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# "The Triple Mirror of the Self" by Zulfiqar Ghose

## INTRODUCTION

### Context and Background

The thesis examines incongruity and identity crises in Zulfiqar Ghose's *The Triple Mirror of the Self* (1992) through post colonial aspect. Identity is a major theme of postcolonial literature. It has room for further discussion and finding new horizons in works of the writers who left their native culture and settled in some English speaking country with different culture. Many Asian and African writers have suffered the crisis of their identity while living in a foreign country with alien culture and life style. Identity crisis starts when a person is not given due social and cultural status in the society where he is living. This thesis studies cultural, lingual, political, racial, literary and religious issues that contributed to this crisis. The study is also helpful for further understanding of Zulfiqar Ghose who has contributed to English poetry, novels and critical essays. The desire for identity and recognition can be felt after keen reading of his novels and it seems to vaguely shine and silently run in his novels. The purpose of this thesis is to locate the identity crisis in the novels of Zulfiqar Ghose, find out the socio-cultural and political reasons for the crisis and throw light on some grey areas which were either ignored previously or could not be discussed sufficiently.

Identity crisis is generally the crisis of adolescence that can find its outlet in works of the writers in their mature age. Collins English Dictionary defines identity crisis: "A state in which a person experiences uncertainty about who they really are and their proper role in life" Identity crisis is a psychological term, carried by psychologist Erik Erikson, which means the failure to achieve ego identity during adolescence. Identity crisis is generally the crisis of adolescence that can find its outlet in works of the writers in their mature age. Forming self-image and facing unfavorable circumstances with unsupportive political cultural influence may lead to identity crisis. Erikson's own interest in identity began in childhood. Born Ashkenazic Jewish, Erikson felt that he was an outsider. He describes identity as something subjective. He believes that identity crisis as a quality of unself-conscious living, can be gloriously obvious in a young person who has found himself as he has found his communality. In him we see emerge a unique unification of what is irreversibly given- that is, body type and temperament, giftedness and vulnerability, infantile models and acquired ideals –with the open choices provided in available roles, occupational possibilities, values offered, mentors met, friendship made and first sexual encounters. Quite a few modern sub-continental writers discuss identity crisis in their novels and try to trace out its reasons.

The conception of diaspora has been productive in its attention to the real-life movement of peoples throughout the planet, whether or not these migrations are through alternative or compulsion. Recently, students have distinguished between completely different styles of diaspora, supported its causes like imperialism, trade or labor migrations, or by the sort of social coherence inside the diaspora community and it ties to the ancestral lands. Some diaspora communities maintain sturdy political ties with their land. Different qualities that will be typical of the many diasporas are thoughts of come back, relationships with different communities within the diaspora, and lack of full assimilation into the host country. As Bhabha opines: "The study of

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world literature might be the study of the way in which cultures recognize themselves through their projections of otherness. Where, once, the transmission of national traditions was the major theme of a world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonized or political refugees – those border and frontier conditions – may be the terrains of world literature." South Asian diasporic fiction has been widely celebrated for its illustration of culturally hybrid characters that challenge mounted conceptions of ethnic and racial identity. Recent novels by Pakistani diasporic writers, however, expose the political limits of discourses of cultural hybridity following the events of 9/11. Diaspora keeps on creating queries related to its fluidity and expanse and writers interpret the multiple problems that are inherent. Migrations and acculturation are a relatable phenomenon that leads human perceptions.

On the one hand Pakistani Diasporic writers are bracketed with the Asian, South Asian diasporic identity, and on the other they need to respond to international political crises like the author affair, the Gulf War or, additionally, recently, terrorist attack, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and therefore the confrontation between India and Asian nation over geographical area. Whereas a Pakistani transnational identity is usually submerged to a lower place these alternative identities, it's indeed crucial in understanding the conflicting pressures to that young Pakistanis are subjected in America, significantly since September/11, and the clash between numerous cultures in diasporic conditions. Fictional literature that's influenced by the diasporic or migratory experiences of displaced black communities, generally as a result of forced slavery. Migration that results in separation is also seen as rebirth during a new place, city, country marked by a replacement culture, new changes and then on. If migration is reincarnation, it takes the memory back to the sooner birth because the migrants have to be compelled to build a new world and conjointly die in hope and dread.

Issues of identity are relevant within the current dispensations of continually reconstituting politics, gender identities, personal, national and international relations, particularly as identities are understood relationally. In varied fields of interactions, this is often additionally accentuated within the light of changing patterns of globalizations, similarly as personal/ gender reassignments. And these prospects still enlarge. Except for the "Third World" lady we use this term terribly self-consciously during a postcolonial context, the identity issue is so central. In *The Triple Mirror of the Self*, Zulfikar Ghose attempts to scour this difficult territory. No wonder then, the book is complex in organization: shifting narrators, shifting narrative, a backdrop that spans continents and climes. Of the book's three parts, the first 'The Burial of the Self' is the most impressive, if the most difficult. It is set in an uncertain part of Amazonia, in a tiny settlement in the great rain forests of South America. Urim, the scattered one, our hero, has arrived there from the modern metropolises of the world, seeking in a nameless fashion, to bury the self. Other men too have arrived here, of similar provenance, but driven by different needs.

Ghose was born in Sialkot which is now in Pakistan in 1935 by Muslim parents. 1940 is considered a violent and traumatic decade due to Hindu-Muslim clashes in the subcontinent. Opposite to this Ghose's early life period spent easy going then his family migrated to Mumbai in 1942 and the area was rural at that time without any development of industrialization. In his autobiographical account *Confessions of a Native-Alien* (1965), he narrates rural beauty and facts of the time. He also discusses the everyday life of common people living there and their struggle to make their livelihood. This solemn image of the impoverished people in the rustic area is interpreted. It was also a time marked by the struggle for the independence of India. So, the period was deciphered by brutal communal violence between Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. Ghose, at that time of fear was a Muslim boy in the volatile setting there. This replicates the

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oppression, depravity and decay in human values on the time of the partition. In 1952 he and his family left for England. The phase in England, also different from Mumbai, was noticeable by financial affluence for his family and later economic effort for both Ghose and his family.

For Ghose this period was academically worthwhile. Ghose encountered with celebrated writers, and dedicated himself to a writing vocation. In 1959, he graduated in English and Philosophy from Keele University. He edited Universities' Poetry, and also did a number of other works he also served as a cricket reporter. Between 1952 to 1969, he wrote two books of poetry, *The Loss of India* (1964), and *Jets from Orange* (1967) it is an anthology of short stories, *Statement Against Corpses* (1964) and a biography, *Confessions of a Native-Alien* (1965). He also published two novels during this period *The Contradictions* (1966), and another incredible novel *The Murder of Aziz Khan* (1967).

In 1969, Ghose went to the United States, when he was asked to teach at the University of Texas at Austin. During this period, he published other nine novels under his name, *The Texas Inheritance* (1980); it was in print under the fictitious name of William Strang. His nine novels are: *The Incredible Brazilian*, a trilogy which comprises *The Native* (1972), *The Beautiful Empire* (1975), and *A Different World* (1978), *Crump's Terms* (1975), *Hulme' Investigations into the Bogart Script* (1981), *A New History of Torments* (1982), *Don Bueno* (1983), *Figures of Enchantment* (1986), and *The Triple Mirror of the Self* (1991). The *Fiction of Reality* (1984), *The Art of Creating Fiction* (1991), *Shakespeare's Mortal Knowledge* (1993), *Beckett's Company* (2009), and *In the Ring of Pure Light* (2011). Poetry books include *The Violent West* (1972), *A Memory of Asia* (1984), and *Fifty Poems* (2010). Ghose left only some unpublished novels, too, which are kept in the Harry Ransom Center of the University of Texas, Austin. The unpublished novels are *The Deccan Queen*, *The Frontier Province*, *The Desert Republics*, and *Kensington Quartet*. *Clive of England* is also an unpublished play.

There is also a number of other scattered poems, short stories and essays as well. Critical response of Zulfiqar Ghose's work sometimes involves statement on his refusal to form the main target of his writing any venue that may be promptly known along with his own authentic or authenticating background as an individual of South Asian origin. He has not avoided South Asian settings entirely. *The Triple Mirror of the Self* marks something of a defining moment in Ghose's profession, after which he moved totally out of the abstract standard and into littler networks of South Asian or global written work. After 1992 he composed two more books that have what Ghose calls "a South Asian foundation," neither of which has discovered a distributor. *The Triple Mirror of the Self* just sold a couple of hundred duplicates and was "a tremendous business misfortune for [Bloomsbury]," Ghose claims individual meeting. The work itself was turned around near twenty American distributors, "one supervisor putting forth the momentous expression that it was too great to be in any way distributed". His consequent original copies were therefore not at attractive prospects for New York and London distributors, who have simple access to data about creators' past deals. So also, next to no basic work concerning Ghose has been embraced since the mid 1990s.