

Twilight in delhi as an elegy essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Aimed All earned for himself international fame and acclaim on the publication of his magnum opus, *Twilight in Delhi*. In this novel, he has portrayed the decay and demise of indigenous culture of the Muslims of Delhi and the ruin and demolition of old Delhi. Critics have analyzed *Twilight in Delhi* as a social chronicle. They have also examined it as a novel written on the theme of Imperialism, but very few analysts have focused on this novel as an elegy.

It would be quite interesting and illuminating to the readers and to the reviewers to analyze this novel from a new angle: as an elegiac novel. Hence, the prime purpose and drive of this study is to prove, with the help of textual evidence, that *Twilight in Delhi* is a multi-dimensional elegy in narrative form, far removed from classical elegy written in poetic form. In *Twilight in Delhi*, Aimed Alias prime emphasis is on the depiction of the demise and decline of Muslim culture in Delhi. Although Hindus and Muslims lived together in Delhi, yet Aimed All laid emphasis on the customs and rites of Muslims in Delhi.

In this novel, death, marriage and birth are the basic concepts that are expounded by Aimed All. He has given a detailed description of all these aspects of society. He has put forth the moments of merriment and sorrow side by side in *Twilight in Delhi*, which is a deviation from the modus operandi of the classical elegy. It's a peculiar distinction of this Muslim author hailing from India/Pakistan. Society plays a role of backbone in survival of a prosperous state because it is basic support in maintaining a good system of any society.

Culture of any society is also of a great importance as it can be considered a root of the identity of any society. The decline of culture from a society is a huge loss of its moral principles and values. The word Twilight means the time when light becomes dim, less or it can be the death of light. The same sense has been presented in the novel as it gives the demise of Muslim culture in Delhi. Twilight in Delhi shows decline of Muslims way of living, their mod of thinking and their whole lifestyle. All shows their values decaying and vanishing in true sense.

He has narrated a complete detail about decaying culture and rituals of Muslims living in Delhi. Their basic principles and customs become ambiguous. When the novel starts we observe a society having their religious customs but with the passage of time these customs face serious decline and they go to astray. People only talk about religion but there is no practice. They only pretend to have a religion but do not follow its instructions. In the novel, people are going to mosques and offering their prayers but inwardly they are not satisfied and do not know the real meanings of their prayers.

They are not familiar with its basic concepts. It would not be wrong to say that the decline of Muslim culture can be due to their carelessness with the elision because religion holds a great importance in maintenance of a peaceful society. Muslims used to live with the Hindus and they adopted a large number of Hindu culture and their customs. They were greatly influenced by the Hindus. Ahmed Ali wrote this novel successfully by giving his realistic ideas of the society of Muslims in Delhi. The whole story of this novel moves around Mir Anwar's family.

All has presented the family of Mir Anwar as an image of the whole Muslim society. He shows that there is a tremendous difference between the ways and moods of living and thinking between the old and young generation that is also a cause of decline in society. Mir Anwar does not like western clothing and culture at all and he does not want his son to dress up in western style but his son Shareef likes to wear western shirts and shoes. Young generation of that society does not want to face the realities of life rather they wish to be in a world of dreams. An extensive portion of *Twilight in Delhi* is about the marriage of Shareef and Bellies.

Although their marriage is according to Islamic ways but in other sense it's according to the culture of India. Islam focuses on simplicity in all aspects of life but All's marriage was celebrated vehemently having all functions of emerald, Bhutan etc. This clearly depicts the demise of the Islamic culture from Muslims. The whole society was living on false notions and beliefs. Flying of white pigeons and kites describes the peak of Indian culture and rule in India. *Twilight in Delhi* gives a vivid picture of culture, rituals, customs and religion and also shows the process of the downfall of this culture.

On one side All has given a picture of Muslims but on the other hand he has excluded non-Muslim characters out of this narrative.. All was a great and well known novelist, teacher and a civil servant of Pakistan. He was born on 1st July 1910. His father was a civil servant named Seed Shuddering. At first All has started his education from recitation of Holy Quern. At the age of nine, his father died. After the death of his father All started living with his uncle named Seed Budding who was a deputy commissioner in UP.

Alias cousins did not like him at all and he was treated very badly. He was badly feeling inferiority complex among them. For studying English, Aamed All went to Wesley Mission High School in 1992 where he met Mission Abdullah and they became sat friends. From Aligarh's University All done his matriculation where Eric Dickinson taught him. Raja Oar and Aamed All became good friends of each other in university. All received his degree of M. A English in Literature from Locknut University. He taught in many Indian universities. In 1947 All started teaching in University of China.

He received a great fame at that time and was selected as a senior Deputy Secretors at ministry of foreign affairs in 1950. Aamed All was a famous writer of his time who wrote in both languages, Urdu and English. He started his career as a poet but after mom time he found interest in novel so he wrote many novels, poems and short stories. He was an Urdu writer but wrote ample work in English. Aamed All 1st short story was published in a magazine named Locknut University Journey. He also wrote many English plays in which " Break the China", The Land of Twilight" and " Kafka" are worth mentioning. Kafka" was an Urdu poem written by Prep Chain and later on was 4 translated by Aamed All in English bearing the title: " The Shroud". In his Urdu poems," Said Khan", " Shoals" and " Hammer Gall" are very famous. His works in English cannot be ignored. Purple Gold Mountain" was a lengthy piece because under its title eight poems were being published. He also translated many Urdu poems in English in which " The falcon and the Hunted Bird", " The bulb and the Rose" and many others are included. Being an Urdu writer, All had full command on English. He translated Quern from Arabic to English.

He did a lot of work on essay writing as well. As the novel “ Twilight in Delhi” is all about Muslim culture and their lifestyle All got great fame from this novel. He was greatly impressed by Kigali and had great liking for him. All worked at many places as visiting professor. Western Kentucky University, Michigan State University and Southern Illinois University are those universities in which All gave his services for a long span of time. Aimed All was working in Karachi University and in 1933, All got an honorary degree of Doctor in Literature from Karachi University.

His wife Bellies was also a good writer and her taste for painting and classical music was also very good. All married Bellies at the age of 40. His novel “ Twilight in Delhi” was translated by Bellies in Urdu having the name “ Dill ski Sham”. He got Sitars-e-imitate from the Government of Pakistan. All became the mouthpiece of whole society because he had a great art of storytelling. His great command on English made him successful in expressing his ideas about society that he beautifully did in “ Twilight in Delhi”.

He received a prominent place among the great writers of that time, most prominent amongst them are: Sat Hosannas Manta, Krishna Chanced, Simms Caught. There was not much scope of English writing in India at that time so Aimed All occupied a distinctive position amongst the Indian writers who wrote in English. He became a renowned writer in both languages Urdu and English. Twilight in Delhi” revolves around only one person Mir Animal and his clan. He is the central character of the novel. His wife is Begum Animal and a son Share and a daughter Nehru.

Majors who is the nephew of Begum Animal also lives with them. Begum Kamala is a widow and sister-in-law of Mir Animal. She also lives in Mir Animal's house. Mir Animal's house has two portions, one is Amerada and the other one is Canaan. In Canaan portion, there is a maid servant named Delaine, and in Amerada a male servant is present named Gaffer. Mir Animal also have another daughter named Begum Wadded who is living in Opal. Her husband has died. Now she lives with the family of her husband. She has a son and a daughter. Animal's another daughter died during her birth.

She was married to a gentle man named Eased Hosannas. Two sons of Animal, Habituated and Sardinian, are living with their families according to their posting. 5 The novel starts when Mir Animal comes back to his home late at night for dinner. His son Share is in love with Bellies who is the sister of one of his best friends. On the other hand, Share also loves a prostitute, Mustard ABA, and often thinks about her. Her runs her business in churl bazaar. In the afternoon, Share goes to see his friend at his home but his friend Bond is not there. He continuously thinks about Bellies when he is at her place.

After that Share goes to his another friend Barb and tells him his feelings about Bellies and say that he wants to marry her at any cost. At the same time he is very sad because he knew that his father will never allow him to marry Bellies because of the difference of caste. Share was from Seed family whereas Bellies was from McHugh family. Caste system was a big hurdle for marriage at that time. When he comes back from Barb's house he feels very upset because of is issue of marriage. Ultimately he decides to write a letter to his sister living in Opal.

She treats him as if he is her son and is very dear to her. He was sure that she will find some solution of his problem. When she receives his letter suddenly she decides to go to Delhi. When Mir Animal's family receives the news of her arrival they all are very happy and anxiously wait for the day of her arrival. Share tells her about his rigid decision of marrying Bellies that he will commit suicide if he will not be married to Bellies. Begum Wadded promises him that she will help him. She first egotists with her mother about their marriage and tells that he is very serious about Bellies.

When Mir Animal comes home at night his wife collects her nerves to talk to him about this matter. When she discusses Grass's interest in Bellies, Mir Animal refuses point blank. He was totally against their marriage. Begum Wadded assures Share that she will solve this matter and they will get positive results from their father so he does not need to worry at all. She gives him a suggestion to go to Opal with her and he agrees. She says that he can come back when the matter cools down. Mir Animal had an affair with his maid Delaine in his youth and he also had relations with a dancing girl named Ban Jan.

When Ban Jan died, Mir Animal became very sad and by reminding all these things he allows Share to marry Bellies. He was very happy in starting days of marriage and he took a lot care of Bellies but after some time his whole charm dashed to ground and he started taking interest in other prostitutes. Share is jobless in this period of time and he waits his good time to come. Meanwhile his wife gives birth to a baby girl whose name is Johan Era. Shabby Bag says Suzan in her ears. At that time T. B was not curable and

because of the carelessness of Share Bellies fell ill and doctors diagnosed T. B.

At that time Share once again became caring for Bellies but she completely lost her health and died. 6 After the death of Bellies, Share starts showing interest in her wife's younger sister Koura who is only 16 years old. Koura also likes her brother in law and both want to marry each other. She is much attached to Johan-Era as well. Share talks about this matter with his family and also wants a positive response from his mother in law but she clearly refuses. Merman's marriage with Mohr shows the racer aspect of society in which women have no rights to express their own opinions about their life.

They are merely considered puppets in the hands of man. Mohr always fancies Emmer as her would- be husband but had never seen him. He is a stupid and a lazy-boned fellow. Mir Animal first refuses but by the fear of society he agrees. At the end, Mir Animal suffers from the attack of paralysis and after that he leads a very miserable and pitiable life. His wife gets very worried about his attack and health. As Mir Animal is model of whole society likewise his paralysis shows decline of whole society. At the end almost all the characters suffer from some disease.

In the last part of novel, Mir Animal only thinks about his past memories; he is more lifeless than alive. ' Twilight of Delhi' was once published with support from likes of E. M. Forester and Virginia Wolf. It can be read as a chronicle of period's social and political happenings. As a story is it very sluggish, really nothing to impart other than general sense of pessimism, this is comprehensible. It is interspersed with lots of poems, none of which

appeals to the English readers. This poetry is more understandable for those who knew Urdu and Hindi.

Aimed All was born in Delhi, and educated at Aligarh's and Locknut. Having taught as a lecturer in English at Locknut and Calcutta Universities, he had later migrated to Pakistan after Partition. He was a member of the All India Progressive Writers' Association and had contributed an article, "A Progressive View of Art" to its first official publication, Towards Progressive Literature. According to him, art has its roots in and derives its material from life. Art leads to "mental and emotional activity, stimulation of a progressive type, which leads us along the lines of the highest consciousness.

For him, the word "progressive" means trying to enrich our social life and implies the banishment of mysticism. Aimed Alias first publication is Anger or Sparks which is a collection of experimental stories in Urdu, and done in collaboration with other young Urdu writers. However, this book was publicly burnt in many places because of its bold treatment of the sordid, dark side of Indian life. Many of the preoccupations of Aimed All in Twilight in Delhi find place in a limited scope in his short story "Our Lane" which was first written in Urdu and then translated by the author himself to English.

Though his first novel Twilight in Delhi is written in the realistic technique, Aimed All turns to an exploration of the human psyche in his second 7 novel Ocean of Night (1964) while his third novel Rats and Diplomats (1985) tries to ridicule life in diplomatic circles abroad. Besides novels and short stories, he has also brought out translations, poetry and criticism. As for this novel's career, it was at first rejected by a firm of American Publishers, for whom the

author had written it, on the ground that it was far removed from American life.

However, the Hogwash Press, on the intervention of E. M. Forester, later published it. It was hailed by critics on first coming out but the book remained out of print till 1967 due to political disturbances in India and abroad. However, in Pakistan, as the author points out in the introduction to the Oxford University Press Publication of 1991, on rare occasions when he has been interviewed over the television, all references to Twilight in Delhi have been edited as it was based in Delhi, the forbidden' city across the border.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW An elegy is a lament for the deceased in the form of a funeral song or a dirge. It is opposed to Eulogy which is a song of acclamation and approbation. Most notable elegies written in the past include: John Milton's "Lycidas." Walt Whitman "O Captain! My Captain! ", Thomas Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" , Paul Claudel's "Fugue of Death", W. H Auden's , "In Memory of. B. Yeats. " All these were funeral songs or mourning songs. Some very renowned authors composed elegies in their day, most remarkable among them are as follow: "Funeral Blues" by W.

H. Auden "Because I Could Not Stop For Death" by Emily Dickinson "Dirge Without Music" by Edna St. Vincent Millay "November" by Edmund Spenser In Memoriam" by Lord Alfred Tennyson "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London" by Dylan Thomas In order to properly distinguish between an elegy and a eulogy, it may be very interesting to look

at the difference in the form and meanings of the two. The eulogy is a familiar form for factions of certain religions, and ethnic groups. Eulogy is a piece that is spoken after someone passes away.

An elegy is very close; however, it is a poem that primarily serves the purpose of a lament or a requiem for a recently deceased person. Therefore, the main difference is the form in which the words are Ritter. Furthermore, in its primitive form, elegies were not always simple, short pieces about the death of a loved one. Indian novel in English appeared on the literary horizons in the early sass's. The writers like Mull Raja And, Raja Oar, R. K. Nary and Aimed All were the pioneers of Indian fiction in English. This was an embryonic as well as a budding period of Indo-English writing.

Aimed Alias Twilight in Delhi saw the light of the day in 1940. Twilight in Delhi is one of the first and the most remarkable novels written in English from the pen of novelists of the Sub-continent. Mull Raja And , the author of Untouchable is credited as the pioneer of English novel in India, and Aimed All is akin to him. Aimed All, in fact, has introduced a new genre in English literature, which is quite a distinction. It seems pertinent to survey the critical response Twilight in Delhi received from various critics and reviewers over the past few decades.

Twilight in Delhi is a long mournful plaintive poem written to lament the death of a culture and a city. It can also be called a requiem or a melancholy grumble. Aimed All bewails and bemoans the loss of the city of his birth. It does possess some ingredients or components of a classical elegy but here the author has broadened the scope of this genre which used to be quite

restricted to heroic and pastoral elegy in the olden times. Aimed All has written a condition- of- the- society novel, adding to kit the flavor and tang of an elegy.

In his hands, this novel has become a quintessential synthesis of a social-chronicle UCM elegy, in which he has not only mourned over the tragic events but he had also eulogies and lauded the glorious and splendid dying culture of the Muslims of Delhi. Several critics have examined Twilight in Delhi as a social UCM political history. They have also studied it as a piece of fiction written on the subject of Imperialism, but there are very few reviewers who have analyzed this novel as an elegiac piece of writing.

It would be quite interesting and illuminating to the readers and to the critics to evaluate this novel from a new angle: as an elegiac novel. Since Twilight in Deli's paramount focus is on the demise and decline of Muslim culture in Delhi, it can be deemed as a poignant and heart-rending elegy. A survey of critical response to this novel would be tie worthwhile and valuable in this regard. Marauder Sings , in his article: " Revisiting Aimed All: Twilight in Delhi" has opined that Twilight in Delhi can be understood as a work of modernist pessimism.

It is written in a serious, somber and melancholy tone, an important requisite for an elegy. He has further added that this novel is an elegy of Delhi life in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The British decided to build New Delhi outside the time-worn and ruined old Delhi. Marauder Sings clearly suggested that Aimed All wrote this book mourning the death of

famous historical city of Delhi and its heresies values which withered away along with its prized institutions. Arizona, Harris, in his book: “ Aimed All”.

Indian English Novelists: An Anthology of Critical Essays, has pointed out that Twilight in Delhi is an obituary of a decrepit and dilapidated city and its customs fast eroding by the storms of time. It is fraught with a melancholic tone encased in an aroma of nostalgia. Raiser’s opinion strengthens the argument that this novel is essentially elegiac in its form and content.

William Dillydally mentions Twilight in Delhi in his book ‘ City of Adjoins’. He states that Twilight in Delhi is indeed a classic. It documents the historical period when last McHugh king, Buddha Shah Safari, was thrown out of authority.

His family or siblings were reduced to mendicants and servants, and Great Britain established her rule over India. It was a saddening and heart-rending spectacle for the Indians, in general, and for the Muslims, in particular..

Aimed All has lamented the decline of McHugh rule as if he were mourning over the demise of a dynasty comprising of benevolent monarchs, who ruled over the hearts of the people. Hence William Dillydally also treats Twilight in Delhi as a mourning song UCM a social chronicle. Interestingly enough, Twilight in Delhi can be compared with M. S.

Asthma’s celebrated Urdu novel ‘ Gram Haw’ which deals with life history of Bulbar Shania’s family analogous to the life- history of Mir Animal and his clan. Both books are written in dirge like tone, quite similar to funeral hymns.

Alex Padres in his book titled: Post-national Aesthetics and the Work of Mourning in Aimed Alias Twilight in Delhi, has stated that critical elucidations

and analyses have restricted *Twilight in Delhi* to an only homesick portrayal of a declining Indo-Muslim culture. The author has placed his book inside a Western humanist aesthetic.

Alex Padres, further contends that Alias position as an innovative Urdu writer and the narrative's continued commitment with Urdu poetry do not only offer validity to the elegiac quality of his portrayal, they also produce a difficult challenge to the primacy of realism and the perceived theme of Muslims cultural extermination being re-counted. Conceptualizing this story within a developing Urdu literary innovativeness since the late nineteenth century, he advocates the relevance of a repeatedly reinvented poetics of loss that is symptomatic of the politics of mourning and the absent- presence of a set of cherished values.

In her essay “ The Anxiety of Unkindness” Namesakes Musketeer, remarking on the subjects handled by Aimee All, contends that the older generation of Indo-English novelists, including Aimee All, were surely pan-Indian, outlining Indian apprehensions as against indigenous or regional problems. Musketeer does mention Aimee Alias novel *Twilight in Delhi*, which according to her is marked by three-dimensional approach: Delhi city, Muslim-Indian mode of living and Mir Anwar's paralysis.

She further adds that All attempts to explore Delhi Muslim society which was on the verge of extinction. He deals with analogous time-worn trivialities and banalities of east-west hostility, the conflict between conventionalism and modernism, the breakdown of the Indian Joint-family system and other institutions. Musketeer further adds that this can be seen as an effort to

develop a national as well as individual character, by expurgation of disputes within the country and emphasizing the external differences. K.

Standardization in Indian Literature: Positions and Propositions has pointed out that Indian writers are primarily Indian and pan-Indian and, in whatever language they choose to write in. Their works are rooted in collective, societal, historic and ultra settings. Heterogeneity and diversity in Indian literature has not unsettled the unity and communal harmony of the Indian people. Twilight in Delhi truly represents Indians. Aimed All has treated Delhi as a living character and as the heart and throb of India.

He has traced out the process of evolutionary change taking place in and around this bride of India that got trampled over for seven times. An Indian setting and subject is the hall- mark of this novel. It clearly reflects that Indian literature is a filament of continuousness pitted against a backdrop of unceasing change. It was a time and a situation when the upper and middle class Indian society had imbibed and internalized so many Western traits and habits and ways of life. Twilight in Delhi enables the reader to look into a time when the situation was quite dismal.

Aimed All has articulated the helplessness and vulnerability of the people in the face of what imperialism was doing to their values and culture and to their much- loved and once glorious Delhi. He mourns over the loss of the cherished values in a gloomy and dirge-like tone. Trip Lair says that Aimed All in his elegiac novel has chronicled the turbulent times of Indian history and the mayhem, gains and losses experienced over a period of time. Many eminent writers have written books on “ Delhi”.

Fiction is also available on the grandeur and splendor of this glorious city. There was a time when bull-carts and donkey-carts were seen moving about in Delhi but now nouveau-riches and Deletes are seen moving in luxurious Mercedes and Honda. This city is now called New Delhi as it has undergone a long transitional process of liberalizing and colonization Delhi has had numerous shades, countless fades. Aimed All has documented this transition quite realistically and accurately, based upon what he exactly witnessed during his own boyhood and youth.

Manhood Farrago, in his book titled " Besieged" takes up the subject of the Mutiny of 1857, people and historians in India call it War of Independence. Aimed All has also described this tragic incident in detail, holding the English responsible for the bloodshed of Indian soldiers. His emphasis is on the first ever rebellion against the British government. McHugh King, Buddha Shah Safari, around whom rebellious Indian soldiers had assembled, was eventually thrown out of power. Farrago further adds that these five months were traumatic months ever experienced by the masses of India.

Aimed Alias narrative Twilight in Delhi and Farrago's " Besieged" bear strong similarity in the depiction of Delhi city and the Mutiny of 1857. Farrago says that all craving and resolve of the Indians to combat started subsiding. Both the authors state that with the passage of time the people of Delhi city became lack-luster, slothful and more vulnerable to idleness and apathy. Twilight in Delhi covers the events ensuing from 1911 to 1919. It was the period when Old Delhi was still identified as modern