



VIOLENCE AND POLITICS OF RESISTANCE: AN ANALYSIS OF *TWILIGHT IN DELHI*

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Abstract:

This article attempts to define the term violence emerging from colonization, in liberating the colonized mind or a nation. It explains the violence and politics of resistance through images and events in the novel and focuses on decolonization whether physical or psychological. The novel under consideration in this article is *Twilight in Delhi* (1940) by Ahmed Ali. His writing voiced concern over the decay of Muslim culture and the injustices of colonial powers. The violence by the colonizer and attempt to reverse that violence in form of liberation is one of the most important perspectives of this article. Ahmed Ali portrayed the destruction of society, culture, moral values, and economy at individual and national level. The change in political setup disturbed the existing monotony of the city. This article explains the text *Twilight in Delhi* under the light of *Concerning Violence*, first chapter of the Frantz Fanons book *The Wretched of Earth*..

Keywords: violence, politics of resistance, *Twilight in Delhi*

1. Introduction

The topic under consideration is "Violence and Politics of Resistance: An Analysis of *Twilight in Delhi*". The novel *Twilight in Delhi* is a masterpiece in true sense. Each word of the novel has a deep meaning. The writer had not uttered a single word without background or deep meaning. The plot of the novel is knitted finely with images that lead towards different aspects of life history thus giving a different angle of life.

A simple reader can only see a story of a Muslims family showing the decline of Muslim culture. But in a true sense, it's a sheer mixture of history, violence, life, and death. It depicts past, present, and future. And it shows flashes of life and death relating to the history of sub-continent and violence of colonizer, and violence peeping inside the colonized nation that will emerge one day with the new rising sun. This article analyses the novel in context of violence and politics with the help of images and events, and political setup discussed by Ahmed Ali.

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With the strong establishment of British rule in India, the political situation changes, affecting the society and the natives. The change in political set up deteriorates the condition and structure of the city. The setup build by Mughals was destroyed and rebuilt by the British in their fashion. People living in the city were affected badly. The death rate also increased in Delhi. In the situation, indifference in people's attitudes and consideration of the tragedies as insignificant created chaos in natives. The colonization and violence imposed by the British were at its peak. Unless and until a situation reaches its peak it cannot reverse. The Mughals rule also was at its peak once and then it faced downfall. Now as per the situation discussed in the novel colonization was at its peak and now the writer hopes for decolonization whether of the land of the mind.

2. Literature review

A significant feature of national liberation is the use of violent struggle based on appropriate revolutionary theory and leadership. The article under consideration is "Fanon theory of violence: its verification in liberated Mozambique" by Yoweri T Museveni. He surveyed the decolonization of Mozambique and the basics of revolutionary struggle. The writer became aware of the fact that liberation is a two-way process. In the struggle of liberation by the native, he not only liberates his conscious, but the colonizer also liberates.

To establish a colonial rule, the colonizer had to use violent forces. He wants to dehumanize the native so he could exploit and rule them. If the colonizer leaves even a little hope for the betterment of the future of the colonized native, the colonized will reject the enslavement.

The oppressor uses every possible means to impose his authority on the oppressed. Colonizer dehumanizes himself to impose his power on the colonized people. He purges the native of humanity, mankind and will power. Both the oppressed and the oppressor had to suffer from the feeling of alienation. Struggle towards national liberation is a phenomenon of re-humanizing both of them.

The peasantry class of Mozambique had also experienced the struggle towards liberation. Struggle for the liberation had made them balanced human beings with recognition of their responsibilities towards society and nation. The job of a revolutionary leader is to win the confidence of the masses and make them realize their innate abilities. Natives speed up their revolutionary power with the grip of resistance toward the colonial rule. In any colonized state the peasants are the only revolutionary class, they have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Frelimo the revolutionary group of Mozambique is the ideal portrayal of the national struggle of liberation. The soldiers of Frelimo were also once slaves of ruling exploitative class. They did not repeat the same violent actions committed by the settler during their revolutionary struggle. Frelimo respected women and made every possible means to educate the individual masses. During colonial rule of Mozambique, Portuguese the colonizer disrespected women and burnt native's crops. The shift from disrespectful behavior to respectful behavior was the true result of the liberation of the conscious. Revolutionary struggle purifies individuals and most importantly the society (Museveni, 6).

In the struggle of national liberation, native acquires an instrument to face the enemy. The colonized has no needs to vent his frustration on his fellow beings. During the revolution of freedom, the army and the individual masses worked with unity and harmony in Mozambique. Peasantry class was illiterate still they recognized their inbuilt capability to take part in the struggle of their independence. This awareness of colonized people not only helped them to release their inferiority complexes but also from their narrow-mindedness.

It was surveyed in the Mozambique that not only crimes like murders, rape extinct daily habits like drinking also evaporated from the liberated areas of Mozambique. Revolutionary class assembles themselves only when their revolutionary leaders came down to assemble them. Leaders of the revolution worked on the bases of equality and unity with individual masses. Violence initiated the process of liberation of the mind of colonized and lead towards a fight with colonizer for freedom and leaders played a vital role in applying the force in the right direction. Fight with correct ideological leadership was the result of perpetual liberation in Mozambique. To gain independence from Portuguese every Mozambican had made a serious attempt to recover their humanity.

3. Violence and Politics of Resistance: An Analysis of *Twilight in Delhi*

This article explains the images and events described by Ahmed Ali with reference to violence, colonization, decolonization and liberation.

All images show the struggle of colonized people towards their liberating mind and soul thus leading towards their freedom. The title of the novel *Twilight in Delhi* is an absolute description of the degeneration of Muslim culture. Twilight means a short span of time showing the dying day and emerging night. Delhi was the center of Muslim culture. The portrayal of the character of Mir Nihal is the symbol of Muslim culture. *Twilight in Delhi* signifies that the light of freedom, culture is dying and a wave of salvation, degeneration of moral and cultural practices is about to cover the sub-continent. Twilight also refers to the time when the night is ending, and a new day is emerging, in this sense writer could also mean that he is hopeful towards freedom of the nation. He hopes that one-day as culture is decline under the rule of British, culture will again prosper ending the British rule. He has a strong faith and hopes that violence applied to destroy Muslim culture will be reversed in the form of revolutionary struggle and this will lead towards eternal freedom both physically and psychologically.

The writer leaving a deep impact on the present situation of the city uses the image of a snake. Mir Nihal kills a snake at home with a stick that has entered the pigeon box. Snake is a symbol of evil. Pigeons depict Muslim culture, as pigeon flying had become a ritual in Muslim society. They symbolize purity. Mir Nihal gets hold of the snake eating the pigeons. While Mir Nihal was trying to kill the snake, it hides in the gutter, a symbol of darkness in which one can hardly see. The colonizer while destroying the native's culture, hide in dark places so that they become unreachable. Mir Nihal puts his hand in the gutter and took it out. He beats the snake to his heart satisfaction and broke his backbone. After killing the snake Mir Nihal feels contented and happy. In laughing tone with a twinkle in his eyes he says, "Just a snake, I have killed it" (Ali, 12). His attempt to kill the snake was the inner hope that one day the colonized Muslims will beat and drive the British out of their country. And this incident also shows that if natives

want to catch the colonizers they have to enter their forbidden quarters and must be aware of the political strategies of the British so they can get back their freedom.

The main and the most important symbol of the novel is "Azaan". It is a symbol of purity leading towards eternal values. It is the pride of the Muslim religion. In this novel, Ali portrays the call for prayer. Recitation of Azaan, again and again, this call for prayer can be compared to the revolutionary call leading towards liberation and then to eternal freedom. Ali Says "*The world comes to consciousness with the resonant voice of Nisar Ahmed calling the morning Azaan*" (Ali, 15).

Morning Azaan is an image of starting a new day and Nisar Ahmed voice can be compared with the liberated soul. He aware of his identity and has a deep attachment to his roots and wants to break the chains of colonization. This call for prayer is a call for a revolution in disguise leading towards liberation. Azaan can firstly be taken as purity and call towards religious practices and is a constant reminder of the roots and identity of Muslims in this world. Secondly, this call describes the revolutionary struggle against British oppression. The realization of colonial destruction towards Hindu Muslims culture, language, and identity will bring a spark of attaining freedom in the natives.

The heat strokes discussed again and again by the writer can be compared with the violent strokes arousing from British authorities to enforce their rule. Most of the characters from the novel suffer from heatstroke. The violence imposed on natives disturbs the life of individuals and they suffer from its strokes and aftershocks leaving imprints on them physically and psychologically. The comparison of heat stroke with the heat in the year of mutiny by Begum Nihal is highly symbolic. "*Begum Nihal said she had never experiences such a summer ever since 1857, the year of mutiny*" (Ali, 89).

The violent strokes coming from the British are affecting the people. Almost all the natives are experiencing the shocks coming from violent waves upon their capacity to resist that violence. The more resistance power, in an individual, less will be suffering. If someone is weak in resisting the British culture the more will be the suffering.

As the story proceeds in the novel, many events unfold relating to characters and imperial set up in Delhi depicting colonization at a political, social and cultural level. The preparations leading to the Delhi durbar and coronation of George V and Queen Mary is the most important event, discussed by Ali in the novel. Ali shares the details of the preparations for the coronation of the English king. The first time the visit of British rulers themselves in India is to show that they had gained full authority over natives physically and psychologically. Practically they had established their authority by taking place of Mughals. Many people in Delhi were happy and hoping for their betterment while others were filled with anger and hatred towards the English government (Ali, 133).

The grand preparations for coronation ceremony were in full swing it took many weeks to build the new setup to establish their authority. People from all over India started gathering in Delhi. The roads were cleaned, grounds were leveled, and horses and elephants were seen everywhere, in short, there was a show of wealth in decorations. The parade of English soldiers in uniforms depicted the authority and power over natives. This created fear in common man, some were impressed, and others got irritated, but they cannot bear the courage to stand against British authorities. This whole episode in the novel showed the power of colonizer over colonized natives. The Delhi city was decorated like an exhibition. Most of the Hindu aristocrats

or feudalists were under the influence of the British government. They tried to make friendly terms with the British to establish their control over poor natives although they did not mind their submission to the British.

The residents of Delhi who had not witnessed the glamour of Mughals thought this English king to be real and got impressed by the royal processions. The mere show of power and authority by British soldiers and government officers created fear among common masses. This is an act of psychological violence disturbing the minds of natives. Out of fear of their survival the natives bend down towards the British monarch. They have either witnessed violence in mutiny or had heard of that. The poor natives thought that if they will not become submissive towards western authorities, they might face difficulties to earn their living. Whereas, some just got inclined towards the power and glamour of the west as they feel it will bring prosperity and get their rights. They thought that they lack the freedom of choice in their cultural practices. They do not realize that the freedom to live without restrictions might destroy their moral and ethical values. And those whose conscious was liberated they had suffered loss in massive violent attacks in the mutiny were showing hatred towards British. They know that the British will only destroy as they had the materialistic approach towards life and will get own benefits out of natives and will not hesitate to even kill those who showed some resistance.

On the day of the coronation, the natives' gatherings with their different approaches show the conflict of thought within the same nation, which was created by the British to break their unity. The description of the long day of 7th December 1911 coronation day of George V was a picture of authority justifying the violence marked in the mutiny by well-established good terms with some of the Indian elite class. Ali describes the whole event discussing even the minute details related to that through actions and thoughts of characters whether supporting or opposing the British raj. The sense of liberation leadings towards freedom is to be developed on a national level. Most of the characters are individually liberated and want freedom while others were under the influence of the British. The liberated individuals were not in such a number that can fight against British so they hoped for the awareness and revolutionary struggle, as Mir Nihal hopes for true leadership so that any action can be taken against colonization. Unity at the national level can only achieve freedom.

Almost all the city gathered, some for fun, some to mock at British and others influenced by British. The people waited to see the coronation, as it was a source of entertainment for them. Some got happy with the hope that this new change in political setup would bring them prosperity and good fortune. Others who were aware of the evil intentions of the British got worried because they can see that now after full control of the city, the British will destroy the structure of the city too.

The destruction of the city was now at an extreme level. Natives who were in hope that coronation of a new king will bring them prosperity got disillusioned as they were facing economic crisis. With the rise of foreign yoke, the natives suffered loss at a personal and social level. The British raj brought a feeling of dissatisfaction among people. The people who find it difficult to breathe in the suffocating atmosphere of British rule and their conscious were aware of their loss. They started initiating in the revolutionary struggle as Ali says "*and the terrorist movement was gaining ground all over the country. Already dissatisfaction with the foreign yoke had spread, and Bengal seemed to be taking lead in this direction*" (Ali, 195).

As the British rise, the downfall of the subcontinent begins. Ali said, "*From the eventful year, 1911, which marked, in a way, the height of British splendor in India, its downfall began*" (Ali, 196). British used Hindus and Muslims for their benefit. By making drastic changes in societies, industries, and politics they raised their economy while decreasing the economic rate in the subcontinent.

"India's share of the world economy was 23 percent, as large as all of Europe put together. By the time the British departed India, it had dropped to just over 3 percent. The reason was simple: India was governed for the benefit of the British. Britain's rise for 200 years was financed by its depredation in India" (Tharoor, 6).

New Delhi was under construction not only in structure, new culture, new people, new ways almost whole existing setup was rearranging. The language of the colonizers replaced the old Indian language, which was once the pride of India.

With the change in political set-up violence was at its peak and death had become the most insignificant element of life. The insensitivity for causalities rose so high that no one bothered for the loss of humanity. The British created chaos and Delhi had now become a dead city. Humanity seems to have vanished within the boundaries of Delhi. The winding-sheet cost rose so much that it became difficult for people to give a proper burial to their loved ones. Death is the most severe and last form of violence. An increased rate of death in the city portrayed by Ali in the novel depicts that violence by the British had reached an extreme level. At this point, witnessing a change in the present situation when all the limits have been crossed and there is no space for more sufferings, the colonization had reached its peak, the writer hopes for decolonization with help of liberation of minds of natives.

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