

Towards Human-Machine Collaboration: The New Paradigm of World Literature Evaluation in the Era of Digital Intelligence

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Abstract. In the context of profound globalization and digital revolution, this research aims to explore the fundamental challenges that artificial intelligence technology brings to the evaluation criteria of world literature and the theoretical reconstruction path. The technological logic of AI tends to dissolve the “literariness” derived from Russian formalism and continuously developed in world literature theory into calculable feature units. Excessive reliance on algorithmic logic will trap the progression of world literature into the crisis of technological reductionism. To address this crisis, this research proposes to construct a new mode of human-machine collaborative criticism based on digital humanism as the theoretical foundation. AI will empower the revelation of cross-cultural literary laws and the democratization of classic canon through macro-analysis, while human critics adhere to their dominant position in contextual interpretation, value judgment, and meaning generation. This collaborative mode not only recognizes the advantages of technology in processing massive data, but also emphasizes the irreplaceability of humanistic spirit in the final value judgment. It is designed to provide a feasible theoretical framework and development path for world literature to maintain diversity and creativity in the algorithmic era.

Keywords: world literature, artificial intelligence, human-machine collaboration, literariness

1. Introduction

The rapid development of generative artificial intelligence technologies is reshaping the global literary landscape with unprecedented depth and breadth. AI has reached the stage of human-like intelligence, and can even participate in complex literary and artistic creation [1], producing texts that are highly authentic in style and prose, even to the point of being indistinguishable from human works. In January 2024, Japanese author Rie Kudan won the prestigious Akutagawa Prize for her novel *Tokyo-to Dojo-to*, which was assisted in its creation by ChatGPT [2]. Through 2 experiments, Brian Porter and Edouard Machery find out that AI-generated poetry has reached the level of AI-generated images in non-expert assessments: across multiple eras and genres of poetry, non-expert participants cannot distinguish human-written poetry from poems generated by AI without human intervention or specialized fine-tuning [3]. This phenomenon poses a fundamental challenge to the

existing literary evaluation system. For the world literature that transcends national, linguistic and cultural boundaries, this challenge is particularly severe and complex. The validity of our existing criteria for identifying, judging and canonizing world literature is facing doubts.

David Damrosch proposes “a threefold definition focused on the world, the text, and the reader” in *What Is World Literature* [4]? This statement indicates that world literature is formed during the processes of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural dissemination and reception, as well as through creative interactions with readers in different contexts. However, the logic of AI is contrary to this in essence. AI tends to reduce this complex and relational “literariness” into a series of statistical and imitable stylistic features and narrative patterns, thus falling into the predicament of technological reductionism. With the focus on the “literariness” of world literature, this research aims to systematically examine the crisis of the evaluation paradigm triggered by digital and intelligent technologies, and explore the path for theoretical reconstruction, pointing out that the future lies in constructing a new type of critical mode based on human-machine collaboration. This new mode should fully recognize the value of AI in revealing macro-literary patterns, while firmly safeguarding the core position of human critics in value judgment, creative interpretation, and ethical review, so as to preserve and enrich world literature’s diverse landscape in the algorithmic era.

2. “Literariness” in the context of world literature

As the core concept in literary research, “literariness” is first introduced by the Russian Formalist Roman Jakobson. He believes the subject of literary scholarship is not literature in its totality, but literariness (literaturnost’), i.e., that which makes of a given work a work of literature [5]. He points out that literariness is manifested in the deviation of the poetic function from the norms of everyday language. Viktor Shklovsky deepens this understanding with the theory of “defamiliarization”, emphasizing that literariness extends the readers’ perceptual process through artistic means, making familiar things “strange” and thus restoring people’s vivid experience of the world. Russian Formalists argue that the uniqueness of “literature” consists in its tendency to “defamiliarize” experience and that the true concern of literary scholarship should be to analyse the formal devices by means of which such an effect is achieved [6]. With the development of literary theories, the connotation of literariness gradually expands from pure linguistic characteristics to a broader dimension. Structuralism pay attention the deep-seated patterns of narration, believing that literary works are structural assemblages adhering to specific narrative rules and symbolic logic. Reception aesthetics and reader-response theory achieve the shift of research perspective and highlight the role of readers in meaning generation. Entering the post-modern era, Jacques Derrida disrupts the stable definition of literariness, stating that “(literature) is an institution which tends to overflow the institution” [7]. He argues that no internal criterion can guarantee the essential “literariness” of a text [7]. He regards it as an open game of infinite deferral of language, in which the connotation of a text is always in a state of uncertainty and reconstruction. Later, theories such as post-colonialism and feminism have further associated literariness with cultural politics and identity. This evolutionary process indicates that literariness is a complex concept covering linguistic innovation, aesthetic experience, historical context, and reader reception.

The literariness of world literature presents the unique nature of dynamic generative in the cross-cultural context, with David Damrosch’s research being the most representative. In *What Is World Literature?*, Damrosch proposes that world literature is “an elliptical refraction of national literatures”, “writing that gains in translation”, and “a mode of reading” [4]. The metaphor of “elliptical refraction” suggests that when a literary work enters another culture from its source, just

as light refracts on an elliptical mirror, it will lead to the deviation and increment of meaning. This refraction is not a departure from the original work, but a continuation of its vitality. Damrosch also attaches great importance to the unique value of translation, believing that world literature is the literature that benefits from translation. Translation is the sole approach for national literature to transcend the linguistic barrier, disseminate in the broad field of world literature, and gain recognition from diverse readers. The statement of “a mode of reading” shifts the generation of literariness from the text itself to reading practice, emphasizing that the significance of world literature manifests in the trans-temporal and trans-spatial dialogue achieved by readers with different cultural backgrounds through the text. “World literature is not an immense body of material that must somehow, impossibly, be mastered; it is a mode of reading that can be experienced intensively with a few works just as effectively as it can be explored extensively with a large number.” [4] This kind of dialogue with the text maintains the distance between the source-language culture and other cultures. Readers can perceive the process of text circulation and the differences between different cultures from it, and then reflect on themselves and view cultural diversity from a different perspective.

Since the 21st century, academic research on the literariness of world literature has been further expanded. In response to the limitation that close reading fails to cover the true scope and characteristics about world literature, Franco Moretti proposes the notion of “distant reading”. He points out: “distance...is a condition of knowledge: it allows you to focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes—or genres and systems” [8]. Moretti argues that world literature should explore the diachronic development and change processes of literary forms, and distant reading can verify literary critics’ interpretations by analyzing data and searching for empirical models, so as to find “a law of literary evolution” [9]. The French scholar Pascale Casanova has a new vision of the literary world and world literature: “a world that is secret and yet perceptible by all (especially its most dispossessed members); territories whose sole value and sole resource is literature, ordered by power relations that nonetheless govern the form of the texts that are written in and that circulate throughout these lands; a world that has its own capital, its own provinces and borders, in which languages become instruments of power [10]. She thinks that the development of world literature is a process in which various linguistic and literary entities engage in an eternal struggle for literary capital and recognition within the world composed of unequal power relations. In summary, it can be seen that the literariness of world literature is essentially related and dynamic, rooted in specific historical and cultural soil, and constantly transcends its boundaries in development.

3. The crisis of literary evaluation paradigms: AI undermines the literariness of world literature

The intervention of artificial intelligence is causing an unprecedented theoretical crisis for the evaluation of world literature. The literariness of world literature is generated during the dynamic process of cross-cultural circulation, creative translation, and acceptance in multiple contexts. Literariness (literariness) cannot be reduced to an algorithm, no matter how complex, because even the most advanced algorithm is an imitation of the human mental model, which as of yet cannot deal with culture as a collective intellect with dynamics [11]. Over-dependence on the data-based and quantitative operations of AI will solidify this literariness into static and calculable units, resulting in the dissolution of its aesthetic depth and interpretive diversity. These changes not only shake the foundation of traditional criticism but also may reshape the power structure of world literature, exposing marginal voices to the risk of being further obscured.

3.1. The erosion of aesthetic depth

AI tends to simplify the aesthetic innovation of literature into data features. With natural language processing (NLP) technology, AI can deconstruct text into quantifiable data indicators such as word frequency, syntactic structure, and rhetorical types, and construct an algorithmic recognition model of literariness based on large-scale literary corpora. This operational mode represents the technological extremization and alienation of the distant reading advocated by Moretti.

The algorithm models are also inclined to decontextualize literary texts. The aesthetic value of literary works is often closely associated with the social and political environment and cultural trends at the time of their creation. The language choices and narrative structures in the texts carry specific historical connotations and emotional inclinations. Artificial intelligence is able to produce words within a set structure and employ the use of poetic devices such as alliteration, rhyming schemes, and metaphors. However...there is the question of consciousness and poetry is used to convey emotions. As of now, artificial intelligence is not developed enough to possess natural emotions, does not have inner experience nor does it have a consciousness [12]. AI can not achieve deep empathy with historical contexts and fails to comprehend the social contradictions, cultural conflicts, and the survival dilemmas of human in specific periods hidden behind texts. It can only simplify these complex factors into statistical associations of surface features, which will strip literary works of their functions as historical records and carriers of emotions, reducing them to mere combinations of language symbols divorced from realistic foundation.

The algorithm's elimination of ambiguity further narrows the interpretive space of literature. The polysemy and ambiguity of literary language present an open field that allows different readers to generate diverse meanings from the text based on their own experiences, thus forming a rich interpretive ecosystem. But the core function of the algorithm is to pursue the certainty of results. Its inherent rejection of ambiguous expressions and vague images will constrain the creativity and openness of literary language, depriving readers of the right to participate in the construction of text meaning and transforming literary appreciation from a personal aesthetic experience into a passive reception of information.

3.2. The flattened circulation

Damrosch's "elliptical refraction" reveals the creative transformation and meaning enhancement of world literature in the process of cross-cultural circulation. The circulation of world literature is inherently a dialogue process full of creative misinterpretations and new meanings, like Lu Xun's rewriting of Gogol's *The Diary of a Madman*, which is not a simple text imitation and translation, but combines the Russian critical realism with the "people eating" feudal ethics of modern Chinese society, and it reconstructs the meaning of the work in the local narrative. However, the generation and evaluation mechanism of AI is completely dependent on the matching and replication of the existing literary database. Cultural circulation can be reduced from creative refraction to mechanical replication. In the process of algorithmic literary creation, although there are accidental and arbitrary elements, it always operates within the rules of mathematical logic, and is carried out by the computer with purposeful actions, which means that "conscious actions" run through the entire creative process. Its works, although having a certain degree of contingency, are essentially "rule-based products" [13]. At the same time, the algorithm technology is constructed in the form of ideology construction and the process of ideological endowment. The phenomenon of "filter bubbles" and "information cocoon" formed thereby will further strengthen the invisible power of algorithms [14]. The Western mainstream literary works have a higher proportion in the training

data, and their narrative structure, theme expression, and aesthetic style will be regarded by the algorithm as the best template for imitation. Such generated discourses not only cannot produce creative literary expressions, but will also strengthen the existing cultural hegemony. Those small-scale, experimental, and marginalized literary expressions, due to their low proportion and lack of reference, their unique cultural symbols and narrative forms can not be recognized and generated by AI, facing the fate of being further ignored.

3.3. The suspended translatability

Translation serves as an important link for the value generation of world literature. However, at present, AI translation still primarily focuses on semantic equivalence, making it difficult to deal with the ambiguity and cultural essence of literary language. Literary translation is distinguished by its intricate linguistic complexity, creative artistic expression, profound cultural depth, and dynamic social adaptability [15]. Nevertheless, current mainstream AI translation models, such as Google Translate and Baidu Translate, prioritize semantic accuracy and fluency. When it comes to translating literary and theoretical works, including dealing with subtle nuances and rich, complex, and diverse artistic images, AI often makes errors or fails to convey the profound implications of the original works [16]. The meaning of literary language often transcends literal semantics and is closely associated with specific cultural backgrounds and emotional atmospheres. AI can only perform semantic matching based on data and is unable to achieve deep aesthetic transformation. Moreover, the neural machine system is not capable of activities such as summarizing the source texts, making comments or annotating [17]. Due to the inability to comprehend the requirements of the target-language readers, AI is also unable to identify the content in the translation that requires special annotations during the translation process. It has no knowledge of how to effectively add or subtract content from the original text to better convey the essence of the original text while enabling target-language readers to accept and understand it. Therefore, over-reliance on algorithmic translation will cause cross-cultural dialogues in world literature to degenerate into superficial language exchanges rather than in-depth aesthetic and ideological interactions.

4. The new paradigm of world literature evaluation towards human-machine collaboration

After recognizing the dissolving of the literariness of world literature caused by artificial intelligence, our urgent task is to reconstruct a dynamic evaluation paradigm in the era of digital intelligence. This paradigm should neither retreat to the isolated island of humanism nor slide into the technological determinism that relies solely on algorithms. Therefore, it is necessary to construct a new evaluation mode based on digital humanism, which combines the advantages of human and machines and aims at activating world literature classics. This new mode requires us to re-consider and coordinate the relation between human intelligence and machine intelligence in literary criticism. By integrating the macro-pattern recognition ability of AI with the in-depth contextual interpretation of human critics, this mode can more efficiently address the increasing complexity and diversity of world literature. We should make technology a medium to enhance rather than weaken the literary connotation to form a dynamic and open critical system.

4.1. Digital humanism

The emergence of digital humanism provides a crucial theoretical foundation for addressing the above-mentioned crises. Digital humanistic criticism of literature has evolved from the initial

application of tools to a new stage characterized by the embodied interaction, collaboration, and cooperation between humans and machines, namely the “co-creation, co-reading, and co-interpretation” stage [18]. In the field of world literature evaluation, this concept first clarifies that the ultimate right to judge literary quality should not be given to algorithms. In humanities research and evaluation, the role of humans should be prioritized [19]. As the study of humanity, the core value of literature lies in the presentation of human life experiences, emotional worlds, and cultural spirits, and this value cannot be fully captured by data quantification or algorithmic modeling. The essence of algorithms is the induction and replication of existing rules, while true literariness is precisely reflected in the negative power that “overflows” the calculation model: the resistance of works to established rules, clear classifications, and simple meaning interpretations. This resistance endows literature with the ability to break cognitive inertia and stimulate critical thinking. Through the embodied interaction and interpretation between humans and machines, the interactive interpretations among humans, between humans and generative AI algorithm software, and between different generative AI algorithm software are continuous and open. This multi-dimensional interpretation model can promote continuous interaction among multiple parties, enabling human interpreters to obtain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding and interpretation of texts [18].

Digital humanism also emphasizes acknowledging and respecting the aesthetic differences of different cultural traditions in human-machine collaboration, so as to promote cross-cultural literary exchanges through dialogue rather than unification. Traditional world literature evaluation has long been influenced by Western centrism, advocating the narrative structures and aesthetic standards of European literature, which has led to the marginalization or misinterpretation of the textual characteristics of other cultures. In the context of the digital humanism, human-machine collaboration requires embedding respect for cultural differences in technological applications. The text analysis of AI needs to be trained with a balanced corpus of multiple cultures to objectively present the aesthetic differences of different cultures. Human critics, based on a profound understanding of their own cultural traditions and references provided by AI, should interpret the cultural logic and value connotations behind these differences. This collaborative model combines the objectivity of technology with the subjectivity of humans, building a dialogue platform for cross-cultural aesthetics and promoting readers from different cultural backgrounds to form a diverse recognition of the value of world literature based on mutual understanding.

4.2. Human-machine complementary advantages for collaborative path

The core advantage of AI lies in its powerful capabilities in data processing, pattern recognition, and macro-analysis. By revealing the laws of cross-cultural literature, AI greatly empowers the research about world literature. Traditional world literature research mostly relies on case analysis and experience summary. Limited by human resources and time costs, it is difficult to encompass a vast number of texts from various regions and periods all over the world, let alone achieve large-scale comparison and correlation analysis of text features. By contrast, NLP tools can handle multiple languages, which enables use of multilingual datasets and such multilingual research is particularly important for enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion, and generating comprehensive evidence beyond WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic) countries [20]. The data integration and law tracking of AI provide human critics with a broader research perspective, empowering them to conduct more targeted micro-cultural and aesthetic analyses on the basis of macro-laws. At the same time, AI can further expand the research horizon of world literature. With the development of digitalization, the role of algorithms can also exceed beyond tools. Their value

lies not only in promoting the progress of literary research or expanding its scope, and certain concepts from computer science can introduce new research questions to literary studies and inspire us (human critics) to carry out existing research in a more scientific manner [21].

In the field of style evolution and influence research, the tracking and analysis abilities of AI provide practical support for the scientific research of the dissemination paths about world literature. Traditional research on the dissemination and influence of works mostly relies on textual research and academic sorting, which makes it difficult to comprehensively present the translation and dissemination chains of works, the differences in regional acceptance, and the degree of influence on literary creations from different culture. At the same time, research conclusions are easily limited by the availability of literature and subjective judgment. AI, on the other hand, can construct a global dissemination map of works by integrating data from global library collections, citation information from academic databases, translation and publication records, and reader feedback data in different platforms, clearly presenting the timeline and space range of the cross-cultural circulation of works. AI can also analyze the stylistic association between the influenced works and the original works through text similarity, restore the text adjustments during the translation process with the help of translator annotations and semantic recognition, and quantify the depth of influence of works on literary research in different regions, providing an objective and systematic basis for evaluating the literary value of works around the world and avoiding the subjectivity and fragmentation in traditional influence research.

Correspondingly, the core responsibilities of human critics lie in contextual interpretation, value judgment, and meaning generation. In the interaction with intelligent technology, human actors are also undergoing changes in the aspects of roles, modes, mechanisms of action and discourse power. They need to protect human conception of values and human values through role repositioning and professional reshaping [22]. Human critics should endow data with humanistic significance, place the data patterns presented by AI in specific humanistic scenes, interpret the literary meaning and social value behind the data, and reveal the profound connections between changes in text features and cultural trends, historical events, and human spiritual needs. They should transform data from digital symbols into humanistic cognition to ensure that world literature evaluation does not deviate from the core dimension of humanistic spirit.

Human critics also need to provide creative interpretations about the ideological depth, aesthetic originality, and social value of works, continuously exploring new perspectives of work interpretation. The interpretive ability of algorithms is constrained by their training data and cannot break through the existing cognitive framework to discover new values and connotations. However, human critics can leverage interdisciplinary perspectives, personal life experiences, and critical thinking to uncover the profound meanings in texts that algorithms fail to recognize, and interpret how texts respond to universal human dilemmas, critique social realities, or reconstruct cultural values. Human critics should also take the initiative to explore marginal texts, which are ignored by algorithms due to their small sample size and unique text features. The discovery of the special cultural values and aesthetic innovations of such works can compensate for the blind spots of algorithms, promote world literature evaluation to cover a wider range of cultural groups and literary expressions, and avoid the homogenization of the literary landscape caused by technological filtration.

4.3. Activation of world literature canon by human-machine collaboration

Confronted with the structural rigidity of world literature canon, the human-machine collaboration strategy demonstrates unique potential for deconstruction and reconstruction. The introduction of

digital technology in the realm of literary studies has expanded the reach of the subject, thus democratizing it and rendering literature and literary analysis more readily available to a broader audience [23]. AI can systematically analyze multi-dimensional data such as literary history, authoritative selections, academic citations, and global translation flows, and clearly present the representative differences of writers from different regions, genders, and races in the classic system through visualization means. By revealing the power structure and cultural biases implicit in the traditional world literature canon, AI can provide an objective basis for classic criticism. And then, the mission of human critics is to interpret the cultural and political logic behind the data and actively promote works with high literary value but low data visibility into the vision of world literature. This active intervention based on data insights can effectively promote the democratization process of the canon system.

In terms of respecting and interpreting the aesthetics of diverse cultures, human-machine collaboration presents a more detailed division of labor. Regarding the core aesthetic categories deeply rooted in specific cultural traditions, such as the Chinese concept of artistic conception and other non-quantifiable aesthetic traits, although AI can provide cross-cultural comparative data, the depth and accuracy of its interpretation still highly depend on the professional competence of human critics. Human critics need to utilize the quantitative data provided by AI, such as the frequency of image usage and rhetorical distribution patterns, and combine their profound understanding of cultural traditions to clarify the specific connotations and cultural logics of these aesthetic categories. This collaboration not only helps maintain the aesthetic diversity of world literature in the era of digital intelligence but also promotes effective dialogue and understanding among different cultural traditions.

The human-machine collaboration strategy can also further promote fairness in translation and cross-cultural circulation. By tracking global translation trends, AI can accurately identify the structural imbalances in the translation process, such as the marginalized status of certain nations' literature in the translation market. These data provide action guidelines for human critics, translators, and publishers. They can establish targeted translation projects and systematically promote literary works with outstanding artistic achievements but low visibility. This data-driven humanistic intervention not only compensates for the deficiencies of the spontaneous market mechanism but also contributes to the construction of a more equitable order for cross-cultural literary exchange. Through collaboration, the research process of world literature can be continuously advanced, and a cultural field where diverse voices resonate harmoniously can be truly formed.

5. Conclusion

This research examines the theoretical crisis faced by the world literature evaluation system in the era of digital intelligence and puts forward the paths for its reconstruction. The technological logic of digitization and quantification of artificial intelligence can cause the systematic digestion of the literariness of world literature and shake the traditional evaluation paradigm. In response to this crisis, this research proposes to build a new type of human-machine collaborative critical paradigm based on digital humanism. AI plays an auxiliary role in revealing macro-literary laws, diagnosing the solidification of classics, and monitoring translation imbalances, while human critics safeguard their dominant position in contextual interpretation, value judgment, and meaning generation. Through this effort, the diverse landscape of world literature can be reshaped in the tension between technological empowerment and humanistic adherence.

However, this research still has certain limitations for now. The proposed human-machine collaboration mode needs to be verified and refined through specific critical practices, and the investigation of AI iteration needs to be continuously carried out. Future research should shift towards the construction of a more operational evaluation mode, test and improve this human-machine collaboration paradigm in specific world literature teaching, translation, and publishing practices. At the same time, the algorithmic ethics and cultural-political implications behind this paradigm need further attention and discussion to promote its application and development.

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