Analysis of the current situation of China's online literature industry chain from the perspective of the electronic media era

Yuke Chen

University of Shanghai for Science and Technology, Shanghai 200093, China.

Abstract: The technological updates and iterations in the electronic media era have a huge impact in the field of literature. In China, the gradual improvement of the online literature industry chain has received great attention.This article will begin with an introduction to the online literature industry chain, focusing on the ecology of online literature development and analyzing its production, publishing, dissemination and consumption aspects, so as to present a more complete picture of the current state of the electronic literature industry chain.

Keywords: Electronic Media Era;Chinese Online Literature;Industrial Chain

Introduction

With the proliferation of the Internet and the modernization of computer technology, human society has moved from the age of mechanical reproduction to the age of electronic media. According to McLuhan, "In the words of the electronic age, 'the medium is the message' means that a whole new environment has been created" .The medium has created a new environment, extending the virtual space and narrative time of the human world, and its influence has already permeated literature.

The "world" of traditional literature is a world in which the author draws sustenance from the real world and reflects it in the literary work through artistic processing. The reader then reverts the spiritual nourishment obtained from the literary world to reality, comparing and absorbing it according to real-life experiences. In this way, people only passively accept this physical 'objective world'. However, the birth of the Internet has greatly enhanced people's creative autonomy, allowing the 'virtual world' to be created in a rich way.

The most representative form of literature in the electronic media era is online literature. For the definition of network literature, scholar Youquan Ouyang has divided it into three levels: in an original sense, it refers to "original literature first published in the network".In a narrow sense, it refers to "literature that exists through network links and multimedia integration and relies on the network".In a broad sense, it refers to "literature that is transmitted through the network". In a broader sense, it refers to "literature transmitted through the Internet". It is not difficult to see that the development of network literature has now reached all aspects of our spiritual life.

1. The production aspect

The media has taken advantage of its new networked character to create a unique production chain through its interaction with all elements of literary activity.In the age of electronic media, the operation between the various elements of literary activity permeates the entire literary production chain due to the nature of the medium.

Therefore, exploring the relationships and mechanisms of literary activity is the key to the dynamic way of being of electronic literature.The traditional Western literary theory of Abrams' four elements of literature - world, writer, work, reader,can no longer clarify the new phenomenon of online literature in the age of electronic media. So the "world/platform (medium)/writer/reader→work" system of production mechanisms in online literature could be seen.

1.1 Genre creation and genre refinement

In his study of online literature, scholar Yanpeng Lu mentions that compared to traditional literature, the production mechanism of online literature is closer to the production process of the cultural industry. And typed, reproductive and fashionable culture strategies have become the most relied upon way of survival in online literature.In online literature, novels have become the mainstream genre, and thus more attention is paid to the subdivision of the subject matter. Compared to traditional literature, online literature is more imaginative, and the categories of imaginative works have become more labeled. The authors' writing is also influenced by the classification of categories, which makes it easier to produce outstanding writers of a single genre.

1.2 Fans operation and interactive creation

Online writing data is a criterion to assess the value of online writing. And the data is good or bad because the support of readers to the work, the rules of the writing platform and so on. The reader's choice directly determines the profit of the website and the writer, and the rules set by the website directly determine the writing style and status of the authors.In order to get more revenue, authors often have to cater to the website and the readers. Furthermore, authors and platforms should focus on the operational interaction and the accumulation of fans of the book.

For example, authors interact with fans of their books through activities. Fans create sketches, write reviews for the characters in the books, and actively promote the author's work, actions that in turn inspire the author. Another example is the influence fans have on the characters and plots of the original books. If a character is very popular, then the author is likely to change his or her original intentions and modify the fate of the character to suit the readers.

2. Publication aspect

Nowadays, there are various reading and related platforms on the Internet, which provide a link between authors' writing and readers' reading, and also provide a bridge for publishers' publication planning. Therefore, the diversification and systematization of platforms play an important role in the publication of online literature.

Online literature can gain more social influence and benefits through paper publishing. However, the publication of online literature also has higher requirements for its own quality.Regrettably, the current state of online literature publishing is not optimistic, and there are many problems.

2.1 Works themselves

Due to the low threshold for the creation of online literature and the uneven levels of authors, many works lack art in language and ideas and logic in content. The quality of works on the internet is difficult to be guaranteed. In addition, the lack of professional editors is also a problem in the field. Because of this problem, some works of questionable quality are published, which adversely affects the overall level of online literature and the development of its publishing.

Another serious problem with online literature is the lack of intellectual property protection. Piracy is rampant in the field, which directly affects the income of creators. Moreover, the lack of respect and protection for intellectual property rights is also detrimental to the continued creativity of authors and the innovative development of online literature. Sadly, figures show that the scale of piracy losses in China's online literature reached RMB 6.028 billion in 2020, up 6.9% year-on-year.

2.2 Publishing industry

Publishing companies are weak in their development of online literature. The quality of online literature itself, as mentioned above, is also a concern for many publishing companies. Many traditional publishing houses are not willing to 'keep a low profile' in publishing online literature. In addition to this, the genre subdivision in online literature is a major challenge for publishers.As we all now, one of the distinctive features of online literature is the fine division of genres.Genre subdivision is good for authors and online literary platforms, but not necessarily for publishers. There are so many new genres of online literature, some of which are even difficult to categorize. But publishers need to consider and judge the works they publish holistically, and then position and market them. In a word, they need to be rigorous in launching their publishing activities.

3. Dissemination aspect

In the age of electronic media, the dissemination of online literature has taken on a richer form. In order to meet the needs of readers, online literature takes advantage of the multimedia and interactive nature of the Internet, using nodes as the basic unit, in the form of nodes, "information blocks", which break the gap between visual, auditory and reading media on the basis of text, resulting in a multimedia or even multidimensional form, which has evolved from a single form such as text, sound, image and colour.

3.1 The combination of new media and news

The most obvious form of dissemination of online literature is the use of various new media.On some platforms such as Weibo and Tik Tok, accounts that recommend articles, whether in text or video form, are everywhere, and many even have large followings. These accounts help the spread of online articles by presenting outlines or main plots to their fans. In addition, many platforms also disseminate online novels through advertisements. For example, some episodes of novels combined with news information are placed in timely advertisements to catch people's attention through hot spots, allowing them to learn more about the novel and thus promoting its dissemination.

3.2 The phenomenon of spreading widely overseas

In recent years, a lot of Chinese online literature has been widely disseminated overseas and enjoyed by many foreign readers. This upsurge has also led to the enthusiasm of domestic network literature creation and related translation fields active. At the same time, it also greatly proves the communication power and content value of Chinese network literature.

In the process of dissemination, the value of online literature is constantly explored. This aspect of the process reflects both the results of creation and publication in the earlier aspects and also leads to the consumption aspect. The effect of dissemination is both a basis and a test. The various performances of the dissemination of online literature need to be studied in more depth, and this article will not go further.

4. Consumption aspect

In contemporary society, people leading monotonous and boring lives, especially those struggling with various pressures in the city, are eager to find a spiritual pastime. The emergence of online literature has given people spiritual comfort.Virtual novels with interesting content, imaginative plots and simple, fluid writing allow the reader to release stress and gain a sense of vicarious satisfaction in the novel.

From this demand perspective, readers are influenced by emotional appeals as well as being guided by genre. They then become inclined to read different subjects. When this demand is reflected in the construction of platforms and the creation of authors, it promotes a market-oriented trend in the production of online literature.So it can be said that there is a large consumer market for online literature.

4.1 Main source of revenue: Online reading

 ChinaLiterature Group, a comprehensive Chinese cultural industry group with digital reading as its foundation and IP cultivation and development as its core, announced its full-year results for 2021 on 22 March 2022. The financial results show that online reading remains

the Group's main source of revenue.Online reading means that the platform provides readers with novels, and readers pay a fee when they choose their favourite novels to read. The cost of reading is usually based on the number of words. Readers can read the very first chapters of a novel for free, but are charged for the vip chapters. With the goal of pulling in new users, some platforms, including ChinaLiterature, also offer novels that are free to read from time to time.

4.2 Developable source of revenue: fan economy

As mentioned earlier, the idea of fans occupies a very central place in the production process of online literature. These fans not only influence the production of the original online literary texts, but are also a huge consumer force. Fans are a unified body of production, dissemination and consumption. The concept of "fans as active producers of culture" is now widely accepted. Many companies involved in the cultural industry have become active supporters of fan culture, guiding fans in the production and consumption of content.

However, there is a natural power gap between fans and companies, and there is an immutable identity conflict between them. The fan base is large enough that if the publishing company ignores the fans' opinions, the publishing company's profitability is simply not guaranteed.Therefore, publishing companies cannot ignore the needs of their fans.Only by respecting and understanding them can they achieve a mutually beneficial win-win situation.

Conclusion

It is not difficult to find from the above discussion and life practice that content will always be main. And no matter when and how new the medium means, content will always be the core competitiveness. This enlightens practitioners that needs to be kept in mind for good in these different aspects of production, publication, dissemination and consumption.

The online literature is a industry of continuous development and innovation. In the new electronic media era, the status of the audience will rise further.And along with the change in the status of the audience, the structure of the online literature and even literature industry chain will certainly make corresponding adjustments and extensions. At present, with the rapid improvement and development of the industry chain, these aspects still need to be continuously integrated and explored.

Reference

[1] Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man [M]. He Daokuan. Nanjing: Yilin Publishing House, 2011

[2] Yanjun Shao. The Crisis of Traditional Literary Production Mechanisms and the Generation of New Mechanisms [J]Literary and Artistic Controversy, 2009(12):12-22

[3] Youquan Ouyang. Introduction to Internet Literature [M]. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2008

[4] Li Zhu.The production mechanism of online literature in the age of electronic media [J]. Journal of Ludong University.101,38(01):48-56

[5] Yanpeng Lu.The establishment and guidance of online literary production mechanism [J] Creation and Review,2015(4):48-53

[6] Qijia Chen.Literary Production in the Age of the Internet [J] Jiangsu Social Science. 2009(04): 142-147

[7] Jinglin Wang .The dilemma and transformation strategy faced by online literature book publishing [J] News World. 2022,(04):73-76

[8] Cuntian Zhang.E media window under the study of the network of literary pan-dissemination [J] Journal of Luohe Vocational and Technical College.2022,21(01):74-78