IMPERIAL NARRATIVES AND NATIVE VOICES: A COMPARATIVE POSTCOLONIAL STUDY OF *TWILIGHT IN DELHI* AND *HEART OF DARKNESS*

Hafsa Bibi
M. Phil, Department of Applied Linguistics, GC University, Faisalabad
muhammadkhn5505@gmail.com
Iqra Hussain
Principal, Government Associate College for Women, Jandanwala
Muhammad Shafqat Nawaz (Corresponding Author)
Ph.D. Scholar, Dept. of Applied Linguistics, GC University, Faisalabad
nawazshafqat123@gmail.com

Abstract
The literature addressing colonialism have been produced both by colonizers and colonized. The variances of their perspective on colonialism can be found in their writings. This study, using textual analysis, explores Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad and Twilight in Delhi by Ahmed Ali through the lens of postcolonial theory, focusing on the psychological, cultural, and political ramifications of colonialism. The study is qualitative in nature, and the sample passages for analysis from the novels have been selected by using the technique of purposive sampling. Conrad's work critiques the moral corruption and inhumanity embedded in European imperialism, using Africa as a symbolic landscape to reflect the inner darkness of the colonizers. In contrast, Ali's novel presents an intimate portrayal of cultural decline and identity loss under British colonial rule in India. While Heart of Darkness reveals the dehumanizing effects of colonial power from the oppressor's perspective, Twilight in Delhi captures the emotional and cultural disintegration experienced by the colonized. Together, these texts illuminate the complex dynamics of power, resistance, and historical memory central to postcolonial discourse. The significance of the study lies in the fact that it can be used by the teachers, researchers and students as it develops the understanding about the analysis of text written on the subject of colonization.

Keywords: *Literature, colonialism, colonizers, colonized, postcolonial theory, British rule, white man's perspective*

1. Introduction
1.1. Background of the Study
1.1.1. Colonialism
Colonialism is a period when European countries officially took control of other countries usually brown or black people. These colonizer countries took partial or complete power over the countries. Colonizers brought their own people in every institution of government and exploited the rights of citizens, resources and economy of the country. It narrates the story of powerful western countries which colonized and control other countries. It usually discusses the history of imperial expansion. Colonizers call themselves civilized and they had the motive to rule over others. They consider themselves allocated rulers. They are with the perspective that they rule over other nations for enlightenment and to make them civilized. Colonization emotionally and psychologically affected the colonizers. The colonizers are with the idea that the colonized countries have no culture, history and these countries made no donation to human development. They portrayed themselves as rescuers and heroes who protected the people from ignorance and uncivilized conditions. The language of colonizers replaced the language of dominated people. They tried to convert their religion in Christianity through missionaries. They had deeply affected the laws of the countries that even after colonization the same bureaucratic setup remains continued.

1.1.2. Colonial Discourse
Discourse deals with the narratives and opinions about particular topic. It can be about anything. According to Foucault (1972), discourse is system of statement through which world can be known. A system in which controlling group establishes the field of truth by

imposing particular knowledge, regulation and ethics upon controlled group. Colonial discourse deals with the perspectives and narratives of colonizers. The colonial discourse portrays colonized as brutal, uncivilized, idle and servant. The colonial writers usually present colonizers as civilized, compassionate, and magnanimous. Colonial discourse implicated in ideas of essentiality of Europeans the colonizers, and thus in assumption features of modernity: premise about history, language, literature, and technology. The literature which is written during the colonization era can be defined as colonial literature.

1.1.3. Post colonialism

The term 'Post Colonialism' refers to the end of colonization age. It is difficult to specify the period when colonization ended, or whether ended at all? It is said that colonization never ended. Though the colonizers had gone but the effect of colonization is so strong that it continues through the application of their rules, confinement rates, police viciousness and their involvement in the government policies of once colonized countries. These dominant countries still rule through their language as it is necessary to seek English language in learning and jobs also.

1.1.4. Post-Colonial Discourse

Post-colonial discourse deals with the problems and consequences of colonization. It focuses on the questions of political, cultural independence of enslaved people. Post-colonial writers work on the themes of colonialism and racialism. They mainly focused on nationalism. They highlight and give value to their own culture, political and social identity. Post-colonial writers present their perspective from their own history and portrayed colonization as a savage and horrific thing. They take the language of colonizers to write and use a dialect which sounds spoken rather than written. They present it as a different variety of English. The post-colonial writers usually do this to challenge the control of colonizers' language. They take the language which is used to enslave them and make objection to their oppressors. Post-colonial writers are with the perspective that colonizers were not with the motive of enlightenment or civilization but barbaric economic oppression. They present the other side of the story. They draw metanarrative perspective in their stories that colonizers were with the motive of destroying culture language religion and economy of the countries they colonized.

1.2. Brief Summary of Twilight in Delhi

Twilight in Delhi begins on a sweltering summer evening as Mir Nihal returns home to family concerns about marriage arrangements, particularly for his son, Asghar. A traditionalist, Mir Nihal is alarmed by Asghar's adoption of Western habits, symbolized by his English boots. Asghar, in love with Bilqeece—a girl from a lower social class—seeks help from his sister Begam Waheed to convince their parents. With emotional appeals and eventual persuasion, Begam Nihal agrees to support the match despite resistance from Mir Nihal. Their servant, Dilchain, spreads the news, causing tension in the household. Meanwhile, Asghar's relationship with the courtesan Mushtri Bai ends in jealousy and emotional conflict. Eventually, the family consents to the marriage, and Asghar spends a year in Bhopal before wedding Bilqeece. Parallel to this, Mir Nihal experiences personal loss—his beloved mistress Baban Jan dies, followed by the death of his pigeons, symbolizing the collapse of his world. These events soften him, leading to reluctant approval of Asghar's marriage.

As the British Empire tightens its grip, Mir Nihal reflects on the erosion of traditional Delhi. He witnesses the city's transformation, including the spectacle of King George's coronation parade, and feels sorrow for the fallen Mughal aristocracy. Asghar and Bilqeece's marriage faces challenges, with cultural tensions and emotional disconnect. Bilqeece's death from tuberculosis leaves Asghar devastated. He later becomes emotionally attached to her sister

Zahra, but his proposal is rejected. As political unrest unfolds and the Indian freedom movement intensifies, personal tragedies continue to strike—Asghar's brother dies, and Zahra marries another man. Disillusioned and broken, Mir Nihal withdraws from life, ultimately slipping into a coma and passing away, marking the symbolic end of an era in Delhi.

1.3. Brief Summary of Heart of Darkness

Heart of Darkness begins on the River Thames aboard the ship *Nellie*, where several men await the wind to resume their voyage. Among them is Marlow, an experienced seaman, who begins reflecting on European colonization, calling London itself once one of the darkest places on earth. As he shares his perspective, he transitions into recounting his journey into Africa—a personal experience that revealed to him the true horrors of imperialism. Marlow, fascinated with maps and exploration since childhood, secures a job through his aunt with a Belgian company involved in ivory trade. Appointed as a replacement steamboat captain, he travels to the African coast. From the outset, the setting is eerie and somber. At the company's office, he senses an air of doom. Upon arrival at the company's outer station, he witnesses colonial brutality and exploitation, including native workers treated inhumanely.

At the central station, Marlow meets the general manager, who delays his journey due to the steamer's damage. During this time, Marlow hears frequent mentions of Kurtz, an enigmatic and influential ivory trader. Rumors of Kurtz's illness and power over the natives grow increasingly ominous. Marlow later overhears the manager and his uncle discussing eliminating Kurtz to gain control of ivory trade.

Eventually, Marlow sets off to find Kurtz. As they near his station, the crew is attacked by natives, and the helmsman is killed. Upon arrival, a Russian admirer of Kurtz informs Marlow that Kurtz is alive but gravely ill. Kurtz is revealed to be a brilliant yet corrupted man who has established a godlike rule over the natives. Marlow finally meets Kurtz and witnesses his physical and moral decay. Kurtz attempts to escape into the jungle but is brought back. Before dying, Kurtz entrusts Marlow with his writings and a photograph of his beloved. His final words—"The horror! The horror!"—reflect his profound realization of the darkness within himself and the imperial mission. Back in Europe, Marlow remains haunted by the experience. When visiting Kurtz's fiancée, he lies to her, claiming Kurtz's last word was her name, choosing to protect her from the devastating truth.

1.4. Research Objectives

- To analyze *Heart of Darkness* and *Twilight in Delhi* through the lens of postcolonial theory.
- To explore how colonialism affects the identity, culture, and psyche of both colonizers and the colonized in the selected texts.
- To investigate the use of literary techniques, symbols, and language in representing colonial power and resistance.
- To compare the narrative strategies used by Joseph Conrad and Ahmed Ali to portray the colonial experience.

1.5. Research Questions

1. How can *Heart of Darkness* and *Twilight in Delhi* be analyzed through the lens of postcolonial theory?
2. In what ways does colonialism affect the identity, culture, and psyche of both colonizers and the colonized in the selected texts?
3. How do the authors use literary techniques, symbols, and language to represent colonial power and resistance?
4. What are the similarities and differences in the narrative strategies used by Joseph Conrad and Ahmed Ali to portray the colonial experience?

2. **Literature Review**
2.1.**Theoretical Framework**

Postcolonial Theory is a critical framework used to analyze and understand the cultural, political, and historical impacts of colonialism and imperialism, particularly on formerly colonized societies. It explores how colonial power relations shaped identities, cultures, languages, and literature—and how these influences persist even after formal colonial rule ends. The key thinkers include Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Michel Foucault etc. Influenced by these thinkers, the theory examines how colonizers used discourse (language, literature, science) to construct the colonized as "inferior" or "Other" to justify domination. Postcolonial theory often focuses on hybrid identities—the blending of native and colonial cultures—and the resulting tension, alienation, or empowerment this can bring (e.g., Homi Bhabha's concept of "third space"). Colonized peoples are not just passive victims—they resist, adapt, and subvert colonial authority. Postcolonial theory highlights acts of cultural resistance, both subtle and overt. Inspired by scholars like **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o**, postcolonial theory encourages reclaiming native languages, histories, and cultural narratives that were suppressed during colonial rule. It interrogates how literature—both by colonizers and colonized—depicts colonization, and how **postcolonial writers rewrite history** from the perspective of the oppressed (e.g., Chinua Achebe, Arundhati Roy, Tayeb Salih). Postcolonial theory challenges Eurocentric views of history and literature, gives voice to marginalized communities and helps understand ongoing cultural, racial, and economic inequalities rooted in colonial legacies.

Now, we will have a closer look of these theories. Edward Said, a Palestinian-American intellectual, is recognized as a foundational figure in postcolonial studies. In his influential book *Orientalism* (1978), he explores how Western scholars and writers represented the Middle East and Asia in ways that supported colonial rule. Said introduced the concept of "Othering," highlighting how colonial powers constructed the East as exotic, irrational, and inferior—simultaneously fascinating and dependent on Western civilization. Homi K. Bhabha, an Indian-British theorist, advanced the field with ideas on hybridity in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994). He emphasized how colonial encounters create mixed cultural identities, challenging fixed notions of identity through a process of cultural blending and negotiation. Bhabha sees hybridity as both a survival strategy and a space of resistance between colonial and native cultures. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, an Indian-American scholar, contributed significantly with her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988), examining how marginalized voices struggle to be heard within dominant systems. She also addressed mimicry as a complex imitation by colonized groups of colonial culture—a strategy that reflects both adaptation and resistance. Spivak argues that such mimicry is a suspended imitation, shaped by the West's desire to recreate the Third World in its own image while denying it full autonomy.

In his influential work *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Frantz Fanon explores the complex relationship between Black and white individuals, arguing that both are confined by rigid racial identities. Drawing from personal experiences, Fanon recounts an incident where he was insulted with racist slurs—such as "Negro," "black," "dirty," and "uncivilized"—by a white man in a hotel. This moment, he explains, made him deeply aware of being perceived as the racial "Other" due to his skin color. Fanon emphasizes that such racism is not only socially harmful but also psychologically damaging. He argues that colonial racism leads to mental instability and identity crises among the colonized. A key concept in his work is ethnic assimilation, where the native culture of colonized people is forcibly replaced by that of the colonizer, causing deep psychological harm and cultural alienation.

2.2.Review of Relevant Studies

The study by Martins (2017) proposed an interdisciplinary reflection on how postcolonial fiction in English contributes to constructing ideas of the postcolonial nation and its cultural identity. The primary objective emphasizes the exploration of national history, identity, and cultural representation as crucial elements in understanding a nation and its people. The study focuses on the identity construction in the novels of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai. It provides a historical approach, integrates postcolonial theory, and examines the relationship between anthropology and fiction. The findings highlight that the representation of postcolonial identity in literature, especially from former colonized nations, allows readers and scholars to better comprehend their history, culture, and nation. Additionally, the paper suggests that the appropriation of Western forms and structures in postcolonial narratives leads to an inversion of power relations, thereby revealing a diverse world and deconstructing traditional views of history.

Bulbula (2020) aims to analyze the representation of postcolonial themes in the novel. The main objective is to interpret how themes such as cultural identity, hybridity, and self-otherness are represented within the work, providing a critical dimension to the reading experience for students of literature. A descriptive research design with a qualitative data gathering and analysis method was employed. Both primary and secondary data were used, analyzed through thematic analysis to meet the study's objectives. Theoretical frameworks were developed based on postcolonial theorists to identify and discuss the features within the novel. The findings indicate that the major postcolonial themes evident in the novel include issues of race, gender, and class, which are commonly reflected in diasporic literary productions. The study concludes that these themes contribute to a deeper understanding of the novel's meaning and invite a socio-cultural perspective in literary studies.

Further, Khan et al (2022) explored various postcolonial issues depicted in the novel. The primary objective is to analyze how the characters experience identity crises and face challenges stemming from their cultural and societal contexts. The authors employ textual analysis as a method of data analysis, focusing on selected passages from the novel to highlight the postcolonial themes. The research incorporates theoretical frameworks from postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha and Edward Said, examining concepts like mimicry, ambivalence, stereotyping, and representation. The findings suggest that the protagonists in "Exist West" suffer due to identity crises arising from the oppressive dynamics of colonial history. The study reveals how migration and the struggle for identity affect the characters as they navigate the complexities of belonging and cultural negotiation.

Yasmeen and Ahmad (2022) conducted a study to examine the gendered roles and the patriarchal oppression of women through a postcolonial feminist lens. It aims to highlight the implications of colonialism and patriarchy on women's agency and identity. The research adopts a qualitative approach, primarily conducting a textual analysis of "Exit West." The theoretical framework is grounded in the works of postcolonial feminist theorists, with a particular emphasis on Spivak's concept of 'Subalternism'. The findings reveal that both colonialism and patriarchy impose various burdens on women, which deprives them of their agency, independent identity, and rights. The study concludes that women's experiences under these socio-political structures fundamentally shape their existence and voice in society.

Also, Wachsmann (2023) investigated the representation and implications of imperialism within Jane Austen's novel Persuasion, particularly through the lens of the marriage plot and class dynamics. The researcher combines a structuralist approach with a postcolonial methodology, applying Edward Said's concept of 'contrapuntal reading'. Additionally, the study incorporates cultural materialism to give insight into class representation within the

novel. The findings suggest that Austen's narrative does not challenge the British Empire; instead, it portrays the empire as a means for wealth and social mobility. The marriage plot, exemplified by the female protagonist's choice of a naval captain over her cousin from the landed gentry, underscores the growing significance of the navy and professional classes in early nineteenth-century England, thus affirming support for imperialism. The study culminates in the observation that Persuasion constructs a favorable representation of the rising professional classes that benefit from imperialism

Moreover, the study conducted by Ali and Khadim (2024) analyzed the impact of postcolonial themes on the personalities of the main characters and how their dynamics relate to broader colonial and postcolonial issues. The researchers employ a qualitative approach utilizing a descriptive analytical method. They analyze various characters in the novel with references to key postcolonial critics, including Homi K. Bhabha, Leela Gandhi, Frantz Fanon, and Edward Said. The study relies on verbal data and textual analysis to address the research questions. The research concludes that Hamid effectively depicts postcolonial themes, especially concerning racism, identity crises, and otherness in "The Last White Man." Additionally, the study suggests the potential for applying this analytical framework to other literary works, such as Hamid's "Exit West" in future research.

In addition to this, Bashir and Hussain (2025) aimed to explore the legacy of colonialism, the repercussions of Partition, and the socio-political conditions that have influenced individual identities in both novels. Additionally, the study seeks to examine themes such as familial ties, social complexities, alienation, hybridity, mimicry, and nostalgia. The researchers employed qualitative research methods and conceptual frameworks derived from notable scholars in postcolonial studies, including Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak. These frameworks facilitate an interpretative reading and comparative analysis of the selected literary works. The findings of the study reveal how both novels critique the socio-political realities of their times. *Twilight in Delhi* highlights colonial legacies and the aftermath of Partition, while *The Murder of Aziz Khan* discusses Pakistan's managerial shortcomings and lack of ambition.

Although, there are several studies which examined different genres of literature through postcolonial lenses, but the current study focuses on comparing the postcolonial issues and themes represented in the novels *Twilight in Delhi* and *Heart of Darkness* both written by the authors who belongs to Colonized and Colonizers respectively. Therefore, the study is unique in its scope, materials and methods.

3. Material and Method

This study employed a qualitative research design, utilizing textual analysis as the primary methodological approach to examine *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad and *Twilight in Delhi* by Ahmed Ali. The research was guided by postcolonial theory, with a particular focus on the conceptual frameworks of Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak. Their theoretical assumptions—including Said's *Orientalism*, Bhabha's notions of *hybridity* and *mimicry*, and Spivak's critique of the *subaltern*—provided the analytical lens through which the colonial and postcolonial dimensions of the texts were explored. A purposive sampling technique was used to select key passages from both novels that prominently engaged with themes of colonial power, cultural disintegration, psychological domination, and resistance. The textual analysis focused on uncovering the postcolonial implications embedded within the narratives, interrogating how each text either reinforced or subverted colonial discourse. By applying the theoretical insights of Said, Bhabha, and Spivak, the study critically assessed the representations of colonizers and colonized, the dynamics of hegemony and resistance, and the construction of identity under colonial rule. The methodological approach ensured a theoretically grounded comparative analysis,

revealing the divergent yet interconnected ways in which the two novels articulate the psychological, cultural, and political consequences of imperialism.

4. **Results and Discussion**

4.1.Analysis of Twilight in Delhi

Twilight in Delhi

The title *Twilight in Delhi* is rich in symbolic meaning, and it can be interpreted through the lens of Postcolonial Theory in several ways. The term *twilight* often signifies a moment between day and night, a time of transition or uncertainty. In a postcolonial context, this can be interpreted as a metaphor for the transitional period in India during British colonial rule—between the fading of traditional, indigenous cultures and the rising influence of the colonial power. The "twilight" could symbolize the end of the Mughal era and the arrival of British colonial dominance, as well as the waning of old structures and the emergence of new colonial realities. The "twilight" evokes a sense of ambiguity, where the boundaries between the colonizer and the colonized, tradition and modernity, are blurred. It captures a sense of cultural liminality, where the indigenous identity is in flux due to colonial influence. This aligns with **Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity**, where the colonized subject exists in a space between cultural influences—both resisting and absorbing the colonial presence.

The title *Twilight in Delhi* also alludes to the **decline of traditional Delhi** as the British Empire established its foothold in India. **Delhi**, once the heart of the Mughal Empire, now stands as a symbol of the **imperial decline** of a great civilization, and the **"twilight"** suggests that its former glory is fading in the face of colonial domination. The **decay and degeneration** that characterize the novel can be seen as a metaphor for the larger **disintegration of indigenous culture** under British rule. This aligns with **Edward Said's theory of Orientalism**, where the **East** (Delhi, in this case) is represented as stagnant, decaying, or in need of Western intervention. The title reflects the **imperial gaze** that perceives Delhi and its culture as outdated and in need of reform, emphasizing colonial dominance over indigenous traditions. The **"twilight"** represents the **dawning of a new imperial order**, where colonial powers redefine and reshape the cultural landscape of the colonized regions.

The title can also point to the **resistance of the colonized**. While *twilight* marks the end of the day, it can also signal a moment of **transition and hope**, as the darkness of night can be followed by the light of a new day. In the context of postcolonialism, this can symbolize the **subaltern's struggle** to reclaim agency and voice in the face of colonial oppression. The twilight might represent the **moment before full resistance** to colonialism, as the characters (and by extension, the people of Delhi) navigate their way through an oppressive colonial system. According to **Gayatri Spivak's concept of the subaltern**, the colonized individuals (the subalterns) often struggle to have their voices heard within the dominant discourse. The title could symbolize **Delhi's subaltern people**, who are caught in a twilight space—no longer fully part of their pre-colonial society, but not fully absorbed into the colonial power structure either. The sense of **"twilight"** implies that the people of Delhi are on the brink of potential resistance or transformation, yet they are still under the shadow of colonialism. The struggle to retain identity while adapting to a colonial world is central to postcolonial narratives.

The title *Twilight in Delhi* may also evoke the sense of **cultural hybridity**. The term *twilight* could symbolize a space where the native culture of Delhi is **interacting and blending with colonial influences**—creating a **hybrid cultural identity**. This period of colonial transition brings about significant changes in the local customs, traditions, and social structures, producing a new cultural amalgamation. □   Homi Bhabha's theory of **hybridity** is particularly relevant here. In the twilight, the native people of Delhi are neither fully

immersed in their traditional culture nor fully integrated into the colonial system. This ambiguity and hybridization create a space of tension and complexity, where **colonialism's impact on culture** leads to new forms of identity that are neither wholly indigenous nor wholly colonial. The **twilight** can be seen as a space where these hybrid identities emerge, challenging the binary between colonizer and colonized.

Finally, the term *twilight* can represent the **ambiguity** and **uncertainty** that accompanies the colonial experience itself. It is a state of being neither in full light (colonial dominance) nor in complete darkness (the pre-colonial past). This reflects the **psychological and emotional turmoil** that characters in *Twilight in Delhi* undergo as they attempt to reconcile their own identities with the pressures of colonial rule. The **uncertain twilight** might echo **Frantz Fanon's** exploration of the **psychological effects of colonization** on both the colonizer and the colonized. The colonized subject is in a state of **liminality**, caught between two worlds and struggling with their sense of self under the colonial power structure. The title, therefore, may represent the **inner conflict** and **alienation** felt by individuals like Mir Nihal and his family, who are unable to fully adapt to the changing world around them.

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

This passage from *Twilight in Delhi* can be analyzed through the **Postcolonial Theory** by focusing on the themes of **colonial oppression**, **exhaustion**, and **alienation**. The imagery of the city "enveloped by night" and the people "wrapped in a restless slumber" reflects a sense of **physical and mental exhaustion**. The colonized subjects are portrayed as exhausted by the oppressive heat and the hardships of their daily lives under colonial rule. The **"restless slumber"** may symbolize how colonial subjects are never fully at rest; they live in a constant state of discomfort, both physically and psychologically, under the heavy weight of imperialism. The people sleeping in the courtyards, on rooftops, and in by-lanes, "half naked," suggest a sense of **fragmentation** and **alienation**. The lack of shelter and personal space can be seen as symbolic of the **colonial condition**—where the colonized are pushed to the margins of society and stripped of dignity. The harsh conditions of their labor, reflected in the description of their tiredness, underscore the **exploitation** of the colonized labor force, which is typical in colonial economies. The mention of the **heat becoming oppressive** can be seen as a metaphor for the **intensity of colonial oppression**, which pervades every aspect of daily life. Just as the heat "shoots through like pain," colonial rule inflicts **pain and discomfort** on the colonized, making their existence a daily struggle for survival. The imagery of the people sleeping "tired after the sore day's labor" also reflects the exploitation of colonial labor. The colonized are depicted as **worn out** by the demands of a colonial economy that exploits their labor for the benefit of the colonizers, leaving them with little to no time or energy for rest or personal fulfillment.

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

This passage from *Twilight in Delhi* can be interpreted through **Postcolonial Theory** as it reflects on the themes of **colonial displacement**, **loss of cultural identity**, and the **decay of native pride** under British colonial rule. The reference to the city once being the domain of **Kings, monarchs, poets, and nobles** highlights the rich cultural and political history of

Delhi before the arrival of the British colonizers. The absence of these figures, such as **Babur, Humayun, Jahangir, and Shahjahan**, symbolizes the **dismantling of native political power** and the collapse of the **Mughal Empire** under colonial rule. The once vibrant and prosperous Delhi is reduced to a shadow of its former self, reflecting the **subjugation of native governance** and the loss of indigenous cultural authority. The phrase "no King lives there today" and the reference to the **"old inhabitants"** who have "lost their pride and grandeur under a foreign yoke" suggests that the colonization of Delhi has led to a **crisis of identity**. The native population is depicted as being **displaced** from their own cultural and historical legacy, with their sense of pride and dignity undermined by foreign domination. The loss of the Mughal rulers and their legacy is symbolic of the **colonial erasure of indigenous culture** and governance. The mention of poets **"feeling the lack of patronage"** underlines the **cultural suppression** under colonial rule. In the Mughal period, poets and artists flourished with the support of the kings and nobles, but under colonialism, this patronage disappears. The **cultural stifling** that follows the decline of the native elite is a key postcolonial theme, where **colonial powers impose their own culture**, leaving little room for the flourishing of indigenous art and literature. The line **"gone they are, gone and dead beneath the all-embracing earth"** evokes a sense of **cultural death** and **historical erasure**. The physical death of the rulers and their cultural contributions is tied to the **symbolic death of native heritage**, as the **British colonial system** imposes a foreign culture that dominates and replaces indigenous traditions, histories, and governance. The allusion to the earth encompassing the dead signifies how colonialism has buried native pride and glory beneath the weight of its own authority.

"You are again wearing the dirty English boots! I don't like them. I will have no aping of the Farangi in my house. Throw them away' (p.11).

This passage from *Twilight in Delhi* can be analyzed through **Postcolonial Theory** by focusing on themes of **cultural conflict**, **colonial influence**, and **identity formation** under colonialism. The father's exclamation, "You are again wearing the dirty English boots! I don't like them," represents a **rejection of colonial cultural imposition**. The English boots symbolize the influence of British colonialism, and the father's anger at his son wearing them reflects the desire to **preserve indigenous identity** and resist the **Westernization** that colonial rule brings. The term "dirty" here may be an expression of disdain for the foreign culture, emphasizing the colonizer's imposition as both **unwanted** and **degrading** to native traditions. The phrase "I will have no aping of the Farangi in my house" highlights the **cultural tension** experienced by colonized subjects who are caught between **indigenous traditions** and the **colonial culture**. The word **"aping"** implies mimicry or imitation, suggesting that the son's adoption of English boots is seen as an act of **cultural betrayal** or an attempt to assimilate into the foreign, colonial culture. This reflects the postcolonial conflict of **cultural hybridity**, where individuals feel torn between two cultural identities: their native heritage and the dominant colonial culture. The father's command to **"throw them away"** represents an effort to assert **native pride** and **resist cultural assimilation**. In postcolonial contexts, such moments often highlight the **psychological and cultural struggle** of the colonized to maintain their sense of self and resist the erasure of their traditions and customs under colonial influence. The rejection of the English boots can be seen as a metaphor for rejecting colonial values and **asserting indigenous autonomy** in the face of foreign domination. The term **"Farangi"** (foreigners, typically referring to the British during colonial rule) reinforces the idea of **otherness**. By referring to the colonial powers in this way, the speaker distances the native identity from the **alien** and **oppressive** culture of the colonizer. The use of this term emphasizes the **cultural divide** between the colonized and the

colonizer, symbolizing the **alienation** and **disrespect** felt by the colonized towards foreign influence.

"The beauty of the body is like a flower which attracts the bulbul to it and breaks his heart like a candle which tempts the moths and their wings" (p.90)

This passage from *Twilight in Delhi* offers rich material for **Postcolonial Theory** analysis, particularly with respect to **symbolism**, **gender dynamics**, and the **colonial gaze**. The metaphorical comparison of the body's beauty to a **flower**, and the **bulbul** (nightingale) being drawn to it, evokes the traditional **symbolism of attraction** and desire. The **flower** represents something **delicate**, **alluring**, and **fleeting**, while the **bulbul** symbolizes a longing that is both **irresistible** and ultimately **destructive**. The **"candle"** that tempts the **moths** to fly into its flame suggests the **self-destructive nature** of desire. These images are often used in postcolonial contexts to symbolize how colonial subjects—especially women—are drawn to the allure of the colonizer's culture or material promises, only to be **disillusioned and destroyed** by the very thing they are attracted to. The use of the **moth and candle** imagery can be seen as a postcolonial metaphor for **colonialism itself**. The colonial system, much like the flame of the candle, **lures the colonized** (symbolized here by the moths or the bulbul) with promises of advancement, wealth, and power. Yet, in doing so, it **destroys** their inherent cultural values and sense of identity. This speaks to the **destructive allure** of colonial power—an external force that seems tempting and beneficial but ultimately causes great harm to the colonized. The passage might also reflect on **gendered dynamics** in colonial relationships, particularly the role of **colonial women** (or those viewed through a colonial lens). The objectification of the body's beauty may refer to how **colonial subjects**, particularly women, were often seen through the **gaze of the colonizer** as objects of desire. The metaphor of the **bulbul** or **moth** being attracted to the **flower** or **candle** also represents how **colonized women's bodies** were often fetishized or idealized, yet their true value and autonomy were denied under the colonial structure. The imagery here suggests the **victimization** of the colonized body, which is both objectified and ultimately harmed by colonial desires. The underlying sense of **futility** in the metaphor ("the beauty breaks the heart" and "the wings are burned") speaks to the **postcolonial theme** of lost autonomy. In the colonial context, the **desires** of the colonized people—whether for economic progress, social mobility, or cultural assimilation—are **doomed** from the start. The colonized are drawn into systems that **promise improvement** or **pleasure**, but in the end, these desires only lead to **loss**, **disillusionment**, and **destruction**, mirroring the tragic fate of the bulbul or the moth.

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

This passage from *Twilight in Delhi* can be interpreted through **Postcolonial Theory** by focusing on themes of **colonial exploitation**, **cultural superiority**, and **loss of indigenous prosperity** under British rule. The reference to the **Mughal Kings** and their lavish practice of showering **rupees** and **gold mohurs** underscores the **prosperity and grandeur** that characterized indigenous governance before the arrival of British colonialism. The Mughals, as rulers of the subcontinent, symbolized a flourishing empire that was self-sufficient and culturally rich. This wealth and generosity, once a mark of native power and sovereignty, contrast sharply with the colonial era, represented by the **"farangis"** (foreigners or the British) who are described as giving "**dust and stone**." This contrast highlights the **economic decline** of India under British rule, where the **wealth of the land was siphoned off** by the colonial power, and the indigenous people were left with **poverty and exploitation**. The statement **"What will these good-as-dead farangis give? Dust and stone"** reflects a sense of bitterness and resentment towards the **colonizers**. It speaks to the **economic exploitation** of India by the British, who extracted wealth, resources, and labor from the land, while

offering little in return. The **"dust and stone"** can be seen as a metaphor for the **empty promises** and **destructive impact** of British rule, which left the colonized people with very little in terms of material or cultural benefit. In contrast to the opulence under Mughal rule, British colonialism is seen as offering **nothing of value** to the indigenous population except for exploitation and impoverishment. The speaker's nostalgic reference to the **Mughal Kings** and their generosity emphasizes the **cultural superiority** and **self-sufficiency** of pre-colonial India. The phrase **"What will these good-as-dead farangis give?"** reflects the deep disdain for colonial rulers, viewing them as **illegitimate** and **lifeless** compared to the thriving indigenous culture and governance of the Mughals. This rejection of the British **"farangis"** as being **"good-as-dead"** suggests that, in the eyes of the colonized, the colonial presence has brought **decay and decline** rather than progress or enrichment. The speaker's recollection of the Mughal era also illustrates a **longing for a lost golden age**—a time when the rulers of India were **powerful, wealthy, and culturally vibrant**. This sense of loss is common in postcolonial literature, where the **trauma of colonization** is often framed in terms of the **loss of a prosperous, self-governing nation**. The reference to the British giving **"dust and stone"** suggests that the colonized people are left with a sense of **emptiness** and **cultural disintegration** in the face of foreign rule.

4.2.Analysis of Heart of Darkness

Heart of Darkness

The title *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad can be analyzed through postcolonial theory to uncover the multiple layers of meaning and its connection to the themes of imperialism, dehumanization, and the exploration of the "Other." The title *Heart of Darkness* is often interpreted as a metaphor for the **heart of colonialism** itself, which is inherently brutal and exploitative. The **"darkness"** refers to the moral and physical degradation that colonialism brings, both to the colonizers and the colonized. The title suggests that the very core of European colonial expansion is one of **corruption**, **violence**, and **darkness**, hiding the truth of its consequences under the guise of civilization and progress. In a postcolonial context, the **"heart"** of imperialism is depicted as a place of **moral blindness**—an absence of empathy or ethical responsibility toward the colonized people. The colonizers' actions are driven by greed, exploitation, and a desire for power, without concern for the harm they cause. This **dark heart** is not simply a location in Africa but represents the **moral void** at the center of the entire colonial enterprise. The *Heart of Darkness* is also an exploration of the **psychological** and **existential darkness** within the human soul. As the protagonist Marlow ventures into the African wilderness to meet Kurtz, he descends into a **physical and mental journey into the unknown**, where he confronts not just the horrors of colonialism, but the **darkness within himself and others**. The title reflects how colonialism strips away civilization, revealing the **primal, savage instincts** that lie dormant in all humans, as the veneer of European superiority breaks down. In a postcolonial reading, this psychological darkness mirrors the **dehumanization** of both the colonizer and the colonized. The colonizer, in their exploitation and violence, loses their humanity, while the colonized are **reduced to objects** of exploitation, their identities erased and their cultures marginalized.

The **"heart"** can also symbolize the center of European **civilization and culture**, which is **threatened** and ultimately **undermined** by the imperial project. In the narrative, the more Marlow and his crew move into the Congo, the more they come into contact with the **chaos, violence, and savagery** that colonialism both creates and perpetuates. The **heart of civilization** is revealed to be fragile, and the colonial venture exposes its **moral and cultural bankruptcy**. The title suggests that, at the core of European imperialism, there is not the **enlightened reason** or **cultural superiority** that colonialism claims to represent, but rather a **dark, corrupt core** that reveals the destructiveness of the entire colonial project.

Kurtz, the central figure in *Heart of Darkness*, embodies the **literal and metaphorical "heart"** of the darkness in the narrative. He is a European who becomes consumed by the brutalities of colonialism, descending into madness and moral decay as he gains absolute power over the native people. Kurtz's journey from a **highly educated and idealistic man** to a **deranged and monstrous figure** underscores the **corrupting power** of colonialism and imperialism, which strips away the veneer of civilization and exposes the **darkness within**. The title can thus be seen as referring to the **darkness that Kurtz represents**, not just within the African wilderness but within the **European psyche**, revealing how the colonial enterprise can lead to the **degradation of human values**, the erosion of ethical responsibility, and a descent into **moral chaos**.

The African continent itself is often portrayed as the **"Heart of Darkness"** in the eyes of the European colonizers. It is seen as a **place of savagery, barbarism, and untamed wilderness**, a stark contrast to the supposed **civilization** of Europe. In the postcolonial context, this view of Africa represents the **colonizer's constructed image** of the "Other" as something to be conquered, controlled, and **civilized**. However, this perspective is deeply flawed. In a postcolonial interpretation, the **"darkness"** of Africa is not inherent to the land or its people, but is instead **projected by the colonizers** who define it as such in order to justify their imperial actions. The **"darkness"** is a product of European ignorance and prejudice, a projection that allows the colonizers to dehumanize the African people and **rationalize their exploitation**.

The title can also be interpreted as a **symbol of colonial guilt**. The "darkness" represents not just the physical and moral destruction caused by colonization but also the **guilt** that colonial powers attempt to suppress or ignore. The European characters, especially Kurtz, embody the **consequences of unchecked power** and **moral corruption**, suggesting that the true horror of colonialism is not only in its exploitation of the colonized but also in the **psychological toll** it takes on the colonizers themselves. In this sense, the "heart" of darkness is also the **moral heart of European civilization**, which becomes twisted as colonialism progresses, unable or unwilling to confront its own destructive impact.

> The best way I can explain it to you is by saying that for a second or two I felt as though instead of going to the center of a continent I were about to set off for the center of the earth" (Conrad, p.13)

The comparison of setting off to the "center of a continent" with going to the "center of the earth" can be seen as a metaphor for the deep **mystery, fear, and darkness** associated with colonial exploration. In postcolonial theory, particularly with Edward Said's **Orientalism**, colonial powers often depicted the colonized world as mysterious, "dark," and unexplored—something that needed to be **discovered, tamed, and controlled**. The phrase "center of the earth" evokes an image of a primitive, unexplored place, which reflects the European perception of Africa as a **land of savagery and untamed wilderness**, positioned as the opposite of the **civilized West**. This statement also demonstrates the **colonial construction of the "Other."** The "center of the earth" is an image often associated with **the unknown and the frightening**, emphasizing the **alienness** of Africa to European sensibilities. This is consistent with postcolonial critiques of how colonial powers viewed indigenous lands as **vast, untamed territories** filled with "uncivilized" peoples. The **"darkness"** in *Heart of Darkness* is not just geographical but also metaphorical—it represents the **psychological and moral unknowns** that colonialism sought to dominate. Africa, in this context, is presented as a space that embodies the **primal, savage, and threatening**, suggesting that the journey into the heart of the continent is also a journey into a moral and existential **void**. The protagonist's feeling of unease ("for a second or two") hints at the **tension between colonial ambition and the anxiety that often accompanied it**. In the context of postcolonial theory, this reflects the

underlying fear and discomfort felt by colonizers when confronting the lands and people they sought to dominate. Even as colonial explorers sought to project control over the "unknown," they were often confronted by a **sense of foreboding** about what they might encounter. The European exploration of Africa was frequently framed as a **civilizing mission**—but the underlying fear of encountering something primitive or chaotic was a constant undercurrent.

The **journey itself** is symbolic of the colonial **project**, with its aim to bring "light" (civilization, progress) into the "darkness" (savageness, chaos). However, the language of **uncertainty** and **trepidation** surrounding the journey suggests that the colonial mission was not without its doubts and anxieties. The colonizers may have convinced themselves that they were bringing **enlightenment and order**, but the metaphor of traveling to the "center of the earth" evokes the realization that there is something fundamentally unsettling about the colonial enterprise. It suggests that colonialism, rather than a noble mission, is fraught with an **inevitable confrontation with its own moral and psychological darkness. The protagonist's reaction can also be interpreted as an unveiling of Western arrogance. The comparison of the journey to the "center of the earth" highlights the hubris of Western exploration, suggesting that colonizers viewed themselves as the beacons of reason and civilization, even as they ventured into lands they considered to be morally and culturally inferior. The juxtaposition of the "center of the earth" with European notions of order and reason reveals how colonial discourse often exaggerated the differences between the colonizer and the colonized, creating a binary of civilization versus savagery.**

"They howled and leaped and spun and made horrid faces, but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity-like yours- the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough…" (Conrad, p.36)

This passage reveals the complexity of colonial discourse and the construction of the "Other." The description of the indigenous people as "howling," "leaping," and "spinning" underscores the colonial tendency to **dehumanize** the colonized subjects. In this context, the African natives are portrayed as **primitive, wild, and uncivilized**. This aligns with Edward Said's notion of **"Othering,"** where colonizers construct the colonized as inferior, animalistic, and outside the realm of **"civilized" humanity**. The reference to the natives as making "horrid faces" emphasizes their perceived **savagery** and **barbarism**, which was a common colonial stereotype.

The narrator's fleeting recognition of their "remote kinship" with the natives suggests a **moment of recognition** of shared humanity. However, this recognition is not accompanied by genuine empathy. Instead, it emphasizes the colonial mindset that, while acknowledging the humanity of the "Other," still perceives them as fundamentally different and inferior. This tension reflects the **moral ambiguity** inherent in colonialism—colonizers could simultaneously **acknowledge the humanity** of the colonized while **reinforcing their subjugation** and **inferiority**. The phrase "just the thought of their humanity-like yours" suggests a **momentary realization**, but the focus on the natives' behavior and the use of the word "ugly" reinforces the distance and **otherness** imposed by colonial perspectives.

The juxtaposition of the natives' "wild and passionate uproar" with the narrator's sense of **civilized superiority** highlights the colonial view that non-Western cultures were **uncivilized** and in need of domination. The use of "ugly" to describe the natives' behavior implies that their actions are outside the bounds of what is considered **socially acceptable** or **refined** by European standards. This reflects the **binary opposition** that colonial discourse often established between the **civilized** (the West) and the **uncivilized** (the colonized). The natives

are seen as **wild** and **untamed**, a sharp contrast to the European conception of **rationality and order**.

The passage also suggests the subtle but pervasive **violence** of colonialism. The **thrill** the narrator experiences at the sight of the natives' supposed savagery signals a **colonial gaze** that both **confronts and dominates** the "Other." This "thrill" is unsettling because it is not an empathetic recognition of the natives' humanity, but rather a **compulsive fascination** with their difference. This fascination with the **exoticism** of the colonized is a recurring theme in colonial literature and reflects the tension between fascination and domination in the colonial project. The narrator's mixed feelings—acknowledging a kinship while still viewing the natives as **ugly**—underscore the **contradictory nature** of colonial thought. Colonialism was not only about physical domination but also about **psychological manipulation**, where colonizers could view themselves as **superior** while still recognizing the shared humanity of the colonized. This contradiction reflects **Frantz Fanon's** ideas in *Black Skin, White Masks*, where colonized individuals are **caught between two conflicting identities**: one imposed by colonial powers and one that exists within their own cultural consciousness.

"I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope, each had an iron collar on his neck and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking" (Conrad , p. 15).

This passage from *Heart of Darkness* vividly illustrates the brutal and dehumanizing effects of colonialism. The imagery in this passage—"every rib," "joints of their limbs... like knots in a rope," and "iron collar on his neck"—represents the **dehumanization** of the African slaves or natives. They are depicted as **objects** or **animals**, stripped of individual identity and reduced to mere **bodily features**. This is a classic example of the colonial tendency to **objectify the colonized**: reducing them to physical attributes and treating them as commodities rather than human beings. The use of "iron collar" and the **chain** reinforces the colonial image of the **enslaved body**, which is controlled, oppressed, and physically bound. The "iron collar" and the "chain" metaphorically represent the **violence** and **subjugation** inherent in colonial systems. The slaves are physically shackled, symbolizing not just their lack of freedom, but also the **psychological and cultural chains** imposed by colonial domination. This imagery reflects the **brutality of the colonial project**, which relies on physical control and violence to maintain power over the colonized people. **Frantz Fanon's** theory of **colonial violence** can be applied here, where the physical oppression mirrors the mental and emotional scars inflicted by the colonial system.

The passage emphasizes the collective nature of the colonized people's suffering. The phrase "all were connected together with a chain" highlights their **shared oppression** and the fact that they are treated as a **mass** rather than individuals. This reflects the colonial attitude that **reduces the identity of the colonized to a collective entity** with no regard for their personal stories, cultures, or identities. The chain represents the unbreakable connection between the colonized subjects, all oppressed under the same colonial system. This is also an example of how the colonizer views the **colonized as interchangeable**, with no regard for their individuality. The "bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking" is a haunting and symbolic image. The rhythmic sound of the chains reflects the **unrelenting, almost mechanical nature** of the colonial system. It suggests the **constant** and **inevitable nature of exploitation**, where the colonized are **trapped in a cycle** of oppression that continues without end. The rhythm may also evoke the **dehumanizing process of commodification**, where the colonized are reduced to mere objects in motion, fulfilling the needs of the colonizer's economic and political goals. The physical descriptions in this passage also highlight the **psychological trauma** that colonialism inflicts. The "iron collar" and "chain" symbolize not just physical captivity but also the **mental oppression** that the colonized face.

The image of the "knots in a rope" suggests a **twisting and contorting** of the colonized psyche, as they are bound to a system that tries to strip them of their identity and agency. This aligns with **Homi K. Bhabha's** notion of **mimicry**, where the colonized are forced into a specific role dictated by the colonizer, often contorting their natural identity to fit the colonial expectations.

The narrator's perspective on the situation reflects the **colonial gaze**: viewing the colonized as a spectacle, a group to be observed and categorized. The colonized individuals are presented as **"other,"** reduced to physical attributes and social status as slaves, not as people with their own agency or identity. This reflects **Said's idea of the "Oriental" as a subject of European discourse**, a constructed "Other" who exists only in relation to the colonizer's worldview.

> "Well if a lot of mysterious niggers armed with all kinds of 6 fearful weapons suddenly took to travelling /.../ I fancy every farm and cottage thereabouts would get empty very soon." (Conrad, p.19).

This passage from *Heart of Darkness* is laden with racial and colonial attitudes, and it offers a profound example of how **colonial discourse** shapes perceptions of the **colonized**. The term "mysterious niggers" is a racial slur that **dehumanizes the African characters** by reducing them to a monolithic and primitive group. In the context of postcolonial theory, **Edward Said's** concept of the **"Oriental"** as the constructed "Other" applies here, where the Africans are viewed as **exotic, dangerous, and unknowable**. The use of the word "niggers" reinforces the **racial hierarchy** established by colonial powers, positioning Africans as inferior and subhuman in the colonial narrative. The phrase "mysterious niggers armed with all kinds of fearful weapons" evokes a sense of fear and **uncontrollability** associated with the colonized. The **fear of rebellion** or resistance is a common colonial motif, as colonizers often feared the possibility of uprisings from the colonized populations. The **mysteriousness** attached to the African people implies that they are alien, unpredictable, and threatening. This fear reflects the **colonial anxiety** about losing control over colonized territories and people.

The use of the word "mysterious" reduces the African characters to **objects of curiosity** for the colonizer, preventing any sense of African agency or complexity. According to **Homi K. Bhabha**, colonial discourse often involves a **process of "mimicry"**, where the colonized are not allowed to speak for themselves but are instead filtered through the lens of colonial prejudice. In this passage, the African people are perceived not as individuals with their own desires and motivations, but as an **indistinguishable mass** that exists only to fulfill the fears of the colonizer. The mention of "fearful weapons" is significant because it highlights the **assumed violence** and aggression of the colonized, reinforcing the colonial narrative that portrays native people as inherently violent and in need of control. This is a classic example of the colonial justification for **military intervention** and **oppression**: the colonizers paint the colonized as dangerous and uncivilized, thereby legitimizing their own violent actions to subjugate and "civilize" them.

The idea that "every farm and cottage thereabouts would get empty very soon" is a reflection of the **colonial paranoia** regarding the potential for a revolt. The colonizers view any form of **resistance or rebellion** as a threat to their dominance, and this fear often fuels **violence and further subjugation**. This passage captures the **nervousness** and **fragility** of colonial power, which constantly feared the very people it oppressed.

The tone of this passage reflects the **colonial mindset**, which sees itself as the **superior civilization** that must protect itself from the perceived savagery and irrationality of the colonized. The suggestion that the Africans are armed and dangerous plays into the stereotype of the "noble savage," a trope often used by colonial powers to justify their

dominance and the need for military presence in the colonies. The Africans are portrayed as **uncivilized**, and thus in need of colonial rule and control to maintain order.

"in and out of rivers, streams of death in life, whose banks were rotting into mud, whose waters, thickened into slime, invaded the contorted mangroves that seemed to writhe at us in the extremity of an impotent despair" (Conrad, p.14).

This passage from *Heart of Darkness* can be analyzed through postcolonial theory, especially through the lenses of **dehumanization, environmental degradation, and colonial power dynamics**. The description of "streams of death in life" and "rotting into mud" highlights a central theme of **environmental decay**. In postcolonial discourse, this imagery can be interpreted as a **metaphor for the impact of colonialism** on both the physical environment and the native people. The colonizers extract resources and exploit the land, transforming it into something **unnatural, stagnant, and diseased**. This destruction of the land reflects the **decay of colonial power** itself, which, while seemingly powerful, is ultimately **unsustainable and degrading**.

The phrase "contorted mangroves that seemed to writhe at us in the extremity of an impotent despair" evokes an image of **life struggling against suffocating forces**. The **mangroves**, representing the African landscape and, by extension, the African people, are shown as suffering under colonialism. Their "writhe" implies an **attempt at resistance**, yet their despair signals that they are **powerless** against the overwhelming force of colonial domination. The colonized are **dehumanized** and portrayed as incapable of escaping the forces that constrain them, both physically and metaphorically. The imagery of **slime, rotting mud**, and **contorted mangroves** invokes the idea of the **"Other"** as described in postcolonial theory. The African landscape is depicted in **unnatural and grotesque terms**, emphasizing its **foreignness** and **dangerousness** in the eyes of the European colonizer. The colonizer views the land not only as a **place to be exploited** but as something that is **alien and threatening**. This reinforces the notion of the colonized land (and its people) as a place that is **uncivilized**, **chaotic**, and **wild**.

The **"extremity of an impotent despair"** signals the **alienation** that the colonizer feels in the foreign land. The land is portrayed as something that cannot be controlled, a **vessel of decay and death** rather than a resource for progress and civilization. In postcolonial terms, this portrays a sense of **colonial paranoia**, where the colonizer is overwhelmed by the alien environment that defies their **civilizing mission**. The landscape, in this view, is not merely an object of exploitation but an **enemy** that resists colonization at every turn. The phrase "streams of death in life" carries a profound contradiction, capturing the **life-sustaining aspect of rivers** in contrast with the **deathly consequences of colonialism**. Colonization, while ostensibly bringing progress, also leads to **decay and destruction**. The rivers, which should symbolize **life**, are instead seen as **streams of death** that **pollute** and **corrupt** both the environment and the people. This juxtaposition reflects the postcolonial critique of colonialism as a force that, despite claiming to bring civilization, leaves behind only **ruin and desolation**. The term "impotent despair" reveals a sense of **hopelessness** and **powerlessness** that pervades the colonized world. It underscores the **tragic condition** of the African people under colonial rule, as their struggles against colonialism are often **futile** and **ineffective** in the face of overwhelming European power. The **despair** is not only physical but also **psychological**, symbolizing the **mental and emotional toll** of living under colonial oppression.

Conclusion

In conclusion, both *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad and *Twilight in Delhi* by Ahmed Ali offer profound insights when viewed through the lens of postcolonial theory, revealing the psychological, cultural, and political repercussions of colonialism. Conrad's novella critiques

the moral hollowness and inhumanity at the core of European imperialism, using Africa as a symbolic landscape to expose the darkness within the colonizers themselves. Through Marlow's journey and Kurtz's descent, the narrative unveils the brutal dehumanization and hypocrisy that underpinned colonial endeavors. In contrast, *Twilight in Delhi* provides a poignant, insider's perspective on the cultural and emotional disintegration caused by British colonial rule in India. Through richly symbolic language and evocative imagery, Ahmed Ali mourns the loss of Muslim Delhi's grandeur, identity, and traditions under foreign domination. Where Conrad exposes the colonizers' moral decay, Ali captures the colonized's cultural erosion and resistance. Together, the two texts complement each other by showcasing the devastating impact of imperialism from both the oppressor's and the oppressed's perspectives, reinforcing postcolonial theory's emphasis on power, identity, resistance, and historical memory.

References

Achebe, C. (2006). An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness. In *Heart of Darkness: an authoritative text, backgrounds and contexts, criticism*. 4th edition. Ed. Paul B. Armstrong. New York.

Ali, A. (1984). *Twilight in Delhi*. Pakistan: Oxford University Press.

Ali, H., & Khadim, N. (2024). Postcolonialism in Hamid's The Last White Man. Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 12(2), 2111-2117.

Bashir, S., & Hussain, J. (2025). A Postcolonial Study of the Socio-Political Scenarios in Twilight in Delhi and The Murder of Aziz Khan. Annals of Human and Social Sciences, 6(1), 194-204.

Bhabha's, H. K. (1994). The postcolonial and the postmodern. The location of culture, 171-97.

Bulbula, D. A. (2020). Analysis of Postcolonial Themes on Dinaw Mangistuâ€™ s Novel Entitled â€ All Our Namesâ€™.

Fanon. Black skin white (1952). https://www.academia.edu/25552124/

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge* (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). Pantheon Books. (Original work published 1969)

Khan, M. (2022). Aryan, AA, & Riaz, S.(2022). A Study of Post-colonial Issues in the Novel Exist West by Mohsin, 7, 220-229.

Martins, M. (2017). Reflections on the postcolonial novel: an interdisciplinary approach. International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies, 4(2), 166-177.

Said, E. W. (1978). Orientalism. Vintage Books.

Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? speculations on widow-sacrifice. In Laurence, G. & Cary, N (Eds.), Longer version in Marxism and the interpretation of culture, University of Illinois Press.

Wachsmann, C. (2023). "She gloried in being a sailor's wife": A Postcolonial Reading of the Marriage Plot in Jane Austen's Persuasion. *In Progress: A Graduate Journal of North American Studies 1 (2023), Nr. 2*, *1*(2), 17-28.

Wa Thiong'o, N. (1986). The Language of African Literature. Decolonizing the Mind: Nairobi: East African: Educational Publishers.

Yasmeen, T., & Ahmad, I. (2022). Subalternism, Women and Patriarchy: A Postcolonial Approach to Mohsin Hamid's Exit West. Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review, 6(4), 555-561.