TRACING EPISTEMIC DISOBEDIENCE IN AHMAD ALI'S TWILIGHT IN DELHI: A DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT
This study investigates colonial universal truth and its proliferation in the context of colonial India through Ahmad Ali's (1940) Twilight in Delhi. The study scrutinizes how Ali's (1940) novel dismantles the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP), the Western colonization model by installing epistemic disobedience to the received epistemes. The study aims to explore how CMP is operated, functioned, and established by the systematic control of sex/racism, subjectivity, economy, and authority in the indigenous society. Walter Mignolo's (2018) theory of Decoloniality will be applied as a theoretical framework to analyze the novel as an illustration of Epistemic Disobedience: a process of delinking, disobeying and dislocating from the Western model of modernity/coloniality that questions colonial universal truths to establish connections and associations between local histories and individual perspectives. Hence, this rereading of the novel would be instrumental in establishing the bodies of knowledge and indigenous narratives against the backdrop of colonial India.
Key Words: Decoloniality, Coloniality, Modernity, Colonial Matrix of Power, Epistemic disobedience

Introduction

The study investigates the contemporary functioning of power structures inherited from colonialism on a worldwide level in the name of modernity: The concept of modernity became prominent in the latter part of the twentieth century. It served as the conceptual counterpart to two more tangible concepts: modernization and development. Modernity was constructed as both the idea of itself and of a world where modernization and development were the driving forces. It evolved to represent a horizon, the destination toward which modernization and development were propelling humanity collectively across the globe. Moreover, modernity itself isn't a concept aligned with decolonization, whereas coloniality is. Coloniality plays a foundational role rather than being derived from modernity. In other words, modernity cannot exist independently of coloniality, hence the combined term: modernity. This endeavor aims to foster emancipation in realms of thought, existence, knowledge, comprehension, and lifestyle, promoting avenues for reimagining existence and fostering connections across regions, territories, struggles, and communities. Decoloniality originates from responses to the promises of modernity juxtaposed with the realities of coloniality, as articulated by Aníbal Quijano (1999), who was a Peruvian sociologist and humanist thinker, gave an idea of Coloniality/Decoloniality in 1990. Quijano (1999) was the same person who gave the concept of colonial matrix of power but, later on, Mignolo (2018), who is an Argentine semiotician and one of the founders who worked on modernity and coloniality, theorized it. In the words of Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (2007):

Decolonization is the process of revealing and dismantling colonialist power in all its forms. This includes dismantling the hidden aspects of those institutional and cultural forces that had maintained the colonialist power and that remain even after political independence is achieved. (p.56) Additionally, Mignolo (2018) articulates that the comparison with the colonial matrix of power closely aligns with the film's narrative, with one notable difference: the illusion's creators in the film are machines brought to life by humans, not humans themselves. Within the colonial

matrix of power, those crafting the illusions (such as modernity) are human agents utilizing human labor, as well as energy from the biosphere (such as water, land, and oxygen) and the cosmos (like sunlight and moonlight). Despite operating within the colonial matrix, these individuals either believe in or propagate the notion that there exists an external perspective beyond its confines from which it can be observed.

Mignolo (2018) categorizes Colonial Matrix of power into four domains:

I.   Knowledge and Subjectivity
II.   Gender and Sexuality
III.   Economy Control
IV.   Authority Control

Firstly, Mignolo (2018) delves into the concepts of knowledge and subjectivity, which constitute the primary realm of the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP), serving as the initial tool for exerting control over indigenous populations. When the Western powers seek to infiltrate indigenous cultures and ideologies, they compel the indigenous peoples to recognize the flaws in their own beliefs and systems. Subsequently, they impose their own ideologies and cultures, cloaked in the guise of progress, development, and advancement, yet effectively constructing systems of colonial oppression. Consequently, the humanities disciplines and institutions within indigenous societies become centered around Eurocentric perspectives.

Secondly, the colonizers create distortion in the indigenous society in the name of gender and sexuality. They create disputes in the name of burning issue of gender in the colonized society. The colonizers create an illusionary picture of substandard of the women in terms of race, class, gender and status. And the women are realized that they are excluded of any privileges and compensation; consequently, deformation is created in the society in form of gender issues by the colonizers. Hence, the significant role of political and historical accounts in shaping the discourse on the West's powerful position and the power imbalance between East and West, cannot be overlooked (Abbas & Iqbal, 2023).

Thirdly, Western powers introduce distortions into the economic structures of indigenous communities. Natives are coerced into participating in jobs dictated by colonial policies, fostering desires for an elevated lifestyle while being presented with various opportunities such as employment, loans, and assistance programs by the colonizers. Simultaneously, colonizers exploit the resources and labor of the colonized regions for their own economic benefit. This facet encompasses the economic mechanisms through which colonialism persists, including the extraction of natural resources, the establishment of exploitative labor systems, and the imposition of unequal trade relations. Fourthly, colonizers establish political institutions to govern indigenous populations, consolidating their authority within these societies. They rely on systems of governance to uphold control over colonized peoples. This aspect examines how colonial powers construct and enforce power hierarchies, employing legal frameworks, military might, and cultural dominance. Thus, this delineates the methods through which Western powers exert dominion over indigenous societies through the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP).

The novel, *Twilight in Delhi*, is set around 1911 to 1919 in Delhi. Ali (1940) portrays the picture of the Muslims in old Delhi of that time. He also depicts the viciousness of colonialism and imperialism on Indian Muslim in Delhi in the form of down fall of Mugal Emperors. The main character is Mir Nihal, the protagonist of the novel, a Muslim man who hates Western people and their culture, but he experiences the dramatic changes in his life and the lives of his

family during this period. As his son Asghar who is accepting the Western culture as he likes English shirts, shoes, and proper lifestyle of the Western people, but his father, Mir Nihal, firmly expresses his disapproval of unconventional items in his home, cautioning Ahmad Ali against such matters. Ali (1940) endeavors to convey ideas of liberation through symbolic elements and dialogues among characters. For instance, during their gatherings at Mirza's shop, Mir Nihal and friends reminisce about the prosperous Muslim Empire years. A friend highlights the contrast in grain prices between the Muslim rule era and the present. Asghar exemplifies colonization's impact by adopting English culture, attire, and furnishings. Despite his efforts, Mir Nihal consistently opposes him, articulating his notions of independence through speeches. Mir Nihal often reflects on the past, particularly when encountering descendants of Muslim rulers reduced to beggary on the streets, prompting contemplation on the current plight of once-dominant families.

Literature Review

This study pays attention to the concept of modernity and colonial matrix of power (CMP). The conception of modernity emerged during the latter part of the 20th century. It represented an abstract notion encompassing two tangible elements known as modernization and development. Modernity was conceived as a hypothetical realm where the propelling forces were modernization and development, guiding and influencing us all. In the words of Mignolo (2018), Modernity, of course, is not a decolonial concept, but coloniality is. Coloniality is constitutive, not derivative, of modernity. That is to say, there is no modernity without coloniality, thus the compound expression: modernity/coloniality. Our intent is to help the reader understand how the colonial matrix of power (cmp, of which modernity/ coloniality is a shorter expression) was constituted, managed, and transformed from its historical foundation in the sixteenth century to the present. (p.3) Mignolo (2018) says that modernity and coloniality both are the two sides of the same coin. As so far decoloniality is concerned, it simply means an expedition to free from CMP by building an indigenous narrative in the indigenous society. As Mignolo (2018) says, "Decoloniality is the exercise of power within the colonial matrix to undermine the mechanism that keeps it in place requiring obeisance. Such a mechanism is epistemic and so decolonial liberation implies epistemic disobedience" (p.114). Many theorists have paid glance at Western's model of colonization in the name of modernity as Quijano (1999), who was a Peruvian sociologist and humanist thinker, said that this model (CMP) is constituted by the systematic control of sex, subjectivity/knowledge, economy, and authority. Another theorist, Catherine E. Walsh (2023), pays his glance at the concept of coloniality. According to her, "Coloniality, as such, is not a descriptive term to refer to the practices of domination in and of a colonial past. It is part of the hidden stories, the local histories that became and continue to become global designs" (p.6).

Additionally, many people already have done their research on Ali's (1940) *Twilight in Delhi.* For instance, Alam (2015) describes the cultural marginalization at the hands of the colonizers in Ali's (1940) *Twilight in Delhi.* Moreover, he examines cultural heteroglossia to capture the transformations occurring in the cultural fabric of Indian civilization due to the influence of English language and customs. Alam (2015) determines *Twilight in Delhi* as a tool to rediscover and rejuvenate his treasured cultural legacy, which was eroded during colonial dominance.

Another researcher, Azhar (2022) who explored victimization of women in Ali's (1940) *Twilight in Delhi*. He scrutinizes women in the novel experience victimization and oppression from men in diverse ways. The portrayal of women as subaltern and consistently influenced by a patriarchal society permeates the novel. This representation of women reflects the broader Indian society rather than being confined to a specific family or group. He vividly portrays the harsh reality of women's conditions, revealing that they often endure mental anguish and physical abuse, even within the confines of their homes. Sadly, in many parts of the world, such violence is not recognized as a crime but rather accepted as a means of social control within families. Ali (1940) bluntly depicts the plight of women in the subcontinent, illustrating that they faced not only humiliation from their own communities but also brutality from the colonizers, resulting in a double colonization. Despite being marginalized and exploited by men, the women in the novel passively accept their circumstances without resistance.

Additionally, Hassan Khan (2022), another researcher, pays his glance at Ali's (1940) *Twilight in Delhi*. He investigates socio-cultural aspects of the novel, *Twilight in Delhi*, in his article. He examines the cultural and social changes occurring in the subcontinent under British rule. He scrutinizes that the novel unfolds during a time marked by the intersection of two distinct cultures: the cultural Indian society is in decline, gradually replaced by British culture in a notably harsh manner. In this context, the novel provides a significant exploration of Vygotsky's theory of social learning, which emphasizes the role of society in a child's learning and conscious development. Through the portrayal of two generations within the story, both living in the same society yet inclined by different cultures, a compelling dynamic emerges. Elder figures like Mir Nihal, having experienced the splendor of Muslim rule in India during their formative years, harbor resentment and suspicion towards the British, viewing them as usurpers who tarnished the glory of the past.

Many researches have been done on Ali's (1940) *Twilight in Delhi* as mentioned above, but the current study deals with the model of decoloniality/coloniality and CMP which has not been discussed earlier. Ali's (1940) *Twilight in Delhi* depicts an inevitable reality of western's dominance of culture and socio-political system over the indigenous society. The study aims to investigate how the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP) operates within indigenous societies, particularly concerning the systematic control of sex/racism, subjectivity, economy, and authority. Additionally, it introduces the notion of Epistemic Disobedience, which involves a process of detachment from Western models of modernity/coloniality, as depicted in *Twilight in Delhi*. Through this lens, the study challenges the colonial notion of universal truth (modernity/coloniality) and seeks to forge connections between local histories and individual perspectives. Furthermore, the decolonial framework emphasizes the importance of indigenous knowledge and narratives in resisting the modern/colonial context, as evidenced in Ali's (1940) *Twilight in Delhi*.
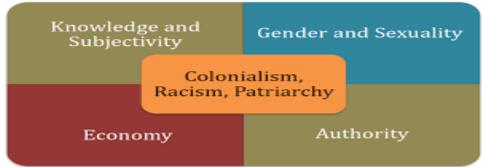
Material and Methods

The research draws extensively from contemporary literature and adopts a predominantly qualitative approach. As this research will not conduct any numerical figure or data; this research will involve analyzing, and interpreting a particular text, so this research is explanatory and qualitative in nature. Qualitative Research simply means to gather and analyze no-numerical data on account of gaining an understanding of reasons or something. Qualitative research is,

sometimes, involved to explore complex phenomena or to gain insight out of some peculiar text or personality.

This study aims to analyze Ali's (1940) masterpiece *Twilight in Delhi* by using a particular theory Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP) theorized by Mignolo (2018). According to him, CMP is a Western's model of colonization which is categorized in four domains:

Through this model, the Western build their narrative by discouraging the episteme of the indigenous society. They create an illusion of modernism among the indigenous, and institutionalize their culture, and socio-political system in the indigenous society. As Mignolo (2018) said,

> The analogy with the colonial matrix of power is almost one to one. The exception is that the creators of the illusion are, in the film, not human beings but machines that humans have created. In the colonial matrix of power, the creators of the illusions (modernity), using human bodies (labor) energies as well as energy from the biosphere (water, land, and oxygen) and the cosmos (sunlight and moonlight) are human beings inside the colonial matrix of power but believing, or making believe, that there is an instance outside the colonial matrix from which it can be observed. (p.114)

Here, Mignolo (2018) refers to the complex system of domination and control established during the colonial period, which continues to shape global relations and hierarchies today. He encompasses various dimensions such as knowledge, economy, gender, and authority control, through which colonial powers exerted influence and maintained their dominance over colonized people. In the colonial matrix of power, the creators of illusions are human beings who benefit from and perpetuate colonial systems of domination. They harness various resources, including labor, energy from the biosphere, and cosmic energies, to maintain their control over the indigenous people. These resources are exploited to sustain the illusion of superiority and legitimacy of colonial rule.

Discussion/ Analysis

This section delves into examining the current study and the results derived from scrutinizing specific sections of Ali's (1940) *Twilight in Delhi* in the context of epistemic disobedience and colonial matrix of power. This analysis explores how power structures established during colonialism continue to operate globally under the guise of modernity. Moreover, the section explains the establishment, control, and evolution of the colonial power structure, which encompasses modernity and coloniality, from its beginnings in the sixteenth century to the present day. Ali (1940), in fact, suggests that the harm inflicted by colonial powers upon the cultural heritage of the conquered nations is permanent and cannot be undone. However, they also imply that the memories and experiences of these injustices are ingrained within the

collective consciousness of affected communities.

Ali (1940) represents the intricate network or networks of power that, intertwined with supremacy, patriarchy, and the ongoing advancement of modernity, persistently shape and acknowledge, regulate, and organize life, knowledge, nature, and existence globally in *Twilight in Delhi.* He depicts the erosion of values like identity, socio-cultural norms, morals, and religious principles due to the British colonial model CMP (colonial matrix of power). For example, in the beginning of the novel, Mir Nihal, the main character in the story, sheds tears over the decline of the former greatness of his ancestors as he said,

> It was the city of kings and monarchs, of poets and story tellers, courtiers and nobles. But no kings live 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. (p.4)

The above lines describe a city that was once a vibrant center of power, culture, and creativity, ruled by kings and monarchs and enriched by poets, storytellers, courtiers, and nobles. However, under colonial rule, the city has undergone significant changes. The kings no longer hold sway, and the poets and artists struggle due to the absence of royal patronage. The native inhabitants, though still present, have experienced a loss of their former pride and grandeur as they live under the control of a foreign power. This illustrates how the colonizers can disrupt and diminish the cultural and social fabric of a place, stripping it of its traditional sources of authority, creativity, and identity in the name of modernity in the indigenous society. As Mignolo (2018) said that the intertwined nature of modernity and coloniality, suggesting that coloniality is not merely a byproduct of modernity but rather a fundamental component of it. While modernity is often associated with progress, industrialization, and societal advancements, coloniality refers to the systems of power, control, and exploitation that were established through colonialism.

In the same perspective, there is a character, Asgar, son of Mir Nihal, who is portrayed as a representation of colonial influence and modernism. He is depicted as someone who admires English society and its customs, preferring English clothing and accessories such as shoes, caps, and attire. In the first part of the novel, Ali (1940) portrays his physical appearance as "Asgar enters quietly walking on tiptoe. He is a tall and handsome young man with his hair well oiled and his red Turkish cap. The upper buttons of his sherwani are open and show the collar of the English shirt" (p.13). Here, Asgar is depicted wearing clothing that combines elements of both his native culture (the sherwani) and the colonizer's culture (the English shirt). This fusion of clothing reflects the complex interactions and influences between colonized and colonizer cultures in colonial societies. It also highlights the pressure for colonized individuals to adapt to or adopt aspects of the dominant colonial culture while still retaining elements of their own identity.

Furthermore, the study elucidates how the colonial matrix of power, of which modernity/coloniality is a condensed form, was established, controlled, and evolved from its origins in the sixteenth century to the contemporary era. Mignolo (2018) says that Colonial Matrix of Power is formed by the colonizers that rule the life of the indigenous people (colonized). The colonial matrix, established by a minority of humanity, dictates the existence of the majority. Power within this matrix encompasses the governance of all human beings, including those who uphold and enforce its rules. Even the rulers themselves are subject to their

own desires and compulsions to maintain control. Walsh (2023) also pays his glace at colonial matrix of power. According to him, it is a dynamic nature of coloniality as he argues:

> Coloniality is the complex matrix or matrices of power that, in its constitutive interweaving with capitalism, patriarchy, and the ongoing project of modernity, continues to conjure and recognize, to control and order existences, knowledge, nature, and life throughout the world. (p.6)

Walsh (2023) suggests that coloniality is not a singular phenomenon but rather a complex system or network of power relations. It involves multiple intersecting forces and dynamics that shape societies and individuals. He argues that coloniality is intertwined with other systems of power and domination, such as capitalism (the economic system based on private ownership and profit), patriarchy (the social system that privileges men and oppresses women), and modernity (the cultural and intellectual movement characterized by the pursuit of progress, rationality, and technological advancement). These systems reinforce and perpetuate each other, contributing to the maintenance of coloniality.

Besides, Ali (1940) also highlights how the colonizers build educational institutes in order to build their narrative and promote language in the indigenous society. He tries to reveal the crucial role of education in perpetuating colonial power dynamics and erasing indigenous knowledge systems and cultural identities. He asserts that the colonizers understood that controlling education was essential for maintaining their dominance over colonized peoples. By shaping the narrative taught in schools and enforcing the use of colonial languages, they aimed to create a population that identified more with the colonizer's culture and values than with their own indigenous heritage. Because, the language a writer employs reflects their ideological thoughts and contemplations (Iqbal, 2022). In *Twilight in Delhi,* Ali (1940) quotes, "But English in taste and character, in morals and intellect. Hence schools and colleges were set up to convert Indians to brown Englishmen through knowledge imparted in the English language" (p.23). Here, he reflects the colonial ideology that British culture, values, and intellectual traditions were superior to those of the colonized people. He articulates the colonial educational policy aimed at cultural assimilation and the production of a class of brown Englishmen among the colonized people. As the matter of fact, colonial authorities established schools and colleges to impart knowledge primarily in the English language and to instill British values, customs, and modes of thought among the indigenous population. The term brown Englishmen implies an attempt to mold colonized individuals into resembling their British colonizers, albeit with a different skin color, by adopting English language, manners, and cultural norms.

Secondly, Mignolo (2018) suggests how colonizers perpetuate distortions and divisions within indigenous societies by manipulating gender and sexuality narratives. The colonizers exploit these issues as a means to control and subjugate indigenous populations. They introduce conflicts and controversies surrounding gender within colonized societies, exploiting existing power dynamics and exacerbating divisions. This can involve imposing Western gender norms and values onto indigenous cultures, which often do not align with traditional indigenous understandings of gender roles and identities. Moreover, the colonizers propagate stereotypes and misconceptions about indigenous women, portraying them as inferior or substandard based on factors such as race, class, gender, and social status.

In the same context, Ali (1940) scrutinizes that women were barred from making significant decisions within the household under the influence of colonial structure power,

exemplified by Begam Nihal's inability to consent without her husband's permission, even when faced with her son Asghar's clandestine love affair. However, upon discovering Asghar's precarious state and fearing his potential suicide, she covertly arranges Asghar and Bilqueece's marriage. Throughout the novel she seems submissive and subordinate, but, at some extent, she seems to resist the patriarchal limitations even she said, "For though women hold a subordinate position in Indian life yet in certain matters they can take the law in their hands, and marriage is one of them" (p.71). This suggests that despite the subordinate position women hold in Indian society, particularly within the patriarchal structure, they still possess agency and power, particularly in matters related to marriage. This can be seen as a recognition of the ways in which women navigate and negotiate within systems of oppression. Despite facing constraints and limitations, women can sometimes assert their autonomy and challenge traditional power dynamics, particularly in areas such as marriage where their personal agency may be more pronounced. This highlights the complexity of women's experiences within patriarchal societies and underscores the importance of understanding the ways in which women exercise agency and resistance within such system. In such context Mignolo (2018) quotes, "Indigenous feminists in both the North and South have questioned in recent years the heteropatriarchal norms that operate within Indigenous communities, and within the contexts and practices of Indigenous organizations and decolonizing struggles (p.40).

Thirdly, Ali (1940) also highlights how colonial economic policies and the influx of cheap imported goods disrupted traditional economic structures in India, leading to economic hardships for local artisans and the broader population. As he says,

> The trade of the latter had been affected, as cheaper laces and gold threads had started coming into India from England and Germany. Besides, fewer people seemed to buy these things. All this plus the higher prices of grain forced them to economize. (p.212)

The above lines suggest that colonial powers, such as England, were able to produce these items more efficiently and at lower costs due to industrialization and technological advancements. This flood of cheaper imports would have negatively affected local artisans who couldn't compete with the prices offered by colonial industries. Besides, he implies a decline in demand for the handmade laces and gold threads produced by Indian artisans. This decline in demand could be attributed to various factors, including changing fashion trends influenced by colonial culture or the preference for machine-made goods perceived to be of higher quality. The higher prices of grain mentioned in the passage could be due to various factors, such as changes in land use patterns (for example, cash crops replacing food crops), colonial taxation policies, or disruptions to local agricultural practices. These higher grain prices put additional financial strain on the populace, forcing them to cut back on non-essential expenses, such as buying luxury items like laces and gold threads. Another specimen of economic distortion in the indigenous society through colonial matrix of power can be observed in *Twilight in Delhi.* As Ali (1940) says,

> But there is only more starvation. The prices of things have gone up. We can't even get sugar. Ghee is now five chattanks for a rupee whereas before 1911 it used to be one seer and over. And wheat is sold at eight seers to the rupee. (p.210)

Here, Ali (1940) illustrates the economic hardships and challenges faced by indigenous populations during the process of decolonization. He indicates that despite the aspirations and promises of decolonization, the situation for many indigenous people worsened. This could be due to various factors such as disruptions in food distribution systems, economic instability, or

the aftermath of colonial policies that had marginalized indigenous communities. He, further, reveals significant increase in the prices of essential goods. For instance, the inability to access sugar and the sharp rise in the price of ghee (clarified butter) indicate inflation and economic instability. Such price hikes would have disproportionately affected indigenous populations, especially those who were already economically vulnerable. The drastic changes in prices indicate broader economic shifts that may have resulted from the dismantling of colonial economic structures or the introduction of new economic policies during decolonization.

Ali (1940), further, depicts the erosion of various values, including identity, socio-political system on account of the British colonial rule. He portrays the dismal and debased depiction of Delhi's conquest by its colonial ruler. With the imminent arrival of King George V and the upcoming coronation, new roads are being constructed, diminishing Delhi's grandeur to mere spectacle. As Ali (1940) quotes,

> Many activities were going on in Delhi, for the English king was going to hold his Coronation Darbar in this ancient seat of the mighty kings of Hindustan. The Delhi people were agog and started in wonder at this bustle, many happy in the hope of gain, others raging within their hearts at the thought of subjection to a foreign race…. (p.133)

Here, Ali (1940) describes the atmosphere in Delhi as preparations are underway for the Coronation Darbar of the English king, King George V, in this historically significant city, which was once the seat of powerful Indian kings. The anticipation and activity in Delhi reflect the impact of colonialism on Indian society. There is a sense of excitement and wonder among some Delhi residents (indigenous people), possibly fueled by the prospect of economic opportunities that may arise from hosting such a significant event. This reflects how colonialism often brought economic changes, albeit often benefiting only a select few who were able to capitalize on the colonial presence.

Additionally, colonizers establish political institutions to govern indigenous communities, thereby asserting their authority over them. This demonstrates how Western dominance is established over indigenous societies through the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP). Ali (1940) also asserts that under the influence of the westerns the native people begin to think that the colonizers are well-wisher of them. As he quotes, "You should thank the angrezi Sarkar for this said Siddiq, the bania. For it is through it that we are getting all this" (p.136).

 The above statement conveys a sense of gratitude towards the English government (referred to as Sarkar) for providing certain benefits or opportunities. This reflects a common phenomenon in colonial contexts where some members of indigenous communities may perceive colonial rule as beneficial, particularly if they are able to gain economic advantages or social privileges through collaboration with the colonial authorities. Siddiq's statement suggests that he attributes the improvements in their circumstances, whether economic or otherwise, to the policies or actions of the English colonial government. However, it's important to note that this perspective may not be universally shared among all members of the indigenous community. While some individuals or groups may benefit from colonial policies, others may experience exploitation, marginalization, or loss of autonomy. Thus, Siddiq's statement reflects a complex relationship between colonizers and colonized peoples, where perceptions of colonial rule can vary based on individual experiences and circumstances.

Epistemic Disobedience

Epistemic disobedience refers to an act of questioning and resisting dominant Western

knowledge paradigms and epistemologies. It involves recognizing these dominant systems of knowledge while simultaneously challenging their authority and legitimacy. Epistemic disobedience suggests a refusal to accept Western knowledge as the sole or superior way of understanding the world. It also involves transcending binary and rigid categorizations imposed by Western epistemology and embracing a more fluid and inclusive approach to knowledge. This approach acknowledges the interconnectedness and complexity of diverse perspectives, cultures, and ways of knowing. Mignolo (2018) defines epistemic disobedience as "Epistemic disobedience means to recognize them and denaturalize them at the same time. Epistemic disobedience requires border thinking" (p.161).

Ali (1940) in his novel, *Twilight in Delhi*, tries to build an indigenous narrative by exemplifying the past history, culture, and socio-political system of the Muslim in Sub-continent. As he said, "Yet beyond the ravages of unpredictable fate, my purpose in writing the novel was to depict a phase of our national life and the decay of a whole culture" (p.21). Here, Ali (1940) suggests that the tumultuous and often chaotic nature of history, particularly during periods of decolonization. Colonized nations often faced significant challenges, including wars, political upheavals, economic instability, and social unrest, all of which can be seen as ravages of unpredictable fate. Additionally, he is indicating that his primary intent is to capture a specific period in the history of his nation. He aims to provide a nuanced exploration of the historical context of decolonization, focusing on the broader societal and cultural implications rather than just individual narratives. He suggests a deeper thematic engagement with the process of decolonization and its effects on the national identity and cultural heritage of the colonized people.

Ali (1940), further, quotes "The damaged done by colonial powers to the heritage of conquered peoples is irreversible; yet racial memory is a collective storehouse that time and history" (p.9). Here, he highlights the lasting and often irreparable harm inflicted upon the cultural heritage of colonized societies by colonial powers. Colonialism often involved the imposition of foreign languages, religions, laws, and customs, as well as the exploitation and destruction of indigenous cultural practices, knowledge systems, artifacts, and monuments. This damage is described as irreversible, suggesting that the effects of colonialism persist long after formal colonization has ended. He acknowledges the profound and lasting scars left on the cultural identity and heritage of colonized peoples. Despite the damage caused by colonialism, he suggests that memories of cultural traditions, histories, and identities persist within the collective consciousness of the indigenous people. Racial memory refers to the collective, inherited memory passed down through generations within a particular racial or ethnic group. This memory serves as a collective storehouse that contains the cultural, historical, and ancestral knowledge of the indigenous people.

Besides, Ali (1940) quotes the local poets in his novel, *Twilight in Delhi*, to build an indigenous narrative. He establishes his identity by juxtaposing poems from Urdu and Persian traditions within the text, presenting a composite culture that contrasts with the colonizer's influence. He is drawing upon indigenous sources of knowledge, creativity, and cultural expression. This action not only acknowledges the significance of indigenous literature and oral traditions but also elevates the voices of indigenous poets who may have been marginalized or ignored by colonial authorities. He, in fact, is constructing a narrative that reflects indigenous perspectives, experiences, and worldviews. This narrative is likely aimed at challenging

dominant colonial narratives and presenting a more holistic and authentic understanding of indigenous histories, cultures, and struggles. Moreover, he highlights the importance of amplifying indigenous voices and reclaiming indigenous narratives as part of the broader decolonization movement, which seeks to challenge and dismantle the legacies of colonialism and empower indigenous peoples to reclaim their own stories and identities. Ali (1940) quotes many local poets like Bahadur Shah Zafar, Nisar Ahmad, Ghalib, Hafiz, Daagh, Mir Taqi Mir etc.

To show epistemic disobedience, Ali (1940) uses many local urdu words in his novel to represent the linguistic significance of the indigenous society. By incorporating numerous local Urdu words into his novel, he asserts the significance of his indigenous language and culture. This act of linguistic resistance serves to reclaim agency and assert cultural identity in the face of colonial influence. At various place, he uses local words, for instance when he says, "There is only sorrow written in their kismet" (p.45). The word 'Kismat' in the statement shows the linguistic importance of the indigenous culture. This usage underscores the resilience of native languages and challenges the dominance of colonial languages. It serves as a form of resistance against colonial erasure by affirming the value and vitality of indigenous cultures and languages. Many other specimens are there of using the local Urdu words, for instance when he says "He used to smoke a hooka then. He sat in the veranda" (p.45). The words like hooka and veranda are local words used in the novel, *Twilight in Delhi*. This linguistic decolonization underscores the significance of indigenous perspectives and traditions, contributing to the broader movement of resistance against colonial domination and cultural assimilation.

Besides, Ali's (1940) deliberate effort to highlight the significance of historical buildings in indigenous culture within his novel, *Twilight in Delhi*. As he quotes "Innumerable men, women and children came out of their houses and went for picnics to Okhla or Qutab Minar" (p.84). By specifically mentioning landmarks such as Okhla and Qutab Minar, he underscores the enduring connection between these structures and the indigenous communities they represent. Historical buildings like Okhla and Qutab Minar serve as tangible symbols of the region's rich heritage and traditions. They represent not only architectural marvels but also repositories of cultural memory and identity. By prominently featuring these landmarks in the narrative, he emphasizes their importance in shaping the collective consciousness of the indigenous population. The mention of people going for picnics to places like Okhla or Qutab Minar highlights the enduring connection between local communities and these historical landmarks.

In *Twilight in Delhi*, Ali (1940) presents another specimen of indigenous episteme in the form of flying kites and pigeon which represents the traditional culture of indigenous people of Delhi. As he states "The sky was covered with the wings of pigeon which flew in flocks. These flocks met other flocks, expanded into a huge, dark patch" (p.18). The mention of flying kites and pigeons serves as a symbolic expression of the traditional culture of the indigenous people of Delhi. The image of the sky being covered with the wings of pigeons flying in flocks suggests a sense of unity and solidarity among the indigenous population. This unity is further emphasized as these flocks meet and expand into a huge, dark patch, symbolizing the strength that emerges when individuals come together in pursuit of a common goal or shared identity. Flying kites and pigeons are deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of many indigenous communities, including those in Delhi. These activities are not only recreational but also hold significant cultural and social

meanings.

Mir Nihal, the main character of Ali's (1940) *Twilight in Delhi*, as embodying epistemic disobedience by representing indigenous culture. Mir Nihal's attire, consisting of a knee-length white Muslim coat and a decorated round cap, symbolizes his connection to and representation of Muslim culture in Delhi during the colonial period. The choice of attire for Mir Nihal is significant in the context of decolonization as it asserts the visibility and validity of indigenous cultural practices in the face of colonial dominance. By dressing in traditional Muslim clothing, Mir Nihal asserts his cultural identity and resists assimilation into colonial norms and values.

Conclusion

This study outlined a rigorous examination of how Ali's (1940) *Twilight in Delhi* subverts colonial power structures (CMP) and offers alternative visions of history, knowledge, and resistance as an epistemic disobedience. It has been found that the novel underscored the importance of challenging colonial narratives by celebrating the significance of indigenous perspectives in the process of decolonization. Ali's (1940) novel has shown how indigenous identities and narratives, individuals and communities often find themselves constrained by the pervasive influence of Western norms, values, and institutions. The study expounded on the formation, regulation, and development of the colonial power framework, which encompasses both modernity and colonialism in the indigenous society and Ali's (1940) novel endeavours to construct a local narrative by illustrating the historical background, culture, and socio-political structure of the Muslims of colonial India.

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