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**Alienation and Fragmentation; A Modern Critical Analysis of Zulfikar Ghose's Poem
"Disturbed Nights"**

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Abstract:

This research study delves into the mental crisis of modern humans as they face alienation and fragmentation of psyche related to the industrial revolution and materialistic pursuits in their lives. This paper aims to provide a deep analysis of modern humans and their sufferings due to modern age technological developments through the poem, "Disturbed Nights" written by Zulfikar Ghose. Ghose in his poem tries to awake the anxious minds of modern men who are no more than puppets to the machines of the said age. Though, multitude of writings are out there that focus on the mental crisis and dilemma of modern world, but hardly any body of work can be found that demonstrates the diasporic consciousness and the multidimensional richness of South Asian poetry in general and Zulfikar Ghose in specific, as a blend of the effects of both modernism and colonialism on human's mentality. Therefore, this poem is a masterpiece that mirrors the chaos and troubles of the modern age as well as the struggles of post-colonial humans dealing with the resulting alienation and fragmentation. This research tries to fill the gap by alluding to the sufferings of the diasporic community who experienced the traumas of colonialism and its aftermath in the form of alienation, fragmentation, isolation, disconnection, and mental crisis.

Keywords: Mental Crisis, Modern Humans, Alienation, Fragmentation, Diaspora, Disturbed Nights by Zulfikar Ghose.

Introduction:

Zulfikar Ghose is one of the most accomplished and prominent Pakistani-American diasporic writer, who wrote the poem "Disturbed Nights" in an era of great psychological depression. He is a postmodern poet, a great short-story writer, a true novelist and a genius literary critic who championed the cause of common people through the decades of his literary writing. Postmodern era is a period of history where humans are facing conflicts in new forms and ways in rapid and ever-changing advancements in every field. The struggle to balance the gap between changing situations resulted in the fragmentation of men's psyche and alienation of humans who are social beings. "Disturbed Nights" is a thought-provoking piece of literature that attempts to

portray the fragmented psyche of human beings in a rapidly advancing and changing world that leads to alienation, inaction and loss of genuine human connections. Ghose in his works give us glimpses of uncouth, uncaring and uncompassionate behavior of society towards its fellow-beings (Mahmood et al 2015). Ghose in “Disturbed Nights” triumphs the role of a perfect artist, being a detached observer at the same time. Ghose’s “Disturbed Nights” is a prism that portrays Postmodern era with all its traits of social and psychological conditions of men due to aftermaths of colonialism as Postcolonial literature is a representation of racial segregation, including slavery, upheaval and displacement, isolation, and exile experienced by the people who were formerly colonized (Masood, 2019). Ghose’s poem is an embedded painting of natural language, imagery mixed with simple style; yet, employing metaphorical expressions and blending realistic and fantastical elements through symbolism. The force of his creations makes the readers sneak and seek into the purpose and message of text. The works of Ghose are a unified whole of religious, political, social and economical oppressive structure of authorities. Especially, poetry of Ghose deals with the socio-culture fabric as well as individual aspects of modern life; with an embodiment of the elements of diaspora, exile, alienation, loneliness, strangeness with a search and quest for identity and cultural values. (Rana, 2020).

The researcher, therefore, in this paper intends to analyze that how the magical combination of thoughts in a poetic language conveys the essence of the era in which it is written. This paper also delves deep into the poem to investigate more about the condition, connection and advancements of the people in the present times that affect and predict the future of humanity.

Literature Review:

“Disturbed Nights” by Zulfikar Ghose is a poem that has not been subjected to much discussion before and scholarly critical analysis. Its themes, its symbolism, its imagery, in addition to its broader contextual relevance to the modern era do not come to the light of scholarly eyes as much as his other writings that are the center of attention to the researchers.

Kanaganayakam (1985) comments on Ghose in his dissertation “Paradigms of absence: the writings of Zulfikar Ghose” that he refuses to be confined and delimited by the national boundaries and traditional flair, his complaine to probe with new modes, and his inclination to create non-referential and demanding complex arts may partly explain his entrustment to that blurred area of grey where neither the student nor the literary critic yearns to roam. Therefore, kanaganayamkam (1985) aspires to highlight in his study that Ghose, far from being obscurantist or abstruse, has at least three major claims to seek credit. Firstly, that his writings despite their variations in narrative form and atmospheric evince are in remarkable and exceptional coherence. Secondly that his work showcases a nuance of composition and intricacy of imagination which acclaim him as a contemporary writer worthy of notable attention. Thirdly that in future, the archetypes of resistance which he displays through his fiction, could offer the possibility of new poetics for the artistic portrayal of indegenious alien encouters in the form of otherness (Kanaganayamkam, 1985).

Rana (2020) points in his study, “Analysis of Zulfikar Ghose Collection of Poems in Perspective of Michel Foucault’s Bio Power Theory”, that Ghose’s works are integrated with the elements of diaspora, exile, alienation, dissolution, peculiarities and quest for one’s own cultural values. He points that Ghose, being one the most acclaimed and finest poet of diaspora, deserves an

attentive research on his writings because his complex yet simple creations of art have been centre of attraction in providing a new cosmos of poetic exploration for scholarly research. The novelty of themes and alienating essence in Ghose's poetry earns him his fame and attention. For that reason, a plethora of scholars, countless writers, various authors and a few researchers have worked on Ghose's writing. (Rana 2020)

Fredrick Ruban (2016) in his research paper titled as "Reminiscence Surfaces Diasporic Consciousness: A Comparative Analysis of Indigenous and Overseas Episodes of Zulfikar Ghose's "This Landscape, These People", has dissected Ghose's poetry based on his diasporic expressions. Ruban investigates the impacts of disconnection and isolated otherness on modern humans that are reflected in Ghose's poetry. Ruban has also mentioned how Ghose has portrayed white people during his migration period. The poems which the researcher had picked for his study have different settings pertaining to Ghose's memories and present conditions. In essence, the paper deals with basic patterns of recollection enfolding in the transnational identity. (Ruban, 2016)

In addition to Ruban (2016), Rana points out that Ghose exceptionally portrays the ambivalent diasporic experience which he has experienced in England. He points that Ghose makes comparison by availing the literary device, simile, that paints an utterly crushing sense of loneliness and dislocation in the unknown land while demonstrating a sense of diasporic consciousness. (Rana,2020)

Moving forward to delve in the conceptual literature, Schacht (2015) in his book "Alienation" points out that Alienation is the key buzzword of modern times especially in our times. Alienation is applied everywhere, in every field and every domain ranging from politics to modern films. But he asks that what does the word "alienation" really mean? What does it refer to? What is meant when someone says they are alienated? Is it a relationship phase or a state of mind? If it is a bitter reality that modern men are alienated, then from what or whom? Are we alienated from workplace, or social relationships, or from ourselves? Or in a nutshell, modern men is alienated from all these? (Schacht, 2015).

Sahan (2021) sheds light in his article, "Alienation in the Urban Structure and its Impact on the Individual and Society", on alienation by pointing that alienation, which is caused by social isolation and psychic fragmentation, is a key concern for modern psychological domain and a major societal problem. He tries to define the core concept of alienation as a mental and physical state of a person when he isolates himself from the material as well as his spiritual World. This distancing makes him unable to change the reality of his world in which he lives. He further remarks that alienation can be self-imposed as voluntary as well as imposed by an emotionless society in involuntary. Sahan also posits the importance of research on this aspect of society and individuals as he argues that alienation is not just part of literature, but many other fields such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, and language. This makes alienation, a phenomenon of modern world which needs to be tackled and handled by scientific research, in order to reveal both its form and essence (Sahan, 2021).

Under the chunks of literature review, it is obvious that alienation and fragmentation are groundbreaking ideologies in modern literature; especially in Ghose's poetry that needs to be analyzed and criticized in to led a foundation of journey for further research on these

characteristics of modern era, that are especially evident in Pakistani diasporic literature through the beauty of poetic language. As there is a paucity of research work on Ghose's poetry and eminently a dearth on his theme of alienation and fragmentation in "Disturbed Nights"; therefore, it needs to be explored deeply which justifies the current study.

Research Methodology:

This research paper adopts a qualitative data analysis as it uses interpretatory, descriptive, and explanatory methodology to explore the depth of Ghose's poem. This research in the form of qualitative method of analysis, accommodates a number of empirical evidence and original first-hand materials which in this case is Ghose's poem, "Disturbed Nights". It has also used different secondary sources in the form of books, articles, and research papers to explore the domain in order to fulfill the research gap. Using the qualitative method of interpretation, this research tries to explore both the analytical nature and perceptive interpretations of unique and individual viewpoints, urges and reflexes to phenomenon, or situations or events. Abiding by these guidelines, the current body of research mainly uses original texts and content analysis for data acquisition and its processing. The text of Zulfikar Ghose's poem "Disturbed Nights" is the primary source, while all other books, articles and cited sources are secondary sources of information.

Theoretical Framework:

Alienation is known as one of the pivotal and challenging concepts of 20th century which was championed by many great writers and philosophers altering its meaning throughout the history. In theology, it refers to the aloofness between God and his creations; in social discourse, it points the loss of the liberty of an individual; and in Political economy of English, it highlights the transfer of rights of ownership.

G.W.F Hegel (1807) in his work "The Phenomenology of Spirit (1807)" was the first author to give a philosophical doctrine of alienation, calling it as a state of the soul becoming other than its true being in the realm of Objectivity. Then, Emily Durkhiem in his well-known works "Division of Labour" and "Suicide" brought forth the term "anomie" which pinpoints that series of events through which the unwritten collective values of social cohesion enter into a dilemma after an extension of division of labour (Musto, M. 2013).

Alienation was also the focus of German sociologists as George Simmel in his work the "The Philosophy of Money (1900)" depicted as the process of human relations becoming impersonal due to the dominance of social institutions over human autonomy. This concept was promoted by Marxists for its critique of capitalism, but over the range of time it was counted as the lonely struggles of humans in the face of unhappiness (Musto, M. 2013).

Additionally, the concept of fragmentation in literary writing was first depicted in 20th century writings of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, through the use of technique called "Stream of consciousness". These authors tried to show the changing complex pattern of thinking of human mind.

There is a representation of disconnected pattern of individual ideas or a non-continuous way of thoughts in a fragmentary writing style. Fragmentation sheds light on the disoriented and unorganised pattern of language which serves the best to depict the spirit of modern age (Jasim, H. H. 2024). Regarding the empirical literature on Ghose's poetry, it is evident that the hybrid

diasporic awareness of Ghose had substantial repercussion on his evident theme of alienation and fragmentation, as Ghose himself wrote that when we left Bombay in 1952 for migration to England, we belonged to nowhere because we were aliened to both the countries. Pointing at his new country, England, he said that it only highlighted the already profound sense of alienation and utter desolation from the country that he left behind. Commenting on it further, he pointed at the distinction between the two countries of his early life which has been the fragmented and psychotic theme of much of his thinking. In a nutshell, he professes that all these conditions created a psychological conflict and an urging need to know that to where did he belong; but despite everything, both the need and the conflict remain unaddressed. As, these ideas are noteworthy in the diasporic writing of Ghose; therefore, this exploration will help in bringing forth new ideas in the modern literary writing of colonialism- impacted writer.

Analysis and Discussion:

“Disturbed Nights” by Zulfikar Ghose (1964) is a literary piece of art that depicts the life of modern men; their psychological fragmentation, social alienation, and nostalgia for the past through the use of a modern technique called the Stream of Consciousness. Ghose uses first person narrator in his poem to personalize the experiences and make an emotional connection between his work and the readers. The first person narrator describes his experience of hearing the siren of an ambulance that triggers his imagination and memories leading him to wander between past and present marking the dilemma of our times. This poem acts as a poignant master-piece portraying the inaction of modern men who are just waiting for the Godot. Just like, the narrator who stood behind “a Photinia hedge” (Ghose, 1964) and “watched the paramedics walk-up” (Ghose, 1964) but never tried to go out and be an active participant in the eco-environment of his society; a socially beneficial and connected being.

Moreover, Zulfikar Ghose also points at the drawbacks and destructions of modern industrialist and technologically-sophisticated society to criticize and question the claim of modern humanity that they are the most advanced generation of beings. He supports his claim by highlighting that automobiles are technological inventions created to bring comfort and ease in human life; but due to chaotic and hasty lifestyle, accidents became more common, and for that the anti-dote of ambulances were made. This loss of safety of humans and the triviality of valuable human life in modern era is depicted by “siren” which is a symbol of emergency and life in danger that is backed by the line “as usual of some emergency across the valley and imagined an accident” (Ghose, 1964).

In addition to this, Ghose demonstrates the negative impacts of industrialization after 18th century which are at peak and multiplying hundreds more times in this fast-paced technological world as evident from the destruction of mother nature and devastation of climate change. “An accident/in which a man driving home late from a bar has crossed/ The grassy median and plunged into an accident” (Ghose, 1964) illustrates the transition of humans from a natural order to man-made disorder resulting in destruction of human life in the form of accidents, alienation, and fragmentation. The “green maidan” is a symbol of nature created by God, but men tries to cross the set limitations of God as he drives from “bar”, a representation of “gray morality and disturbed spiritual connection” and thus he “plunges into an oncoming truck”, a human invention that crushes humans and thus humanity (Ghose, 1964).

The loss of focus and meaning in human life which is a primary cause of an alienation and fragmentation is also highlighted by Ghose as; "young boys in a jeep, beer cans in hand and shouting/along with thumping rock music" (Ghose, 1964). These lines portray that modern young men are lost in trivial, unnecessary, meaningless, and non beneficial tasks; therefore, when they meet an "unexpectedly sharp bend in the road" the tests and turmoils in the journey of life, they are unprepared to tackle it and thus "have lost control" of the car of life resulting in "unnecessary deaths" of positivity and of human creativity (Ghose, 1964). Zulfikar Ghose also depicts that at a "young age" we align our interests to the pathway that meet the designed destination of our life but this alignment requires great focus, attention, and clarity of mind that the young generation of the modern era are devoid of. Therefore, they astray from the right path, collapsing before reaching the awaited destiny. (Ghose, 1964).

Furthermore, the beer and bar are symbols of escapism from modern materialistic burdens and responsibilities. These symbols also depict the cultural ambiguity and social diversity of modern era where each human goes to bars and party places to demolish their inner emptiness because modern men are particularly plagued by being alone in a pack of surrounding humans, the same lonely humans. In the bar, each human meets other different people from different diverse backgrounds with different mentality, where each of them constantly tries to deal with their own alienation and fragmentation of psyche as pointed by Younger that suffering is a particular human experience that often tends to bring with it loneliness or alienation from others as well as one's own self (Younger, 1995).

Notably, Zulfikar Ghose through his first person narrator of the poem attempts to critique the modern media and its catastrophic impact on human psyche. He asserts that modern men only think of unnecessary deaths when they hear a siren as "For these/ Are the mornings-paper headlines telling of a night's disaster" (Ghose, 1964). These lines are a true portrayal of the proverb that first impression is the last impression as starting the day with bad, mind-disturbing deadly news lead to "hectic whole day". Ergo, social media is a source of crisis of modern mental health and psychic fragmentation (Ghose, 1964).

The modern sapiens are so indulged in everyday, energy-dragging, meaningless activities that they don't have any time to learn the tactic of criticism, tolerance and balancing of chaotic life caused by disturbed psyche. They arise from deep sleep only when "elm tree lit up by approaching/headlights and then the whole front yard illuminated"(Ghose, 1964). Here, the elm tree symbolises the human consciousness which is lit up only by approaching difficulties of life and afterwards it illuminates the whole front yard. The front yard can be interpreted as a symbol of first brain, the Cerebrum known for its critical thinking and decision making ability that humans are deeply immersed in fiddling around futile efforts that they have lost their charm of illuminated beings. However, this statement can also be seen as an optimistic note, as it points out at human psychic abilities to retain its creativity at the very edge of destruction amidst struggling with so many distracting issues as "alienation is an umbrella concept that includes powerlessness, meaningless, social isolation, cultural estrangement, and self-estrangement" (Geyer&Heinz, 1992). If, this level of psychic stability is not achieved ,then "the white light dazzles" ,the peace and clamness dazzles and finally fades into "alternate red and blue flashes" reflecting uncertain emotional state from which unprepared humans cannot escape and

ultimately fall into an abyss of depression and anxiety, while having "flung a hand across my eyes" (Ghose,1964).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the "Disturbed Nights" is a modern age masterpiece that critically and creatively highlights the dilemmas of modern men; how to balance between increasingly industrialised life and a calm natural way of life. Zulfikar Ghose, a diasporic writer beautifully presents the alienation and fragmentation of modern men who suffered from chaos of modern age along with colonialism. The aftermath of Industrial Revolution and Colonization led many people to absurdity and alienation as social bonding ended while everyone ran after materialistic gains. This poem is a strong reminder to behold the strings of our natural creativity and rules of divine humanity in order to stay in peace and psychic stability. Humans are made to fit into natural order and the disorder of that order by industrial revolution led to such issues as alienation and fragmentation. These modern men sufferings are unbearable because humans at first are social animals, so they can't live happily while being alienated. Also, humans are the only species that have a complex evolution of intelligence. So if that mind is fragmented, humans will lose their race of intelligence and will come down to the stage of wild animals. In a nutshell, modern men need to pay attention to their association and way of thinking and socialising because in the end all we need is a healthy mind and beneficial human relationships.

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