NATIONAL NARRATIVES

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DEFINITION

- A national narrative is one that writes the history of the nation within other stories.
- Any narrative where you can see the characters/specific space as a microcosm for the larger public history of how that nation was shaped.
- They give shape to the beliefs, the aspirations and the sense of identity of national groups or nations as a whole.
EXAMPLES

- **Midnight's children**
  - Tells the story of post independent India through the story of Salim Sinai and his family.
  - Embodied not only in his life, but also in his physical self.
- Midnight’s Children’s Conference.
Kanthapura

- The village and The Old lady - metaphors for the nation as a whole.
- Microcosm of the traditional Indian society with its entrenched caste hierarchy.
- Gandhian Movement.
- Narrative technique.
POETRY

- Two genres on basis of subject matter, style or literary characteristics.
- Narrative – Very Often, reveals tradition and culture of a particular country.
- Non-Narrative poetry – doesn’t tell any story, or describe the characters or their actions, reveals speaker’s state of mind, emotions etc.
Of late, a few Indo-nostalgic writers are beginning to show signs of "long-distance nationalism", concomitant with the rise of nationalism within India against the backdrop of a booming economy.

As seen in Postcard from Kashmir, by Agha Shahid Ali -

"Kashmir shrinks into my mailbox, my home a neat four by six inches.

I always loved neatness. Now I hold the half-inch Himalayas in my hand."
THIRD WORLD LITERATURE

- Impossibly broad and general to define.
- Not well defined literary corpus – like say “South African” or “Indian” literature.
- Third world literature is that literature that is most empathetically not of the First – i.e. not of the European, Europeanized American and perhaps simply not of the “White Man’s World”.


Frederic Jameson

- U.S. Scholar
- Marxist
- Postmodernist
- “Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism”
FREDERIC JAMESON:

“The third world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic, necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory; the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third world culture and society”

For instance, Serious Men by Manu Joseph
Refuses to see third world literature as writings like canonical ones.

“Indeed our want of sympathy for these often unmodern third-world texts is itself frequently but a disguise for some deeper fear of the affluent life that still as little in common with daily life in the American suburb”

The Other reader – between Western readers and the alien text.

Jameson focus on demonstrating the struggle affected by both imperialist and colonialist forces when third world artist try to construct its’ national culture and national identity.
Aijaz Ahmad

- Born in India
- Marxist
- Pakistani citizen
Jameson neglects that Asian and African literature do not adopt single metropolitan language.

Various Third World nations contain numerous facets of capitalism and furthermore resemble their First World counterparts.

He believes that the global struggle between capital and labor gives the world its unity.
The dialectic of the social and the literary cannot be determined unitarily by a single factor.

Texts are produced in competitive contexts where ideologies and cultures compete for subjective control.

A text almost needs its specific cultural context to give it purpose, direction, and significance.

The texts in the third world based upon “the experience of imperialism and colonialism” should be assessed with time concern.
CONCLUSION

Jameson’s attempts reminds of what Macauley said in his “Minute on Indian Education” –

- “I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.”

Jameson’s arguments seems to be over-generalized and orientalist without due considerations to time and space factors.
REFERENCES

Fredric Jameson – Third World Literature in the era of Multinational Capitalism.

Ahmad, Aijaz. “Jameson’s Rhetoric of Otherness and the ‘National Allegory.’”

Macaulay’s “Minute on Indian Education”.
THANK YOU