



Jameson's View of the Third World Literature

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Abstract: Jameson takes the political system as the standard to classify the three worlds. He thinks that the first world literature is more mature and perfect than the second and third world literature in terms of literary types and theoretical research. The nationalism that the second and third worlds are keen to explore has been cleared up in the first world and has long been out of date. What they can do is to accept the influence of American principles of free market and postmodernism. He asserted that the first world literature was the competitor and criterion of measuring the achievement of that of the third world. The result was undoubtedly disappointing. It was due to his identity and a higher self-positioning as the first world critic.

Keywords: Jameson; the third world; literature

1. The Classification Standard of Three Worlds

Jameson's classification of the three worlds adopts the standard proposed by Alfred Sauvy (1952), which is popular in the western world, especially in the United States. He classifies the capitalist bloc into the first world, the socialist bloc into the second world, and those countries and regions suppressed and exploited by colonialism and imperialism belong to the third world. Perhaps in Jameson's view, social system is the natural barrier between different ideologies.

Mao Zedong put forward the different strategic thought of classifying the three worlds. He asserted, "I think the United States and the Soviet Union are the first world. The centrists, including Japan, Europe and Canada, are the second world. We are the third world." (Mao Zedong, 1994: p 600)

2. The Interpretation of the Second World Literature

Russia writers have composed numerous excellent works and have contributed great wealth to the world's literary treasure house, and its literary theory has also had a profound impact on the literary creation and criticism of China and other countries. According to Jameson, as a writer, although his formal achievements may not be as good as the standard masterpieces, such as the works of Proust, Joyce and Mann, they provide an opportunity for metaphysical thinking, which is rarely provided by pure aesthetic objects.(Jameson, 1994: p 68) In other words, Jameson thinks that Platonov's works are not masterpieces from the aesthetic point of view, but he appreciates the ideological value of his works, including the reflection on social morality and even social system, the bold satire and fundamental query of Utopia. But as for the value of modernism, there may be something new in the "second world" to teach the first world, which is no longer effective in the latter's postmodern period. (Jameson, 1994: p 101)

3. Interpretation of Third World Literature

Jameson admits that nationalism is very important in the third world and the second world. Although these countries are influenced by the global postmodernist culture of the United States, it is still irreplaceable. But these countries lack the experience of discussing and using nationalism, and actually abuse the term. This is not the way that American

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intellectuals discuss “America”. In fact, people may feel that this is an old topic of “nationalism”, which has been reasonably settled in the United States. Scholars in the third world are keen on discussing their national identity and are full of hope for the future of the nation. However, overemphasis on nationalism has long been out of date in the west, especially in the United States and some countries with such experience in Europe, and people have formed mature views on it.

4. The Relationship between the First World and the Third World Literature

Although Jameson admitted that the United States lacked a spirit of introspection and could not become the center of theoretical production, he then refuted it: but we should also look at the problem from an economic point of view. In any case, the late capitalism currently expanded to the world is indeed American culture itself. As a result, theories of late capitalism will spread with American culture. Whether it's a good thing or a bad thing, it reflects the fact that American production, or rather the entertainment industry and culture constantly produced by the “United States”, is dominant in today's world. I don't know what we should do as Americans. I don't like to be guilty all day, or to blame myself. I can't stand beating my chest all day long and saying that we really shouldn't do these bad things. We're ashamed of what we've done. I think a lot of things in the United States need to be analyzed, and we have a unique perspective here. If we regard ourselves as intellectuals with political and cultural responsibilities, we will have a lot of work to do and many important tasks to be accomplished. (Jameson, 2004, p 161)

5. Conclusion

We can't help but wonder whether the countries with less developed capitalist production mode and low level of productivity are able to digest and absorb the perfect lifestyle, let alone their various cultural traditions and lifestyles. Are they going to break through and enter the free market and cultural model of late capitalism? I think the answer has been given. “Fundamental cultural revolution” means a radical change. We should be full of expectation to realize universal humanity and move towards sacred Americanization. Jameson believes that as American scholars, they can only provide this. With such developed economy, prosperous culture and uncorrupt politics in the United States, of course, intellectuals are duty bound to act as spiritual mentors and humanistic models of other countries and people.

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