



Narrative Silence as a Device in the 20th Century Novels: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

Silence in the narration marks the deliberate omission of deeper ideologies left unspoken to evoke reflection and critical thinking. This research explores the role of narrative silence as a device in *Twilight in Delhi*, analysing the physical spaces and examining the narrative silence underlying them. Gerard Genette's concept of descriptive pauses, under the category of narrative duration in Narrative theory, and the spatial mode of communication, under the umbrella of Multimodal Discourse Analysis developed by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen, serve as the theoretical and analytical frameworks, respectively. A qualitative research approach is used within an interpretive worldview. The significance of this research lies in its contribution of offering profound insights into the interrelation of silence, space, and meaning in *Twilight in Delhi*. The findings reveal that narrative silence serves as a powerful device for conveying cultural decay, the decline of past glory, and historical transformation under colonial authority. The research contributes to the existing body of literature by appealing to deeper, unspoken truths and by exploring spatial mode as a peculiar mode of communicating them.

Keywords: Narrative Silence; Multimodal Discourse Analysis; Spatial Arrangements; Descriptive Pauses



INTRODUCTION

Narrative Silence is the deliberate suppression of information within texts, and meaning is generated by examining the unsaid rather than the explicitly stated words. Namrata is a columnist who writes a weekly column, "Between the Lines," in which she mentions silence as a tool for storytelling. "In writing, silence often speaks louder than words. A pause between sentences. A line that trails off. A character who does not answer a question. These moments might look like absence, but they are charged with meaning. In South Asian literature, so attuned to context, what can and cannot be spoken, silence is rarely empty. It becomes a form of resistance, a marker of trauma, a space for ambiguity, or even a gesture of love." (Namrata, 2025) Her reflection on silence explains that omissions and gaps are powerful tools to embed texts with richness of meaning.

Silence and the omission of information are abundantly used by twentieth-century writers to convey meaning by suppressing traumatic memories, to highlight traditions and colonial aspects through spatial arrangements, and to reflect the emotional situations of characters. Rita Rieger is an Austrian female literary scholar and researcher who has highlighted different modes of language. She states, "As authors at the turn of the 20th century show, the reconsideration of language's limits occurs within the interchange between the arts. Writers like Stéphane Mallarmé, for instance, constantly search for different modes to transmit meaning without its direct formulation" (Rieger, 2018).

Scope and Significance

The significance of this research is that it examines the contribution and role of narrative silence in *Twilight in Delhi*, which is enriched with thematic meanings. By considering Multimodal Discourse Analysis and Narrative theory as the focal point of the research, it provides profound insights into the interrelation of silence, space, and meaning in *Twilight in Delhi* within the context of twentieth-century novels.

Statement of the Problem

In *Twilight in Delhi* by Ahmad Ali, narrative silence plays a significant role in exploring the complexities and tension within the premise of houses and colonial India. Despite scanning multiple areas using different frameworks, an area remains unconsidered, thereby narrowing the topic by treating physical spaces as the focal point of research in *Twilight in Delhi*, a mode of meaning-making that explicitly conveys broader, deeper, unspoken meanings. Ahmad Ali employs narrative silence heavily in this novel, and the spatial mode of communication through descriptive pauses is one way this device plays a crucial role.

Aim and Objectives

This study aims to explore the role of narrative silence as a device in *Twilight in Delhi* within the context of twentieth-century novels. To achieve this aim, the objectives of this study are to analyze physical spaces through the spatial mode of communication in *Twilight in Delhi* using Multimodal Discourse Analysis and to examine how these spaces embody Narrative Silence and themes by using Narrative theory.

Delhi's landscape, Mir Nihal's house, mosque, courtyards, fading architecture, deserted streets, railways, and administrative buildings reflect cultural and colonial aspects, the decline of traditions, and the loss of a grand Muslim past. By exploring this mode of communication within Multimodal Discourse Analysis, this research offers evocative insights. It contributes to understanding the role of silence in Twentieth-century novels by narrowing the study to a particular novel, *Twilight in Delhi*, and to the strategies Ahmad Ali uses to highlight the cultural and emotional aspects left unspoken.



Research Question

The research centres on a single research question:

Q: How does narrative silence work through spatial arrangements and descriptive pauses in *Twilight in Delhi*?

This research question serves as a premise for examining narrative silence as a device for revealing unuttered meanings in the text, deeply embedded in descriptions of physical spaces.

Limitations and Delimitation

This research is limited to 20th-century novels and to the use of narrative silence, with multimodal discourse analysis. Therefore, the study focuses on Pakistani novelist *Twilight in Delhi*, where physical spaces such as Mir Nihal's House, the courtyard, Delhi's historical buildings with fading Mughal infrastructure, Jama Masjid, and other spaces are studied to examine how narrative silence works through these spaces, which exhibit descriptive pauses in the storyline.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Silence and gaps are literary devices used to convey deeper meanings left unsaid. These tools engage readers' critical thinking and are used to hide and distort stories within the texts. Numerous researchers have examined literary texts to evaluate and uncover gaps in their understanding.

Nafisha Zafar is a Pakistani-American writer known for her storytelling and reflective writing. She has written an essay named "The Role of Silence in Literature". She has elaborated on how silence is misunderstood in literature. She has mentioned Virginia Woolf, who said her works demonstrate this truth. In Nafisha's words: "Writers across centuries have used silence as a powerful narrative device: to express what characters cannot say, to reveal hidden emotions, or to highlight the unspeakable realities of life. In many ways, silence becomes a language of its own" (Zafar, 2025). In addition, Nafisha has elaborated on how silence is misunderstood in literature. She has also mentioned Virginia Woolf, who said her works demonstrate this truth. For example, she mentions that in "To the Lighthouse, silence shapes relationships as much as words do. The absence of speech between characters creates emotional tension, reflecting how human connections often depend as much on what is unsaid as on what is spoken" (Zafar, 2025).

Shaukat Ali and his co-authors have explored this phenomenon in their research on *Twilight in Delhi*. They say, "The occurrence of gaps and silences in human speech (language) is a natural phenomenon. Every literary text is an ideology in itself and has a certain amount of gaps and silences wherefrom it can be deconstructed in different ways, giving different new meanings" (Ali et al., 2022).

In 20th-century novels, silence is not merely a theme; it plays a definitive role. Robert Walser's Berlin novels are the best examples of this narrative technique, in which his narrators deliberately remain silent to enhance reflection. Maryana Yaremko, Khrystyna Dyakiv, and Nataliia Petrashchuk have explored silence as a narrative strategy in their research article titled "Silence as a Narrative Strategy in Robert Walser's Berlin Novels". They comment on silence as:

"The use of silence as a narrative strategy increases the communicative and pragmatic effect of the text, contributes to the realization of the author's intention, determines the content and form of the text, gives its linguistic structure a stylistic



expressiveness, produces an effect on readers, and engages them in receptive activity.” (Yaremko et al., 2023)

This statement highlights that silence is a conscious choice the authors make in their work to navigate the complexity of diverse thoughts within texts.

Sabrina Aguzzi has done her thesis research on Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë, and Anne Brontë's novels titled "Actions Louder than Words: Reading Narrative Silence as Literary Creation in the Brontës". She has discussed that silence is a creative and intentional narrative strategy, an interplay between absence and presence. It expresses emotions, highlights power structures, and shapes the narrative's meanings. (Aguzzi, 2018)

Rita Rieger is an Austrian literary scholar who has also commented on the writing of silence and absence in "The Writing of Silence, Absence, and Ineffability. An Introduction to Texts with no Words: The Communication of Speechlessness", in which silence is highlighted as a central motif in modern literature. She comments that "The study of writing speechlessness or texts with no words makes it possible to consider the spatial and visual character of the texts and to dissociate writing from a simplified notion of text as the spoken language's trace" (Rieger, 2018). She has discussed how deliberate gaps can signify multiple perspectives in the meaning-making process, including trauma, emotional conditions, existential emptiness, and power dynamics. Silence becomes a language in itself, communicating and revealing the rich sites of meaning.

There are many types of silence that authors use in literature. Each type serves its own purpose. Fatemeh Marzban, with Alireza Khormae, Amirsaeid Moloodi, and Farideh Pourgiv, have discussed different modes of silence in the article titled "A Multimodal Approach to Silence as a Communicative Sign in the Novel 'Suvashun'". They comment that "Silence can be manifested in different modes, and in each mode, it has its own functions and meanings. It is the concurrent function of these silences across different modes that, along with the function of other elements, form the overall meaning and the reader's experience of the literary work." (Marzban et al., 2022)

Nafisha Zafar has also discussed different modes of silence in "The Role of Silence in Literature". It can act as resistance, betrayal, and suppression, as an intimate source of communication, and as a catalyst for deeper thoughts about existence (Zafar, 2025).

Recent Studies

Twilight in Delhi is the best example of where silence is employed as a tool to embed different perspectives and meanings. In the article titled "Gaps and Silences In Ahmad Ali's *Twilight In Delhi: A Marxist Critique*", Shaukat Ali, with his co-authors, has done their research on how meanings can be interpreted left unsaid in *Twilight in Delhi*:

"Ahmed Ali's silences are not figurative but rather a symbol of the deep-rooted trauma in the troubled psyche, a haunting of the glorious past before the colonialization of the Indian subcontinent. It also functions as a strategy for keeping the painful memories of the past latent via narrative silences and gaps. These dynamic absences reveal missing information in the story. Furthermore, a concise method of research is needed to make these silences speak because silences are not physical; they occupy a psychological and implicit structure." (Ali et al., 2022)

These lines highlight how narrative silence is used in literary texts to conceal traumatic and distorted stories.

In one research study, *Twilight in Delhi* is examined through Critical Discourse Analysis by Abdul Ghafoor Awan and Muhammad Yahya. This study has focused on uncovering hidden



cultural ideologies and the disparity between Eastern and Western perspectives, using Norman Fairclough's three dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis as a framework. The focal point of this research centres on examining the role of women, the depiction of the decay of Muslim Culture, prostitution, and the colonial aspect with nostalgia by linking the text with society. (Awan & Yahya, 2016)

Moreover, Usama Khadim and his co-authors have examined *Twilight in Delhi* using Critical Discourse Analysis in their research article. According to them, their study shed "light on the fact that critical discourse analysis can help understand the relationship between power, language, gender, and society as portrayed in any piece of text. Furthermore, it delineates that critical discourse analysis can also be used to explore the nature of different aspects of historical events" (Khadim et al., 2025).

Farah Qamar, English Literature Lecturer at the University of Education in Pakistan, has contributed to analysing *Twilight in Delhi* by focusing on the discontinuity of characters' lives at the personal and societal levels within the framework of Fairclough's three-dimensional model. According to her, "The word twilight in broader perspectives conveys the discontinuity of moral, social, domestic, and personal life of an individual as it is presented in the decay of Mir Nihal's emotional attachment with Babban Jan and pigeons, Asghar's failed love, Begum Nihal's near blindness, and the death of Habibudin" (Qamar, 2019).

Numerous researchers have contributed to the analysis of Ahmad Ali's masterpiece. Shubhpreet Sandhu has analyzed *Twilight in Delhi* through a structuralist and semiotic lens to describe the decline of Muslim Culture in India. The novel is analysed as a system of signs by identifying the existential situation in the narrative through dependence on context and positions within the cultural systems (Sandhu, 2022). *Twilight* is also explored through the lens of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory by Ali Hassan Khan and Bushra Meraj. They have applied this theory to study the role of society in shaping the behaviours of individuals by analyzing "the cultural and social transition that the sub-continent was going through during the British rule in the region." (Khan & Meraj, 2022) In addition, Muhammad Hamad and his co-authors are applying a New Historical lens. Their study "seeks to determine how the text portrays a decaying Delhi through comparing the narrative representation of the social relations and contexts with the documented histories and cultural text from the period of British colonialism and the resulting social crises for a society as depicted by Ali" (Hamad et al., 2024). Similarly, Rabia Sohail and Sumera Shan Ahmad have examined *Twilight in Delhi* by exploring the vocabulary that evokes images of smells that represent Delhi's culture through a discourse of cultural studies. They state that "Discourse analysis involves not only text and talk, but it also deals with the sounds, images, audios, videos, and films" (Sohail & Ahmad, 2025). Furthermore, Abhishek Debbarma has also explored the role of silence in his article titled "The Power of Silence in English Literature: A Personal Reflection," in which he argues for its centrality in postcolonial literature.

"In postcolonial and contemporary literature, silence often represents not just the personal but the political. It reflects histories of oppression, cultural dislocation, and systemic forgetting. As a reader from India, I found myself deeply affected by the use of silence in postcolonial narratives, where colonial power structures and cultural erasure silence characters" (Debbarma, 2024).



Research Gaps

Conceptual Gap: In addition, there is a need for rigorous research to explore narrative silence as a device in *Twilight in Delhi* by Ahmad Ali, as this work has been extensively examined through the lenses of Marxism, New Historicism, Postcolonialism, and Modernism, and primarily through Critical Discourse Analysis. Meanwhile, few researchers have explored silence, but the explicit examination of this device under the lens of Narrative theory and Multimodal discourse Analysis, focusing on physical spaces, has not been conducted in *Twilight in Delhi* by Ahmad Ali. Therefore, this research addresses the existing gap in research on *Twilight in Delhi* within the context of twentieth-century novels.

Methodological Gap: This research is also significant because it examines how narrative silence functions as a device in Ahmad Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*, focusing on spatial arrangements within the framework of Multimodal Discourse Analysis. The main objective of this research is to analyze how physical spaces such as Delhi as city, Mir Nihal's house, courtyards, Jama Masjid, tram cars, administrative buildings, fading Mughal architecture, deserted streets, last glimpse of Delhi and, so on, other spaces highlight the themes of emotional isolation, loss of past, tradition, community and colonial presence with cultural clash.

Theoretical Framework

Gerard Genette's Narrative theory, with a peculiar focus on his concept of duration in terms of scene and description, works as a theoretical framework to study silence, where his concept of duration, particularly the category of descriptive pause, reveals deeper meanings within the unsaid narration. Descriptive pauses slow the pace of narration and the storyline, and they delve into descriptions of spaces to invite readers' critical thinking (Mambro, 2016).

Conceptual Framework

Ahmad Ali employs narrative silence as a device in *Twilight in Delhi*, and this study explicitly unveils the unsaid truths, thereby contributing to the deeper and broader significance of narrative silence in Twentieth-century novels. So, it extends the existing scholarly literature by offering insights into the interplay of silence, space, and meaning in literature. Furthermore, this device is used to convey emotional isolation, traditions, disparities between Eastern and Western perspectives, the decline of past Muslim glory, and colonial influence.

Analytical Framework

This research study integrates the Multimodal Discourse Analysis framework developed by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen to examine spatial mode as a tool of communicating in *Twilight in Delhi*. Meanings can be communicated through different modes, such as spatial, linguistic, and image and sound modes. "Multimodality in discourse analysis explores how multiple forms of communication, like text, images, sounds, and spatial arrangements, work together to convey meaning. This approach goes beyond traditional linguistic analysis by considering various semiotic resources." (Analyzer, 2024)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive research approach. It involves an in-depth textual analysis of *Twilight in Delhi*, incorporating a Case Study research design to examine the narrative silence Ahmad Ali uses as a device to portray physical spaces in this novel. This design is significant to study subtleties within the text and to identify case themes. In



this study, *Twilight in Delhi* is taken as a single case study to analyze and identify the descriptive pauses in the representation of physical spaces.

Research Instrument

Within-case Textual analysis is used as an instrument for this research study. Therefore, the close reading of *Twilight in Delhi* helps uncover the absence of meaning and contributes to understanding the use of narrative silence within the broader literary context. This type of analysis provides a systematic way to examine and analyse the narrative silence and to identify the themes of cultural decay, emotional loss, and the fall of the historical grandeur of Indian Muslims in the face of colonial power.

Population and Sampling

Purpose Sampling is employed in the research to study *Twilight in Delhi* by Ahmad Ali, as this novel serves as a standard exemplar of its use of narrative silence in spatial arrangements and its engagement with historical, colonial, and cultural representation. Therefore, this sampling type, with spatial arrangements as the sample, is used to conduct research to identify rich information left unsaid and to gain deeper insights into this single case.

Data Collection Procedure

The data source is the textual lines and passages of *Twilight in Delhi*, directly taken from the novel, based on their applicability to Genette's concept of descriptive pauses within the category of duration and the spatial mode under the umbrella of Multimodal Discourse Analysis developed by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen. Similarly, research articles and documents from websites are consulted for literature reviews and to authenticate the findings and place them within the existing body of literature.

DATA ANALYSIS

Narrative Silence is a literary strategy in which authors deliberately omit information from their narration or texts, examining meanings by analysing the unsaid rather than explicit verbal narration. Ahmad Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* is the best example of this device in twentieth-century novels. Narrative silence plays a significant part in portraying the complexities and decline of colonial India through physical spaces such as Mir Nihal's house, mosque, deserted streets, fading Mughal architecture, courtyards, and so on. Other spaces exhibit the themes of emotional isolation, loss of past, tradition, community, and colonial presence.

The research employs Genette's concept of duration, with a particular focus on descriptive pauses that slow the narration, and the story continues through the description of the physical spaces. In addition, Multimodal Discourse Analysis, developed by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen, is incorporated to analyse the spatial mode of meaning-making in *Twilight in Delhi*. This study examines Ahmad Ali's novel, focusing on the research question: How does narrative silence work through spatial arrangements in *Twilight in Delhi*? This question is analysed by anchoring in the novel's physical spaces, which highlight the interplay of silence, space, and meaning.

For instance, in the novel's opening, the lingering darkness of Delhi is described through visual imagery of nighttime, courtyards, and lanes "wrapped in a restless slumber" (Ali, 2011, p. 20). Delhi city is visually described as a semiotic hub, shaped by its architecture and history. This city has witnessed its grandeur and fall reflected in buildings such as "forts and tombs and monuments" (Ali, 2011, p. 21). The text offers a detailed description of Delhi's infrastructure, while the narrative halts the plot. The story's duration



slows as discourse continues. Ahmad Ali has described the city's past and present conditions, including its cultural figures and physical remnants. Ali writes:

“But the city of Delhi.....mourned and sung, raped and conquered, yet whole and alive, lies indifferent in the arms of sleep. It was the city of kings and monarchs, of poets and storytellers, courtiers and nobles. However, no king lives there today.....Yet the city stands still intact, as do many more forts and tombs and monuments, remnants and reminders of old Delhi's, holding on to life with a tenacity and purpose which is beyond comprehension and belief.” (20-21)

Here, the narrative silence appears as past vitality and present downfall, serving as a form of resistance. Delhi maintains its foundational integrity rather than vanishing into a neutral backdrop, demonstrating the city's perseverance in the face of destruction. So, the historical gap highlights that the city's buildings speak where people are not speaking, due to colonial displacement. Therefore, physical spaces take the lead in revealing the omitted and unsaid truths, thus explaining that communication is not limited to the verbal mode. The concepts being invoked can be conveyed in spatial rather than oral form.

As the forts and tombs give a visual image of Delhi's past majesty, so narrative silence is not an absence of core ideas; it speaks louder than words. The physical remnants of Delhi also reflect the fading Mughal architecture and static history. The ruins of these buildings demonstrate how silence plays a crucial role in spaces. “Destruction is in its foundations and blood is in its soil.” (21) This sentence explicitly reveals the unsaid and hidden semiotic meaning that lingers in the dwindling infrastructures of Mughal magnificence. Furthermore, “Only some monuments remain to tell its sad story and to remind us of the glory and splendour—a Qutab Minar or a Humayun's Tomb, the Old Fort or the Jama Mosque” (21). These monuments are not just buildings; they bear the nostalgic memory of Indian Muslim Culture, the erosion of history, and political influence. The colonial impact is evident in the description of Delhi and its architecture.

The narration of the physical spaces halts the plot's progression but invites deep reflection on the role of narrative silence in *Twilight in Delhi*. The best embodiment of the spatial mode of communication is Mir Nihal's house. Ahmad Ali has provided a detailed description of the house, including a separate area for men and women. The house is described: “As you look at it, only a wall faces you, and in the wall a door.” (23). Moreover, the house consists of “an inner courtyard”, “a low kotha and under it two small rooms”, “an arched veranda” and “an old date palm tree” (23). The house's detailed visual structure embodies the cultural and traditional aspects of Indian Muslim culture. The people are cautious about their culture and social traditions of the time. The minute, subtle discussion of domestic space underscores the harmony and continuity of life in a family full of vitality and warmth.

Even so, there are two sections in the house, as it is stated: “At dinner time long food-cloths were spread, inside the zenana for the women, in the mardana for the men” (140). At the surface, it is a simple statement, but this division of house sections reveals the solidity of patriarchal and cultural values. Here, the physical structure of the house reveals the omitted verbal concept of *parda*, providing strong evidence that non-verbal modes sometimes convey more information than spoken narration.

Ahmad Ali writes: “The oven, which had been built in the morning to boil the water for the dead, was full of ashes and dust. On the bare top of the date palm sat a kite and shrilly cried for a while and flew away, leaving the trunk, ugly and dark, standing all alone



against the sky." (239) In these sentences, oven, bare top, and date palm act as spatial indicators. Now, the house is without the zest of life and full of dust. The sentences convey a fragmented house, with its interior rusting, thereby portraying unvoiced emotional isolation and patriarchal decline. The spatial arrangement is sufficient to speak this truth loudly.

The courtyard of the house is also part of a vibrant spatial arrangement. As in *Twilight in Delhi*, this part of the house has "an old date palm tree raises its head towards the sky" (23); "a henna tree is growing, and sparrows have built their nests in its branches" (23), and "a fountain around which jasmines and tube roses were growing" (40). Here, Ahmad Ali has used the device of narrative silence to evoke critical reflection in the reader.

The courtyard is once full of nostalgia, fragrance, memory, shelter, and fertility, as reflected in rosebushes and sparrows. It conveys the spirit of the Muslim community and the harmony between nature and architecture in Delhi. Gradually, the spring of Delhi is lost with the courtyard, which is "strewn with torn paper, bits of stones, vegetable peelings and all sorts of rubbish, and everything seemed to be in a state of neglect." (224) Now, the place mirrors the fading grandeur of the house, Mir Nihal, and Delhi in the broader domain. The descriptive pauses in the narration halt the storyline, but the spatial mode conveys its language, providing a clear understanding of unexpressed stories.

In addition, the mosque in *Twilight in Delhi* is also a standard hub of spatial mode of communication. Jama Masjid and the visual elaborated description of this mosque communicate the glory of Muslims and the gradual decay of that splendour. Ahmad Ali gives a thorough picture about the structure of Jama Masjid that the rays of the sun "were caught by the tall minarets of the Jama Masjid, glinted across the surface of its marble domes, and flooded the city with a warm and overbearing light." (32) This representation of the mosque silently conveys the rise of Indian Muslims dominance, their identity and native integrity. Ahmad Ali portrays the infrastructure of the mosque by giving a peculiar visual picture, as mentioned in the novel:

"A noble flight of steps led to the platform in front of the eastern, the Shahi gate, of the Jama Masjid, steps going up from three sides, the north, the east and the south. On the western side is the huge gate itself, always kept barred and locked, with only a small postern leading into the mosque's courtyard. In front is a great open space about forty feet above the level of the road, paved with red sandstone." (97)

This picture presents Jama Masjid, a central spatial hub in the city, where a clear distinction between the mundane and the sacred is evident. The monumental presence and significance of Jama Masjid are expressed without verbal articulation. So, the descriptive pause and narrative silence reflect the mosque not as a physical structure but as a carrier of history and emotions.

The human voices are muted in this description, which underscores the pause in the storyline within the ongoing physical space. However, the sounds of the pigeons fill the mosque with noise as it is written in the novel: "Flocks of wild pigeons rose from the domes and the roofs of the Jama Masjid and flew away, or others came and descended inside the courtyard to quench their thirst at the tank in the middle of the courtyard. One could hardly hear anything in the midst of the din and the noise of a Delhi evening." (99-100) The descriptive pause within the narrative exemplifies the hustle and bustle of life within muted human voices. The structural mapping of Jama Masjid interprets the modern



colonial aspect within the muted human experience. The downfall of Muslims' identity becomes visible when it looked "diminutive and shrunk" (43).

Furthermore, "It was this very mosque, Mir Nihal remembered with blood in his eyes, which the English had insisted on demolishing or turning into a church during 1857." (135) The mosque, which is the identity and indicator of Muslims' sovereignty, is now under the colonial power. The history and memory associated with the mosque are conveyed through narrative silence amid the novel's spatial hub. Here, the plot's narration pauses to elaborate on the trauma, the loss of cultural identity, and the discontinuity of a splendid life.

Although the administrative buildings of Delhi are physical spaces and exhibit structural mapping, the unvoiced themes and ideas underpinning these buildings highlight that narrative silence can be used to invite reflective readings and nuanced understanding. It is mentioned in the novel that: "the ugly Clock Tower jutted its head towards the sky, and by its side the dull red building of the Town Hall looked drab. Wild pigeons circled and towered above the two buildings and, beating their wings for a while, settled down on the roof of the Hall and in the crevices of the Tower." (43) These sentences reflect that language is not the only source of information and communication. The meanings can be perceived through spatial arrangements. The detailed visual atmosphere around these spaces embodies the contrast between pigeons' vitality and the dull, ugly civic landscape of colonial modernity. The buildings do not explicitly highlight this ideology. However, it underpins the absence of narrative information, which becomes visible when applying the spatial mode of Multimodal Discourse Analysis as a unique mode of giving semiotic meanings.

The control of British colonial power extends beyond infrastructure; it is not limited to towers and halls. Delhi is under structural decline in the face of New Delhi. As Ahmad Ali has written, "The British had only built a new capital outside the city walls." (17) Furthermore, "the Seven Delhis have fallen, and the eighth has gone the way of its predecessors, yet to be demolished and built again." (17) It becomes evident that Delhi is not just a city. However, it is a spatial hub that carries semiotic meanings. This city is undergoing demolition, but it conveys the hidden ideology of British officials, which is analyzed using Genette's concept of descriptive pauses within the concept of duration. The physical hub loudly conveys the underlying themes of cultural decay and identity.

Similarly, the railways also became a means of communicating the mechanical life in the face of modernity under the colonisers' hold. "At noon the city seemed deserted and dead but for the grating noise of tram cars that plied throughout the day, though very few people used them" (90). The tram cars fill the city with noise but are less popular with the public. However, they are working, highlighting how narrative silence is used in these physical stations to demonstrate the alienation and emptiness of organic urban life amid mechanical interference. The railways are not articulating this information, but the narrative device they employ invokes this ideology.

The lanes and the roads did not remain silent in their visual description. The difference of old Delhi lanes and streets from "The by-lanes were narrow and dark, lit only by kerosene lamps here and there at the turns" (46) to "the empty streets and in the narrow by-lanes and bazars lanes" (202) and "The road did look wide and broad, a real boulevard" (175) represents the omitted information of colonial order and visibility. The narrative silence in these sentences represents hollowness and the authority of colonial power. The



progression of the plot halts in the description of spaces, emphasizing the decay and loss through spatial arrangements.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The textual in-depth analysis of *Twilight in Delhi* reveals that narrative silence is a powerful device employed by Ahmad Ali to disclose the glorious past and the deteriorated present of Colonial India under British rule. This power has been exercised in Muslims' daily lives, as exemplified by the cases of Mir Nihal's house in Old Delhi and New Delhi, administrative buildings, deserted lanes, Jama Masjid, tram cars, courtyards, Forts, and Clock Towers. The spatial mode of Multimodal Discourse, developed by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen, has been used in this research to study how physical spaces are not merely structural buildings. However, these spaces communicate the unsaid truth, identified through Gerard Genette's concept of descriptive pauses, which function as a storyline halt in the detailed representation of spatial arrangements. The themes of cultural decay, decline of grandeur and dominance of Indian Muslims, emotional alienation, mechanical intervention, and colonial power are embedded by Ahmad Ali using narrative silence as a device. So, the Multimodal Discourse Analysis is used as a framework to uncover the hidden ideologies underlying physical spaces.

The findings of this research illustrate that narrative silence is not merely an absence or omission of information, but a standard tool for hiding traumatic memories and rich meanings, and for presenting unspoken truths and themes. The physical spaces serve as indicators and carriers of history, culture, and traditions. Therefore, this research examines the decline of Indian Muslims under British rule, as conveyed by Ahmad Ali through the physical spaces of Colonial India.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The study highlights the significance of silence in narration in *Twilight in Delhi*, within the context of twentieth-century novels, in which authors of this period extensively used this tool to conceal deeper information and ideologies. The purpose is to evoke readers' critical thinking and reflection on the idea that written and verbal discourse are not the only means of communication. That spaces can also convey what authors leave unuttered in their texts. *Twilight in Delhi* is a wonderful, exemplary case in which narrative silence is employed through spaces, which are examined and analyzed through descriptive pauses in Gerard Genette's concept of duration and the spatial mode of Multimodal Discourse Analysis by Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen. The findings of this research can be applied to other 20th-century novels to explore multiple modes of communication and hidden ideologies and themes.

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