Lacan and Jameson: The Creation and Confirmation of Post-modern Cultural Criticism

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ABSTRACT

Although Jacques Lacan’s cultural theory has been specifically studied by foreign scholars since 1980s, the domestic academic circle has ignored it for a long time, regardless of the relations between Lacan’s theory and postmodern cultural criticism. For the renowned postmodern cultural critic Fredric Jameson, Lacan’s theories have been mentioned many times in his construction of “the cultural logic of late capitalism”, such as Lacan’s “schizophrenic structure” of cultural linguistic in literary works and “the breakdown of signifying chain” have been treated as critical features of postmodernism. This reflects the mixture of psychoanalysis and Marxism in the 1980s and 1990s, which vividly illustrates the diachronic process from “cultural linguistics unconscious” to “cultural politics unconscious”. In the cultural context of late capitalism, further detailed studies of the relation between the creator and confirmer of postmodern cultural criticism are still needed.

INTRODUCTION

Jameson's next book "Lacan" will be released on February 6, 2018. Why Jameson publish this only 96-page book? It is not difficult to find that Jameson's academic career has a very different staging: in the 1970s, attention to structuralism and Marxist literary theory; in the 1980s, analysis of modernist and imperialist context of the writer's political unconscious; in the 1990s, study of postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism; after 2010, he gradually shifted the focus to the interpretation of realism literature. Jameson's essay, through the different schools of theory, with a view to construct its overall methodology of the social sense of poetry. Does this imply some kind of internal logic and connection? The answer is yes. Jameson is extremely creative fusion of psychoanalysis and Marxism as a whole, in order to observe the capitalist social form of diachronic changes. In the psychoanalytical part, Lacan and Lacanian theory always runs through his academic career.

This paper focuses on Lacan's postmodern cultural criticism to Jameson's inspiration. The so-called "post-modern culture", also known as "post-modernist culture", "post-industrial social culture", "information society culture", "late developed (or transnational) capital culture", "post-capitalist culture", which refers to the rise of the 1960s in the United States, quickly swept the entire western industrial society and

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quickly spread to the rest of the world an international social and cultural trends. Post-modern culture, the causes or conditions are extremely complex, but what can be clear is that Lacan and post-Lacan theorists play a major role in it.

Postmodern cultural criticism can be subdivided into narrow and broad sense ones. Narrow sense of cultural criticism: the strict sense of cultural criticism, mainly referring to the rise of literary research after the Second World War. Broadly speaking, as cultural methods to study literature, or the text to study culture and so forth. Today, the Chinese cultural criticism of the academic orientation, like what Jameson on cultural studies has said, “a desire”, the true meaning of this desire based on at least three points: First, the cultural studies as “universal social issues”. The second is to highlight and respond to the spiritual and cultural problems of the present society through cultural studies; third, to regard cultural studies as an "academic reform program" to maintain the superiority of "interdisciplinary". On Chinese domestic front, there are only doctoral dissertations directly related to Lacan and postmodernism, which are "Lacan and Postmodern Cultural Criticism" (2004) by Huang Hanping of Jinan University and Liu Ling 's "Lacan' s Postmodernism" Desire Problem Research "(2006). There are mainly Fang Wenwen's discussion on Lacan, postmodern society (culture) and feminism, such as "post-modern cultural psychology: Lacan's theory" ("foreign social science", 1998, No.6)”, “Women's Discourse and Lacan's Postmodern Psychoanalytic Theory” (Foreign Social Sciences, 2002, N0.1). While the number of studies involving Jameson's postmodernism is significantly more. In short, although in a very small part of the Jameson study involved in the impact of Lacan, but the domestic circles concerning Lacan to Jameson's impact on the subject of this research remain to be tapped.

Language Unconscious: The Subject Subordinating to Language

Jameson systematically introduces Lacan’s “language unconscious” in his article in the late 1970s, which emphasizes that the Lacanian theory of structuralism was distinct from other paradigms. " Insofar as the Lacanian version generates a rhetoric of its own that celebrates submission to the Law, and indeed, the subordination of the subject to the Symbolic Order, conservative overtones and indeed the possibility of a conservative misappropriation of this clearly anti-Utopian scheme are unavoidable"[1]100 This innovation stems from a reinterpretation of Freudian theory. “The originality of Lacan’s rewriting of Freud may be judged by his radical reorganization of this material, which had hitherto—houses, towers, cigars, and all—been taken to constitute some storehouse of universal symbols.”[1]86 For Lacan, the language of infants (infans; unvoiced) marks its entry into the symbolic phase, which is similar to Freud's individuality of "Id". On the basis of Freud's personal unconsciousness, Lacan gives priority to the unconsciousness of language and culture. Jameson further attaches importance to the ideological nature of this transformation that purely physical needs and natural state does not exist, it is through the symbolic stage immediately become a desire to be given a social significance. [2]

Lacan's "Imagination", "Symbol" and "Real" are based on Freud's three kinds of personality structure and put forward. In his view, the mirror phase of the "self", is developed along the fictional direction. The “Real” world is a kind of original disorder and ignorance, the subject is not close to and dominating the field, he does not refer to the objective reality, but refers to a symbolic order from the language of the “absence of the presence” of “Real” is the source of desire, is also a permanent "here" in the chaotic
state and in people's thinking and language. The field of imagination (ego, physical space) is the subjective area of human life or human subject. It is established on the basis of the individual history of the subject. It is our cultural environment and is everything that the singular forms its characteristic. Symbolic world (superego, social space) is the symbol of the world. It is just an order that governs the laws of individual life activity. The individual is bound by the existing cultural system through language, and establishes relations with others as the "subject". In his paper, Michael Clarke sharply pointed out that the proposal of Lacanian symbolism has a great effect on the openness of Freud's unconsciousness, making it possible for the theory of unconsciousness to be used by Marxism. Lacan switched the foundation of consciousness from Freud's so-called unconscious "other scene" to a mechanism of symbolic structure, which made the unconscious open to historical limitation because it took effect at the material and social levels, In Marxism, the symbolic structure is present at these levels. [3]

For Jameson, Lacan's "Real" refers to the history itself, as the essential history. However, the history of reality is always constructed (or reconstructed), such as ideology. How to discern the tampering of the essence of capital, especially the truncated transformation of western cultural context in the 1960s, has become Jameson's opportunity to corroborate the logic of post-modernism or late capitalism.

In addition, the existence of "Imagination" partially explains Lacan's thesis that "the unconscious is the discourse of the other." On this programmatic slogan Jameson has a dialectical analysis of "language" and "unconsciousness". Jameson pointed out, in general, we can say that the use of language encompasses not only the abstraction of the other, which is prior to the non-my whole experience, but also a physical being, a concrete person, and, in addition to both, A third person, that is, his own self, or his own image (can be traced back to the infant stage of the mirror stage, that baby first found himself and an outside of the image of the time). When we begin to consider non-my language experience as these separate aspects, we gradually come to realize that this act of speech contains the most complex (imaginary) projection and mutual self-centered mentality.

**Political Unconscious: The Subject Subordinating to Ideology**

As mentioned earlier, the two pillars of the Jameson Building are psychoanalysis and Marxism. However, the two are diametrically opposed and seemingly uncoordinated, the former emphasizing the individual, the latter giving priority to the collective. [4] Lacanian and post-Lacanian theories make Freud's unconscious model play an important role in Marxism.

Jameson has made it clear that if two words to sum up his academic career, that is, "history" and "form". It is also shown in one of his masterpieces, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative As a Socially Symbolic Act* (1981), the famous proposition "always historicize." [5] Does the concept of "HISTORY" have an inherent relation to Lacan's "real" or even the equivalence of a concept? This is often not mentioned, but it is combing the construction of Jameson's theory of one of the key nodes. Sean Homer directly points out that Jameson never gives full elucidates, even if Lacan's "Real" capitalism is so full of his discourse. In fact, the dialectical relationship between Jameson's "text, society and history" in Marxist literary criticism has obvious similarities with Lacan's "imagination, symbol and reality". [6]
The Political Unconscious, a book marks that Jameson no longer shackles in the perspective of structuralism linguistics criticized Lacan's theory, but to further internalize it, into the logic of his theory of construction. The book reveals the inspirations from Lacan's theory. First, the subtitle is "narrative as a social symbolic act". "Social" and "symbolic", the former means ideology, the latter is equal to Lacan's "symbolic world", and in the title page meaningfully quoted Dukeheim's words to confirm this: "As a result of the whole concept The world represented by the system is the world in which society resembles itself, so that only society can provide a generalized notion that such a world must be reproduced."

It is well known that the concept of unconsciousness is now proposed by Freud, referring to an innate "sexual instinct" desire. Lacan pointed out that Freud neglected Saussure's linguistic theory and thus failed to integrate the latest achievements of modern linguistics into his psychoanalysis. What he had to do was to use structural linguistics to analyze Freud's theory in order to compensate for the gap his theory itself.

The Political Unconscious is a continuation of Jameson's Freudian and Lacanian "unconscious" theory. In this book, Jameson discusses the relationship between ideology in the structure of art and the ideology in everyday life. He emphasizes that the ideology of everyday life embodies the existence of politics, manifested as social system and political doctrine and various cultural facilities. This ideology constitutes a deep unconscious of people's repression, which was called "political unconscious". In Jameson's words, "all literature, no matter how weak, will permeate what we call the political unconscious, all literature can be interpreted as a symbolic reflection of the fate of the group." Writers' or artists' space experience, must be in a strong or weak way to reflect the construction of their art space in works. And realism literature can reproduce reality and history through language and language. Modernist literature uses metaphor, metaphor and other means to achieve the effect of rebellion and irony to alienate material, nature, individual and society. In fact, when talking about post-modern literature and art, Jameson pointed out that Lacan's post-modernist text of the ideological confirmation of the practice.

Cultural Unconscious: The Diffusion of Subjects

Despite the fact that Jameson began to shift from literary criticism to cultural studies after the 1980s, Lacan's inspiration, instead of being reduced, has made Jameson one of the most important critics of postmodern cultural criticism. His postmodern cultural criticism is more concentrated in these two articles: "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" (1983) and "Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (1984). Lacan played a key role in Jameson's confirming of postmodern cultural criticism, which is reflected in Jameson's definition of the basic characteristics of post-modern culture and the concept of "cognitive mapping", and his idea of the "imagination and reconstruction of Utopia".

One of the basic characteristics of postmodern culture is "the diffusion of subject", which has been found by Lacan in his revolutionary transformation of Freud’s theory under the slogan “back to Freud” since the 1953. Fabio Vighi, in his book "Ontology of Crisis and Lacan's Discourse of the Capitalist” (2015), focuses on the "crisis ontology" of Lacanian discourse of the theoretical and political implications in the late 1960s. Under the influence of Lacan's "Subversion of Subject" theory, Jameson admits: "It is Lacan's inspiration for us to find a new yet undeveloped notion of the nature of
ideology. This is the first time since Marx and Nietzsche ... " [8] Jameson then put forward the "cultural logic of late capitalism." And pointed out that the post-modern culture is "the cultural dominant of the logic of late capitalism." [9] (Jameson, 1991, 46)

Another characteristic of postmodern culture is "sense of depthless". Some scholars have pointed out that in Lacan's expositions on capitalism, which possesses obvious "anti-social effects". The subject is no longer exploited by the capitalists, but by the force of libidinal enjoyment. [10] In the cultural logic of late capitalism, the various identities of the subject are singularized, and Freud's "ego", "self" and "superego" and Lacan's "Imagination", "Real" and "Symbol" can no longer be presented in its entirety.

The third characteristic of postmodern culture is the formation of a new cultural language of "schizophrenia". Jonah Peretti, in his article “Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Contemporary Visual Culture and the Acceleration of Identity Formation/Dissolution” (2006), points out the differences between Jameson’s "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" (1983) and James Deleuze, Felix Guattari’s “Anti-Oedipus” (1983) that these two works are based on the Lacan’s theory and Lacanian psychoanalytic theories and illustrate the relationship between the subject and their cultural identity in the context of late capitalism.

Jameson argues that "cognitive mapping" is an instrumental mapping and representation of power and social control in various forms of cultural logic in postmodernism. In addition to being directly influenced by Lacan, Lynch, and Althusser's theory, the theory of "cognitive mapping" arose largely from his confirmation of the postmodern space and Lefebvre's theory of space politics. In addition, Jameson also began to comment on Lefebvre's space political theory in the early 80s, but the response is not satisfactory. After combining the theories of Lynch and Foucault, Jameson put forward the theory of cognitive mapping. Edward W. Soja once put forward a similar view: “(in arguing for the theory of cognitive mapping”) he specifically referred to Kevin Lynch (1960) on ‘images of the city’, but the insinuating connections link back not only to Lefebvre and Berger, but also to Foucault.” (Soja E., 2010, 63)

There are mainly two purposes of Jameson’s “cognitive mapping” theory. The first is based on the geographical sense, that is, people need to identify their own geographical location among the post-modern buildings and cities. The second is from the ideological sense, that is, "cognitive mapping" is actually concerning "class consciousness". In fact, the "Cognitive Mapping" is proposed mainly in the United States under the circumstances of the formation of the post-modern space, in which the "consciousness of class" is declining realities. Through the cognitive mapping method, reviving “consciousness of class” so as to better understand the current status of the United States in the world. On this point, Jameson had a more detailed exposition:

I wanted to underscore the way in which we not only need to know, as people put it, where we stand individually, who we are, what our identity is, but we also have to recognize the degree to which we are located in the world system and what that does to our collective identities. I think it is implied there, and maybe we will come back to this later on, that it is easier for people in some parts of the world to map their own positions and situations with respect to the rest of the world than it is for others. [12]

CONCLUSION

All in all, further researches on the relationship between Lacan and Jameson from the perspective of post-modern cultural criticism are still in need. The microscopic
view of this article provides a macro perspective on the integration of the 1960s to 1990s, such as psychoanalysis, linguistics and Marxism. In the context of global postmodern culture, it is of great value to trace the development and confirmation of postmodern cultural criticism, which would be helpful to the contemporary cultural construction in China.

REFERENCES