

AHMAD'S CRITIQUE OF JAMESON'S RHETORIC OF OTHERNESS AND THE
NATIONAL ALLEGORY

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Abstract

The present research paper attempts to point out dualism, systematic gaps, and contradictions, which are inherent in Jameson's logic of binary opposition and Eurocentrism and highlights practical as well theoretical relevance of Ahmad's critique in the age of advanced late capitalism. The duel between subject and subjectivity, in the realm of discourse, is very complicated and there is always return of repressed. Inspired by radicalism of Enlightenment, Ahmad's critique deconstructs the inherent Eurocentrism in Jameson's argument.

Keywords: Dualism, binary opposition, advanced late capitalism, Eurocentrism, return of repressed, radicalism, and Enlightenment.

It is generally considered that Marxism is a monolithic ideology or method of interpretation, which is based on postulates of dialectical materialism, to be homogeneous hermeneutics. Hence, all Marxists critics, it is assumed, being trained in methodological universe of classical Marxism, are considered 'as birds of the same feather' (Ahmad: 96) which would flock together in the realm of theory. Though there is homogeneity in Marxist hermeneutics, it is also marked by its revolutionary ethos and utopian ideals, transforming it as an instrument of much desired social change. Conceptually speaking, Marxist critics can have divergent approaches and they can differ over methods or contents of analysis. Having rooted in genealogy of historical materialism, Marxism is not immune to vagaries of theoretical evolution of itself into different schools and approaches. Therefore; it would be theoretically relevant, if one locates Ahmad's arguments in the domain of the third world Marxism, which is deployed to counter arguments of Jameson, western Marxist.

Along with Edward Said, Ahmad regards Jameson as a cultural critic who rightfully deserves our admiration. Ahmad points out,

“Jameson and Said are possibly the most significant cultural critics writing in the English language today for the kind of work I do in this area, and I can scarcely find my own thought without passing through theirs.” (Ahmad: 159)

Moreover, he appreciates Jameson’s passion for world literature in his essay ‘Third world Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital’ but he has some valid reservations about Jameson’s ‘construction of a theory of the cognitive aesthetics of third world -literature’ (Ahmad:95). Theoretically speaking, he rejects ‘a binary oppositions of what Jameson calls ‘First and ‘Third’ worlds (Ahmad: 95). To Ahmad, Jameson’s arguments are reflection of his subjectivity, propagating European universalism, orientalist reductionism and premodernism. Being ‘a Hegelian Marxist’ (Adam Roberts: 16), Jameson’s interpretations are more in tune with ‘Hegelian organic totality’ (Adam Roberts: 25) rather than ‘relative autonomy’ (Adam Roberts: 25) which is an essential strategic requirement to launch ‘war of position’ against ‘capitalist universality’ (Ahmad: 74) to reclaim the lost space in the ‘war of position’

Ahmad, employing Althusserian Marxism, considers Jameson’s intellectual position as ‘totalizing oppressive’ (Adam Roberts: 16) and he rightfully shares ‘a distrust of the whole picture’ (Adam Roberts: 16). Historically speaking, there is a close connection between oppressive totalitarianism and Hegelianism. Hence, Ahmad attempts to deconstruct Hegelian method and logic of Jameson in his grand project of ‘construction of a theory of the cognitive aesthetics of third world -literature’.

Jameson’s artificial categorization of first and third world is again based on the entrenched trope of essentialism that is often deployed by ideological state apparatuses to materialize their hegemonic projects of the ‘capitalist universality’. For most of time, humanity as whole suffers from the ‘collective amnesia’ and even reputed scholar like Jameson is no exception to this rule. In this situation, one is reminded of Marx, who had very famously said ‘History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce’. Most significantly, Jameson’s essay ‘Third world Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital,’ due to selective amnesia on the part of Jameson, wishfully forgets real and imagined violence, injustice and exploitation brought by the logic of the binary opposition in the discourse of orientalism since the advent of the industrial capitalism. In other words, Jameson, though he is progressive critic and has been known for his Marxism, has been indirectly helping the reactionary forces by giving much needed legitimacy and sanctimony to the binary opposition of first and third world. Most importantly, the basic problematic of representation ventures beyond the logic of binary opposition due to the centered subjectivity of Jameson in First world. By focusing on

centered subjectivity of Jameson in western academic world, Ahmad rightfully points out the surreal effect of subjectivity on even disinterested and impartial critic like Jameson.

Ahmad's critique of Jameson's basically deals with Jameson's 'construction of a theory of the cognitive aesthetics of third world -literature.' According to Ahmad, "There is no such thing as a 'Third World Literature' which can be constructed as an internally coherent object of theoretical knowledge'. (Ahmad: 96)

In the opinion of Ahmad, theoretical construct of 'Third World Literature' is, like discourse of orientalism, an artificial construction which is far removed from the social reality and experience of the given society, making it another handmaiden in the hands of advanced late capitalism. For Ahmad, this artificial construction is nothing but reduplicate continuation of earlier methods of representation since the advent of the industrial capitalism. Even one observes the social, political, economic, literary, and linguistic diversity in these countries, one would immediately understand dangers of making sweeping generalizations regarding the system of the literary production in these countries. Most importantly, the immense heterogeneity of rest of world is homogenized for the audience in metropolitan counties, paving way for the formation of Other. To the dismay of Ahmad, he finds that,

"I realized that what was being theorized was, among other things, myself"

(Ahmad: 96)

Like other structures of binary opposition, the third world is 'othered', repeating colonial 'structure of feeling'. For Ahmad, Jameson's essay is a kind theoretical epiphany albeit of a sadder realization. Comparatively speaking, both are Marxist critics but Jameson's essay made Ahmad conscious about his own subjectivity which is a product of the biased and artificial western discourse. In the opinion of Ahmad, he thought Jameson 'as a comrade' (Ahmad:96) due to their Marxist leanings but for Jameson, Ahmad is 'civilizational other' (Ahmad:96). Though Ahmad was a child of Indian nationalism, he had paid very dearly for the colonial politics of divide and rule. Hence, like feminist writers and critics, 'personal is always political' for Ahmad too. Therefore, Ahmad attempts to deconstruct the very artificiality of theoretical construction of third world.

According to Ahmad, Jameson's 'construction of a theory of the cognitive aesthetics of third world -literature' is attempted 'in languages of metropolitan' (Ahmad: 98). Conceptually speaking, language is very powerful tool and it is profoundly entrenched in the power relations of society and discourse. In Lacanian terms, even 'our unconscious is structured like language,' following the principle of negation to grasp and understand the social reality. If knowledge, for example, is constructed in alien language, then this process of forming knowledge automatically silences rather disempowers native people all over the world. Hence, their lives, even their literary productions especially from the native languages

have been ‘tranquilized’ by the western discourse. Most importantly, this ‘negation, the spirit of unmaking that Hassan calls literature of silence’ (Adam Roberts :113). Like Gayatri Spivak of ‘Subaltern Studies’ who has rightfully challenged the very legitimacy of representation of marginal people in theory and literature, Ahmad has raised a valid question about the authenticity of this literary project by deconstructing imbalanced power dynamics between ‘metropolitan center’ and ‘marginal periphery’.

The language is a medium articulation and self-realization. In the opinion of Ahmad, the system of knowledge production in metropolitan center has different methods and approaches while delineating paradigms of literary aesthetics in the discourse. Western scholar is well versed in his own language and any other European language also but it is impossible to find ‘a major literary theorist in Europe or the United States who has ever bothered an Asian or African language’ (Ahmad: 97). On the contrary, Asian, or African scholar is well versed in at least in single European language. In this context, this shows the system of the literary production is in favor of metropolis center. By showing the ‘defamiliarization’ of a literary theorist of metropolis center with the object of projected study, Ahmad rightfully points out the limitations and unsuitability of this grand theory of literary aesthetics.

Like an artist in Plato’s theory of mimesis, who is removed twice from the reality due to the imitation of imitation, similarly a western theorist is basically constructing theory without having direct exposure to any native language or experience. As with process of imitation which is marked by the consistent absence of the original, the western theorist completely depends on translations of non-European literary works for contouring the paradigms of theory of third world literature. Historically speaking, the subjectivity of western scholar and methods deployed in formation of this grand theory has uncanny similarities with methods of the orientalism. Most importantly, Jameson’s conception this grand theory reminds us about James Mill (1773-1836) who wrote ‘The British History of India’(1817) sitting at India office in London without ever visiting India. Unfortunately, this book, being classic example of colonial historiography, divided on Indian society on religious lines, which later culminated in the horror of partition of which Ahmad was hapless victim. Being victim of manipulations of discourse, Ahmad understands imminent dangers inherent in contours of ‘oppressive totalities’ such as grand theories of aesthetics. Hence, he points out,

“A literary theorist who sets out to formulate ‘a theory of the cognitive aesthetics of third-world literature will be constructing ideal types, in the Weberian manner, duplicating all the basic procedures which Orientalist scholars have historically deployed in presenting their own reading of a certain tradition of high textuality as knowledge of a supposedly unitary object which they call the Islamic civilization.” (Ahmad: 97)

Ahmad's arguments, based on his own bildungsroman, follows Freudian dictum of 'repressed always returns.' Being famous for blending of Marxism and postmodernism in the age of advanced late capitalism, Jameson willingly neglects tragic consequences of grand theory. In the opinion of Robert Adams, Jameson's critical understanding is influenced by Hegelianism and Althusserianism. In this context of production of grand theory of the third world literature, Jameson is more Hegelian rather than Althusserian. Comparatively speaking, Jameson's Althusserian approach is only reserved for the first world. Hence, scholars like Ahmad from third world felt betrayed because of perpetuation of Hegelian master -slave relationship which has compelled them to linger on periphery forever, even denying their basic humanity. Hence, as result of this dominance, the emancipatory ideals of Enlightenment, which are solid foundations of progressive politics and civil values, are forced to retreat in the 'war of position' (Ahmad:110) due to the dominance of 'oppressive totalities', empowering 'capitalist universality'.

The Apollonian authority of a western theorist, having blessed with 'Olympian wisdom' (Eagleton: 13) selectively selects non-European literary texts as the representative text of periphery, according to Ahmad. For most of time, writers who are writing in English language, which is 'meta language of informal empire' that is controlled by US, are considered as a true representative of a vast heterogeneity of Africa or Asia. Conceptually speaking, the process of canon making is always political and has been governed by demands of the power dynamics of the given age. In the age of advanced late capitalism, the writers who 'happen to write in English are valorized beyond measure' (Ahmad: 98). If one analyzes themes and characterization of these so called representative literary works, most of these works are catering western audience by highlighting the negative attributes of their own countries. Sometimes these literary works, due to author's incessant psychological fixation to please his western masters and to be of worthy of his love and trust, as he is conditioned in Hegelian dichotomy, often resembles of 'slum tourism' of Dharavi or Nairobi for western travelers whose consciousness is already colonized by the trope of orientalism. Comparatively speaking, like the colonialist 'project of development of underdevelopment' that was an unofficial motto of colonialism to drain wealth from periphery to the center, similarly this selective valorization of native writes is deeply entrenched in manifestations of a transnational capital in the age of advanced late capitalism. In this context, Ahmad believes 'the characterization of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* in the New York Times as a continent finding its voice' (Ahmad:98) is deeply flawed and problematic.

If one rigorously deconstructs the canonization of Rushdie's '*Midnight's Children*', one would gauge that there is a selective process of omission and commission. Comparatively speaking, Rushdie is not only writer who happens to write about the partition of the Indian

subcontinent or India's quest for 'tryst with destiny', there are many writers, though they write in regional languages and have been able to develop their own literary aesthetics, such as Yashpal, Kamleshwar, Amruta Preetam, Nemade etc. who have not been part of this cannon making process. Most significantly, their works are enjoyed and appreciated by large number of readers due to the reach of non-European languages as compared to Rushdie's works. Hence, reasons for non-inclusion of these writers in canons is apparent and one is really amazed by the fact how could migrant writer to represent the social dynamic of the native country which he has left for greener pastures. Furthermore, such writer, now situated in Metropolis, could be handicapped by the mediation of his own experience as 'floating signifier', which is completely absent in non-European writers, to claim principles of literary originality and authenticity that are an integral part of western poetics and mimesis while depicting native experience in the language of metropolis. Like Lacan's conceptualization of 'self' as fiction which is 'in the continual process of being composed (Adam Roberts: 64)', this process of cannon making process an artful fictitious process which does not resonate with ground realities of the third world counties as the literary works of their counterparts do.

According to Adam Roberts, 'Jameson is crucial to our understanding of contemporary literature and cultural studies (Adam Roberts:)', hence one could employ Jameson's own methods of analysis while deconstructing prevalent process of literary cannon making to point out inherent gaps and contradictions in the European discourse. "Always historize", this what Jameson stressed in his epoch-making book 'The Political Unconscious'. By deploying Jameson's method of historizing the literary work, one could easily historize Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) to examine critically the genetic link between 'manifest' and 'latent' content of this novel. Historically speaking, it was the same period in which China was integrated into the 'capitalist universality' under a leadership of USA. Being a satellite of America, Pakistan midwifed the birth of Taliban, creating menace of religious fundamentalism which still haunts and bleeds world at large and India in particular. On the contrary, USSR was in decline being just a few years way from its formal demise and there was ascendancy of global right in the election of conservative leaders like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. At home, India had just weathered storm of Emergency and suffered political fiasco of Janata government. Moreover, idealism of anti-colonial national movements was replaced by Faustian deals in the corridors of power. As compared with capitalism, socialism lost its sheen, allure, and revolutionary ethos under mismanagement of Maoism and Stalinism, heralding 'the end of history' argument. As the Left was contained or forced to retreat or rather to say disintegrated, there was no serious challenge to dominance of capitalism. Hence, liberal democracy had given 'shock therapy' and had been forced to

discard policies of the welfare state which was implemented to ward off challenge of communism in the early decades of 20th century. As the discourse of orientalism had prepared ground for the actual implementation of colonization, similarly postmodernism made soil fertile for the development of advanced late capitalism. Therefore, there is no surprise in celebration of Rushdie's novel as postmodernist novel. Ontologically speaking, in the larger scheme of things, his novel perfectly satisfies strategic needs of the informal empire in the 'war of position.' Considering all these factors, it is very difficult for Ahmad to ignore 'textual politics of literary production, circulation, dissemination, consumption, and celebration' of this novel in the contemporary literary circuits which are governed by motives and dictates of advanced late capitalism in the guise of the postmodernism which advocates 'the end of grand narratives' such as Enlightenment and Marxism. Hence, Ahmad is vehemently against bestowing of authority on any writer, who is seduced either by the charm of center, or whose trapped subjectivity is compromised due to strategic manipulations of the western discourse, to represent the heterogeneity of African and Asian countries in sweeping generalizations for the sake of seeking literary and aesthetic approval that is an outcome of psychological conditioning of such writers in Hegelian trope of master and slave relationship, thus weakening the cause of 'the wretched of earth' from Asian and African nations.

Ahmad, after highlighting the major role of the 'capitalist universality' in the formation of literary canons, shifts his attention to 'the epistemological impossibility of a third – world literature' (Ahmad: 98) to challenge normative categorization of the literature 'on the basis of this binary opposition' (Ahmad:98). According to Ahmad, Jameson, being a theorist of the postmodernism and advanced late capitalism, is aware about problems of hermeneutics while conceptualizing his three-world theory that suffers from an essentialism and reductionism. Therefore, to circumvent ontological argument of binary opposition which is logocentric foundation of his intellectual stand and approach, Jameson performs a kind of verbal gymnastic when he deploys a category of the 'essentially descriptive.' To say that the categories of three worlds are basically essentially descriptive in nature, which do not have any theoretical base, is exactly equivalent of Kipling's argument of 'white men's burden' where the oppressive side effects of ideological formation are completely ignored, thus making the pauperization of these nations an abject social reality.

To Ahmad, this category of 'essentially descriptive' is not an innocent entity due to the problematics of the orientalism and industrial capitalism. In the parlance of theory, Ahmad believes,

"There is no such thing as a category of the 'essentially descriptive', that description is never ideologically or cognitively neutral; that to describe is to specify a locus of meaning, to construct an object of knowledge, and to produce a knowledge that will be bound by that act

of descriptive construction. Description has been, for example, in the colonizing discourses” (Ahmad:99)

In the opinion of Ahmad, this categorization of three world theory is once again repetition of western logocentric discourse in different Avatar. Though Jameson believes that this essentially descriptive category is just used for the academic discussion, but it has been naturalizing these artificial ideological distortions as material realities of oppression, exploitation, exclusion, and stigmatization for repressed heterogeneities of the global south, thus cementing the European universalism, reductionism, and pre-modern essentialism. Most significantly, like the discourse of colonialism, this categorization deliberately hides strategic self-interest of creator of this diabolic category of ‘essentially descriptive’.

To limit Ahmad’s polemics in the domain of west and east would be short sighted, if one overlooks other possibilities which are inherent in his arguments. By challenging dominance an essentialist logocentric discourse of western representation, Ahmad is exploring possibilities of new method hermeneutics that would be free from the ideological distortions and assumptions. In today’s world changed political and economic conditions, which now favors global south, one cannot deny possibility of the reversal of position in this binary opposition. Most significantly, in these ever-going ideological wars, truth is always the biggest causality and innocents often suffer enormously. Being inspired by radicalism and egalitarianism of the Enlightenment, Ahmad, as cultural critic, strives for actual realization of utopian ideals of French revolution for the humanity as whole, thus making this world as better place to live not only this generation but also for coming generations. Therefore, though both are leading Marxists of the contemporary age and have been trained in classical Marxism, Ahmad has no hesitation in denouncing Jameson’s ‘essentially descriptive’ categorization as part of ideological state apparatuses of the oppressive totality.

In his essay ‘Third world Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital’, the First and Second Worlds are epistemologically categorized on the basis of production system (capitalism and socialism). On the contrary, the Third World has been strategically defined ‘in terms of an experience of externally inserted phenomenon’ (Ahmad: 100). What is unsaid in this argument is ubiquitous nature of the industrial capital in the capitalist and socialist nations. As it is often noted, capitalism and socialism, being product of the industrial revolution, differ over the issues of surplus. For capitalism, ‘primitive accumulation’ of surplus is an existential necessity and for socialism, on the contrary, ‘distribution of surplus’, is part of its ideological genetics. In Jameson’s categorization, both these political systems are an autonomous and independent, always work for realization of objectives though there is difference in their methods, objectives, and approaches. For Ahmad, Jameson’s strategic silence or omission about the production system of the third world of which he is

constructing grand theory of aesthetics is baffling and reeks of the western dominance. By neglecting the production system, Jameson defines third world in the terms of experience which is generated by the colonialism. Like the problematics of 'lived experience' in cultural studies, Ahmad finds this inserted categorization is flawed and far away from the social reality of the third world.

One cannot understand whether Jameson is feigning ignorance or unable to escape from 'gut feeling' of 'class determines consciousness' that is related to his own subjectivity while delineating the third world in terms of experience instead of the production system. To scholars, including Ahmad also, from all over the world, Jameson is a kind role model who is working as staunch Marxist in the country which has horrible legacy of for McCarthyism in the age of advanced late capitalism. But again, one has typical Marxist epiphany that points out structural and theoretical limitations of western Marxist while dealing with theorization of the third world. In the opinion of Ahmad, there is no as such difference between production systems in categorizations of first, second and third world respectively. To bolster Ahmad's argument, it would be relevant and very appropriate to quote Marx to point out anatomy and functioning of capitalism. Marx, in 'The Communist Manifesto' examines capitalism as,

"The bourgeoisie, by rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilizations. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians intensely obstinate hatred to foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst. i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image." (Karl Marx: 55).

Historically speaking, Marx had made such pathbreaking analysis of hydra headed nature of the capitalism in heydays of the industrial revolution while Jameson's analysis came almost century later in the unparalleled regime of advanced late capitalism. To Jameson's first world analytical mind, it seems very hard to accept the transformed social reality of the third world which is strikingly different from the orientalist framework and parameters. Most importantly, Marx prophecy is the reality all over the world due to global production system and dictates of the global market. Unlike the industrial capital whose motto was 'to manufacture to manufacturing' (Marx: 15) in the west, 'outsourcing' is *raison d'être* of advanced late capitalism. Due to the change in workings of the transnational capitalism, the contemporary world, which is also known as 'flat world', is metamorphosed into the global village. Hence, Jameson's attempt to define third world in the terms of experience is as arbitrary as the trope of essentialism in structure of the binary opposition.

To counter Jameson's theoretical categorization of the third world, Ahmad had cited the example of the India. Though India had suffered from 'bleeding process' (Marx: 17) of the colonialism, Independent India has adapted the bourgeoisie model of the development by opting for the parliamentary form of democracy and mixed economy model of development in which it tried to combine the best features of capitalism and socialism. Throughout his political career Gandhi was talking about decentralization and revival traditional production system, there is no place for such kind of romantic revivalism in the official state policy of the independent India. The contemporary India, as Marx had predicted, is an exact image of the west, strengthening the dominance of the transnational capitalism. Ahmad argues, "The India of today has all the characteristics of a capitalist country; generalized commodity production, vigorous and escalating exchanges not only between agriculture and industry but also between Departments I and II of industry itself, and technical personnel more numerous than those of France and Germany combined". (Ahmad: 100)

According to Ahmad, it will be futile to define the third world in terms of experience because workings of transnational capitalism. Retrospectively speaking, this argument between both these stalwart Marxists took place in the early days of globalization when transnational capitalism created outsourcing phenomena, transforming country like China as 'engine of global growth' which was going eventually to wipe out manufacturing base of USA and formation of right-wing phenomenon of Trump. What is important here is Ahmad's ability to understand the working of advanced late capitalism in the advent of the globalization. On the contrary, Jameson seems failed to understand the social reality and production system of the third world.

In his project of grand theory of the third world aesthetics, Jameson views national allegory is a dominant mode of the narration that focuses on nationalism and national liberation struggle against colonialism and imperialism. In Jameson's analysis, the third world is restricted into an essentialist trope of postmodernism and nationalism. To Ahmad, this very trope of postmodernism and nationalism is problematic, being part of the 'capitalist universality'. Historically speaking, genealogy of nationalism is often aligned with liberal humanism that makes soil fertile for the prosperity of the capitalism. Nationalism, as there is evidence in history, is very expressive about the political rights of the individuals but very shy about the economic rights of individuals. In the realm of Marxist theory, nationalism, like other ideological state apparatuses, is a capitalist construct, formulated to control labor in respective native nations and facilitate unbridled movement of transnational capitalism across the national boundaries. In the contemporary global south where native elites form and rule governments, there is red carpet welcome to multinational companies and continuous suppression labor of the global south. For Ahmad, being trained in classical Marxism,

nationalism is not empowering or liberalizing phenomenon as socialism is. Hence, Ahmad has valid reservation against Jameson's categorization of 'national' in national allegory of grand theory of aesthetics.

Conceptually speaking, Jameson's framework of this grand theory of aesthetics endows third world literary aesthetics, if there is an existence of such kind of aesthetics whatsoever, structural choice between 'its nationalisms and a global American postmodernist culture' (Ahmad: 101). In contrast with Jameson, Ahmad has structural and ideological differences with usages of the very term postmodernism. More than this, his Marxist leanings make him conceptually aware about the dichotomy between 'latent content' and 'manifest content' of the postmodernism. Viewed negatively, postmodernism is nothing but Americanization of the world, according to Ahmad. Unlike the postmodernist 'children of 1968' (Berlant:125) who viewed postmodernism as a liberating phenomenon, Ahmad thinks that postmodernism is, like orientalism of yesteryears that made industrial capitalism swift and effective to midwife the 'bleeding process' of colonialism, cultural avatar of the advanced late capitalism. Additionally, there is one more angle to Ahmad's argument that is of Marxism which has been rejected by postmodernism as grand theory of liberation of human subjects from all kinds of bondage and suffering. For Ahmad, what is important here is not ideology of postmodernism but its materiality which has replaced the class politics with the identity politics that has automatically weakened the revolutionary cause of Marxism and strengthened repressive capitalism in the 'war of position.' Due to manipulation and colonization of Consciousness, there has been strikingly absence of coherent challenge to the dominance of advanced late capitalism. Comparatively speaking, Ahmad observes postmodernism as disempowering ideological construct, that goes against all progressive values of the Enlightenment. To quote famous French critic Hippolyte Taine (1828- 1893) is relevant here for understanding Ahmad's analysis of nationalism and postmodernism. In the opinion of Taine, "literature is product of man, milieu, and moment". Following Taine argument, one could easily connect the various radical dots between Ahmad's arguments. Ahmad was, historically speaking, the product of Indian civilization of Gandhi and Tagore who had rejected the western social and political constructs that were responsible for the chaos, violence, and anarchy all over the world. In that sense, Ahmad's arguments have uncanny similarities with Tagore who condemns divisive forces in his poem 'Where Mind is Without Fear'. Tagore says,

"Where the world has not been broken
Up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls"

Consequently, Ahmad locates postmodernism, like nationalism, in the domain of the 'capitalist universality' (Ahmad:74). Therefore, by restricting the choice between the postmodernist American culture and nationalism, Jameson has not given real choice at all, limiting the cognitive freedom in framework of oppressive structures of binary oppositions. Hence, the actual lack of freedom is frustrating, demotivating and most importantly, Ahmad's vision of equal and just world, as in the words of Langston Hughes (1901-1967), the poet of Harlem Renaissance whose soul yearned for liberation, is like 'dreams are deferred'. In the beginning of essay, due to this burden of history in which other is always perennial outsider and object, Ahmad says 'I realized that what was being theorized was, among many other things, myself' (Ahmad: 96). Most importantly, Ahmad's encounter with Jameson, thought it has many dimensions, is more of personal realization that there is no salvation or liberation in the western discourse for the 'wretched of earth' whether he is a scholar of a great reputation in the 'archeology of knowledge' or slum resident, mired in Dickensian pathos and poverty. Simply, it does not matter at all and it will never matter. Therefore, this existential agony compels him to say,

"Politically, we are Calibans all." (Ahmad: 102)

As noted earlier, there are many dimensions to Ahmad's critique of Jameson's categorization of the 'national allegory.' According to Ahmad, there is complete omission of socialism in Jameson's theoretical construct of a grand theory of literary aesthetics of the third world. Historically speaking, socialism was ideal for the most of resistance movements of third world nations against the dominance of colonial dominance. Unfortunately, there is no space of for this rich history of anti-colonial movements in Jameson's theory. Hence, Ahmad argues 'Jameson's theory freezes and dehistoricizes the global space within which struggles between these great motivating forces actually take place (Ahmad: 105).

Ahmad's essay 'Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and National Allegory' examines structural and ideological formations and influences that are solid foundations on which Jameson's arguments are based and validated. For Ahmad, Jameson's Freudian slips such as 'essentially descriptive' are cognitive pathways to understand the subjectivity of Jameson which is an outcome of exchange between Hegelianism, capitalism, and Marxism. Hence, Jameson's theory is too paternalistic, reeks of civilizing mission of the colonialism and therefore, Ahmad rejects this grand theory for its reactionary essentialism, predatory reductionism, and homogenistic aspirations that deny diversity not only of modes of narration but also living experience of the global south. Apart from these conclusions, there are many takeaways from Ahmad's arguments. The battle is not over and empire strikes back. As saying goes, eternal vigilance is the price of freedom that one must pay. To the mass of humanity from the global south, revolutionary consciousness is ontological and practical

necessity for eking out their miserable and pathetic existence in age of advanced late capitalism. Like mythological hero Prometheus who challenged the mighty gods for the cause of humanity, Ahmad has theoretically challenged a major critic like Jameson and tried to cultivate revolutionary consciousness for the sake of the global south. With help of his logical, impressive, and penetrating rational arguments, Ahmad has managed to ward off western attempt to construct another grand theory about 'other' that will repeat the vicious cycle of history in the present. Looking from Other's point of view, Ahmad's critique is relevant and timely intervention in the domain of discourse in the manner of Gramscian organic intellectual whose radical activism and original analysis is not compromised or co-opted in the framework of the capitalist universality.

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