



Auto Colonial Repercussions and Post National Polemics in Zulfikar Ghose: A Critical Study

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine nationalism and its reception in the works of Pakistani diaspora writer Zulfikar Ghose who articulates a disavowal of nationalist sentiment and exhibits a postnational stance in his literary works. The study follows Benita Parry's (1987) defense of nationalism as an anti-colonial project; the research endeavors for a materialist analysis within postcolonial discourse, as developed by Fanon (1961), Said (1978), and Cabral (1966). This theoretical standing identifies in Ghose's works a tendency to self-colonization and the idealist detachment of postnational identity from historical and material struggles. His poetic advocacy of liberal humanist ideals of universality is shaped by his diasporic displacement and linguistic alienation. Liberal humanism calls for individual autonomy and challenges socio-political and historical aspects of literature. His creative genius relies upon the universality of English literature that refers to the internalization of colonial hierarchies and the psychological strain of negotiating multiple identities. The study traces the auto-colonial undertones in Ghose's Anglophone writings that silence transformative postcolonial agency, project the patterns of alienation, question cultural dependency, and magnify identity fragmentation within postcolonial modernity.

Introduction

“Writers are individuals whose deepest attachment is not to their country or to a sociopolitical group but to art” (Ghose 2015).

Liberal humanism promotes artistic “self” as autonomous and free from any historical and political position (Arnold 1865; Eliot 1919; Richard 1926). This intellectual facet reinforced the universality of English canon and emphasized the freedom of artistic expression and the timeless relevance of literature “...whose values are of the purely aesthetic art for art's sake,” (Barry 1995, p.33) . Focused on universal truths and enduring values, it served as a key approach in literary and

cultural studies. By promoting individual autonomy it presumes a shared human essence that transcends historical, cultural, and social contexts.

Edward Said says, "...it is genuinely troubling to see how little Britain's great humanistic ideas...having the power ahistorically to command over approval, how little they stand in the way of the accelerating imperial process" (1993: p.82). In the light of Said's argument it is evident that these humanistic ideals are often taken as timeless, moral and virtuous. But at the same time detached from the material realities in which they are deployed. Postcolonial critics have consistently challenged liberal humanism for its inability to account for power dynamics, historical specificities, and the socially constructed nature of identity (Kellner & Lewis, 2007). The postcolonial theoretical position is supposed to question hegemonic colonial ideologies that oppressed and dehumanized indigenous peoples and exerted power to dismantle the homogenizing force of indigenous identity. It aims to amplify subaltern voices by advocating equal human rights for all and indigenous cultural reclamation.

In critique of liberal humanism, the postcolonial theorists argue that the privilege associated with the universalism of literary aesthetic jeopardized the artistic expression of the native artist who raised voice against political tyranny and social injustice inflicted by colonization (Fanon 1968, Said 1993). Postcolonial theory emphasizes the struggle against colonial oppression and the restoration of agency to colonized peoples (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2003). The effort to counter power structures while striving to preserve national sovereignty has earned this body of work the designation "postcolonial literature". The power of literature can transform lives so that anti-colonial endeavors and emergence of theory laid emphasis on practical wisdom to achieve a more pragmatic approach to art and its purpose (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2006). The universalism of literary aesthetics presented by liberal humanism jeopardized the artistic expression of the native artist who raised voice against political tyranny and social injustice inflicted by colonization.

Said characterizes this as a threat to the political and ideological autonomy of postcolonial subjects, as it compels them to adhere to the liberal humanist standards of "pure art." Also, it endangers the political and ideological freedom of postcolonial subjects. He asserts, literature possesses "the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging" (1993, p. xiii) . Building on this premise, the present study seeks to examine the colonial agenda embedded within the concept of universality, which was strategically deployed to reinforce colonial hierarchies. These hierarchies served to undermine alternative "generalized position-taking" that could potentially contribute to the political and ideological dimensions of social formations all under the guise of liberty and humanism (Berry 1995).

This study follows the postcolonial critique of liberal humanism by identifying the shortcomings of this ideology in addressing the complexities of contemporary social and political realities. It is also noteworthy that before the onset of Postcolonial theories, Marxist critics have already contended that liberal humanism masks the material conditions and class struggles shaping cultural production, presenting postcolonial ideologies as natural and universal (Williams 1997). They contend that liberal humanism universalizes Western ideals and marginalizes non-Western perspectives. (Althusser 1970).

I identify this Marxist standpoint in the works of Postcolonial theorists like Fanon (1968), Said (1978), and Parry (1987). By analyzing the humanist and cultural trend in postcolonial studies these scholars argue that colonial narratives continue to persist through neoliberalism and globalization, while opposing exploitation and inequality postcolonial studies occasionally draw on the same language of universal rights and freedoms championed by liberal humanism (Parry 2004).

This study explores that in postcolonial studies the discursive-ambivalent approach is contributing to liberal humanist ideologies, particularly through its exploration of universal humanism, cultural hybridity, and identity (Spivak,1988 Bhabha,1994). In contrast, the material-historical approach demands a more concrete position-taking, addressing the material and historical realities of colonialism, such as exploitation and resistance, which have enduring implications for contemporary political and social structures (Fanon 1968 ;Said 1978; Parry 1987). This study aligns with Marxist strain of postcolonial studies ,and aims to critique liberal humanism, with particular focus on Parry's theoretical framework as her intellectual approach is a consequence of her active engagement in class struggle and her tendency towards Marxist ideology (Parry, 2004, p. 11).

The Problems in Current Theory of Colonial Discourse (1987),is a seminal work in which Parry identifies the muteness of indigenous assertion in postcolonial writings. She regards this attitude as self-colonization. Parry observes this tendency in contemporary criticism that mute agency in indigenous assertion and undermine anticolonial spirit. The concept of "self-colonization," referred to here as "auto-colonialism," is borrowed from Parry (1987) from her significant work ,she was among pioneers to critique the "poverty of serious discussion" and the lack of indigenous agency within colonial discourse theory. She questions its inclination toward Western-centric thought and names this condition as "auto-colonization" (2004. pp. 6-9). She conceptualizes that this state is detrimental ,because like an ambivalent position the native subject both challenges and perpetuates colonial discourse. Through this ideology native subject internalizes colonial attitude and becomes both a participant in and a resistant of colonial structures, navigating within the constraints imposed by colonial power while inadvertently perpetuating its influence.

The native subjects in this "assimilation phase" (Fanon, 1968), refrain from fighting for their rights and freedom. In Parry's view, contemporary colonial discourse comes out of "... the state of transgression performed by the native from within and against colonial discourse". (1987, p.41).

Parry moves away from the textualism predominant in postcolonial studies and concentrates on colonialism's socio-material conditions. She prescribes such an ideological and materialistic critique that can work paradigmatically to reveal imperialism's epistemic violence and material aggression. She demands a Fanonian understanding of native position in resistance where enactment lies in "a community's engagement in combative social action, during which a native contest initially enunciated in the invaders' language, culminates in a rejection of imperialism's signifying system" (Parry,1987, p.45). Parry retains a strong belief in the power of national liberation, viewing it as essential and undiminished. She argues that contemporary postnational approaches lack real challenges postcolonial societies face after decolonization. Instead, she sees them as reconfigured Eurocentric traps that overlook local struggles and perpetuate external control. She proposes that liberation lies in challenging these global power structures rather than merging into them. She advocates internationalism through class struggle and anti-imperialism but does not approve of cosmopolitanism , which she considers hierarchical and elite in global movement (Parry, 2004, p.11).

Parry's position offers a foundation for questioning the auto-colonial effects and postnational polemics in Ghose's works. Here, I aim to magnify the inherent liberal humanism embedded in his work. He prefers aestheticism in art over ideological functions that enable transformation . His denial to politically motivated art raises challenges to the extent to which his work reflects postcolonial experiences. Although his work emphasizes symphonic and aesthetic appeal, it is distanced from overt ideological commitments. So its classification as postcolonial or national (due to his Pakistani origins) paradoxically accelerates a process of self-colonization.

In the light of this argument this study identifies in Ghose's writings an interplay between artistic detachment that confuses the cultural and political expectations associated with postcolonial identity. It undermines the political purpose, the urge for emancipation, and the drive for resistance often integral to postcolonial literature in a global context. In Parry's theoretical framework, this study identifies a position that understands Ghose's works as distant from postcolonial objectives, thus reflecting a self-colonizing outlook. It is in sharp contrast with the decolonial goals of postcolonial theory. This study procures that the auto-colonial repercussions in Ghose's works are truly evident in his writings that he seems to stand apart from the spirit of decolonization. His works appear detached from resistance, reflecting little engagement with political promises. Instead, Ghose prefers aestheticism to arts and literature; his writings inadvertently, if not openly reinforce colonial legacies and liberal humanist ideals.

Ghose was a pioneering diaspora writer whose roots are in Pakistan, because he was born to a muslim family in Sialkot. His family was in Mumbai before migrating to England in 1954 due to unfavorable conditions at the time of the Partition of British India. A poet, novelist, an essayist, a short story writer, and a critic, he is a multifaceted writer with exceptional fame. Educated at Keele University, He was influenced by renowned literary figures such as B.S. Johnson, Fuller, and members of "The Group." After completing his studies, he performed duties as a teacher and sports journalist before going to the United States, where he served as a professor at the University of Texas. During his time in the U.S., he explored Latin American fiction using surrealist techniques. His study of English literature influenced his literary thought as he admired canonical writers such as Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Ted Hughes, and Sylvia Plath. This inspiration leads him to carry the legacy of English literary tradition rests upon colonial authority and idea of universality.

This study identifies auto-colonial sensibility in his works arises from his inspiration with Western traditions, demonstrating how western colonial authority persists "in a native appropriation of its signs" (Sharpe, 1995, p. 101). In my view, this influence in his writing is not merely an external force but an intrinsic aspect of the experience of living in a foreign land. In this regard a question arises why Zulfikar Ghose's literary works should represent the nation of his birth when his political detachment and postnational ethics undermine the emancipatory zeal central to postcolonial literature? This is a paradox that lies in his denial of native identity, that ironically defines his literary identity. In the light of this argument I contend that Ghose's works, rather than aligning with postcolonial frameworks, reflect an auto-colonial perspective as articulated by Benita Parry.

In Ghose we find what Shamsie (2007), notes that the "identity" of "English writers" who are raised abroad or their parents belong to Pakistani origin has often been questioned (p. 256). His works carry the influence of English literary traditions established in colonial India, where the adoption of English was shaped by the colonial encounter. Ghose assumed English language as his primary medium and ultimately indulged into "unqualified assimilation" (Fanon,

1961). Not only Ghose but many Pakistani diaspora writers are "linked to trends in Anglo-American literatures" and are the product of a "myriad of influences" and a "cultural synthesis" (Shamsie 2017 pp. 256–257). This attitude positions English as both a medium of resistance and a channel for cultural inheritance. Although Ghose's works carry a global perspective on identity, belonging, and the human condition, he did not engage more directly with the postcolonial context in his literary reflections on exile. It suggests that this omission hinders the scope of his works to be engaged with postcolonial themes (Shamsie 2017).

Instead of focusing on the actual reasons behind the disintegration of his homeland and raising voice against inequalities and global exploitation of indigenous "self". Ghose chose to write in modernist and confessional styles. It is due to his inspiration towards English writings that he

focuses on individualism that overshadows the broader cultural and historical dimensions of colonized societies. He fully embraced transnationalism and situated himself beyond national affiliations, questioning traditional notions of belonging. As he asserted a universalist vision, his tendency disrupts expectations of cultural representation. His identity became uncertain for carrying out the responsibilities of diaspora writers to their origins (Abbasi, 2015, p.114). For Ghose, “Of all the classifications of literature, the worst is the nationalistic class, particularly among young authors in the English language, which is the language of several nations”(p.5).

Ghose's exile was a “willed choice”, as he altered his name deliberately and assumed an Indian pronunciation. This was an attempt to shun his nationality that belonged to Pakistan (Rehman, 1989, p.180). Thus his work transcends the boundaries of geography and culture to reflect the fluidity of identity and envision settings beyond physical confines.

While residing in London, Ghose experienced the complexities of self-imposed exile that resulted in cultural displacement. His poetic collections *The Loss of India* (1964) and *Jets from Orange* (1967) and his biography *Confessions of Native-Alien* (1965) underscore the themes of displacement, alienation and loss. While his novels *The Contradictions* (1966) and *The Murder of Aziz Khan* (1969) discuss social conflict and postcolonial identity. When he moved to the United States in 1966 he continued to narrate the themes of dislocation and displacement. His works *The Violent West* (1972), *A Memory of Asia* (1984), and later *Selected Poems* (1991) carry the same ideas. His *Incredible Brazilian Trilogy* (1972–85) further reflects his sustained exploration of exile and hybridity. His works promote transnationalism as he moved from Pakistan to UK and then US, so his identity remains liminal and it is projected throughout his literary career. a stance reinforced by his explicit rejection of geographical and nationalist affiliations (Abbasi 2011, 114).

He delves into the themes of postnational and global identity instead of being tied to a specific nation, which makes his inclusion in a national literary tradition problematic. Consequently, his diaspora position and internationally influenced identity create difficulties in categorizing him within the Pakistani literary canon. Time and again he reflects on "Diasporic Identity," encapsulating the intricacies of navigating multiple identities (Hashmi 1992). His works reflect experiences of rootlessness resulting from the effects of colonialism. Due to this colonial experience he witnessed economic inequality, war, and identity crises, however he did not fully examine the mercenary agenda of colonial intervention and posed a benign satire on this great event of loss and despair.

Ghose's Postnationalism leads to the concept of supranationalism, which explains that all human relations, identities, and economies go beyond the borders. In his poem *The Mystique of Roots* (Selected Poems, 7), he describes that identity is not fixed but rather fluid. It is shaped by exposure, experience, memories, and external influences. “I belong to no country but the/ Country of my own mind”. Ghose's ideology in this regard resonates with the idea of “global cultural flow” that enables new forms of identity that move beyond the confines of the single identity (Appadurai 1990). Hybridity and plurality are closely linked to post-nationalism, which, while embracing cultural differences and fluid identities, remains constrained by a singular identity framework. This emphasis on multiplicity and plurality, as endorsed by Dirlik in support of globalization, does not allow for the assertion of native identity; rather, it reinforces Western epistemological dominance. Parry, in her materialist critique, examines globalization as a modern manifestation of capitalism and calls for a critical examination of cosmopolitanism, particularly when it is stripped of its political significance (2004, p. 3). In Ghose's work the political and ideological standing is missing; he outrightly rejects a writer's vocation towards art that has been hailed by many postcolonial potent voices (Fanon 1968; Said 1993; Achebe 1988). Ghose reflects, “leave the important issues of the time to journalism and television talk shows and if you're really

enraged by an issue and feel a pressing need to be involved then take up politics" (1991,p. 35). In favor of autonomy of a writer in a globalized world, Ghose enunciates national and ideological belonging and advocates for the emergence of a 'transnational' culture, also ignores the "worldwide material conditions of division and exploitation inhibiting its realization" (Parry, 2005, p. 58).

By situating Zulfikar Ghose's work within the broader framework of diaspora writing, it becomes evident how his texts grapple with questions of identity, alienation, and belonging. However, like much of diaspora literature, Ghose's works often fall short in addressing the transformative potential and resistance politics central to postcolonial critique, exemplifying intellectual insulation, although his literary genius exhibits intellectual richness ,it remains disengaged from socio political praxis (Aftab, 2021). Like other diaspora writers Nadeem Aslam, Muhammad Hanif, Kiran Desai and Kamila Shamsie Ghose deal with themes of homelessness and identity crises; these are the common themes in diaspora literature (Bhattarai, 2007). His works project his presence in "cultural spaces" (A. Brah 1996).

In *Confession of a Native Alien* (1965) Ghose explores alienation as an essential feature of his life as his identity is suspended between past and present , and hanging between different regions . By narrating his life experiences he regarded himself as "native-alien". He outrightly rejected the Pakistani family system by criticizing "arranged marriages" and materialism associated with them. He questions a disproportionate burden placed on male head of family. His disapproval stemmed out of his personal experiences, particularly his father's obligation to support a large household on a meagre income (Ghose 1965, p. 2). His critique on extended family systems reflects an ambivalence he carries with him to identify "no scope for individualistic gestures" and depend on "one man's brain and seven men's hard work" (1965 p.49-50). Due to this outlook he is considered to be intellectually detached and self-consciously elitist. Parry criticises this condition and cites Cabral's notion of "cultural alienation" among colonial elites; she opines that this outlook influences decolonial agency with its depoliticizing effects (Parry 2004).

In his semi autobiographical novel *The Triple Mirror of Self* (1992) Ghose offers a poetic reflection of the fluid identity. By dissociating himself from socio- political and historical accounts of characters ,Ghose focuses on their psychological struggles. The characters Changez, Angus and Raza are indulged in self-discovery and their experiences are based upon diasporic experiences of individual alienation , their characters develop through subjective memory and their narratives exemplify modernist aesthetic. His characters like himself are presented as detached and estranged from their own roots.

If we examine why Ghose has adopted this disinterested attitude to his own homeland ,one can discern that in an effort to belong to the place he resides, he fully embraces the land and language. In a conversation with C. Kanaganayakam (1986) Ghose says, "Home is in my mind; my imagination, home is the English language and what I can do with it and what I can read in it" (Conversation 17). Ghose chose a cosmopolitan worldview, he disregards his national identity and his works manifest a transnational and global identity. In doing so he demonstrates doubt regarding national sovereignty as a prevailing form of political dominance and authority. As cosmopolitanism demands global convergence (Brenan 2001), Ghose's native self merges and becomes fluid. He projects the idea of "third space" presented by Bhabha, a conceptual area that exists outside the binary conflict of colonizer and colonized, facilitating the negotiation and formation of hybrid identities. This liminality in his works underscore a tension between the postcolonial critique and eurocentric ideals. He stands between critique and complicity while promoting global and transnational identity. His use of English as a literary medium situated him within a broader postcolonial framework, where the language serves as a tool for both resistance and assimilation. Postcolonial critics adopted reappropriation while using the English language as creative medium

to project local realities and native identities. However Ghose refrains from this practice and preferred perfection in form and style, he despises “a piece of art which champions a cause or message at the cost of form and style” (Abbasi,2015). Rather he adopts a cosmopolitan worldview in promoting the English language.

In *One Chooses a Language* (1991) Ghose’s cosmopolitan identity is evident. “For apple when I was eight in Bombay; I shuttered and chewed almonds for a cure; my tongue, rejecting a vernacular, for a new language, resisted utterance. alone, I imitated the accents of English soldiers; their pitch, and their tone ` . The poem’s narrative reveals the cosmopolitan undertones by dramatizing a complex interplay between local and global identities. The references to “Petrarch”, the “Michelin Guide”, “English” (regarded as a linguistic standard) may inadvertently reinforce the hierarchies he aims to contest. As he “imitated the accents” it suggests a form of hybridity in which mimicry becomes a quiet mode of resistance. This creates an ambivalent space where imitation and opposition coexist, unsettling any straightforward assimilation and subtly destabilizing colonial authority. The poet’s choice of language projects a need for survival in a society that imposed hierarchy. In such a scenario , choice of language is a compulsion as people adopt shared modes of communication to navigate interconnected systems. But this compulsion is not without compromise as it risks marginalizing local identities by prioritizing global uniformity over cultural diversity. As Ghose himself prefers the English language not only as means of communication but also as a creative expression ,he says “English” was the “tongue to my mouth’s microphone”. Adopting language means enforcing another culture that aligns him with the worldview of the colonizer. In Parry’s view the choice of language is not simple as it carries the whole tradition, so it refers to cultural subordination. Parry, like other postcolonial critics, discern that language shapes identity and transforms thought processes so it is important to understand that language is deeply tied to power and colonial languages are instrumental in exertion of power and control (Parry 1987 Fanon, 1963; Ngũgĩ, 1986).

Interestingly, Ghose’s choice of language is not without this complexity. It indicates his tendency to align with the European literary canon. The poet concludes by saying “ There’s England my dictionary my ignorance brings me back to”. In choice of England he invokes a “global tradition” but remains oblivious to the hegemonic structures that are underlying and perpetuating Eurocentric ideals. This perspective reflects Parry’s critique of self-colonization, where postcolonial individuals sustain colonial frameworks by valuing the culture and language of their oppressors over their own heritage (2004). By adopting a new language the poet contributes to the diminishment of indigenous identity subordinated to the colonizer's dominance even after the end of formal colonial governance.

It is due to his inclination towards Western tradition that he elevates secular, western-focused values over the cultural and political contexts of his own homeland. In the poem

“Remove” Ghose depicts the “Remove class” historically belonged to the elite hierarchy of British schooling. By situating this in a postcolonial context, Ghose ironizes how colonial educational structures persist, teaching colonial language and worldview even after political independence. The students in the “Remove class” are thus being “removed” from their indigenous linguistic and cultural roots. foregrounds that all people from different parts of the world now are sharing the global and transnational world, he says that all boys, “ from East Punjab and West Punjab, which formerly were the Punjab, standing together in assembly, fearfully miming the words of a Christian hymn”. The phrase “fearful miming” is suggestive, the poet reflects that students must imitate the gestures of faith imposed by the colonial world, as it is a strict directive in foreign schools. The poet here resonates with the enduring postcolonial discontent embedded in the colonizer/colonized dynamic, highlighting themes of hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence that arise from the continued

marginalization of subaltern voices in the global order. Through Mr. Iqbal, a figure marked by name, origin, and location that blur communal and national boundaries, the poem exposes the instability of postcolonial identity and belonging. Reflecting Ghose's own embrace of rootlessness and transnationalism, it challenges fixed notions of cultural representation and aligns with a global, fluid understanding of identity (Abbasi, 2015). Rather than articulating an indigenous or decolonial assertion, Ghose adopts a transnational or hybrid stance, epitomized by his image of the "hybrid classroom" and the teacher who embraces a world "dissolving boundaries." This gesture, though cosmopolitan, risks replicating the very hegemonic universalism he critiques. Parry (2004) calls this position as self colonizing, she suggests in her materialist critique that "making of an alternative postcolonial tradition" is able to "rescue this literature from the ideological ascendancy of western liberal humanism by cultivating and celebrating 'marginality'". She says that postcolonial critics should

"oppose, subvert, or negate the power of the hegemonic culture" (p.32). Similarly Said (1994) insists that the task of the postcolonial intellectual is not compliance within global modernity but positional resistance grounded in historical difference.

The poem "*Disturbed Nights*" embodies the same pattern. The poem depicts the arrival of an ambulance in the poet's neighbourhood. The poet feels perturbed as this incident took place twice in the same year. The poet's first reaction was not of worry but he decides to be aloof of the whole incident. However he reflects on the unpredictability of accidents in a casual manner and without any urgency. He thinks that possible reasons for the ambulance's arrival might be "intoxicated drivers" and "fatal incidents" that appear in "morning-paper headlines". Thus human tragedies are passively absorbed, as the poet is a detached observer and this appears to be a matter of routine as one "pours skimmed milk in a measured portion of granola". The juxtaposition of the mundane act of preparing breakfast with the grim reality of "unnecessary deaths" exposes a rupture in the poet's emotional engagement, revealing a stance of estrangement and detachment characteristic of modernist expression.

It is worth noting that the poet decided not to be involved in this activity. Although the "elm tree lit up by approaching headlights" and the "whole front yard," he remains a detached observer. The flashing of red, blue, and white lights creates a theatrical surreal effect, adding into the sense of defamiliarization. The poet's position behind the "Phontia hedge" refers to a conscious barrier, he avoids the tragedy of his neighbors both physically and emotionally. Moreover, the reference to paramedics, as "late dinner guests," strips the moment of its emotional urgency. The poem critiques the modernist era for its indifference and estrangement, yet it also aesthetically reproduces that very alienation by employing modernist techniques of surrealism.

Ghose employs modernist techniques of imagery and symbolism in his works abundantly. In *Flying Over India*, he employs the metaphor of flight to symbolize transcendence beyond geographic and cultural confines. The poem depicts experience of flight from a "lonely watch-tower," where the poet creates an analogy between his exile and the flight of an eagle, portrayed as aloof, alone, and alienated. He confesses that "withdrawal is also my viewpoint," and it suggests that the flight is a willed choice and it is not enforced upon him, because the poet urges to ascend above the tumult of the "jungle below". It resonates Ghose's personal choice of exile as an escape from the lived realities of newly independent Pakistan (Jussawalla & Dasenbrock 1989). The eagle gliding above the "alluvial plains," projects human struggle to go beyond borders for a lofty vantage point. The imagery reflects the experience of diaspora who are simultaneously part of yet detached from multiple cultural and historical narratives. "...[N]either city, nor village intrudes with temples and towers", resonates nostalgic reminiscence of pre-partitioned India. The poet sees it as "deck with flowers, trees trees", as he embraces a nostalgic remembrance filled with greenery

of trees. This willed choice of distance from the turmoil and constraints of territorial and national divisions deeply resonates with the diasporic yearning for a realm of freedom and clarity, unconfined by identity tied to specific lands.

The study employs the postcolonial marxist lens to analyse Ghose's works. The postnational urge of global identity exhibited in an ambivalent way as he aspires and at the same time critiques the limitations of postnational thought. Although he transcends physical boundaries, he also exposes the persistent need for belonging, suggesting that the ideal of full detachment from the nation-state remains elusive. In the poem *The Memory of Asia*, the poet uses powerful imagery of "vast rice fields" and "the yellow light from the East" to show his deep connection with his Asian roots. His continuous change of identity, "I keep altering my image," affects his poetic experience (1991, p. 50-51). His poetry navigates the paradox of striving for a cosmopolitan identity while remaining haunted by the dislocation and fragmentation that come with "the elements of undecidability" in diaspora (Parry 2004 p. 56).

The poem *This Landscape, These People* (1984) depicts the experiences of the poet in England, where he is enjoying his "eighth spring," however he is afraid of forming attachments, as he does not "want to touch" the woods when walking through the forest. He conveys his affection for England, but calls it a museum chair, which he can only observe rather than engage with. Given his limited connection to the new continent, he merely observes the local English people and their environment. He depicts them as "walking with stiff countryside?" (p.47) He observes that English men have a rigid stride that reflects a formal and elaborate image of their everyday lives. In contrast to Indians, he found the English people lacking in casualness. In this way, Ghose's work raises questions about whether postnationalism can fully resolve the alienation of displacement, or whether it remains an imperfect and incomplete response to the challenges of the diasporic condition by internalizing and reproducing the colonial system. This ideological stance complicates his position as a postcolonial writer, as his works oscillate between challenging colonial legacies and perpetuating their cultural hegemony. Thus, Ghose's writings underscore the complexities of postcolonial literature, highlighting the enduring impact of colonial discourse on identity, language, and belonging. While his critique of colonialism addresses its excesses, his alignment with its cultural affirmations illustrates the deep and often unresolved tensions within diaspora literature.

Ghose's poetry repeatedly returns to questions of liberal humanism and diasporic awareness, particularly the strain between personal identity and the broader structures of nationalism and the nation-state. His resistance to nationalism leads him to imagine a post-national mode of belonging that moves beyond fixed cultural and territorial limits, a position that clearly echoes liberal ideals of individual freedom and universal humanism. Yet this stance also exposes the ambiguities of his own diasporic position. Ghose moves across identities without fully reconciling their contradictions, and this unresolved movement becomes a defining feature of his work.

Although his poetry critiques both nationalism and colonialism, it rarely settles into a sustained political or ideological position. Instead, it exemplifies what Mossavi (2020) describes as the "decolonial bandwagon": a form of critique that is analytically sharp but ultimately hesitant to translate critique into transformation or action. This ambivalence is evident in poems that resist cultural assimilation and linguistic estrangement while simultaneously revealing traces of an internalized colonial worldview.

Ghose's continued use of the colonizer's language and his careful portrayal of displacement foreground the psychological costs of diasporic life. However, these representations stop short of offering a coherent response to the material and historical forces that shape such dislocation. As a result, despite their aesthetic richness and emotional resonance, Ghose's poems remain limited in

their ability to articulate alternative political imaginaries or propose meaningful ideological interventions.

Parry (2004) contends that while the limitations of nationhood and nationalism must be acknowledged, their potential as instruments of liberation should not be overlooked. She emphasizes the necessity of constructing “practical critiques” that engage meaningfully with colonial legacies, cautioning against the risks of self-colonization and abstract idealism (p. 10).

In this context, Ghose’s intellectual position as a writer appears to exemplify the very concerns Parry raises. His diasporic narratives frequently depict a cosmopolitan intellectual who consciously distances himself from his homeland to integrate into metropolitan centers. Such figures, as Parry’s critique suggests, risk embodying a form of detached intellectualism that fails to critically interrogate the structural injustices of both their host societies and their places of origin. Furthermore, their expressions of solidarity with marginalized communities often remain theoretical, lacking substantive engagement or material action, thereby reinforcing the ideological abstractions that Parry critiques.

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