

## **Problematics of the Anti-globalization Discourse in Postcolonialism**

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### **Abstract**

Postcolonialism is the study of the lasting effects of colonialism – the historical period when European powers colonized and controlled other regions. It explores how these past relationships continue to influence cultures, societies, and identities today. This research paper delves into the intricate dynamics of the anti-globalisation discourse within the framework of postcolonialism. Analyzing the multifaceted intersections between globalisation, colonial histories, and contemporary socio-political movements, the study investigates the paradoxes and challenges embedded in the anti-globalisation narrative. This research paper tries to argue on three interlinked points: I) Does globalization lead to the problem of identity crisis? II) Does globalization allay the movements for social justice by the marginalized sections of society? III) Is globalization limiting the scope of postcolonialism? By examining the diverse perspectives and contested ideologies within postcolonial contexts, this paper aims to shed light on the nuanced complexities that shape and sometimes impede the effectiveness of anti-globalisation discourses.

**Keywords:** Anti-globalisation, Postcolonialism, Globalisation, Discourse, Socio-political Movements.

In the wake of globalization, on the one hand there has been a celebration of increasing homogeneity in the world; on the other hand there is a section of intellectuals who decry this phenomenon as neocolonialism. The canon of postcolonialism serves to study questions and reinvent the modes of cultural perception, primarily of the formerly marginalized states and peoples. Lately, postcolonialism critiques the neocolonial discourse of geopolitical homogeneity that seems to create cultural hybridity and dissolves individual identities. This research paper tries to argue on three interlinked points: I) Does globalization lead to the problem of identity crisis? II) Does globalization allay the movements for social justice by the marginalized sections of society? III) Is globalization limiting the scope of postcolonialism?

“Identity” forms the way in which an individual and/or group defines itself. It is accompanied by notions as social values, norms, mores and nationhood. These categories together formulate one’s conception of self for oneself as well as for others. It often involves both essentialism and othering. It is accusation of the theorists like Aijaz Ahmad that globalization has led to liquidation of the concept of “nation state,” which forms the core of his counter-globalization agenda. He holds nation state as a keyword that gives identity to these postcolonial states. He criticizes Frederic Jameson’s use of the term “Third World” for the former colonies since it defines these nations from the western perspective just like “orientalism.” One can agree with Ahmad’s disapproval of the term because the end of the cold war has also ended the practical relevance of the term since the year 1991. In the decades following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, there has started a gradual process of transformation of the global political scenario from the absolutely unipolar world towards a multi-polar world. This globalization is primarily an economic phenomenon. As it is Marxist maxim: “base determines superstructure,” so Ahmad should readily accept the social repercussions of this process. If at all, there is problem with this process, it is capitalism, which on the one hand appears to expand the gamut of development; on the other hand also tends to increase socio-economic inequalities. In this process, not only the western capitalists are

involved but also the eastern, including Indian and South Korean multinational companies are involved.

Aijaz Ahmad decries Homi K. Bhabha's concept of "hybridity" as false and misleading. Hybridity is an important concept in post-colonial theory, which refers to "the integration (or, mingling) of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures ['integration' may be too orderly a word to represent the variety of stratagems, desperate or cunning or good-willed, by which people adapt themselves to the necessities and the opportunities of more or less oppressive or invasive cultural impositions, live into alien cultural patterns through their own structures of understanding, thus producing something familiar but new]" (Bhabha 168). The assimilation and adaptation of cultural practices, the cross-fertilization of cultures, can be seen as positive, enriching, and dynamic, as well as oppressive. It also thwarts the notion that colonized cultures or colonizing cultures are monolithic, or have essential, unchanging features.

The representation of these uneven and multivalent cultural sites creates a cultural "false consciousness" among the masses, which Ahmad perceives as a bourgeois design to meet their selfish ends. Bhabha de-essentializes the east-west oriental binary under the influence of postmodern discourse. I agree with Ahmad as breaking such essentialisms in discourse does not provide a solution or negates a problem. But these factors which are denied or erased by Bhabha and likewise theorists, do not also define the postcolonial identity. The idea behind Homi Bhabha's revelry in hybridity becomes clear from his following lines:

Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific

histories of cultural displacement, whether they are the middle passage of slaver and indenture, the voyage out of the civilizing mission, the fraught accommodation of Third World migration to the West after the Second World War, or the traffic of economic and political refugees within and outside the Third World. Culture is translational because such spatial histories of displacement --

now accompanied by the territorial ambitions of global media technologies -- make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue (Bhabha 172).

He revels in this event of transnationalism that is accompanied by migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation as well as in cultural translation's complex form of signification. He disparages the unifying discourse of nation, peoples, or authentic folk tradition, embedded myths of cultures particularity. He believes that though this process of hybridity is unsettling, but it makes one increasingly aware of the construction of culture and the invention of tradition.

Ahmad's attitude towards Bhabha has roots in his cultural particularism and therefore he desists the latter's delving into ambiguity. But, I disagree with Bhabha's concept of hybridity as to me transnationalism is what Foucault calls "heterotopia," a transient space. It is transient because it is born of the modern work culture formed in the course of evolution of new socio-economic scenario. It stays with one as long as one is part of this work culture. Hence, it cannot be a source of permanent identity for an individual. One is always identified with his country and region till date. In the USA, the concept of "melting pot" was prevalent for a long time, where national identities of the immigrants got lost in the general wave of Americanization. Lately, since the late twentieth century, there has been a shift towards a new concept of "salad bowl," whereby different cultures exist side by side, at the same time maintain their respective cultural identities. One can observe Arabs, Indians, Pakistanis, and Chinese maintain their distinct identity in the western countries. Diasporic novels provide an impression how significant one's identity becomes in a foreign land. So, how there can be a threat to the identity of the postcolonial cultures in their respective homelands.

There is another accusation on globalization that it has fostered a culture where people live in a hyper-reality, ignoring problems of the real world. Aijaz Ahmad points out that these capitalist states via mode of internet and television present the world in a colorful manner, celebrating the economic and scientific marvels while ignoring the poverty and starvation in the likes of sub-Saharan countries. But it has been seen that the overall impact of cable network and

internet has been far positive when weighed against its drawbacks. It has caused an increased awareness about every issue that faces mankind. It has been media culture that stirred the movements like the Arab Spring in the Middle East. In spite of its failure, it sparked a ray of discontent among the masses in these countries forming a cusp in history of these nations. Even in the United States, the Occupy Wall Street movement marked a challenge against the empire of capitalism. Here, one can assert the fact that globalization is not a deliberate design of capitalism to colonize the world. It is an independent phenomenon that is need as well as consequence of capitalism.

In her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Gayatri Spivak defines “subaltern” as the people who do not have recourse to their revisionist history. For instance, there are social groups as the Afro-Americans, Dalits in India, there sighs and oppressions were noted in the history. So, they can claim for their rights and protest against the historical and social injustice done to them. However, subaltern groups form people like remote tribes in the world, homosexuals, and transgenders, whose oppression was not even noted in the past. The era of globalization has created a liberal atmosphere where these people have tried to come out of their shells to claim their rights from the grand narratives of history. The critics of late postcolonialism as well as few Marxists have blamed globalization for dissolving the history of the post-colonial countries. They agree with Francis Fukuyama’s notion of “the end of history,” which he refers to the evolution of the unipolar world after the disintegration of the USSR. The world has seen rise of China and the Islamic State in the recent years which nullifies Fukuyama’s idea. Arif Dirlik also takes postcolonial theorists to task for their complicity in covering up “contemporary problems of social, political, and cultural domination.” But when one talks of dissolution of history of the postcolonial world in the wake of globalization, one goes utterly wrong. On the contrary, there has been enrichment of history in the recent years. Every single incident has been studied from the numerous perspectives. Even the histories of the eunuchs, unnoticed tribes or the lost tribes are being penned down.

Ella Shohat takes issue with the term “post-colonial” for its implication that “colonialism is now a matter of the past.” This issue is irrelevant because the term holds good till the last trace

of colonial hangover does not vanish from the lives of the formerly colonized. Unlike these intellectuals who see globalization as a new form of colonialism, colonialism can also be seen rather in indigenous institutions of these countries themselves. The class differences, political corruption, casteism and other forms of oppression are drenched more in the local institutions rather than the foreign. These nations face more threat from hegemonic discourses of the native proto-fascist ideologues rather than the global capitalists. Jan Mohamed clearly points out “if the contemporary neocolonialist hegemony is, as, based on the active direct consent of the dominated, then it is also arguable that the neocolonized are guilty of complicity in consolidating neocolonialism.” Therefore, it becomes moral duty of the postcolonial intellectuals of these countries to question and dismantle the imperialist forms of knowledge ingrained in their own political and cultural unconscious as well as inscribed in western representations of the formerly colonized.

Therefore, I consider that counter-hegemonic discourse of postcolonial critics should target the illegitimate sources of power, whether indigenous or foreign. The role of intellectuals here is to qualify such power centers and disintegrate them; otherwise dereliction of this duty on their part becomes what Julian Benda calls “the treason of intellect.” The very awareness of the problem forms the initiation of revolutionary phase against that problem. I sum up my notion of globalization as a commercial phenomenon that transformed the structure of society and mental prowess of an individual. It has affected the east and the west in the similar manner, though its impacts are pronounced in the east because overall the society here is less attuned to the circumstances of globalization, thereby producing a “cultural shock.” It does not threaten one’s identity or nation’s sovereignty. Rather, it has been and shall be a medium to assert these attributes at the global level.

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