

Alien Voices and Dialogic Discourse in Zulfikar Ghose's Poetry

Rabia Zaheer & Dr. Rizwan Akhtar***

ABSTRACT:

The paper attempts to read Zulfikar Ghose's poetry a Pakistani Diaspora poet, by applying the theoretical frame of Dialogism proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin in 1981. Although, Bakhtin sees poetry as monologic and "single-voiced" (Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination 434), this paper attempts to accomplish that poetry as a genre by virtue of its regional, extraterritorial, transnational and eclectic appeal harbors dialogic voices. Correspondingly, this dialogic resonance is acutely registered in postcolonial poetry because it addresses multiple perspectives and contexts thereby challenging poetry's arguable monologic character. In this regard, Ghose's poetry is a multi-voiced discourse that is continuously shifting, evolving, and reshaping itself, and approaching it through Bakhtin's dialogism opens new research avenues to engage with the unexplored voices that people his poetry. Ghose's poetic work, immersed in exilic and cross-cultural paradigms, is a befitting site for exploring dialogic propensities since Ghose writes about his roots and home from the western cosmopolitan locations. By a close reading of Ghose's five collections of poetry, The Loss of India (1964), Jets from Orange (1967), The Violent West (1972), A Memory of Asia (1984), and 50 Poems: 30 Selected 20 New (2010), this paper establishes that postcolonial poetic discourse has germs of dialogic interactive.

Keywords: dialogic, heteroglossia, hybrid, polyphony, diaspora

* Email: rabiazee@yahoo.com

** Email: kafkatrial123@gmail.com

Zulfikar Ghose belongs to the first generation of Pakistani poets of diasporic origins. His work in its acceptance and appeal is trans-continental but can also be categorized not only a part of the trans-continental and postcolonial body of literature, but more importantly representative of South Asian diasporic literary tradition. This paper aims to accomplish that Ghose's poetry owing to its appraisal of cross-cultural concerns is characteristically dialogic or "double-voiced" (Bakhtin 35), a manifestation of hybrid poetic vision. Informed by a "hybrid muse" (Ramazani qtd. in Innes 178) and a "double-consciousness" (Du Bois xvii), it addresses the binaries of the self and other as it engages with multiple voices, texts, and contexts. To establish the presence of this plurality of voice we shall focus on the close reading of his collection *Selected Poems: Zulfikar Ghose* which includes poems from his five poetic collections, *The Loss of India* (1964), *Jets from Orange* (1967), *The Violent West* (1972), *A Memory of Asia* (1984) and *50 Poems: 30 Selected 20 New*. The research employs Bakhtin's theoretical percepts explored in his book *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*.

Ghose has travelled extensively and has lived in different parts of the world, calling himself a native, an alien, or a "native-alien" (*Confessions of a Native-Alien* 2) and hence an author with a dialogic identity. A consistent pattern of relocation and adapting different cultural locations in quest of a home has been the major focus of critical scholarship on his novels. However, preoccupation with various geographical spaces and their attendant cultural fictions is also an intriguing aspect of his poetry which has not been the focus of critical inquiry and which this paper attempts to establish.

Explored in connection to his personal life, his poetry has been treated as confessional, a personal disclaimer of relocations and dislocations. Like the confessional poets who rose to prominence in the 1950s, including Emily Dickenson, Robert Lowell, and Sylvia Plath, Ghose often uses "an autobiographical mode" that reveals the personal in "unusual frankness" (qtd. in Ozcelik 24). Speaking "in the first-person voice with little apparent distance between the speaker and the poet", many of his poems are "narrative in structure" (Beach qtd. in Ozcelik 34). Criticism on his work has focused on conflicting identity constructs in relation to the exile narrative, dynamics of displacement, politics of home and location (Awan, "Unwilled Choices: Exilic Perspectives"), as well as the theme of alienation and deracination (Rehman, "Deracination and Alienation"). Other critical works include Mansoor Abbasi's monograph *Zulfikar Ghose: The Lost Son of the Punjab*, but that too is centered on

his novels. Apart from the thematic focus, scholars like Kanaganayakam and Alamgir Hashmi have also explored the stylistic as well as structural formations in his work in their works *Structures of Negation: The Writings of Zulfikar Ghose* and “A Stylized Motif of Eagle Wings Woven” respectively.

Ghose has frequently been acknowledged, anthologized and appreciated along with the other established Pakistani poets of his generation like Alamgir Hashmi, Daud Kamal, and Taufiq Rafat in Muneeza Shamsie’s “South Asian Muslims: Fiction and Poetry in English”; Alamgir Hashmi’s “Poetry, Pakistani Idiom in English, and the Groupies”, Waqas Ahmed Khwaja’s “Zulfikar Ghose (1935-)” and Asma Mansoor’s “Notes of a New Harp: Tracing the Evolution of Pakistani Poetry in English”. The brief overview of criticism on Ghose clearly highlights not only a dearth of critical focus on his work in general, but also a serious neglect of his poetry. Furthermore, it denotes the downside of a criticism based on author-centered appraisal.

A Bakhtinian approach to Ghose’s poetry at first seems an unlikely yet vital approach in order to bring to the fore the unexplored voices that people his poetry. Thus the paper addresses the urgent need, and prominent lack of a more exploratory multi-focused criticism on his poetry. To establish that poetic mode is also capable of transforming into a dialogic mode one has to overview Bakhtin’s own reluctance to treat poetry as dialogic. For Bakhtin poetry almost always retains its “monologic steadfastness” (“Discourse in the Novel” 286), often becoming “authoritarian, dogmatic and conservative” (287), and “is by convention suspended from any mutual interaction with alien discourse” (285). While, in comparison to lyric poetry, the novel comes forth as “variform in speech and voice” (“Discourse in the Novel” 261). It is “double-voiced” (“Discourse in the Novel” 304), celebrating “inter animation of languages” (“From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse” 52) which forms the basis of his concepts of “heteroglossia” (“Discourse” 263), “polyphony” (430) and the “multi-voiced” (265) text.

The paper reads Ghose’s poetic output in the light of Bakhtinian theoretical concepts of dialogism however it employs the notion of dialogic to poetry. Therefore, we argue that by virtue of Ghose’s encounter with various geographical and cultural spaces and a consequent poetic rendition of cross-cultural journeys, his poems contain intrinsically “dialogized”, “heteroglossic” and “polyphonic” (“Discourse” 263) voices that are not subjected to a singular, authorial voice rather they accomplish a discourse of multiple voices. The dialogic element in

Ghose' poetry harks on a lingual multicity which in Bakhtin is heteroglossia, and it refers to the "internal stratification of language" an interplay between "social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, [. . .] languages of generations and age groups, [. . .] language that serves the socio-political purpose of the day, even the hour" (Bakhtin, "Discourse" 262-263).

Similarly, the term "polyphony" is adapted from the discourse of music, which refers to the diversity of points of view and voices that exist within a discourse (Bakhtin 430). Both heteroglossia and polyphony denote a discourse of cultural, aesthetic, and lingual plurality. This also suggests the strength of postcolonial poetry which borrows from western tradition but also transmogrifies the tradition, and accomplishes electric and hybridized models of poetic imagination.

Bakhtin identifies these characteristics in a novel's narrative. He asserts that the novel is both "evolving" ("Epic and Novel" 7) and "responsive", and incorporates the "living utterance" ("Discourse" 280; 276) of social discourse, therefore it is the most suitable genre documenting the mechanizations of post-industrial capitalist world. In contrast, Bakhtin's limitation of poetry in general, and lyric poetry in particular, as a "monoglossic" ("Epic and Novel" 12), "unitary" and "authorial" ("Discourse" 270; 334) genre seems too severe a repudiation, because of his quest for a pluralistic vision which a novel is capable of producing.

There is no doubt that Bakhtin's theory of dialogism contributes to novels' methodological, narratological, and political stature. However, several critics have questioned and challenged this limitation imposed on poetic discourse including Bialostosky's (qtd. in Bellanca 59) work on the dialogic aspects of Wordsworth and Coleridge's poetry; as well as others who have attempted to explore the dialogic potential of T. S. Eliot's modernist works like "The Wasteland", Pound's "Cantos", or Woolf's *Orlando*.

In other words, Bakhtin's perception of poetry as essentially monologic and imbued with limitations of communication and critical impact, has been challenged. Commenting on the "inherent addressivity" (Scanlon; par.1) of poetry, Paul Celan states that the "poem wants to reach an Other, it needs this Other . . . [and] seeks it out, speaks toward it" (qtd. in Scanlon par. 1). Jahan Ramazani, an eminent Postcolonial scholar addressing the same issue asserts that the "twentieth and twenty-first centuries have been especially fertile ground for 'poetic dialogism'", a

term he coined by combining Bakhtin's "dialogic", with Jakobson's "poetics" (qtd. in "Review" Steinman 113). Ramazani, further emphasized that poems "come into being partly by echoing, playing on, reshaping, refining, heightening, deforming, inventing, combating, hybridizing, and compressing extrapoetic forms of language" (qtd. in Frances par. 4). Therefore, poetic dialogism is a counter-discourse of dialogism conceived by Bakhtin as an exceptional privileged trait of fictional narratives.

The notion of dialogism has an added value in postcolonial discourse. In this regard Ramazani has particularly appreciated the use of modernist bricolage and postcolonial hybridity in relation to the transnational condition (Ramazani, "Modernist Bricolage, Postcolonial Hybridity" par. 1) in the poetry of Lorna Goodison, Kamau Brathwaite, and Agha Shahid Ali. He elaborates how these writers as exponents of trans-national trans-geographic polysemic poetics are capable of producing "intercultural poetic forms of modernism [. . .] to break through monologic lyricism, to express their cross-cultural experience, despite their vast differences in ethnicity and geography, politics and history, from the Western modernists" (par. 1). Thus for Ramazani, the postcolonial poetic discourse is ripe with dialogic potential.

Moreover, what Ramazani terms as monologic lyricism, is in fact the capacity for contentious dialogue evident in postcolonial and world poetry. As a result, within the larger context of the postcolonial Diaspora Ghose's poetry reveals a cacophony of multiple unmerged voices, decidedly distinct but not necessarily discordant. Contemporary Pakistani diaspora poetry, thus addresses multiplicities of "various cultures, religions, and ideologies" (Mansoor 14). On one hand, it retains "echoes from multiple languages including, but not limited to Urdu, Hindi, Pashto, Panjabi, Sindhi" (14), while on the other, it adapts from Western cannon, "re-shaping the English language" (Mansoor 15) as a tool for expression. These poems not only contain echoes of the past civilizations of the subcontinent like in Alamgir Hashmi's "A Topical Poem" and Kureshi's "The Gandhara Sculptor", and use Urdu and Punjabi words as in Kureshi's "Empty Cribs", "Day", and Hashmi's "This Time in Lahore" and "The Gujrat Merchant's Daughter", but also effectively create "imaginative forms" to express the experience of "cultural in-betweenness" particular to postcolonial literature (Ramazani qtd. in Burt 157).

Moreover, Ghose's poetry displays dialogism in a myriad of ways: the enunciation of several voices that de-center the authorial

position and directly engage with the reader as well as each other; direct address to a diverse and varied audience, anticipating their response; dialogic engagement with the classical canonical texts appropriating them in novel ways; intertextual engagement with both the indigenous as well as the Western culture and society and the shifting voices within the consciousness of the poet expressing the trans-cultural experience. Ghose's poetry is a multi-voiced discourse that is continuously shifting, evolving, and reshaping itself. Its dynamic, fluid and polyphonic nature makes each word vitally engaged in "living conversation" with the "social life" (Bakhtin, "Discourse" 280; 259) of its own context, other texts and contexts.

There is a dynamic and complex engagement with the reader in Ghose's work depending upon his identification, or distance from the implied audience. This "double-voiced" ("Discourse" 324) aspect of give and take is what makes his poetry open to dialogue. It is also dependent upon his use of various pronouns to denote his position. The awareness of two kind of audience; the West and the East; the 'us' and 'them', is particular to postcolonial discourse that addresses multiple and varied audience simultaneously, and thus creates a layered dialogue. And Ghose's postcolonial poetics is particular in creating this sense of varied audience. It fulfills Bakhtin's criterion for a dialogic discourse, and "faces outward away from itself, toward the listener-reader, and to a certain extent, thus anticipates possible reactions to itself" (Bakhtin, "Forms of Time" 257).

Out of the multitude of prevalent voices, one is the voice of a world weary man who by virtue of his experience directly addresses, imparts wisdom, or cynically questions his readers. Addressing the Eastern reader, in the poem "The Attack on Sialkot" he states: "Religion is irrelevant to grief: you will not agree, nor will Pakistan" (Ghose, *Selected Poems: Zulfikar Ghose* 16). In a similar manner repudiating the Imperial education system for creating an illusionary image of the West, Ghose addresses the "English reader", and states that the "Imperial Education" is responsible for creating illusions (Ghose, *Selected Poems* 41), and endorsing the "old-fashioned Eng. Lit view" in the poem entitled "An Imperial Education". In both the cases, the use of pronoun "you" and direct address reveals him in a superior position of the author who is informed by his experience of colonization as well as trans-nationalism. However, this is not always the case; the same voice, at times, also addresses and cynically questions the worth of the critic, the scholar and the man of learning. In the poem "The Counter Riddle", the question is

posed to the great scholars of the world inquiring if they have been able to decipher the great truths of existence. The inquiry is projected with the utterance: “Answer me, O scholar, speak, O man of learning!” (Ghose, *Selected Poems* 82), which is as much a question to himself, as to the literary intelligentsia.

Another voice that often speaks is at one with the readers, denoted by the use of the collective “we”, and “us” pronouns. It is the milder and conciliatory voice that shares grief, offers advice, and discusses possible future endeavors. It expresses concern at a friend’s death stating “we know such things happen” in “The Incurable Illness” (Ghose, *Selected Poems* 23), and then asks: “Shall we be dissuaded from discontent?” in the poem “Of Self Hatred” (30). Forming a part of the collective whole, it acknowledges in the poem “Sounds” that “we’re compelled to make our retreat / and put the fragments together” (Ghose, *Selected Poems* 65) in order to make something of the time to come. This voice is a complete antithesis to the superior voice discussed earlier. Therefore, the politics of “I” and “We” in poetic landscape of discontent and disease signifies poetry’s potential for breaking personal barriers. The poetic manifesto is clearly stated which is also a post-modern posturing; fragments defy wholesomeness, but to find essence in fragments is an alternative which Ghose’s poetry exceedingly relishes, and his fictional characters exemplify the modernist compulsions of accepting various contexts. Therefore, Ghose is successful in writing the situations and conditions of the diasporic and exilic communities, who by virtue of crossing borders become a living example of dialogic citizenship.

Ghose has never felt at home in either India or Pakistan, and though emphatically stating his British identity in an interview with Meyer, he also acknowledges that he has achieved his ideal “place” in America (Ghose qtd. in Khwaja 73). According to Bakhtin these continuously shifting identities or selves engage in a “struggle for influence within an individual’s consciousness” (“Discourse” 348) particular to the author of the novel. The postcolonial poetic discourse however, allows the poet the same freedom the novel allows its author, and like him Ghose “utilizes now one language, now another, in order to avoid giving himself up wholly to either of them” (348). Indulging in a “dialogue of languages” (348) and voices, he makes his poetry a site for contestation, and renegotiation. Ghose’s poetry is dialogically resonant, given his diasporic postcolonial context, it negotiates the self-addressing multiple perspectives and contexts, not only of the exilic experience, and the colonial past, but also the ensuing transnational present. Postcolonial

poetry, and in particular Ghose's poetry, specifically engages with the present to consistently renegotiate the self. Opposed to the limits Bakhtin outlines for epic poetry, that it is "beyond the sphere of possible contact with the developing, incomplete and therefore re-thinking and re-evaluating present" (Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel" 17), Ghose's poetry continuously engages not only the past, present, and imminent future, it is essentially a multi-voiced discourse that continuously shifts, evolves, and reshapes itself in terms of form, content, and associative contexts.

Ghose's poetry is an avowal of the multiple selves, existing at various positions. He, oscillating between "stranger or an inhabitant" in the poem "This Landscape, These People" (Ghose, *Selected Poems* 12) continuously questions his identity as the subcontinent Indian, an English man, or an American. These multi-vocal selves speak up in the poem "This Landscape, These People". He recalls identifying with the people of his native-land crying "for Independence" (*Selected Poems* 10), while in the same poem, he later states that even being "born here, among these people, I was a stranger" (*Selected Poems* 11). The cultural dichotomies and uncertainties which he encounters in-between his phases of physical and psychological transcendence, endow his poems with a paradigmatic resistance of dialogic proportion.

The same kind of oscillation between identification and alienation occurs in many of the poems with an English setting. Ghose articulates this experience of invisibility during his "eighth spring in England" where he felt like a "stranger" ("This Landscape, These People" *Selected Poems* 10). He wonders "Do they notice me . . . these Englishmen" (10), and painfully realizes that "with a look, the English transplant me / elsewhere" ("Alien" *Selected Poems* 13). He also laments the "swagger and sway", and the "impudence / of a native" ("This Landscape, These People" *Selected Poems* 10) he enjoyed in India, though now, has no more "Mecca to turn to" (*Selected Poems* "The Attack on Sialkot" 12).

It is clearly evident from these poems that Ghose is not comfortable in his own skin, never satisfied with one language or voice, he acknowledges this hybrid condition: "I am an old eagle, moulting / My music is hybrid jazz of no tradition" ("The Lost Culture" *Selected Poems* 22). This fluid self, an expression of his diasporic experience makes his poetry polyphonic; engaged in simultaneous dialogue "between self and other, author and reader, speaker and audience" (Weir 1). Thus the personal pronoun, "I" used in Ghose, is "not a singular I" (Ashbury, "Melodic Trains" 40) of the author, or the voice of the hero, it refers to a

multitude of selves and independent voices. Ghose's poetry thus displays a "double-voiced, double accented, [and] double styled *hybrid construction*" propounded by Bakhtin ("Discourse" 304).

In a Larkinesque manner, Ghose deliberately detaches and distances himself from what he observes. He desires the "cold perspective" of distance, and in the poem "Flying Over India" identifies "the point of the eagle's introspection / or its lonely watch-tower withdrawal" as his "point of view" (*Selected Poems* 9). This distanced self engages with "both the past and the future at the cusp of the present" (Mansoor 3). Ghose's poems often create a "third space" (Bhabha qtd. in Dobinson 10) where his present wise old self comes face to face with the past selves of his youth. In a narrative dialogue between a father and son, his poem "Across India: February 1952" captures the voice of his young self, who consistently asks questions from his father "*Why do we linger here among parrots?*" (*Selected Poems* 1). In another poem "The Loss of India" he encounters the troubled young boy who witnessed the partition first hand, who "cushioned his heart in the moss / of withdrawal for his India and his youth were lost" (*Selected Poems* 6), while in "The Mystique of Roots" he comes across the careless youth who "kick[s] at clover, / pluck[s] mustard flowers" (*Selected Poems* 7), not caring for his native land. Both these selves are observed by the grown up man who left his country for another, forever coming back to his past selves. These are just a few amongst the many echoes that people his poetry.

Apart from the various voices that call him "over and over and over" in the poem "The Mystique of Roots" (*Selected Poems* 7), Ghose also reworks, and revisits his previous works, engaging in a dialogue with himself, either in writing or in memory. In his poem "A Memory of Asia" he states that "this is a revision", and acknowledges, "I keep altering an image" (*Selected Poems* 50-51). Thus Ghose's identity is in constant flux shifting amongst the many selves that haunt his poetic space. This plurality of voice and the evolving self contribute to the "elastic environment" ("Discourse in the Novel" 276) that pervades Ghose's poems.

Ghose's poetry engages in a continuous dialogue with other works of literature, authors and artists. In his poem "At Pere Lachaise" he visits the "famous dead" (*50 Poems* 75) Balzac, Oscar Wilde, Maria Callas, and Jim Morrison. The graves of the various artists receive motley of visitors: some are visited by the young accompanied by exclamations or laughter, some by the old, accompanied by silence, and many by family, and an outpouring of grief. Such a diverse visitation from all ages, and classes

with their clichéd, eccentric, or odd responses, captures the very spirit of Parisian life and its various social groups. This slice of life, exposed by the poet is in its essence Bakhtinian. Engaging with varied groups this poem captures the “social life of discourse” as evident “in the open spaces of public squares, streets, cities, and villages, of social groups, generations and epochs” (“Discourse” 259). Peopled with various characters, be they famous writers, painters, poets, or the common lot, his poems voice the lived experience and vast travels of the poet.

In his poem entitled “The Force of Grammar”, Ghose attests to his active engagement with other texts, for the “books” in his “library began to speak”, “familiar passages at first / seemed a voice within my [his] mind” (*Selected Poems* 83). His poetry proves that all literature written at a certain time responds to the literature before it, as well the literature that comes after it. He recognizes the “distortions in the texts as if / the books were rebelling against the printed / words and offering their own revised versions” (*Selected Poems* 83), thus every “word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it” (Bakhtin, “Discourse” 279). All words are answers to the words spoken before them, thus making the literary discourse an incessant dialogue taking place over centuries. In Bakhtin’s terms “word lives as it were, on the boundary between its own context and another, alien, context” (“Discourse” 284). Each word and utterance in Ghose’s poetry exists at a threshold, an imminent condition of merging with the other.

Like all typical postcolonial writing, his poetry not only answers, corrects, extends and appropriates canonical works of literature, but also informs and is continually informed by the previous texts. It is essentially “intertextual” (Kristeva qtd. in Alfaro 268) conversing with a multitude of texts. Many classical texts speak in Ghose’s poems, like Yeats’ “Sailing to Byzantium” in “The Body’s Independence” reverberating Yeats’ evaluation of the modern world as “no country for old men” while Ghose’s India is “no country/ for Princes” (*Selected Poems* 4).

In another poem “The Other World” (Ghose *Selected Poems* 43), “evening falls and there are miles / to go yet” echoes Frost’s “miles to go before I sleep” in the poem “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”. Along with other literary texts, Ghose also engages with literary and mythological figures like Odysseus, the wanderer, the “compulsive voyager” (*Selected Poems* 46) in his poem “Come, Sailor”. He hears the Siren’s voice, heard by Odysseus, and addresses him: “the voice you heard / in ancient mythologies / calls”, and asks him to “Come, sailor, journey towards the cold fog” (47). Ghose’s poem “Come, Sailor” also

converses with other texts like T.S. Eliot's to rework the metaphor of the "drowned Phoenician sailor" in "The Wasteland" who sheds his nationality to become the nameless, yet universal "drowned sailor" in Ghose retaining no nationality, ethnicity or race (*Selected Poems* 46).

In Ghose's poetic discourse, "another's word, another's utterance, becomes the subject of passionate communication" (Bakhtin, "Discourse" 337), thus classical literature becomes an "object of interpretation, discussion, evaluation, rebuttal, support, further development" (337). Ghose's reworking of classical texts continues with his seven poems entitled: "Lady Macbeth's Farewell to Scotland", where Lady Macbeth haunts the surreal, nightmarish world of suspicion, denial and exposure. In the poem, "The Shadow Woman" she becomes the "shadow" of her former self (*Selected Poems* 88) and exists in peripheries. His statement "O Lady of Shadows, you were vilely illuminated!" in the poem "Exotic Nights" (*Selected Poems* 91), not only directly addresses her but also gives another version of her plight. The use of past tense "were", directly addresses the Shakespearean text and the Western tradition in which she has been misjudged carrying the burden of centuries of misrepresentation. In Ghose's world of "defunct genes", biological experiments, (*Selected Poems* 88) and gadgets for "planet's entertainment", she roams looking for anything that "could still reproduce itself" ("Among Perfumed Landscapes"; "On the Poisoned Land" *Selected Poems* 94; 89).

Moreover, apart from literary texts Ghose's poetry also engages other art forms incorporating "extraliterary language" (Bakhtin, "Prehistory" 67). Be it the "rhythm of Webern" in "Notes towards a Nature Poem" (*Selected Poems* 55); "Verdi's *Forza*" in "Destiny" 79; the rising tempo of a Qawali in "Nusrat" (Ghose *50 Poems* 82); a "Painting by Gauguin" in "The Oceans" (67); or a "Bunuel movie" in "Flying Over Extinct Volcanoes" (71). Incorporating other arts like music, the opera, painting and media reveals the "heteroglot" (Bakhtin, "Discourse" 265) nature of his poetry in which the varied discourses create a vocal symphony.

Along with other Pakistani poets who write in English Ghose has created a "bilingual discourse" moulding the "European models to become synchronous with the inflections of the vernacular" (Mansoor 10). Furthermore, idioms, metaphors and techniques from varied origins engage within his poetry creating a rich "elastic environment" (Mansoor 12), not much different from the Bakhtinian discourse. Ghose attests to the complex dynamics of the bilingual and hybrid self in his poem "One

Chooses a Language”, he states “my tongue rejecting a vernacular / for a new language, resisted utterance” (*Selected Poems* 48) and learnt to imitate the “accents of English soldiers” (48). Although Ghose refers to imitation here, it is important to note that out of this emerges the “distinctive voice” as defined by Hashmi, which is “modern, at times modernist, contemporary, relevant, and genuinely of the place. . . [carrying] the responsibility and the authority of an ancient civilization” (“Poetry, Pakistani Idiom in English” 268).

In Hashmi's words “all genuine writing addresses itself to its natural and social environment [. . .] its elisions, mutations, indulgent equivocations, contractions, expansions, absences, or hesitations” alternatively, an indulgence and a constraint” (“Poetry, Pakistani Idiom in English, and the Groupies” 4). This holds true for the emergent Pakistani idiom employed by Zulfikar Ghose. Asma Mansoor further identifies in Ghose's poetry the “rhythms of speech synchronizing in chorus with controlled and formal versification (12), making his poetry a “living language” that exists “outside the artist's study” (Bakhtin, “Discourse” 259).

Ghose's poems written over a vast time period, speak to other texts, other discourses, as well as other forms of social expression. His poetry resonates with “other's words, varying degrees of otherness” as well as varying degrees of one's “own-ness” (Bakhtin qtd. in Clarke 7). It is both a product of his times and conditions, as well as a response to all texts and contexts that have existed before it. Ghose attests to the fact in his poem entitled “A Memory of Asia”: “what's / remembered occurs to the mind as a line from / someone else's poem or a phrase from a fiction” (*Selected Poems* 52). This interplay between fact and fiction, memory and the present, certainty and confusion becomes complex when “the very language of remembering is someone else's / style which one's voice is convinced is its own”(52). Hence, true to Bakhtinian notion, each “word lives” in Ghose's world “as it were, on the boundary” between its own context and another, alien, context” (“Discourse” 284).

The varied voices that resonate in his poetry may become blurred, but remain unmerged as he states “I am nearly certain / I am quoting some poet . . . it could be something I wrote” (*Selected Poems* 52). This interplay centralizes Bakhtin's ideas of the text taking on the “extraliterary” (“Prehistory” 67) features of a “living” language (“Discourse” 280) incorporating the “social life of discourse” making it essentially polyphonic. As with Bakhtinian dialogic discourse, in his poetry there occurs an “assimilation . . . of other's words” (Bakhtin qtd.

in Clarke 7), so that the speech becomes “half ours and half someone else’s” (Bakhtin, “Discourse” 345).

A Bakhtinian reading of Zulfikar Ghose’s poetic works appropriately exposes, “breaks open, refashions, and inscribes” “a new series of perceptual contradictions” in his poetry (Kristeva qtd. in Weir 6). It brings to the fore inherent characteristics of Ghose’s poetic style that have been previously unexplored. Moreover, highlighting it as a fluid, conversational and intertextual discourse, it opens novel ways of critical exploration. It enables the critic to read his poetry not only as a “double-voiced” (Bakhtin, “Discourse” 324) discourse in connection to the hybrid and the trans-national, but also as the ever evolving expression of the poet grappling with issues of an identity in flux. The study opens up multiple avenues of research particularly of the postcolonial texts in relation to their own as well as the other’s context.

To conclude, the multiplicity of voices as evidenced in Ghose’s poetry transform the poetic language into a medium congenial for conveying the process of synchronization of contentious elements Bakhtin originally envisioned for fictional narratives, and is also called “process of becoming” (Bakhtin, “Epic and Novel” 5). However, poetry and more emphatically postcolonial poetry as it invokes a diverse range of geographical and cultural appreciation is also “polyphonic”, “responsive”, “evolving” and “dialogic” – all characteristics that Bakhtin associates with the novel. This kind of alternative reading of poetic-discourse prevents poetry to be tagged as a genre that is exclusively monologic hence capable of dialogic resistance. By implication, postcolonial poetry as it harbors a dialogic potential helps identifying thematic and stylistic dormancy. Therefore, Ghose’s poetry also exemplifies a postcolonial dialogic imaginary.

Works Cited

- Abbasi, Abu ul Wafa Mansoor Ahmed. "Paradigms of Style: A Style of Zulfikar Ghose's Novels." Diss. Arkansas University, 2012. <scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/297/>. Web. 13 Oct. 2015.
- Abbasi, Mansoor. *Zulfikar Ghose: The Lost Son of the Punjab*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, *Google Book Search*. <cambridgescholars.com/zulfikar-ghose>. Web. 17 Aug. 2016.
- Alfaro, Maria Jesus Martinez. "Intertextuality: Origins and Development of the Concept." *Atlantis* 18.1/2 (1996): 268-285. *Jstor*. Web. 14 Oct. 2011.
- Ashbery, John. "Melodic Trains." *The New Yorker*, 17 May 1976. <newyorker.com/magazine/1976/05/17/melodic-trains> Web. 10 Feb. 2017.
- Awan, Muhammad Safeer. "'Unwilled Choices': The Exilic perspectives on home and location in the Works of Zulfikar Ghose and Mohsin Hamid." *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies* 5.2 (2013): 6-21. *Paskistaaniat.org*. Web. 12 Oct. 2015.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich. "Discourse in the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, Edited by Michael Holquist, Translated by Caryl Emerson and Holquist, University of Texas Press, 1981. Print.
- . "Epic and Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, Edited by Michael Holquist, Translated by Caryl Emerson and Holquist, University of Texas Press, 1981. Print.
- . "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, Edited by Michael Holquist, Translated by Caryl Emerson and Holquist, University of Texas Press, 1981. Print.
- . Introduction. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, Edited by Michael Holquist, Translated by Caryl Emerson and Holquist, University of Texas Press, 1981. Print.
- Bellanca, Mary Ellen. "Alien Voices, Ancient Echoes: Bakhtin, Dialogism, and Pope's *Essay on Criticism*." *PLL. Questia.com*. <questia.com/library/journal/1G114833158/alien-voices-ancient-echoes-bakhtin-dialogism> Web. 5 Jan. 2014.

- Bois Du, W.E.B. Introduction. "*The Souls of Black Folk: W.E.B. Du Bois*", edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Terry Hume Oliver, Norton Company, 1999. Print.
- Burt, Steve. "Review." Rev. of *The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English* by Jahan Ramazani. *College Literature* 30.3 (2003): 157-59. *Jstor*, Web 14 May 2015.
- Clarke, Richard L.W. "Notes on Mikhail Bakhtin 'The Problem of Speech Genres (1952-53).'" 1-9. <riwclarke.net>. 12 Feb. 2017.
- Dobinson, T. "Occupying the 'Third Space': Perspectives and Experiences of Asian English Language Teachers." *Critical Perspectives on Language Education*. Springer.com. 10 May 2012.
- Eliot, T.S. "The Wasteland." *Poetry Foundation* <poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/47311>. 10 Feb. 2017.
- Frances, Dickey. Review of *Poetry and Its Others: News, Prayer, Song, and the Dialogue of Genres* by Jahan Ramazani. *Twentieth Century Literature*. Par.4. Web 14 May 2015. <questia.com.www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-397579100/poetry-and-its-others-news-prayer-song-and-the>
- Frost, Robert. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening". *Poetryfoundation.org*. Web 14 May 2015. <poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/42891>.
- Ghose, Zulfikar. *Confessions of a Native-Alien*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965. Web. *AbeBooks.com*. 14 May 2015.<abebooks.com/book-search/title/confessions-of-a-native-alien/author/zulfikar-ghose/>
- . *Selected Poems: Zulfikar Ghose*. Oxford UP, 1991, Print.
- . *50 Poems: 30 Selected 20 New*. Oxford UP, 2010, Print.
- Hashmi, Alamgir. "Poetry, Pakistani Idiom in English, and the Groupies." *World Literature Today* 64.2 (1990): 268-71. *Jstor*. Web. 14 May 2015
- . Review: "A Stylized Motif of Eagle Wings Woven." *World Literature Today* vol.66.1 (1992): 66-69. *Jstor*. Web. 10 Oct. 2015.
- Innes, Lyn. "Review." Rev. of *The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English* by Jahan Ramazani. *Research in African Literatures* 35.3 (2004): 178-79. *Jstor*. Web. 10 Oct. 2015.

- Kanaganayakam, Chevanayakam. *Paradigms of Absence: The Writings of Zulfikar Ghose*. University of British Columbia, 1985, *ubc*, www.open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/831/items/1.0096670. Accessed 20 Oct. 2015.
- . *Structures of Negation: The Writings of Zulfikar Ghose*. University of Toronto Press, 1993, pp. 1-226. *books.google.com*.
- Khwaja, Waqas Ahmed. "Zulfikar Ghose (1935-)." *South Asian Novelists in English: An A-to-Z Guide*, Ed. Jania C.Sanga, Greenwood Press, 2003. *Books.google.com*. Web. 27 July. 2016.
- Mansoor, Asma. "Notes of a New Harp: Tracing the Evolution of Pakistani Poetry in English." *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies* 4.1 (2012): 14-38. *Scholarlyexchange*. Web. 10 Feb. 2017.
- Muneeza Shamsie. "South Asian Muslims: Fiction and Poetry in English." *Religion and Literature* 43.1 (2011): 149-157. *Jstor*. Web. 2 Nov. 2016.
- Ozcelik, Merve. *Sylvia Plath: The Confessions of a Poetic Soul*. Dissertation, Fatih University, 2014, 24-34. Web. 10 Feb. 2017.
- Ramazani, Jahan. "Modernist Bricolage, Postcolonial Hybridty." *A Transnational Poetics*. University of Chicago Press, 2013. <press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/T/bo6637372.html> 10 Feb. 2017.
- Rehman, Tariq. "Deracination and Alienation in the Works of Zulfikar Ghose." *Journal of the English Literary Club*, 1984-85.
- Scanlon, Mara. Abstract. *Poetry and Dialogism: Hearing Over*, par.1. <springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137401281_1>. Accessed 9 Jan. 2017.
- Steinman, Lisa M. Review of *Poetry and Its Others: News, Prayer, Song, and the Dialogue of Genres* by Jahan Ramazani. *Wallace Stevens Journal*, 38.1 (2014), Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014. *Project Muse*, Web. 9 Feb. 2017.
- Weir, Zach. "How Soon Is Now? Reading and the postcolonial Present." *Postcolonial Text* 2.4 (2008): 1-20. *Postcolonial.org*. Web. 10 Feb. 2017.

Yeats, William Butler. "Sailing to Byzantium." *Poetry Foundation*, <poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/43291>. 10 Feb. 2017.