

The Interrelationship of the Arts and Human Rights

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Abstract

Human rights are with the emotion and logic. The art is an expression of the spirit. Sometimes art is sanctioned by the laws of society, but each is continually exposed to human rights. Human rights and art are relative to each other to build a richer human rights ideas. In addition, works of art make it easier to understand the human rights. Human rights are a prerequisite for empathy. Empathy is the essence of art. Literature, music and picture had to express human rights, moved the hearts of human being. Painting, theater, cinema was also responsible for such a role. Art had a great influence on the development of human rights. It will be human rights and the arts to influence each other.

Keywords: Arts, Freedoms and Rights, Human Rights, Interrelation, Literary Works

1. Introduction

Human rights is an inviolable and inalienable basic right, in which human can survive as a human. All humans are endowed with a right at the moment of birth and the right is prior to the power of the state. This natural right is not limited by law or other people's right. Thus, this right can be expanded as far as individual's power and desire allow to expand.

Human rights have evolved through the countless struggles of many people in history. In this process, there lies a precise theory that emphasized the freedom and equality. The Social Contract of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau have reminded the people of why the human beings are free and equal. However, it was art works that gave a bigger resonance to the heart of the people.

Literatures and paintings were the driving force that has awakened gradual changes to the people. Such phenomenon still exists even to now. Television dramas and movies play the role of textbooks that is better than any academic theory.

Human rights are dynamic. Human rights are an indicator of life. Therefore, human rights reflect the reality. But the problem is, people tend to excessively rely on law when interpreting the human rights. Understanding of

human rights through the law which is focused on the protection of rights has the disadvantage of not being able to quickly respond to social changes but aside from this, a mechanical aspect such as mathematics can be emphasized for understanding the human rights.

Social changes promote the change in the law. Rather than actively responding to social changes, the appearance of the law that controls the social changes can have negative effects toward the recognition of people on the law. Therefore, if other factors can intervene for understanding the human rights, richer discussions can take place. Such discussions become the core of this paper.

When this human rights encounters arts, the right can be changed. Various genres of arts protect and aids to extend human rights, and human rights can gather social necessity and enthusiasm with the help of arts. Literary, movies, music, and drawings express human rights and play a big role to improve the sensibility of human rights

2. Description of Human Rights and Arts

2.1 The Contents of Human Rights

Human rights are the rights equally given to everyone just by being a human. It includes not only the rights to be

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free from interference and infringement of the country as well as the rights to receive protection and benefits of the country.

The American Declaration of Independence established in 1776 speaks about all human beings being created equal and the rights that cannot be taken away such as life, freedom and the pursuit of happiness. In 1948, the United Nations has announced the Declaration of Human Rights and here, more variety of human rights are presented. Among those, it includes the rights to enjoy arts and scientific advancements and its benefits.

Humans as highly spiritual beings beyond the biological aspects have the potential which is difficult to identify the boundaries. This is empirically demonstrated through history, anthropology, psychology and sociology. Human rights have the purpose of awakening the full ontological potential of humans to be capable in all aspects.

War, hunger and poverty are conditions that threaten human rights even in modern society. Here, the environment according to abnormal temperature also threatens the human rights. The problem is, it cannot be solved by the strength of individuals. In addition, there are many people who still do not know the circumstances they are in. Therefore, it is necessary to understand each other with solidification.

Traditionally, human rights is the right based on the natural equality, regardless of social attributes of people, and has very strong moral implications, making the right inalienable, imprescriptible, inviolable, universal, and independent. Thus, the significance of human rights differ from the basic rights of human prescribed in statue.

For example, 1789 French Revolution, which provided an opportunity a huge advancement of the freedom and rights of human, was begun and developed partly owing to the power transcended from arts. Human rights purposes human to act for oneself. Each human is unique and a distinguished individual from other persons.

The following figure is an original Magna Carta. It was established in 800 years. The most famous passage is as follows: "Nullus liber homo capiatur, vel imprisonetur, aut disseisiatur, aut utlagetur, aut exuletur, aut aliquo modo destruatur, nec super eum ibimus, nec super eum mittemus, nisi per legal iudicium parium suorum vel per legem terre.

Nulli vendemus, nulli negabimus aut differemus rectum aut justiciam."(Clause. 40).

The Universal Declaration on the Human Rights took over the Magna Carta has to say,

"Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

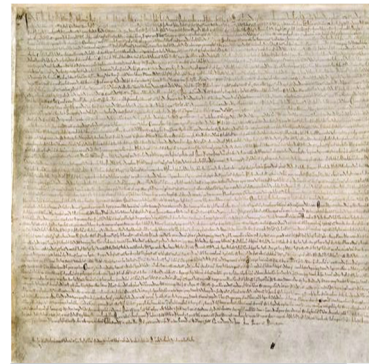


Figure 1. Magna Carta Libertatum, 1215.

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law, Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,” in a preamble.

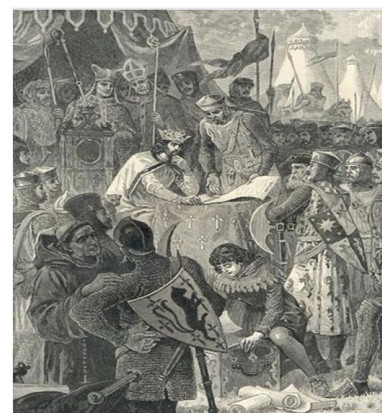


Figure 2. King John Signing Magna Carta.

And in Article 1 it is finally declared as follows: “All

human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

This historical declaration are slowly and consistently expressed in works of art. Human rights documents that will become one of the content. The following figure shows the appearance of King John to sign the Magna Carta.

2.2 Application of Human Rights to Arts

The devastation of war, heat and cold and the appearance of people dying after suffering, and the powerless people being trampled by those in power can be written in novel, drawn in pictures and expressed in music. For a very long time, the mankind has accused the absurdity of society through the power that can create.

Paradoxically, human rights can be understood through the behaviors of cultural artists. Cultural artists express the social pain and suffering or reflection through the publishing of comics, concerts, art exhibitions, photo exhibitions, public reading, poetry or short stories. Away from the political interests, by pulling out their tools of creation, they are coming forward to the world.

In such flow, the appearances of individuals that forms the human rights appears as another figure to the world and approaches all members of the modern society. A modern meaning of human rights perspectives that we understand was historically formed and emerged from a specific culture and a specific period. In the modern concept of human rights, a unique ethicality and normativity was given as one of the methods that solve the problems of human society. Therefore, human rights were progressed as the awareness on cruelty and violence was slowly purified through the human history, and art was an important medium which was indispensable.

Human rights should be applied universally to everyone regardless of nationality or race. Consequently, human rights places more weight on the implementation of human right concept rather than consideration on a specific, realistic situation.

Such a universality of arts could be a good tool to comprehend human rights. It is the human rights that need to be protected from the last thing which can be no more acceptable for human. In that sense human rights may be dependent on emotion as much as reasoning. Inner feelings and conviction of human undoubtedly enrich the content of human rights. Here is the reason

why human rights and arts can look at each other in a place

3. Meeting between Human Rights and Arts

3.1 In the Literary Works

Diversity possessed by the word ‘novel’ is not our interest at least for now. However, if a novel is one of the forms created by humans according to each of the various circumstances for trying to properly escape from specific problems faced by humans during their lives, based on that, humans tend to create anonymous novels or similar things to believe due to the deep abyss between existence, awareness, nature and reality.

The ultimate determination on human does not depend on whether the humans believe the novels or not but how humans can be persuaded using what types of novels. So the novel of ‘Milan Kundera’ is exploring the human existence. There is no truth or morality. That should be done by the party leaders, the president, terrorists, priests and revolutionaries. Perhaps novels are focused on the relativity of the period and human affairs like the word ‘it emerged in the early modern time’ when the people were just starting to realize how human affairs can be relative and how difficult it is for humans to reach the truth. Of course, these words cannot be unconditionally agreed.

Especially, it is not easy to say that novels are irrelevant to the morality. In fact, the novel is in the form of talking about the tradition and the difficulties of moral judgment. This is rather closer to the morality of higher dimension.

Figure Faint traces of human rights can be found in Homers’ Iliad or Sophocles’s Antigone, ancient Greek classics. In the era when human and god coexisted, the innate rights endowed to human by god were the ideal and the reality. Antigone is resistance to power. She says human nature and in compliance with the order of the natural law. Iliad is also provided with a moral lesson and practical lessons. Humanity is in the works. And that spirit is no different to that now.

The essence of human rights has been given to human even prior to the establishment of a state in conjunction with the theory of natural law, and there becomes an issue of how the diverse rights recognized by man-made laws with a state establishment can be justified. Literary works expressed in god’s image were troubled with this

issue, and have asked human to find a reflection. Besides, human rights has been expressed in a lot of works and the spirit is still continued in the current works. And literary works influences in a variety of genres. One example is a picture. The following picture shows the appearance.



Figure 3. The Procession of the Trojan Horse in Troy, Gian Domenico Tiepolo, 1773.

3.2 In the Music and Pictures

Music and pictures are formally too limited to express the human rights. On the other hand, there is no limit for receiving its topics and materials.

In the case of art, for example in the West, there has been a threat of censorship in art until now. Even historically, many great painters have received life threatening situations due to religious issues. This was the same for many painters including Francisco Goya (1746-1828) and Honore Daumier (1808-1879). Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) was criticized for being an erotic painter, and Georges Rouault (1871-1958) has portrayed the court with desolate inner side. There are countless examples besides these. However these paintings sparked a lot of emotion to the modern people and expanded the sharing of emotions.



Figure 4. Goya, La maja vestida, Museo del Prado, Spain.

The following two pictures are hidden stories. Picture includes contemporary meaning of human rights. As an art form that picture is a good tool to express it directly.



Figure 5. Guido Reni, Beatrice Cenci, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica Palazzo Barberini, Rome, Italy.

The musicians who expressed human rights in their music could be Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) and Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951). Mozart satirized and criticised the features of the aristocratic circles at the time through his opera “The Marriage of Figaro”, implicating the preciousness of human, and Schoenberg revealed different-looking human through his music, “A Survivor from Warsaw”, “A Survivor from Warsaw” was expressing the tragedy of war, helps us understanding human rights in itself. But it’s not easy to hear. “The Marriage of Figaro” is easy listening. However, the plot gives away providing a lot of thought.



Figure 6. Arnold Schoenberg, A Survivor from Warsaw.

In addition, a number of music enter into people’s minds, making them understand their situation, then act, report the real issues. And these things become a source for the new development of human rights. These works of art are humanity’s assets. Locke, who had exercised great

influence on the development of human rights theory, he said the following about ownership and property.

“Whether we consider natural reason, which tells us, that men, being once born, have a rights to their preservation, and consequently to meat and drink, and such other things as nature affords for their subsistence But this beings supposed, it seems to some a very great difficulty how any one should ever come to have a property in any thing: I will not content myself to answer, that if it be difficult to make out property, upon a supposition that God gave the world to Adam and his posterity in common, it is impossible that any man, But I shall endeavour to show how men might come to have a property in several parts of that which God gave to mankind in common, and that without any express compact of all the commoners”. (Second Treaties, sect. 25).

His words are still many implications today. Works of art that we see is the evidence.

4. Conclusion

Type Arts and human rights have helped each other's advancement consciously and unconsciously. In occasion, they awakened mundane political order when it crossed over the line of a moral law which it should not, and on other occasions, they become the source of imposing an order on the move of god, universe, and nature.

The concept of human rights based on liberalism is connected with the spirit of arts. The questions about human rights can be expressed, and developed to an opinion. The human rights issue rather than the explanation for a certain scene asks for the expression of thoughts with no hesitation.

The human rights are not abstractive or conceptual but concrete and realistic. The human rights are subject to the survival of the people. To be treated as humans, a social conditions and foundation should be laid. People should be able to eat, wear, sleep, be recognized and live a rewarding life.

Socially given rights conflicts with each other and

my rights and the rights of others will also collide. When individuals or groups enjoy the privileges, the human rights of others are violated. The world without exclusivity and privileges is the world made up of human rights and peace.

Freedom of expression is the symbol that expresses the human rights at the same time of being the core of human rights related to art. In addition, the human rights have established the opportunity to richly broaden its outer margin and made the thoughts of humans to go one step further.

However, what is most important is that it has played a significant role of making the modern people understand the human rights. And this has become the foundation for the development of human rights.

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