

Research on the Relationship between Ideology and Literature—Take Marcuse’s “One-Dimensional Man” as an Example

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Abstract—Marcuse focuses on the critical analysis of ideology. With the analysis of human alienation and social alienation, Marcuse proposes that the rationalization of technology promotes the conquest of ideology in the cultural field. Marcuse emphasizes the two-way relationship between ideology and literature in “one-dimensional man,” which has important implications for grasping the relationship between literary creation and real politics today.

Keywords—Marcuse, one-dimensional person, ideology and literature

I. INTRODUCTION

Ideology plays a very important role in the whole social structure. Ideology has distinct political nature and also profoundly affects the development orientation of literature. Herbert Marcuse is a famous contemporary American philosopher and thinker, and is the most representative figure of the Frankfurt School. While seeing the happiness brought by scientific and technological progress to people, he also saw the disaster it brought to people, and profoundly exposed the alienation of human and society under the seemingly prosperous development and harmonious coexistence of developed capitalism. He sharply criticized the developed capitalist society’s strong control of people and things and the suppression of inhumanity, and sincerely expressed his concern about the social prospects.

A. Ideological Conquest of Literature: Bridging the Gap between Literature and Reality

Marcuse pointed out that the new totalitarian society created by the bourgeoisie promoted people to form a one-dimensional thinking and cultural view, “There is only one dimension, and it is everywhere and in various forms”. In the third chapter of “One-Dimensional Man”—the Conquest of Unfortunate Consciousness: the Tendency of Inhibitory Secularization—he explains the influence of ideology on the field of literature: ideology has comprehensively conquered it, the gradual secularization of the previous elegant culture and the loss of legitimacy, “What is happening is not the fall of high-level culture to mass culture, but the rejection of high-level culture by reality. Reality exceeds its culture” [1]. With the rapid improvement of the level of science and technology, human beings in the past encountered difficult problems are now solved. Therefore, contemporary people have abandoned the expectation of being maintained in the noble high-level culture and trampled on the truth of being maintained in the noble high-level culture [1].

1) Close the relationship between elegant culture and secular culture

Marcuse pointed out that the continuous advancement of technology has eliminated the opposing factors in elegant culture. Under the control of ideology, the contradiction between elegant culture and reality is gradually eliminated. Elegant culture is different from mass culture, beyond the reality and even lead the development of reality, and what is happening is that the development of reality has gone beyond the freedom, romance and unique factors in the elegant culture. These characteristics and factors are disappearing, making the elegant culture into a large-scale, featureless mass commodity. The difference between elegant culture and mass culture no longer exists, and everything has become a “deep loss” of mass culture.

“In Marcuse’s view, multiculturalism in the field of culture is an important reason for the emergence of totalitarianism in this field. It is called pluralism, but it is actually eliminating differences, especially the destructive factors of literature” [2]. In this sense, people’s needs in the spiritual field are extremely false, resulting in many false needs. People are lost in the material illusion created, and people’s thoughts are one-dimensional and single. If there are ideas and voices against the existing society, they will be rejected. Marcuse pointed out that today’s novelty is to eliminate the opposition between culture and social reality by eliminating the opposing and alien elements of high-level culture and the other dimension of transcendence that they constitute reality through high-level culture. The way to eliminate the two-dimensional culture is not to deny and reject various “cultural values”, but to incorporate them all into the established order and reproduce and display them on a large scale [1].

2) The elegant culture into the ideological system

Marcuse pointed out that “the way to eliminate the two-dimensional culture is not to deny and reject various “cultural values”, but to integrate them all into the established order and reproduce and display them on a large scale [1]. The so-called bidirectional culture refers to another dimension of culture that keeps a distance from reality, that is, the once elegant culture. The rulers of the totalitarian society brought the original elegant culture into their hands through the way of “Zhao An”, making it lose its critical edge and become obedient and mediocre. The elegant culture has lost its realistic foundation for survival, because in contemporary capitalist society, the aesthetic value of art has been replaced by the exchange value as a commodity, and the aura that was originally shrouded in art has been broken. Even the original

praiseworthy concepts such as ideal, sublime, glory and freedom have gradually become words themselves, which are widely used in politicians' speeches and salesmen's promotion. As Marcuse said: "The assimilation of ideal and reality to this extent indicates that the ideal has been surpassed. It is pulled from the noble realm of the mind, spirit, or inner world and replaced with operational terms and questions [1].

Marcuse believes that bourgeois ideology has infiltrated into the field of culture and literature, turning people into one-dimensional people. At the same time, he also believes that the one-dimensional development of society will inevitably lead to the disappearance of the capitalist system. The inherent contradiction of the developed industrial civilization is here: its unreasonable components exist in its rationality. This is the sign of its various achievements. The reason why the industrial society with science and technology can be well organized is to rule people and nature more effectively and to make more effective use of its resources. When these efforts open up a new dimension of human realization, it becomes unreasonable. It can be seen that the erosion of bourgeois ideology in the cultural field is the result of the alienation of science and technology.

II. CAPITALIST IDEOLOGY LEADS TO ALIENATED LITERATURE

"Marcuse believes that modern capitalist civilization has caused excessive repression of human beings in politics, economy, culture, nature and other aspects, leading to the overall alienation of human beings" [3]. In the "one-dimensional man", Marcuse proposed the rationalization of technology to promote the conquest of ideology in the cultural field by means of the analysis of human alienation and social alienation. However, Marcuse's analysis of various phenomena in capitalist society by means of alienation is limited.

A. *Alienated Literature Lacks Realistic Orientation*

Alienation is a directional concept, not a generalized concept. The core of the concept of alienation is that the products created by human beings become the masters of human beings, while human beings become the slaves of their own products. What is talked about here is abstract human nature, which cannot confuse and blur the social condition of capitalism, so that the root causes are the same.

1) In terms of literary content, there is a lack of reflection on the real world

After World War II, the world formed a hegemonic pattern led by the United States and the Soviet Union. At this time, armed war is no longer a powerful weapon for their respective interests. The economic take-off brought about by technological development has obviously become an effective proof for them to improve their international status and show their national strength. At the same time, technological development has also led to major changes in our social structure and social life. For example, the mechanization of labor production, the white-collarization of blue-collar workers, the limitation of sexual desire and the reduction of eroticism. In general, people's physical labor has been reduced, and the material level has been continuously improved. However, people's spiritual requirements have always been difficult to meet. So more and more people

began to question the decadence and backwardness of the capitalist system. Marcuse published a book "one-dimensional man" in 1964. He analyzed the new changes of capitalism and concluded that although modern capitalism is a "rich society" and a "developed industrial society", it is also a "morbid society", which is still full of crises and sharp contradictions. He pointed out that the "prosperity" of modern capitalism is only a "superficial phenomenon" and "false phenomenon" which covers up the subsequent suppression and enslavement of human spirit. We can say that today's life is more comfortable than ever, but it is also more depressing and suffocating than ever before, causing anxiety, emptiness, weakness and various mental illnesses. We have realized that the main enemy of people is not war but mentally unhealthy, which can be fatal.

Marcuse criticized the disappearance of the distance between literature and reality in "one-dimensional man". He grasped the most fundamental subject object of man and deeply explored the signs of people's overall alienation in the developed industrial society. The most typical manifestations are: the alienation of human consumption, ruled by false needs; the essence of human beings is suppressed, and labor loses the source of happiness; the lack of real freedom of human beings is confined to false freedom. "It is not that goods are produced to meet people's needs, but that people exist in order to consume goods, and people become slaves of goods" [4]. "Through the analysis of one-dimensional society and thought, Marcuse found the main source of one-dimensional state, namely non-critical ideology" [5].

2) In terms of literary form, there is a lack of subjective thinking

"Marcuse exalted the humanistic spirit of attaching importance to people" [6]. Marcuse put the word alienation in bourgeois society and found that the field of literature was full of a large number of false literatures, and the true nature of human beings was oppressed. People lost their subjective thinking and reflection on the world and fell into the fog of the creation of the rapidly developing material world.

The concept of alienation, to distinguish between the two cases. One is to regard alienation as a basic category and basic law, as a theory and method, and the other is to regard alienation as a concept to express some specific phenomena (including some regular phenomena) in a specific historical period. Marxism rejects the former concept of alienation, but only uses this concept in the latter sense, and strictly limits it to class confrontation society, especially capitalist society.

Back to Marxism, in Marx's alienation theory, the connotation of alienation mainly refers to "separation and alienation", that is, the result of things or human activities that belong to human beings. In the process of human objectification activities, it has achieved independence, and in turn has become the power to restrict and rule human beings. Its extension is mainly in the economic field. Marx's view holds that alienation is an inevitable phenomenon under certain conditions on the one hand, and on the other hand, it is a promoting factor in the development of a certain historical stage. It can be seen that the phenomenon of alienation plays a very important role in the development of society and the progress of history.

Marcuse inherited Marx's alienation thinking. However, "there are serious oversights and misunderstandings in

Marcuse's transformation and reconstruction of Marxist theory" [7]. It should be noted that Marx did not regard alienation as a universal and permanent basic law. He clearly pointed out: obviously, this process of reversal is only the necessity of history, but the necessity of the development of productive forces from a certain historical starting point or basis, but by no means an absolute necessity of production, but a temporary necessity. At the same time, when he used the concept of alienation to describe the wage labor under the capitalist system and other phenomena in the capitalist production relations, he did not think that the concept of alienation has been able to explain the essence of these phenomena. In his view, the essence of these alienation phenomena is to be explained by his surplus value theory and his whole scientific research on capital movement. Moreover, as a concept of expression, he does not think it is irreplaceable. Therefore, under the control of bourgeois ideology, whether literature can be explained by alienation remains to be verified.

B. Alienated Literature also Has Its Limitations

The word alienation has gradually entered the works of philosophy and sociology in the modern West, but different writers have given it different meanings. Hegel used alienation to explain the division and opposition between the subject and the object (including workers and products), indicating that the "externalization" of the so-called "absolute idea" is natural. Feuerbach uses alienation to explain and criticize religion. He believes that religion is created by people and dominates people. God is nothing but the alienation of human nature. In his criticism of idealism, he also believes that it is the alienation of human reason. Other bourgeois philosophers who use the concept of alienation have their own usages. The word "alienation" has penetrated into modern daily life and literary criticism, and its meaning is more ambiguous. It roughly means alienation, loneliness, strangeness, powerlessness, no purpose, no criterion, no meaning and so on. The theory of alienation is popular in the modern capitalist world for a time. It is the manifestation of the contradictions in capitalist society that make bourgeois or petty-bourgeois thinkers feel confused, absurd and desperate about life.

As one of the important representatives of the Frankfurt School's social critical theory, Marcuse devoted his life to revealing the ills of capitalist society and exploring the root causes of human alienation in developed industrial society, and made ideological efforts to remove alienation and seek the path of liberation. He absorbed the ideological achievements of Marxist philosophy, Heidegger and Freud, and expanded the social critical theory of the Frankfurt School. Starting from the core of one-dimensional people, he revealed the current situation of people's comprehensive alienation in developed industrial society, and constructed his humanistic critical theory with the realization of people's comprehensive freedom and overall liberation as the ultimate destination. "Marcuse believes that alienation is closely related to individual existence; society and the individual are opposites" [8].

Marcuse has carried out a profound criticism of contemporary capitalism through the theory of alienation, and some viewpoints have brought important enlightenment to

people. However, at the same time, his criticism also has a certain degree of one-sidedness, and the way to overcome alienation is mostly Utopian. He analyzed the root causes of alienation and studied the main manifestations of alienation. At the same time, he attached great importance to exploring ways to overcome alienation and achieved certain results in this regard. For example, he hoped to change the capitalist system through the overall revolution. However, on the whole, his way of overcoming alienation still has the characteristics of Utopia.

III. CORRECTLY TREAT THE TWO-WAY INTERACTION BETWEEN IDEOLOGY AND LITERATURE

A. Using Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism to Analyze and Solve Problems

Only on the basis of the theory and method of historical materialism, the past mistakes, setbacks and the existing negative specific historical analysis, in order to develop the correct approach to solve the problem according to different situations and methods. Marcuse's criticism of capitalist society is correct, but the proposed solution is unrealistic.

Marx in the mature period realized that alienation as a theory and method could not reveal the essence of things. He had transcended this theory and method and created the science of dialectical materialism and historical materialism. He no longer uses the theory of alienation to explain history, but uses historical materialism to scientifically explain history; he no longer uses the theory of alienation to explain capitalism and labor under the capitalist system, but uses the theory of surplus value to explain them scientifically. His analysis of the major political event of the French Louis Bonaparte coup provided a brilliant example for the concrete application of historical materialism, but did not add the "meaningless speculation" such as alienation. In a certain sense, it is beyond the theory and method of alienation that Marx established and developed the theory and method of scientific Marxism. Indeed, if the theory of alienation has been able to explain history scientifically, it does not need historical materialism; if the theory of alienation has been able to explain capitalism scientifically, it does not need the theory of surplus value and the scientific research of the whole capital movement. In that way, neither of Marx's two discoveries is needed, and Marxism will not emerge.

The various negative phenomena in our society today and their various causes have different natures and levels. Contradictions of different natures and different levels need to be solved in different ways. Only by mastering dialectical materialism and historical materialism, mastering Marxist economic theory and scientific socialism theory, and learning to proceed from reality and flexibly use these theories in the practice of building socialism, can we gradually find solutions to various problems and overcome various negative phenomena.

Putting aside the method of specific analysis of specific issues, it seems to have a very profound content to simplify such a complex issue into a socialist alienation. In fact, the thought is extremely poor. It cannot advance any approach to truth in cognition, and it cannot provide any solution in practice. On the contrary, because it has a vague but quite fixed anti-reality tendency, and has an abstract form that can

be used everywhere, all negative phenomena in society can be attributed to the leadership of the socialist society, and the goal of opposition is focused on the leadership of the party and the government. Therefore, it will inevitably spread distrust and pessimism against socialism, communism and the leadership of the party.

B. Safeguard the Fundamental Interests of the Overwhelming Majority of the People

Marcuse's criticism of one-dimensional society contains the expectation of transforming from one-dimensional people to all-round development people. At present, the capitalist ideology and the socialist ideology are fighting through a variety of media and means of communication, but the fundamental difference between the two is to stand in different class positions. Marxist historical materialism emphasizes that the people are the creators of history. One of the tasks of literary and artistic work is to reflect people's lives and express people's emotions. Only literary and artistic works standing on the people's position will be loved and supported by the people.

Dialectical materialism and historical materialism are Marxist world outlook and methodology, and they are powerful ideological weapons to guide the Communists to move forward. This thought, adhering to the people's supremacy, highlighting historical consciousness, adhering to seeking truth from facts, highlighting problem orientation, strengthening strategic thinking, and carrying forward the spirit of struggle, provides scientific guidance for promoting the development of the party and the country, and is a shining example of adhering to and applying dialectical materialism and historical materialism. Adhering to the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people is the fundamental requirement.

C. Strive to Create Literary Works that are Satisfactory to the People and Reflect the Voice of the Times

Literary works cannot be separated from the times. They must go deep into the reality of social development and reflect the spiritual needs of the people.

The article is written for the time, and the song and poem are written for the matter. To measure the literary achievements of an era ultimately depends on the works. Therefore, literary and artistic creation should strive for the speed of the times, aim at the characteristics of the times, the pulse of the times and the spirit of the times, constantly update the form and connotation of literary and artistic creation, face the problems faced by the current literary and artistic undertakings, and promote the prosperity and development of literary and artistic undertakings. Marxist literary theory regards literature and art as a part of society and pays attention to the characteristics of literature and art reflecting the times. In addition to facing the people, literary and artistic creation should also actively respond to the voice of the times and reflect the spirit of their own times.

IV. CONCLUSION

Marcuse, with his book "One-dimensional Man", exposes to us the subjugation of bourgeois ideology in literature, and shows the falsity and unscientific nature of alienated literature. Correctly handling the two-way interaction between ideology and literature requires correct thinking methods and clear positions. Therefore, first, we must learn to use dialectical materialism and historical materialism to analyze and solve problems. Mastering Marxist economic theory and scientific socialism theory, and learning to proceed from reality and flexibly apply these theories in the practice of building socialism, we can gradually find ways to solve various problems and overcome various negative phenomena. Second, safeguard the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people. Marxist historical materialism emphasizes that the people are the creators of history. One of the tasks of literary and artistic work is to reflect people's lives and express people's emotions. Only literary and artistic works standing on the people's position will be loved and supported by the people. Third, we should strive to create literary works that are satisfactory to the people and reflect the voice of the times. The people are the main body of literary and artistic workers to create. The creation of literary and artistic workers should come from the practice of people's life, reflect the expectations and needs of the people, transform the needs of the people into excellent literary and artistic works, and carry out literary and artistic creation worthy of the times.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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