https://doi.org/10.37420/j.cer.2020.022

Art Production in the Age of Mass Media

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Abstract: *From the perspective of the development of art, every change in art form is closely related to media technology. With the advent of the mass media age dominated by print and electronic media, the mechanism of art production has changed, affecting the existence of art. In the age of mechanical reproduction, the essence of art production is "reproduction"; the quality of art products changes, and the aura dissolves; art acceptance changes, and the public is indulged in the "shock" effect of the work. In the age of electronic media, the mediumlization of art production has become a big landscape, and the final conclusion of art is hustle and bustle. For literature to have a lasting existence, it must spread from the traditional textual to the media, construct its new aesthetic form with literariness, and turn "crisis" into "vigor".*

Key words: *Mass media; Art production; Mechanical reproduction; Electronic media*

Questions Raised

From the perspective of the development of art, every change in art form is closely related to media technology. When we examine the transformation of art based on the evolution of media technology, we find that there is a symbiotic relationship between media and art. In the era of oral transmission before the emergence of words, oral language as a medium has become the basic way for ancestors to exchange information and express emotions, and the occurrence of art has become possible. After the emergence of written literature, words are used as media to record and communicate information between people. In this process, the effective material carrier of characters is constantly improved and developed with the help of technology, realizing the evolution from manual printing to mechanical printing, which makes the speed of literature communication greatly faster. Since the 20th century, with the rapid development of science and technology, photography, radio, film, television and other new communication carriers have increasingly penetrated into the daily life of the public, changing the way of art generation, the way of works existence and the way of reading consumption of the public, and the distance between the public and the public is also getting closer and closer. Especially with the advent of the Internet era and the emergence of digital technology, the electronic form of contemporary art has accelerated its storage and communication advantages, greatly changing the form of traditional art. It can be said that the development history of art is a history of continuous evolution of media.

Of course, for art, the media is not only a carrier for transmitting related information. It also profoundly changes the way art is produced, disseminated and received, and changes the cultural ecology of art production. It also poses a challenge to traditional art aesthetics. In fact, prior to Marx's "art production" theory, people's investigations of literary and artistic activities were generally conducted in the spiritual and

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conscious areas. Whether it was parody theory or emotional expression theory, they ignored the emphasis on media technology. This did not change until the 20th century, especially with the advent of the mass media era dominated by print and electronic media, the mechanism of artistic production changed. Under such circumstances, art, as a kind of spiritual creation and aesthetic experience activity of human beings, under the control of media and technology, what kind of dilemma does it encounter and where to go?

Art Production in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

As one of the important activities of human beings, artistic activities embody human essential power and active creation. To regard artistic activities including literature as a form of production practice is an important contribution of Marx to literary theory. Since the 20th century, the German writer Walter Benjamin first inherited and developed Marx's theory of art production. Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) regarded art production as an activity governed by the general laws of production, just as material production. In the works such as "Art Works in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction "and "Writers as Producers", he examined the mode of art production, art products and acceptance from a technical perspective, and put forward a unique theory of art production, reflecting the important influence of technology application on traditional art in the era of mass media.

The essence of artistic production is "reproduction"

In Benjamin's view, with the advent of the industrial age, new technological means such as reproduction technology, film, photography, etc. have been used on a large scale, causing changes in art production methods and promoting the transformation of traditional art forms into modern art, thus forming the art production in the "mechanical reproduction age". In "Art Works in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", Benjamin believes that everything made by humans can be redone by others, and works of art can be reproduced in principle. Reproduction technology has a strong impact on modern art and brings major changes. Benjamin pointed out: "By the 20th century, replication technology had reached such a level that it could not only be applied to all old works of art and transform its mode of influence in a very deep way, but these reproduction techniques themselves have attracted attention in new art forms. "The reproduction technology breaks the time and space boundaries of modern art. The copy is freed from the traditional field and appears at any time in front of the viewer. This offsets the non-repeatable nature of the original work and accelerates the popularization, secularization, and modernization of art.

Qualitative changes in art products

With the advent of the age of mechanical reproduction, the traditional narrative literature represented by storytelling gives way to batch reproduction. The transcripts of the work are born in large numbers, shattering the mysterious atmosphere of the original work, and the authenticity and sacredness of traditional art disappeared, which is the dissolution of aura. What is aura? Benjamin believes that aura is "the only manifestation of distant objects", which has the value of worship. The existence of aura makes the admirer with a respectful piety, observing its quiet breath, and the soul is naturally connected with art. In the era of mechanical reproduction, the sense of distance and mysterious atmosphere of aura are questioned. The value of reproduction changes from worship to exhibition. The classic and existing nature of traditional art

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no longer exists. For example, a film that relies on mechanical replication technology penetrates the core of reality in the most intensive way through a camera, opens up the unconscious world of experience for people, and opens up unexpected spaces for activities. The audience's identification with actors is the identification with the camera, and thus the film art is creating the phenomenon of worship of stars. The art of film has departed from the appearance of beauty and is becoming more and more technical and commercialized.

Changes in art acceptance

In the era of mechanical reproduction, the art production method has an important impact on the recipients. It is mainly reflected in the fact that with the advancement of technology, art has shortened the distance from the object, more conveniently approaches the masses, meets the consumer demand of the masses, and promotes the possibility and enthusiasm of the public to participate in art, and changes the public's view on art, that is, the public's appreciation of art changed from traditional introspection and free creation to blind entertainment, and indulged in the "shock" effect brought by the work.

The advent of the era of mechanical reproduction has changed the production mode of traditional art. Relying on the power of technology, art penetrates the society in an all-round way, and its production shows a tendency of mediumlization and entertainment. The traditional art world, which reproduces and reflects the objective reality, gives way to the image world dominated by reproduction technology, while the spirit of art gives way to secularity, merchantability and entertainment. The aura interwoven in art is thus swallowed up by modern technology and no longer exists. Under the illusion of commodity fetishism, how to fight against the alienation brought about by media technology, without losing the idea of entertaining the masses, and to maintain the long-term vitality of modern art, this is the enlightenment brought to us by Benjamin's art production theory.

Art Production in the Age of Electronic Media

Mediumlization of art production

Since the second half of the 20th century, with the extension of movies, television, the Internet, and mobile phones to every corner of life, the electronic media has had a strong impact on art production, and the mediumlization of art production has become a major landscape in the contemporary era.

First, new artistic styles based on electronic media are emerging. In the electronic media era, various media such as television, the Internet, and mobile phones are closely integrated with art, especially incorporating various styles such as literature, painting, music, and dance, presenting the mediumlization trend of artistic development. Today, readers can read a literary work in addition to paper text, but also through various media such as movies, television, the Internet, and electronic readers. Internet literature, mobile literature, blogging, etc. are increasingly favored by readers. In this sense, the medium is more like a metaphor, that is, Neil Postman's "defining the real world with a hidden but powerful hint": "whether we use words or printed words or Television cameras come to feel this world. The relationship of this media metaphor helps us to classify, sort, construct, enlarge, shrink, and color this world, and prove all the reasons for its existence." As a microcosm of social life, various electronic media participate in art activities with their unique advantages,

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greatly improving the creativity of art production, art has been widely developed in communication, and art consumption has become more convenient and intuitive.

Second, the image of art production. Today is an era of "seeing is believing". People are surrounded by image media. Various image symbols have profoundly influenced contemporary people's lifestyle and aesthetic interests through television programs, Internet, advertisements, comic books, and fashion magazines. People are identifying the existence of this world visually and graphically, and even re-examining the subjective self. Images become the real existence of understanding the world, and the image turning and cultural turning of art production have become an irreversible trend. At the same time, image has become the main tool to construct consciousness. The image highlights the intuitive meaning, full of ideological content, which is the representative meaning, influencing and stimulating the consumption behavior of the public imperceptibly. The masses submit to the visual pleasure brought by images and enjoy the "dazzling" pleasure, while the rich connotation and profound meaning represented by ideology has been covered and covered by intuitive images.

“The End of Art"

Today, with the increasing prosperity of electronic media, the boundary between life and art, the boundary between public discourse and private discourse are increasingly blurred. Art production is no longer limited to the traditional pure text, but is combined with the network, film and television, advertising, etc., which integrates image, sound and color, forming an art field in the pan-aesthetic era. For example, various landscape design, advertising, street posters, and cyberspace tell the multiple meanings of literary language with sentimental words. Some social media, chat platforms, advertising terms, WeChat, Weibo and other beautiful terms are appropriate. The rhetoric of the chapters, meaningful broken chapters and sentences ..., is constantly inspiring the imagination of aesthetics. All these are covered with a strong literary color. Although it can not be called a pure literary work, it has overflowed the literary boundary and became a living text with pan-aestheticization. This is the spread of literariness. When literature began to develop from a single to a cross-media, all behavioral activities could be regarded as the object of text interpretation, "what is literature" became "literature is everything", so some scholars issued "the end of literature".

Since the 1990s, American critic Hillis Miller introduced this phenomenon to China and published a series of articles, which have become the focus of attention in the literary and theoretical circles since the new century. In the article "The Impact of Globalization on Literary Studies", Miller pointed out that in the new globalized culture, literature is just a kind of multi-cultural symbol or product, which should be studied not only with films, videos, TV, advertisements, magazines, etc., but also with ethnographers. In the article "Will Literary Studies in the Age of Globalization Still Exist?" Miller discussed the profound influence of printing technology and telecommunications technologies such as television and Internet on literature, philosophy, psychoanalysis, etc. from Jacques Derrida's book "Postcards". He pointed out: "In the West, the concept of literature inevitably has to do with Descartes' self-concept, printing technology, Western-style democracy and the concept of independent nations, and freedom of speech within these democratic frameworks. In this sense, 'literature' is just a recent event, beginning in Western Europe in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. "Obviously, the" literature "referred to by Miller began in the 17th and 18th Western Europe of the century, based on literature on printing technology. Obviously, Miller's "literature" referred to literature based on printing technology in Western Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. During this period, along with the

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development of industrial civilization, the printing industry encouraged and strengthened the modern way of thinking of the separation of subject and object, and literature as one of them was naturally no exception. Therefore, although the concept of literature has existed in ancient times, the concept of "literature" in the modern sense is born very late, and the new telecommunication era is bringing it to an end by changing the premise of the existence of literature. Literature, as Miller said, will cease to exist.

From this point of view, the development of information technology provides an opportunity for the end of literature, making literature unable to survive. The concept of "literary" at the end of literature is a specific concept in a modern sense, that is, an art form based on the age of electronic information. This art form, which was constructed in a certain historical period, is increasingly being replaced in the electronic media era by fuzzy and diverse new styles that cross the boundaries of genre and text. Literature is no longer enviable, but has become a mixture of movies, television, and the Internet. It is in this concept of "literary" that Miller talks about the end of literature.

"Crisis" and "Vitality" in Art Production

In fact, the crisis of "the end of art" did not begin with Miller. Two hundred years ago, Hegel put forward the conclusion that art, including literature, will come to an end, which attracted the attention and discussion of later scholars. In Hegel's view, the development of art has experienced three stages: symbolism, classicality and romanticism. These three stages are just three different states of absolute idea self evolution and manifestation. In particular, from the perfect combination of the concept and image in the classical period to the romantic period, the concept gradually transcends and discards the external image, breaks the harmony between the content and form of art, so that art sublates itself and transforms to a higher form, that is, it is replaced by religion and Philosophy. Why can't art undertake the function of expressing ideas and moving towards truth? Hegel thinks that compared with religion expressing ideas through representation, philosophy expressing ideas through thinking, art is subject to direct perceptual image, that is, to express ideas and show reality in the form of perceptual image, which is the mission and purpose of art. However, the perceptual image of art is limited, which can't grasp the infinite and absolutely eternal idea, and even becomes the burden of idea expression. Therefore, art can't be the highest way to express truth in absolute idea. When religion and philosophy deprive art of the function of expressing truth, all these are caused by the development of art itself.

It can be said that from the perspective of Hegel's changes in the function of art, there is indeed a crisis in art. The prediction of the end of art has its inevitability: Art deviates from the highest purport of the soul, falls from the worship status of the soul, and is no longer the most perfect expression of truth. But we should also see that Hegel's assertion of the end of art does not mean that art is really going to die or no longer exist, but that the form of art will no longer become the highest need of the soul: "although we can hope that art will flourish and become more perfect, the form of art is no longer the highest need of the soul." Hegel's idealistic prophecy is difficult to fulfill, because art still has the form of art, and only the status of art changes. From the perspective of today's aesthetic development, art has stepped out of the highest purport of spiritual cognition, moved to life, integrated with life, and become an inseparable part of daily life. In this sense, art, including literature, will not end.

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There are countless connections between art activities and social reality. Every social transformation will cause the change of art and the corresponding changes of culture, customs and people's spiritual conditions. Whether it is Hegel's theory of the end of art or Miller's theory of the end of literature, it involves a question of making a judgment in what kind of context. Hegel asserted the end of art based on the fact that the situation of civil society in the 19th century was not conducive to the development of art and lacked the soil for the existence of independent and self-sufficient works of art; Miller proposed the theory of the end of literature based on the change of art production in the new media information age. Obviously, the end may only be a certain literary style or classic form in a specific historical period, a specific cultural context, a specific field of vision, or a self transformation and extension in the literary generation system. The theory of Literary Termination shows the survival crisis that literature faces, and reflects the difficulties that literature encounters in its own production mechanism under the control of media and technology. In fact, in the era of electronic media, based on the participation and interaction of media, literature has become a kind of hybrid literature. In order to survive for a long time, literature must break through its own threshold, spread from the traditional textual to the media, construct its own new aesthetic form with literariness, and highlight the eternal value of literature. This may be the vitality of literature in the era of electronic media.

Funding

This paper is sponsored by Jiangsu Province Social Science Fund Project “Western Marxist Art Production Theory and Contemporary Literary Issues” [17ZWB003], National Social Science Fund Project in the Later Stage "Literature Existence, Ideology and Art Production" [18FZW056].
江苏省社会科学基金项目“西方马克思主义艺术生产论与当代文艺问题研究”[17ZWB003]
国家社科基金后期资助项目“文学存在、意识形态与艺术生产”[18FZW056]

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