East Africa. These troops took part because India had a complicated relationship with Britain that was based on both love and duty, as well as basic military needs.

One thing that made Indian soldiers in World War I unique was that they had to deal with both courage and hardship. The Indian troops who fought in the trenches had to deal with constant shelling and the constant risk of dying. The troops had to deal with harsh conditions and a lack of basic supplies. They also had to deal with unfair treatment because of their race. Anand talks about how the soldiers were confused by how big the war they were in was. Anand talks about how this soldier had never seen war like this, where robots killed a

lot of men (p. 87). The troops who were used to normal warfare were confused by what they saw on the battlefields.

Indian troops made important contributions to the war, but their work wasn't properly recognized by the government, and they didn't get paid for their services. Their sacrifices were not recognized in the war histories, and the government accounts played down their experiences during the war. India's military got angrier because it wasn't given enough attention, which made nationalist views stronger across the country. Indian troops in World War I fought for freedom in Europe, but they learned the hard way that imperial rhetoric was not true because they had no rights in their home country. Indian soldiers went through a lot during the war, which made them question their loyalty to the British Raj and support the drive for Indian independence.

Colonial Context and Identity:

The colonial social forces at work during World War I had a big effect on the war experience of Indian troops. The soldiers were in a tough spot because they had to decide whether to back British rule or their nationalist feelings for an independent India, which were growing stronger. On top of cultural and social factors, political and social changes shaped their combat journey. The British military's strategy of racial discrimination made it harder for Indian soldiers to figure out who they were. Indian troops were seen as less important than Indian citizens by British forces because they did not have basic rights that British soldiers did. Their experience was another form of discrimination that drove people apart and made them angry with each other.

Anand says that it was hard for the men to connect their Indian selves with their work in British war. The soldiers show how they feel like they don't fit in a world run by colonial power. Indian troops who fought for the 'civilized' British forces saw how dishonorable

behavior in modern war went against the very core of their imperial identity. They had to rethink everything about their lives after the war, including where they fit in those lives. Serving in the military during World War I made Indian soldiers feel more patriotic. This experience made them feel more connected to their home country and gave them better ideas about who they were and their independence. India started a new part of its history because of the war. Independence became a key issue in the nationalism movement.

In terms of literary representation, *Across the Black Waters* is an important piece of writing that gives us human views on the experiences of Indian soldiers in World War I. The stories go against official war records and present different views on the European military than what is usually seen. This novel by Anand tells an emotional story about the problems and hopes of people who are in the military, as well as their scary experiences. His work has helped to study how violence affected the mental and emotional health of people who fought in wars. Through his writing, he shows how these troops felt cut off from their surroundings. He shows how they felt culturally split between Western land and Indian roots, and how hard it was for them to keep the promises made by British rule and stay true to themselves. During the war, his view of the world changed so drastically that it changed important parts of him. Anand, says that war has the power to change people's views and question what they think they know.

Anand uses the different backgrounds of many soldiers in his writing to show how different the experiences of Indian troops during the war were. Anand's writing about individual soldiers gives us a smart look at the human cost of empire and its lasting effects on people who served in the military during the colonial era. These literature works help us understand World War I better by showing how different fighting forces experience different things because of their different backgrounds and by showing the many things that affected their military careers.

Conclusion

According to Mulk Raj Anand, *Across the Black Waters* does a great job of showing how colonial rule affects people's sense of self and how destructive modern war can be by showing Indian troops fighting in British wars. Soldiers from many different cultures joined the British Indian Army during the First World War as part of Britain's imperial expansion. They were there to help the British forces win the war. Those who served in the Indian military during World War I did more than their job; the war made them think about how they saw the world and their place in it. The troops went through the horrible parts of modern warfare and had to deal with racism. They also had to deal with contradictions when they tried to fit in with colonial culture. The stories that Anand tells destroy simple ideas about Indian soldiers and prove that imperialism had terrible effects on people and kept colonial customs alive forever. Through its descriptions of troops of personal experiences, the novel shows how they had problems, became more self-aware, and lost faith in the war. Throughout the story, the soldiers have an inner conflict that shows how disconnected they are from their European surroundings while they learn about the basic problems with colonial rule. This literary portrayal opens up the war story from points of view that aren't usually heard, which helps readers understand how those on the outside felt about it.

This study shows that we need to know everything about the general combat experiences of all people who fought in World War I. Even after more than one hundred years, Indian soldiers still need to be recognized for their bravery and pain. Anand sends a strong message about the military and the ongoing colonial legacy of war through his writing. Looking at how *Across the Black Waters* shows Indian soldiers can teach us a lot about complicated historical events and show us why we need to bring back views that were silenced in the past.

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