

Juxtaposition of Micro-événements Sensibles

-- On Ranciere's View of Modern Fiction

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Abstract

Ranciere believed that individual aesthetic perception and community governance followed the same organizational principle, from this he constructed an art criticism methodology, namely "regime of art". Literary works belonging to the aesthetic art system adopted the approach of "modern fiction", juxtaposing the impersonal "micro-événements sensibles". From the micro perspective, Ranciere believed that the objects presented in the works were no longer closed individuals, but the movement of emotional atoms, and those who engaged in reading behavior also became atomic beings, were equal to other emotional atoms and resonated with others. Therefore, literature reveals the emotional feature of real life and becomes a emotional community.

Keywords

Ranciere; aesthetic regime of art; modern fiction; micro equality.

1. Introduction

Jacques Ranciere, as an important contemporary French literary critic and Marxist, has started an aesthetic renaissance fad in the literary world with a new paradigm of art criticism. In the critique of the regime of art, Ranciere emphasizes the importance of the aesthetic regime of art, points out that its transformation of literature is a silent aesthetic revolution, it ends the collection of relationships between sayable and unsayable, knowledge/action, and active/passive in an atomized way. New possibilities will be constantly opened in literature, while the old and fixed order will be constantly broken. The slow aesthetic liberation that slowly occurs in works, Ranciere names it as modern fiction.

2. Traditional Raison Fictionnelle

Ranciere believes that only one system in the human history has practiced the principle of equality in literature, which is the aesthetic regime of art. The art regime is a set of system, discourse, and standard for identifying art, a regime is a model of perceptible things, visibility, perceptible forms, and understandable forms, while the aesthetic regime is a new system that eliminates the inequality between image and language, time and space.

Ranciere argues that, represented by Aristotle, traditional literary concepts emphasize that writers should organize plots based on probability or necessity, events driven by human thoughts and actions are the core elements of works, and events occur in time, which potentially put the human stamp on the time of the works, and human subjective choices will continuously drive the work until its end. Therefore, Ranciere believes that works in the non-equal era are closely related to time, the time is of linear progress is an unbreakable whole, leading to a whole action from beginning to climax to conclusion. This kind of time follows the logic of strong teleology, with a clear forward direction and strong artificiality. Whether the ending of a novel is happy or sad, the emotional events of the characters are moving towards a predictable end, and it is a kind of fiction that everyone tacitly turn a blind eye to.

Critics consider the formation and development of these works in combination with the culture and religion of this period, and interpret the novel vertically: the time of this world always reflects the sacred redemption time of the other world, the events of this world always find their place in contrast to the other world, however, this unity sought becomes a definite end. However, this, in turn, proves that this end is unreliable. In narratives driven by individual experiences, there is an individual first is there end that all individuals dream of, but this dream based on the understanding of various subjects cannot be restored to its original state, and various elements cannot be unified.

Traditional works have natural stability, which comes from the gradual advancement of causal plots and is reflected in space. The space construction of traditional novels is simple and stable, here, space does not only refer to the scenes or buildings involved in the works, but also the formal construction within the works. The protagonists in traditional works always have superiority in background or spiritual level, the environment often gains attention as an external reflection of the protagonist, all contents surrounding the protagonist is meticulously depicted. The narrative gaze is always directly gotten into the character being watched, shows the reader what is seen and gives definite facts. The perspective of viewing behavior in such works is also different, the author's depiction of secondary characters often comes from a glance through carriage window or crack in the wall, the perspective used carries an unnoticeable contempt. Even if a nobody can be the protagonists in classical novels, but these people from humble backgrounds always have some moral advantages, when they become the protagonists, the center of the entire story shifts, and the nobles become a moral laughingstock - thus completing another round of shaping the main and secondary characters.

The problem with traditional works does not lie in the content level or who the protagonist is. The problem is that the works only promise vitality to some people and do not reserve the possibility for secondary characters to show themselves in the structure, directly stifle this possibility at the formal level, Ranciere believes that the fictional equality that the aesthetic system can pursue is based on the gradual changes at the formal level.

Ranciere emphasizes that the consistent norms and hierarchy presented in traditional works are supported by a metaphysics reproduced. "Literature insists on its own power, so merely abolishing the norms imitated and hierarchicy is not enough. Literature must abolish the representative metaphysics and the nature based on it: the model of individual presence and the connection between individuals; the causal and inferential model; in short, the entire system of meaning." [1] And the task of modern fiction is just to overthrow it.

The task of traditional works is to rationally give the most correct possibility, the task of readers is to rationally understand the most correct discipline, Ranciere calls this fictional rationality, which is no different from the logic of educational despotism and social autocracy that Ranciere has criticized in other works.

3. Modern Fiction: Juxtaposition of Micro-événements Sensibles

Before the fictional rationality based on causal model in nature, there are other ways of dealing with nature and the world before this properly placed nature. Of course, we cannot simply believe that if fictional rationality is overthrown, the basis for the establishment of literature is not action, and therefore define literature as a self-referential and self-enclosed system, from the perspective of language alone, this is just a simple view in the modern literary critics.

Ranciere analyzed the changes brought about by new type of modern fiction, he keenly identified that new, spatial narrative construction had replaced the vertical time mode narrative in Flaubert's novels. In Flaubert's *A Simple Soul*, the maid is the protagonist, a model servant that all the townhousewives aspire to have, the novel tells the story of the maid's life. Roland Barthes also discussed the scenes in this novel in his article "effet de Réel", argued that

the text was filled with meticulous depiction of room furnishings, he took the barometer in Madame Aubain's room as an example and pointed out that such descriptions were actually useless and could not be distilled into narrative functional elements. Barthes called Flaubert a craftsman-like writer, persisted in selecting passages and choosing phrases, Just as naturalism pursues the ultimate truth of objects, the excessive detail description in such novels is only to imitate reality. Although Flaubert's descriptions are no longer solely for traditional rhetorical needs, he ultimately create only an illusion of reality. Barthes also saw the teleological nature of such novels, believed that this type of novel was no exception, although there is innovation in language form, the depiction of objects in novels covers layers of values and names, and is also only manifestation of the mythology of the ruling class. Perhaps Barthes regarded Flaubert's language innovations as possibility for artistic form changes in the future, but he believed that these languages became increasingly isolated and introverted. The new type of writing Barthes pursued is "existing in an environment of various voices and judgments without getting involved; it is precisely constituted by the absence of the latter." [2]

In Ranciere's view, the new possibilities of the novel are born in the seemingly narcissistic descriptive fragments, space is constructed by the sensibilities of the characters in these works with complex descriptions. Every item in the characters' rooms is around their emotions, barometer is not just a dispensable decoration; as an inconspicuous machine, it includes a small complete world of sensibility, points to specific and minute work and life, weather factors such as the sun, humidity, and wind force, and generates ripples of multiple sensibility events around it. The depiction of is actually a concentration of a series of differences, displacements, and intensities, through which the external world penetrates into thoughts, and these thoughts form their life world. Time in objects is frozen, but it is condensed within them due to the dynamic sensibility experiences, thoughts, perceptions, and actions are mixed, creating a real unity in space. When Jameson discussed the changes in realism, he mentioned that the turning point occurred when "s" [3], which is consistent with Ranciere's view.

Traditional novels focused on the advancement and depiction in the time dimension, while the new novels do not pursue a supreme object in the distance but emphasize the development of horizontal space dimension. In a space filled with undifferentiated and equal fragments, a unity is born, and it is just what modern people diligently strive after. Thus, Ranciere transformed Barthes' pursuit of the reality effect into a pursuit of reality feature.

Ranciere's analysis of the barometer "demonstrates the revolution that can occur when a life usually destined to endure the rhythms of time, the changes of climate and temperature, undertake the temporality and intensity of a particular chain of sensible events" [4]. This is an aesthetic revolution taking place in the literary scene. In aesthetic regime works, there is no definite external construction standard in space, and there is no longer distinction between main and secondary characters. Space is generated by human sensibility, secondary characters, apart from the protagonist, also emit their own emotional signals and participate in the emotional atmosphere. In this new community of sensibility, there is actually no distinction between main and secondary characters, intense passion fills the entire space, personal emotions are broken into emotional atoms, the closed nature of individuals is broken, they become part of the environment - also composed of emotional atoms - people and others, people and the environment achieve a state of integration, and people and things achieve equality in the atomic sense.

Finally, Ranciere defined the fiction of aesthetic regime as the act of representing the juxtaposition of impersonal micro-événements sensibles, he believed that writing is the breath itself of this emotional organization [5]. "Micro" corresponds to the principle of no difference in literature, "impersonal" indicates that individual exists in the form of emotional atoms in the works, and "juxtaposition" is to seek change in the horizontal spatial dimension.

4. Atomic Equality: Establishment of Emotional Community

Ranciere's discussed the emotional fragments, thus deducing the way of equal energy of fragments, it reminds people of Deleuzian terms such as Affect, Intensity, Deteriorization. In fact, Ranciere's atomic emotional viewpoint comes from both keen perception of changes in the internal expression of literature and inspiration from other philosophers

In works such as "Deleuze, Bartleby, the Formula of Literature" and "Is There a Deleuzian Aesthetics?", Ranciere compared Deleuze to Flaubert, arguing that "Deleuze inherited the bloodline of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*" [6]. Deleuze's important concepts such as l'heccéité and Intensity focus on discussing the way of human transcending one's own boundaries, this action of breaking boundaries is a 'law of the lower world', like Flaubert's new fiction, points to an atomized world, 'undecided, non-individualized, before appearance, before rational principles'. Ranciere links the text of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* with the Philosopher's thoughts on the deterritorialization of the individual, he reintroduced the shock and ecstasy of the saint when witnessing the disintegration of his own existence: the devil leads Saint Anthony to ascend, and the saint trembles as he sees his body disintegrate, melting into the pre-rational emotional torrent. This kind of emotional atom has not been formalized, has not been rationally incorporated, closed individuals no longer exist, what exists is only the mutual influence between atoms.

Ranciere highlights the all-encompassing power brought by this emotional. On the one hand, this interpretation echoes emerging whole of above-mentioned literature, on the other hand, it rises to the discovery of new sensibility. It pushes people to the edge of boundaries and breaks through them to enter into a common emotional space. It is in this in common emotional space that the aesthetic system re-establishes the new foundation of literature. "The unique power of literature finds its origin in this unknown area. Here, previous individualization has not been completed, and at every moment, the endless dance of atoms is constructing new images and intensities" [7]. Modern fiction advocates decentralization, no longer has fully embodied path; but it seeks the unity within undifferentiated fragments, showing the fragmented body in an ironic way, that image pointing to the infinity and ideas. This is a body that longs to be established but is constantly frustrated.

Moreover, modern fiction is also an action, the gradual progress of works is a movement process, the writing movement is "equivalent to the breath itself of this emotional organization [the impersonal emotional micro-event]" [8]. Fiction is a movement, the appearance, interaction, and disappearance of emotional elements are the breath of works. Each point in the works forms a subtle echoing relationship with the whole, perhaps this trait is more clearly visible in non-narrative poetry. Modern poetry is not content with depicting an object that conforms to a specific intention, but focuses on "the empty position that non-representational poetry possesses", which is a new way of viewing matter.

Ranciere identified significant transformations in the poetry of Whitman and Rimbaud, and the works of the two poets were also filled with references to things. When discussing Whitman, Ranciere emphasized that the sacredness pursued in this kind of poetry does not come from heaven but from the everyday life. In Whitman's works, drunkards, taverns, pioneers, and animals are all detached from their original life sequences without difference, each image in the poem is not isolated but a fragment of the whole, and each fragment reflects a full modern life. The listing, elaboration and other methods used by the poet are not about naming all things but about striving to express the self-naming of things, language is used to reveal the language nature of things, and the words is used to represent the daily and life activities. It is not only the presentation of objects but also the presentation of those who have always been dismissed as irrelevant borderline person, such as loggers and pioneers, their construction of public spaces is also presented. The experience marks carried by these people and things are disorderly

intertwined, and this chaos and noise make the community embrace all with difference, enriching it both spiritually and emotionally. Rimbaud's language alchemy has the same effect. "The way of spreading speech in emotional space, a way that gives speech a pace of movement, travel, and swimming" [9], in other words, it is a way of *accompagner* speech. Not only the writer but also the poem itself is aware that it is a kind of accompaniment, the accompaniment and the subject, and the ability of accompaniment and speech. Poets like Whitman present things, providing the community with feelings and enjoyment, and expressing those latent collective experiences. This expression aims to rescue this empirical world as a whole. How to save? Rancière called Whitman's poetry a combination of ideal and reality, symbolism and holism; symbolic poetry still needs to introduce power into various forms through a third-party force (the poet himself); but this kind of poetry that spreads speech in space directly presents the power of the emotional elements, making "a leaf of grass is comparable to the movement of stars", it is fiction that makes "the material life of this community have a corresponding spirit, and the ideas of this community have a corresponding perceptible reality." [10]

5. Conclusion

When people talk about the practical role of artistic works, Rancière persists in discussing the establishment of the emotional community and calls for modern fiction with it as the goal. In Rancière's view, there is no conflict between the purity of art and politics; or articulation, the former guarantees the latter. The power of literature comes from pure sensibility, sensibility originates from reality but is not bound by real rules and order; writers should write for the future and look forward to a future festival, a fictional festival.

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