

CHAPTER-IV: CONCLUSION

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As discussed so far, the present dissertation attempts a critical study of Ahmed Ali as a progressive writer with special reference to his Twilight in Delhi and Ocean of Night. Ahmed Ali's novelistic vision exemplifies the crisis of cultural decadence of the feudal aristocracy at the turn of the century. It becomes quite apparent if we critically analyse the thematic structure of his novels in the context of his stance as a progressive writer. The novelist's experience, which is limited to the Muslim feudal values, brings out his point of view.

In Twilight in Delhi Ahmed Ali explores the loss of faith, the place in relation to men and beliefs and the decadence. These things are illustrated through the characters of Mir Nihal, Begam Nihal, Asghar, Bilqeece and Babban Jahan. These characters are portrayed with the help of the following symbols: the city of Delhi, the dream, the cat, the rope, the night etc. His Second novel Ocean of Night which can be regarded as no more than a version of his first novel, explores the theme of decadence and disintegration by portraying the characters like Nawab Chakkan, Huma, Kabir and Kesari Bai. The theme of the novel is worked out by making use of very effective symbols like the city of Lucknow, the snake, the night, the sun etc. If we compare the two novels it becomes

self-evident that Ahmed Ali's novelistic vision is conditioned by his progressive stance.

A comprehensive study of his novels brings to our notice that his thematic structure is not at all complex and wide-ranging. In both the novels he maintains unity of place. For instance, Twilight in Delhi is limited to the city of Delhi only and Ocean of Night is limited to the city of Lucknow only. Moreover, the two novels handle the same theme and revive the same atmosphere. The major role of the Indian National Movement is only marginally referred to. Ahmed Ali's novels, therefore, are regarded as minor classics by some critics. But, if we consider his novels from the ideological point of view they can be regarded as an important phase in the history of Indian English literature. In spite of all the criticism levelled against Ahmed Ali, he occupies a very significant place in the tradition of Pakistani English literature. It, therefore, becomes imperative to place him in the respective tradition and note his contribution to the respective novelistic tradition.

One of the important results of the British colonial hold on the subcontinent was that, it produced some eminent Indian men of letters in English. In the 1930's a group of young Indian writers in English began to emerge. The prominent writers among them were R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and Ahmed

Ali. These writers, though adopted the Western realistic techniques, wrote on Indian themes and subjects. Ahmed Ali went to Pakistan after the Partition and inaugurated the era of Pakistani novels in English. R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao concentrated on the Hindu subjects and Ahmed Ali concentrated on the Muslim subjects. Thus, Ahmed Ali occupies a high place of honour in the Pakistani Literary Tradition as he is a trend setter.

As discussed earlier, Ahmed Ali has consciously accepted the stance of a progressive writer. A great visionary as he is, he felt the need of the change for the better. He, therefore, recreates the atmosphere of the feudal Muslim aristocracy so as to point out the phased out values in the society. He recreates the feudal atmosphere in its minutest detail. He does so because he wants to criticize it and naturally he is not nostalgic about it. Ahmed Ali's progressivism is also revealed when he describes the futility of the beliefs like the river Gomati's water having healing power. It does speak about Ahmed Ali's rational outlook towards human life.

One more important aspect of Ahmed Ali's progressivism is seen in his art of portraying characters against the background of historical forces. He portrays, for example, Mir Nihal and Asghar as totally unmindful of the Indian national struggle. Here

Ahmed Ali seems to suggest that though these people consider themselves important in the society they did not shoulder their moral responsibility as far as the native fight against the British colonial hold was concerned. In this manner, Ahmed Ali's novels, though limited in output, set an important trend in the Pakistani Literary Tradition.