

Representation Of The Colonizers' Dominance Over Colonized Culture In Twilight In Delhi By Ali: A Postcolonial Analysis

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ABSTRACT: *This research paper aims to describe the postcolonial aspects in "Twilight in Delhi" (1984) and colonizers' cultural and traditional dominance over the colonized (Indian Muslims). It is important to mention that Ali has personally been through that painful agony of the mentioned colonial age. So as the writers are mirrors of their social era Ali also has drawn a clear sketch of British rule in India especially from Muslim perspective. He appears to have a clear goal to bring to lime light Muslim lingual, cultural and social deprivation caused by the British assault earlier and rule later on. Ali's novel "Twilight in Delhi" (1984) is the clear representation of the decline of Muslim culture in India which is like twilight near to be diminished. He highlights the decline of Muslim cultural values and their traditional sunset also.*

KEYWORDS: Ali, Colonized, Colonizers, Cultural, Hybridity, Oppression, Postcolonial, Socio-Political.

INTRODUCTION

This research paper is the reflection of socio political change as India was under the political and cultural charge made to them by the British and it was a clear paradigm shift from traditional Mughal culture to the British colonial culture or the operation of colonizers on colonized to adopt their culture, traditions and ways of living so this paper discusses two main points:

- a) Postcolonial aspects in Twilight in Delhi
- b) Dominance of colonizers' culture over colonized

When we apply the postcolonial theory on "Twilight in Delhi" it becomes clear that the selected novel is a post-colonial literary object surrounding the colonized cultural changes and submission of cultural values for the British. For Ashcroft et al (1998), it is the study and profound analysis of European territorial conquests, the disgusting attitude of the Empire, the rule of institutions of European colonialism and the resistance of colonial discourse in the subjects and also questioning cultural, political, social, historical rights of colonized.

Ali has tried to talk about Muslim rights by describing them “Others” and has used the words of Urdu to show a shift from English literature to Urdu. It also depicts the cultural norms prevailing in Delhi during British oppression as he has shown his son Asghar as the representative of British or colonizers as he wears the British dress and speaks English language and becomes a part of colonizer’s culture. Similarly he has revealed the conservative Muslim approach regarding women as in the novel women are confined in the four walls of the houses and are not given any rights to express themselves in any related field of life. Associating it with post-colonial discourse there are number of examples of the issues which show that Ali’s main intention was to talk about Muslim rights through his literary bent of mind. To Ali, Karachi (1984) when British entered in India made their own city by calling it “New Delhi” which was situated outside the walls of the city. These rulers removed the last culture by calling it historical void and implemented. The prophecy about Delhi came true as they wanted to build a new Delhi and Delhi remains where, as Ali reveals his agony through Hafiz,

“Even if the friends are oblivious of my being

I have a thousand association with them”

The prominent color of colonizers’ dominance is quiet adamant on colonized after the British rule over sub-continent. In this context the role played by Ahmad Ali through his novel *Twilight in Delhi* holds a distinct literary position. Ali (1984) says that, “The purpose and intention behind writing this novel was to limelight the decay of our norms and culture, our ways of living and thinking, values were dead. Nobody was even allowed to revive his past and see his historical roots”. Hence “*Twilight in Delhi*” (1984) brings to light many concerned issues like culture, language, society, religion, feminism and hybridity. Deprivation and subjugation are also prominent features which the novel represents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Usage of English language for the literary discourse in Sub-continent is the outcome of colonial rule. Rehman states that Noon, Abbas, Ali and Shahnawaz were the pioneers who wrote in English. Through their writings they talked about social, political, religious and nationalistic issues. They used English mainly for two perspectives-firstly to challenge the imperialism and secondly to raise voice against dual identity. The most famous postcolonial writers Sidhwa, Hashmi, Ali, Shamsie and Suleri are most famous writers of Pakistan. (Rehman, 1991).

Ahmed (1997) states that after the British rule the Muslims of India lost their homeland, their Mughal Empire, their language, culture and their city Delhi which was the capital. And the most devastating fact was that they lost their identity (p.43). Ali is called the great revolutionary ideologist as in his novel “*Twilight in Delhi*” we can see his nostalgia for the revival of Muslim civilization. According to him Delhi has been snatched by the Muslims like the Cordova and Granada in Spain. Talbot (1996) cites that Ahmed has used a term ‘Andalus Syndrome’ which means that Muslims had no future after the emergence of colonial rule and they were dependent on the laws set by the British (Ali, 1984).

“*Twilight in Delhi*” discusses many postcolonial terms like-hybridism in language and culture, concept of ‘Other’. Ali has examined the great Muslims center in Delhi, India. It

shows that the light in Delhi was getting fade due to the new light which was brighter. That light affected the culture, religion and the whole life of the Muslims of India. As Ali says that, "My purpose in writing this novel was to depict a phase of our national life and the decay of a whole culture, a particular mode of thinking and living, values now dead and gone before our eyes" (Ali,1984,p.x).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present research is the socio-cultural study of Delhi under post-colonial view point. It gives an insight on the transformation of human attitude and the cultural values. The term post-colonial has been interpreted in different perspectives by many theorists and scholars. Historians have invented the title post-colonial since the recent post era of Second World War. According to Ashcroft et al (1998), in the last decade of 1970's we witness the term "Postcolonial" being used quite frequently by the writers and historians of the related era. The term holds a chronological significance and is very prominent in the literary and historical narrations of late 70s. The term has actually been used to emboss the lingual, social, political and cultural background and happenings of social setups that had been previously ruled by the English queen.

Post colonialism has been interpreted in wider ways now, Ashcroft et al (1998),

It is the study and interpretation of territorial background of European continent we witness many institutions of colonial background related to European history. Going through the facts we also witness lengthy actions and quite descriptive managerial affairs of the British rule. The response of the concurrent colonial settlements to such assaults in the related contexts was quite evident in both earlier and later times of the rule.

So post colonialism is a reward against European imperialism. It can be said that now the European imperialist is the British imperialist which is ruling as the most exalted nation all over the world. The British are ruling the seas and their state is one fifth of the whole world. The British came in the Asian continent and occupied the Indian territories. They rewarded those people who followed their culture and punished those who ignored or disobeyed them in any manner. They were invaders and they conquered the two major norms of Indian people.

a) Language.

b) Popular mass culture

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

"Twilight in Delhi" has been examined and analyzed in postcolonial perspective. In fact there are number of issues which can be put in postcolonial theory. The methodology relies upon the textual analysis of the novel to see the effect of colonialism on Muslims' culture and the death of their norms and traditions.

Analysis

The story is very typical and simple which moves around Mr. Nihal and his household. He belongs to a Muslim family and is the representative of the past. The day begins with the voice of moazzin calling the people to perform Fajar prayer in the mosque. The story is demonstrated in the post 1857 era, when colonizers started ruling over India as the text gives a reference of the historical events like the 'Great Darbar in 1911, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919 in Amritsar and the political turmoil of 1920 in Northern India. The novel presents a clear picture of many historical monuments of Dehli as Qutab Minar, Humayun's Tomb, Red Fort and Jamia Mosque etc. Ali puts himself with the colonized to present the dilemma of those who have been marginalized after the dominance of British. He is of the view that now Delhi which was the heart of the sub-continent is in a state of vanishing and diminishing just like the bright light getting fade day by day and is about to die.

The title "Twilight in Delhi" in itself gives us an impact of a light which is getting dim, it provides us a picture of the life of the 'Indians' going down towards death, and the decay of Muslim civilization. As the starting lines of selected novel show the condition of Delhi:

"Night envelopes the city, covering it like a blanket. In the dim starlight roofs and houses and by-lanes lie asleep, wrapped in a restless slumber, breathing heavily as the heat become oppressive or shoots through like pain". Further he says that, "In the courtyards, on the roofs, in the by lanes, on the roads, men sleep on bare beds, half naked, tired after the sore days labour". (p.1)

Ali has used the postcolonial terms "opposites" –"Order and Disorder" "issue of identity" by which he wants to describe the order of the past and the disorder of the present, as in Delhi the previous ordered culture, norms are now changed with disordered ethics and culture of colonizers the British. The subjugation and deprivation of the Muslims who were a great nation in the past is vividly described by Ali through his present novel due to colonial dominance. The Muslims had to lose their glory, identity and power by becoming as 'opposite' before British. This polarity is revealed:

'It was the city of Kings and monarchs, of poets and story tellers, courtiers and nobles. But no King lives there today, and the poets are feeling the lack of patronage, and the old inhabitants though still alive, have lost their pride and grandeur under a foreign, yoke.....where are Babur and Humayun and Jahangir? Where is Shahjahan who built the city where it stands today.....gone they are, gone and dead beneath the all-embracing earth'. (p.2)

Another postcolonial term "Hybridity" is also used by Ali when he shows the diminishing culture of Muslims due to British rule. He has presented two characters side by side to show that how the British culture was affecting the youth and was creating a hybridism between past norms and culture and the necessity of the acceptance of new British culture to survive. As Mir.Nihal is the representative of old culture and has clash with his son as his son Mr.Asghar is the embodiment of new culture and is under the influence of Western culture, Asghar dresses up like English men which is not liked by his father and he calls British Farangi which show his hatred for British. As the analysis of the text show the hybridity of that culture when Nihal says to Asghar, "You are again wearing the dirty English boots! I don't like them. I will have no aping of the Farangis in my house. Throw them away' (p.11).

According to Ali this hybrid culture is promoting imbalance and inequality between

colonizers' and colonized and according to him it should be finished now. He says

“A hybrid culture which had nothing in it of the past was forcing itself upon Hindustan a Hodge---podge of Indian and Western way--- The richness of the life has been looted and despoiled by the foreigners and vulgarity and cheapness had taken its place.---- perhaps the environment had changed . Society had moved forward and the people had been left behind in the race of life. New models had forced themselves upon India”. (p.251).

Ali has again used the term “Other” and “Otherness” in the novel to show how colonizers treat Muslims as ‘Other’. The dialogue between Begum Jamal and Begum Nahil show the same perspective as referring to Coronation Darbar, Begum Jamal remarks in disparaging tone, “What would these beaten –with-the broom farangi do”? To this Begum Nahil replies,

“When the Mughal Kings used to go out rupees and gold mohurs were showered by the handfuls. What will these good-as-dead farangis give? Dust and stone” (p.141)

As a postcolonial writer Ali has also discussed the very important dilemma ‘the matter of language’. As after the rule of British Urdu and Persian were getting replaced by English and it’s a fact that if a language dies its culture automatically dies. The colonized were forced to adopt the culture of colonizers, there writers through their writings talked about their rights by questioning ironically “Can subaltern speak’?. Similarly Ali through his present novel has taken an initiative to use the words from Urdu language to show that subaltern can speak. Therefore Ali has used metaphors, similes and idioms of Urdu in the text to deal with non-English speaking people to read and relish his context. Although he knows the importance of English but his love for Urdu is revealed when he says in the present novel, “The beauty of the body is like a flower which attracts the bulbul to it and breaks his heart like a candle which tempts the moths a and their wings” (p.90)

Similarly again he remarks,

“My life is a desert in which no Oasis exists.

You have become the moon of Eed.

When husband and wife are willing, what can the qazi do?

Dare you go out and I will break thy legs”. (p.20)

Another characteristic of postcolonial theory is ‘front loading’ of the cultural information in intra cultural context. As we can see that Ali has given explanations of festivals, native customs, beliefs and myths. As the impact of colonizers culture was effecting on the traditions of the Muslims of India, because in Islam there is no concept of wedding gifts for the bride, as Ali has used the word ‘ Bari’ which consists of the gifts by her in-laws for her at the time of wedding. As the following text show the front loading of the colonizers culture,

“Three days before the wedding the brides dresses and things were sent to Bilquis’s house. There were seven suits of clothes of gorgeous silk and gold brocade heavy with rich embroidery. They were tucked together and strewn over with parched fluffy rice as a good omen. Then there was the jewelry, so many ornaments for the whole body made of gold and silver. They were presents from Asghar’s parents to the bride. (p.160)

CONCLUSION

The twentieth century was an age of transition as big changes occur after the dominance of British the colonizers who tried to rule over colonized politically, socially, religiously and historically. They emphasized on the formation of their own rules to make them weak historically. Therefore many voices were raised by colonized against colonizers through presented new linguistic strategies and innovative to mark their identity and Ali is one of them. In fact Ali is the raising voice of Pakistan who wanted to show the British that Muslims of the sub-continent have their own pas, history and culture which is not inferior to British. So he says that English is not only the language of British, it is also their language and they are free to write in English in any style in which they want to write. So 'Twilight in Delhi' is the best example of the reaction against colonialism and there is no doubt that Ali is a postcolonial writer.

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