

Ranciere's Discussion on Internal Contradictions of Literature

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Abstract

Ranciere's theory of art regime is a completely new paradigm of art criticism, and it conveys the idea that aesthetics and politics themselves are isomorphic. Among the three art regimes, only the aesthetic regime implements the principle of political equality and has a new type of vision that attaches equal importance to thought and image, and it is summarized as the "language-thought" principle and the "non-discrimination" principle, respectively. These two principles present a state of contradiction and struggle in literary works and become the driving force for the development of literature.

Keywords

Aesthetic regime of art; contradiction principle of literature; language-thought; non-discrimination principle; Ranciere.

1. Introduction

Jacques Ranciere is a representative critic of Western Marxism, his regime of art has created a new paradigm for art criticism, and has generated a lot of interest. Among the three components of art regime, aesthetic regime is at the most central position, it has disintegrated the various literary norms set by the representative regime, breaking free from the traditional constraints on literature and creating a new form of sensibility. Ranciere has focused on discussing literature belonging to this regime, points out that although literature in the new era still pursues the dream of transcendence, it replaces whole with fragments and collective with individual, rather it is pursuing the wholeness in a contradictory way.

2. Core Logic of Aesthetic Regime

What is art? Ranciere's answer is that the establishment of art works not only relies on the creators' creation and the readers' aesthetic activity, but more importantly, it requires the sight to identify art and distinguish it from non-art. Just as Greek sculptures were not simply regarded as art works in the eyes of the people at that time, they are only regarded as the inspired works of artists in today's museums. Different works are regarded as art in different eras, and the judgment criteria are reflections of political ideas.

Art regime is a system, discourse, and standard for identifying art, a regime is a model of perceptible things, visibility, perceptible forms, and understandable forms. There have been three regimes in history: they are ethical regime, representative regime, and aesthetic regime, respectively. The first regime is the pre-art regime, while representative regime and aesthetic regime are Ranciere's discussion focus.

The core principle of representative regime is "its norm is the primacy of the speech-act, of the performance of speech" [1], the imitation of action is the core of representation. Under this premise, representation is also regulated by speech, to some extent, human actions are also the display of speech acts, and actions should demonstrate the ideal of speech. Ranciere used the example of a Greek orator calling for war to explain this principle, speech is also the most important action, it creates a fictional scene of taking command of world, inspiring the people,

and defending the homeland, it can almost be said to be the highest-level scene of imitation in representative regime.

In the discussion of regime theory, Ranciere always focuses on the transformation from representation to aesthetic regime, he quotes the views of Burke, Lessing, Diderot, and others to argue the farfetched points of imitative view of representative regime. Representative regime believes that literature, painting, sculpture, and other arts are all storytelling, and events can be extracted from art works. Represented by Laocoon, poetry and plastic arts still present different characteristics even when showing the same subject matter. Plastic arts condense emotions into a single point and show the entire story in time through the most inclusive moment; it is a task beyond the power of narrative art by itself. More importantly, once all arts are distilled into some plot imitation, it is difficult to get rid of the infiltration of the real ruling order into the works.

In *The Ignorant School Master*, Ranciere points out that human emotional abilities can be symbolically linked to a way of understanding: making someone "say" something is to express a viewpoint, which is an expression of a particular interest, its premise is to suppress the possibilities of other understandings; making someone "see" something is different, "seeing" requires the direct presentation of the object, making the people capture the contents they understand by themselves, the object itself provides the subject with infinite possibilities for understanding.

The new general knowledge of art found by the aesthetic regime, to some extent, is the embodiment of the ability to "see". The poetics of expressivity is based on an analogy between forms of language. [2] To seek the intercommunity of art within the aesthetic regime, the key is to regard art as a language. Any art is a language, but this language is not the viewpoint conveyed by someone, but a language that both presents the content of speech and simultaneously expresses the image of speech itself.

The Greek stone-carved statues of heroes symbolize solemn spirits, yet this spirit has no actual relationship with the direction of the stone-carved muscles and bones, the image itself resists spiritual interpretation. In the representative regime, people will cover one way of expression with another, ignore the sense conveyed by vision while seeing its symbolic significance, however, aesthetic regime simultaneously covers two perceptions without homogenization, achieving the inclusion of two emotional presentations.

3. Contradiction Principle of Literature

When discussing literature, Ranciere chooses to explain its nature through writing in order to liberate it from certain interpretive and descriptive attempts. "The 'literariness' discussed here is the written words which no longer flow according to a prescribed system, the person who speaks words and the person who receives words are in a prescribed relationship in the original system." [3] The literariness is redefined, moreover, a certain attitude of self-described superiority is also abandoned. The reason why Ranciere emphasizes the written text is to distinguish it from representative regime literature that is given various interpretations, it breaks away from the cultural relationship that reflects the existing order, and its underlying significance is to oppose logocentrism.

Ranciere traced back to *Phaedrus*' positioning of writing, "Once it has been written down, every discourse roams about everywhere, reaching indiscriminately those with understanding no less than those who have no business with it, and it doesn't know to whom it should speak and to whom it should not." [4] Writing that is far from the original sacred memory seems to help people understand many things, but in fact, it makes people ignorant. However, since Derrida opposed logocentrism through writing, writing has been rediscovered and regarded as a force against centralism and hegemony. The same is true for Ranciere, starting from this, This will be

condemned by Plato as a language that transcends the context and is seen as a force of resistance.

Starting from the peripatetic text, Ranciere further brings this free force into the field of literature, pointing out that the images within works also have the ability to overflow. Among them the novel becomes the most typical representation, it no longer focuses solely on the lives of the upper class or the discussion of major spiritual topics in subject matter, instead, it covers all aspects of real society, records the anecdotes of ordinary people, connects realistic and fantastical plots, and becomes a genre that embraces everything.

Don Quixote is a story about a character who confuses reality with books through reading. Beyond the humor, it is also a story that distorts reality and makes a person fall from a system to form resistance. The writing that overflows reality does not play a significant role, but rather provides an opportunity for a small character or their reader to resist the system. Ranciere believes that aesthetic regime discards the collectivized thinking that excludes the emotional experiences of some people, and it requires careful handling in emotional of everyone. Only by starting from the individual perspective can we truly avoid suppressing personal sensibility in the name of collective interests, thus shaking the unequal order structure.

Based on this thought, Ranciere actually endows the individual's "trance" moment towards the order with spiritual value while emphasizing the individual's detachment. Aesthetic regime makes individual and individual image become uncertain symbols, become words and images that can be interpreted differently in the context, break away from the original syntactic chain and truly regain their freedom. This precisely suggests a possibility of equality and a democratic force.

The concept of aesthetic regime in art, which emphasizes both the image itself and the spiritual significance behind it, it is summarized by Ranciere as two contradictory trends in literature. One is the logic chain that transforms literature into writing, and transforms characters and images into peripatetic symbols through the above-mentioned words, the principle of treating the object equally, Ranciere calls this principle as "le principe différence". This principle is when objects are regarded as fragments of images or symbols, they present a truly undifferentiated and equal appearance; when we examine objects, we grasp them as fragments, and reality no longer presents itself as a standard syntactic organization

The other end of contradiction is the ideal that has been attributed to literature since its birth, literature always conveys some spirit that is higher than life, it needs to open up a higher spiritual level on the basis of the original image, compared with the unpredictable vacillation and undifferentiated principle on the horizontal axis, it focuses on providing a higher significance for people on the vertical axis, or say it in more religious way, in the afterlife, Ranciere summarizes it as "language as thought". The "le principe différence" that originated in German aesthetic theory. "Language as thought" are in contradiction, the unity and struggle of this contradiction are just the driving force for the development within literature.

4. Ongoing Contradiction Movement

The ideal that transcends the daily world is a kind of otherworldly attention, which emerged and had a significant impact in the poetic philosophy of 18th-century Germany. German classical aesthetics has always been an important theoretical resource for Ranciere and is the origin of the aesthetic regime of literature, a detailed analysis of the poetics of this period helps us understand the contradiction and struggle condition of literature within the works.

The German Romantics always took it as their responsibility to transcend the limitations of the empirical world, the predecessors of Jena purposely explored the symbolic forms in works, endowing them with a transcendent orientation in their surface meanings. When Ranciere quotes the Romantics' description of their poetic ideals, he believes that this pursuit transcends

the physical objects themselves, pursuit towards the infinite and the supreme is the bud of "language as thought": "a poetry already present in the 'poem written in a marvelous language' of nature, [.....]" capable of poeticizing each thing and making every finite reality a hieroglyph of the infinite." [5]

When the Romantics talked about nature, it was no longer a gloomy, dull and hard external object, the world was like a melody, an eternal dance of all life, a song sung in chorus by all living beings, a rhythm flowing through the soul. [6] In the floating and free romantic poetics, Rancière captured the sprouting of object in works. Nature has been expressed as an organic object since the romantic theory, which not only transcended the delicacy achieved by human craftsmanship, but was also regarded as an existence engraved with the supreme mystery and has transcended any purely artificial product. Nature would become an unexploited mine, providing experiences that overflow the individual. Of course, there was an influence of Spinoza's philosophy towards pantheism. Schelling, who had close contact with Schlegel, published *System of Transcendental Idealism* based on his acceptance of Spinoza, then developed the identity philosophy of unity of reality and idea; the self which was fully explained was somewhat restrained in Fichte, and "subject and object, ideal and reality, are unified in the absolute principle of non-discrimination."

Rancière points out that is neither lowliness nor nobleness in all things, all contain the supreme nature. This is the embodiment of the non-discrimination principle, emphasizing the objectivity of nature and the world. It echoes the pursuit of equality in politics during this period, and its inner spirit is completely contrary to the classical distinction of lowliness nor nobleness. There is no appropriate language norm for all things, and there is no specific tone to place it in a certain order of reality in the works. What is important is a new expression, facing the vastness of nature, what the writer needs to do is to identify its own mystery from nature rather than instruction. Things should speak for themselves, manifest the infinity of nature, and the almost infinite spiritual state is used to express itself in this way. The role of poetry is to delete "the laws of rational thinking, transplant us back into the beautiful chaos of imagination, into the primitive chaos of human nature" [6], and nature is hidden in such chaos, reproducing the vitality of literature and maintaining the initiative of things themselves. Everything flies and dances, there is no an orderly organization, only the full display.

On the other hand, in order to convey the spirituality of nature, it relies on the writer's subjective construction and weaving with language. Schlegel's commentary on Tick's *Don Quixote* translation directly mentions the ability of poetry "dream the joy of life" [6], opening up a second poetic layer above the impoverished reality. The poetics of the Romantics was this work that gives infinity to appearance, they regarded all things in nature as symbols, their material shell is their signifiers, and it refers to supreme spirituality - "infinity", and it is the embodiment of "language as thought" during this period. The former requires language to poeticize all things and pursue infinity, while the latter, "le principe différence", aims to eliminate this distinction of lowliness nor nobleness.

Rancière summarized the state of harmony between human and nature reflected in literature before the advent of modernity as the "the word became flesh" model in literature, the word "the word became flesh" comes from Rancière's paraphrase of the classic opening sentence of the Bible: " Au commencement était le Verbe." God created the world with words, said "Let there be light," and there was light. The Son of God created miracles with words and deeds, said "Be healed," and the sick were healed. Language expressed the ideal of things, matter fully expressed the spirit, which is the "the word became flesh." the word became flesh not only draws our attention to the previously remarkable holy words but also makes us focus on the silent things, this silent representation does not need to comply with any language's requirements for appropriateness - literature easily practices the dream of representing nature, effortlessly presenting that organic and integrated nature.

Modern people can intuitively perceive the essence in nature with simple aesthetic intuition anymore, nor can they return to the natural matrix like the ancient Greeks. Literature will still pursue the desire for spiritual transcendence beyond daily, but it will coexist with "le principe différence" in literature, constantly reminding us that the light of transcendence will present itself to us in fragmented, peripatetic, and overflowing images. The contradiction movement of literature continues to open in a new look without end. The contradiction and struggle between these two principles is not only change in the state of artistic perception and is also a part of the transformation of human existence. They are the driving force of literary development; therefore, it is the core essence of aesthetic regime.

5. Conclusion

Ranciere's series of articles on the art regime presents us with a broader new critical paradigm that elucidate art with individuals and society. Aesthetic regime means a new vision, the holder of this vision abandons the previous perception way that places ideas above images, which is not only the change in literary and artistic views, but also the change in the way individuals perceive society. dominating image. This is not only a change in the view of literature and art, but also a change in the way individuals perceive society. In-depth exploration of principle of literary contradiction will help us understand what is happening in the works: "how places and identities are assigned and reassigned—how spaces and times, the visible and the invisible, and noise and speech are ordered and reordered." [7]

References

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