On the Existing Mode of Literature in the Context of Modern Media

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This dissertation aims to illustrate the existing mode of literature (abbreviated as EML in this paper) as the basic theoretical issue of literature. It means to construct a kind of concrete being in the present social and cultural context instead of a true theoretical pattern of literary existence beyond context. From the viewpoint of theories of communication and media, modern media has influenced the eastern and western society greatly since printing revolution, and formed a new existing context for literature. Thus, “researches on the EML in the context of modern media” become the issue field and the study topic in this dissertation, along with the following parts:

Introduction

Beginning from today’s popular version of “literature termination” and the inquiry of the essential attributes of literary theory study, this part states that literature is a kind of realistic being in both the eastern and the western worlds at present, explaining that the existence of the study of basic literature theory is decided by the most abstract and basic attributes of theoretical study, while the basic literary theories including the EML study are unnecessary to be governed by the thinking pattern of essential theory and metaphysics. Consequently, researches on the EML have their own internal legality.
The Basic Issues of Studying the EML

Since the 20th century it has been found that the existing way of things is more basic and closer to its ontology compared with its essence. Thus the shift, from studying the essence of "existence" to the "way," has appeared in the western philosophy and human science. Therefore, the study of the EML is adapted to the great tendency of human science development, and also explores a new way to study the ontological being of literature. The EML aims to mark how literature exists and how it presents its state, structure and appearance totally in front of us, that is, it disposes the state, structure, and appearance of literature and its relationship to its concrete mode. In detail, focusing on works, the literature activity is the dynamic existing mode and an integral one, which is made up of its production, transmission, and reception; while literature works is static in presenting the existing form and structure of literature text. In the context of modern media, the constituents of the existential mode of literature are clearer, which include the following: signal medium, carrier medium, product medium, and communication medium. Because the EML interwinds some contents of the essence of literature existence, and it also absorbs some nonessential factors which have been abandoned by the essence of literature existence, then it is closer to the ontological being or self-ness of literature. Thus the study of the EML may bring new breakthrough to the study of the ontology of literature. In this dissertation, the theories about philosophy, historicism and literature-field have been applied as the principles of methodology for guiding the study of EML. Based on the previous principles, we can find that any EML is the concrete and practical being, thus there will not exist the EML beyond the context of history and culture. And the EML is the description of the state, structure and appearance of literature being with holism in some certain context.

The Historical Trace of Studying EML

It is stated in this dissertation that there have been five kinds of typical paradigms from ancient Greek to the 20th century in the literature theories: "world-writer-works" paradigm; from phenomenology to the aesthetics of reception, being "writer-works-reader" paradigm; Meyer Howard Abrams (1912-),
"world-writer-works-reader" paradigm; in literature sociology being, "world-writer-works-mediator-reader" paradigm; in Germany being "world-writer-works-addresser-reader" paradigm. The static EML which arises in the 20th century represented by New-Criticism, Phenomenology, Russian Formalism, structuralism Criticism. They discuss the issues such as its existing location, quality, form and structure, etc. James Liu (Liu Ruoyu) transforms the model of Abrams’ four elements into a dynamic cycling one. The contemporary Chinese literature theories combine this mode with the theories of artistic production of Marxism and clearly illustrate that literature is a dynamic activity process constituted by the four elements. Zhu Liyuan proposes firstly the statement of the study of EML, and considers it as a cycling structure of writer-work-reader. The study of EML in the Chinese and western literary criticism has drawn the outline of EML basically and generally, which adapts to the practical situation of EML in traditional society comparatively. However, in the context of contemporary media society, the governing force has penetrated into various links and aspects of literary activities, the constituents of media in EML have been presented. All those theories of EML cannot explain the real situation of contemporary existence of literature.

The Modern Media Context for the Study of EML

Seen from the previous statements, the keen judgments, thorough recognition and analysis of the practical context have constituted the initial steps of the study of EML. The contemporary existing context of literature has been shown in the following two aspects of macroscopic background of social culture and concrete field of literature. The modern cultural age of media can be divided into three periods of mechanical printing, electronic communication and net transmission respectively and they are three cultural modes, which are folding mutually in turn. The modern media has influenced social economy, politics, human daily life and thinking mode greatly; moreover, it can inevitably govern the EML in a microscopic and total way. The field of literature influenced by the modern media is one of the key points of study.

This dissertation integrates the theories of the field of literature, the theories of transmission and communication into a new theoretical weapon, and analyses an enormous impact on the modern media to the vicissitudes of the field of literature.
Even in the pre-modern, media also has a great effect on the vicissitudes of the field of literature with less autonomy. Since the age of media, stressed by the mass literature and news discourse springing from printing communication, elite literature has grasped the accretion of cultural capital through constructed the rarity and worship value of literature. It has construct itself as a glorious literary spokesman in terms of literary autonomy, obtained the acceptance of the eastern and western social culture and educational system, forming the governing of other literary production types besides mass literature. Thus, a field of literature with a united autonomy is formed.

When the electronic media arise, the field of literature with a united autonomy turns into divergence and dissection. The artificial image text has impacted the text of language signals of literature, which has moved the literary position in the art field from the center to the edges. During the process of expanding strength, the news field in the age of electronic media invaded the literary field continuously and diminished the principles of literary autonomy with the business logic and news rules. Tightly driven by the cultural industry brought by electronic media, in the trend of the post-modern social cultural thoughts surging, the influence domain of elite literature has been always following the “mass line,” thus it has some relative affinity with the electronic audio-visual arts. Facing the surging invasion of electronic audio-visual art, it has applied extremely different strategies with elite literature, that is, not confrontation but cooperation. It is illustrated that, the various literary art modes of pop songs, a part of radio plays, art films, a part of TV literature (including TV prose, TV poetry, and TV novels), TV plays, and TV news stories, etc., are just the products of mass literature and electronic media art’s cooperation.

We can not consider that literature has been covered by the electronic media art, but agree that mass literature has found a new existing space in the electronic media. With the development of internet, a net literary field has formed among the e-pals carried by the net. In this relatively independent field of literary production, the various aspects relating to manufacturers, consumers, products, communicating media, and power structure, are greatly different from those in the fields of both elite literary production and mass literary production depending on paper printing and broadcasting-typed electronic media. To some extent, it has merged the boundaries between elite and mass literature. Elite literary production, mass literary production and
net literary production have constituted three typical and powerful representative subdivisions of the literary fields.

**Researches on the EML in the Modern Media**

Having understood the EML, we have obtained further comprehension and recognition to the previous theories surveys and existing issues; meanwhile, the EML has been clarified that it is the concrete being in a certain context, which has been clearly judged and grasped thoroughly. The followings are the basic ideas about the EML in the modern media. There are three sections in this chapter.

"The EML of Production and Dissemination of Literary Information": Here it is illustrated that the attribute issues of literary existing information’s production and dissemination, that is, from the angle of transmission science, literature only exists in the form of production and spreading of the literary information. Thus discussions on the nature, structure, historic occurring, realistic generation, dissemination and acceptance, etc. constitute one of the key points of this dissertation. It could be easy to draw the conclusion that literary activity is a special kind of information dissemination activity and literary text is a special kind of information text if we put the existing studies on the form of literary existing, communication and semiotics together. From the Marxist aesthetic point of view, literary information has the nature of "anthropomorphism." It is a kind of anthropomorphism information. From the point of view of informationism aesthetics, literary information is composed of semantic information and narrow-sense of aesthetics information. Semantic information refers to the information of the object signified by signals. It is orderly, regular and clear. The narrow-sense of aesthetics refers to the signal itself with the qualities of indeterminacy, ambiguity and imagination. Narrow-sense of aesthetic information can be subdivided into deep, surface and outer levels. The premise condition of literary information’s existence in human society is man’s formation of the complete abstract ability. Only then, man is able to grasp the differences between internal essence and outer form; to perceive the object’s image-form with non-utilitarian purposes, attitudes and affections and then to choose the aesthetic information from the realistic formation. Then we can select aesthetic information from realistic information and implementation the production of the broad-sense
aesthetic information. The crux of the literary information is the aesthetic attentions and attitudes. During the dissemination process, the structure of literary information is unsteady which could be imagined as a continuous twisting multi-lateral module with three dimensions. Flexibility presented in the process of transmission must create the plasticity and regeneration of literary information's contents—semantic meaning, narrow-sense aesthetic meaning, which offer a room for creating interpretations for recipients. In this sense, the dissemination has the character of practicality.

*The Researches of the Dynamic EML in the Context of Modern Media*

It is stated that the dynamic process in the bidirectional contact way of "world-writer-works-reader" is not direct or smooth and there exists governing force between every two links whose relationship is not simple or distinct. Virtually the real situation of literature is more complicated along with the existence of modern media. It's not transparent between the world and writers because modern media has inserted a "virtual world" made by the "informational environment" with its firm construction force. More and more likely, it becomes another "world" for writers to get their materials, and also at the same time it has gradually shown its firm construction force to writer's subjective world. The relationship between writers and works is not direct or simple either. Modern media not only decides the individual writer’s destiny of fulfilling his manuscript, but also changes writer’s individual writing situation, then an intertwined layout may appear resulting from individual composition and collective production.

*The Static EML in Context of Modern Media*

Here, it is proposed that literary works are the concrete beings in the transmission chain of literary information. Literary works are nothing but the materialized forms of literary information. In its former half of the transmission chain, there is a vestige of recording the gradual development of literary works; and in its latter half, there is
the recording of the process from the spiritual materialized goods to its value fulfillment. We can call the literary works in the context of modern media “medical text,” in which, all levels of media including the materialistic contents such as signal medium, carrier medium and product medium, are the material guarantee for deciding the existence of literary works, forming the organic part of literary text and the basic level in total structure. The communication constituents still have great aesthetic value, that is, these medium elements have all participated in the aesthetic activities internally and carried broad-sense aesthetic information, only whose existence can make the literary works, being total existence, be a real aesthetic object.

**Keywords:** The Existing Mode of Literature; Modern Media Information of Literature; Media Text