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Communication Synergy and Inherent Tension of Main-Melody Literature from the Perspective of Media Convergence--A Case Study of Jiangshan Ruci Duojiao (How Beautiful Is Our Countryside)

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Abstract: Media convergence has profoundly transformed the communication landscape of literary works while simultaneously complicating the interplay among literature, politics, and the economy. Focusing on the reportage Jiangshan Ruci Duo{jiao} (How Beautiful Is Our Countryside), a recipient of the Lu Xun Literary Award, this paper investigates its "One Body with Two Wings" communication model. In this model, renowned figures, prestigious awards, and leading journals constitute the core "Body," supported by the "Two Wings" of government and capital. The study finds that the work's dissemination pathway relies, to a considerable extent, on authoritative recognition within the literary field and the amplification provided by external forces. While this mechanism enhances visibility and public reach, its dependence on institutional validation and market dynamics also poses potential challenges to the autonomy of the literary field. The portrayal of the "new peasant" in the work resonates widely but simultaneously reflects alignment with mainstream narrative expectations. Consequently, this case highlights the underlying tension between literary autonomy and external influences that characterizes the seemingly successful communication of contemporary main-melody literature.

Keywords: media convergence; main-melody literature; literary communication; literary autonomy; institutional influence; cultural representation

1. Introduction

1.1. Media Convergence and Literary Communication

In the context of contemporary media convergence, the traditional notion of the "self-sufficiency of the work" has gradually yielded to a systematic reliance on communication strategies. We live in an era saturated with information, where the massive growth of content and the scarcity of public attention create a fundamental tension in cultural communication. Within this environment, the process through which a literary work moves from creation to public recognition can no longer be adequately described by the linear "production-distribution-reception" model. Instead, it has evolved into a complex reception system characterized by negotiation, strategic interaction, and the influence of multiple forces.

As scholar Wang Furen observed: "The media chases the forefront of literary development... Whoever can grasp the forefront of literary development and be the first

to launch literary works that reflect new trends in literature will gain better economic benefits and greater social influence" [1]. This statement highlights the increasingly symbiotic relationship between media logic and literary production. The transformation of communication tools and methods has compelled literary studies to expand beyond closed, purely aesthetic critique, incorporating external factors such as media platforms, cultural authority, and market mechanisms. Consequently, literary studies now engage in a form of comprehensive cultural analysis that considers both internal artistic quality and external communicative dynamics.

1.2. Case Study: *Jiangshan Ruci Duojiao* (How Beautiful Is Our Countryside)

The award-winning reportage *Jiangshan Ruci Duojiao* provides a representative case for examining these mechanisms. The formation of its influence is not an isolated literary event but the outcome of an interplay between specific cultural contexts and multiple structural forces. During the period surrounding the work's receipt of the Lu Xun Literary Award, a synergistic communication chain is evident: thematic advocacy and policy support from government departments offered official recognition and promotional platforms; market capital expanded the work's reach through channels such as publication and audiovisual adaptation; meanwhile, attention and evaluations from prominent figures, leading journals, and prestigious awards collectively established a dense "web of reputation" for the work. These forces-political discourse, market capital, and cultural authority-intertwined to propel *JRD* to the forefront of public visibility.

While analyzing this communication path, this study focuses on a central question: Does a communication model that relies heavily on leading journals, prominent figures, governmental support, and market forces ultimately promote or potentially constrain the "autonomy" of literature?

2. Forces of Dissemination: Authority, Empowerment, and Contestation

2.1. The Role of Symbolic Capital

In *Jiangshan Ruci Duojiao* (JRD), the system of certification formed by authoritative critics, leading publications, and prestigious literary awards played a pivotal role. Together, they constitute a mechanism of "symbolic capital" within the literary field. This system not only creates a "pressure of access" that writers-especially emerging ones-must navigate but also fundamentally shapes a work's visibility and potential for canonization.

The function of this certification system is dual. On one hand, it provides academic and artistic legitimization through processes of screening, evaluation, and awarding. On the other hand, this symbolic capital can be converted into market credibility, recognized by capital forces and subsequently catalyzing the production of cultural products that hold both cultural value and commercial potential [2].

2.2. Media Promotion and Critical Attention

The promotion of JRD by literary journals played an essential role in its initial dissemination. Even before winning the award, three chapters were published in *People's Literature* in the same year under the collective title "Poverty Alleviation Trilogy," each featured in prominent positions. The issues' forewords highlighted the work, praising it as a benchmark for reality-themed creative writing in the new era. Subsequently, mainstream media outlets-including *Guizhou Daily*, *Literary Gazette*, *National Literature*, *Guangming Daily*, *People's Daily*, and *Xinhua Digest*-published reviews, generating sustained public attention. This demonstrates that the work had entered the core sphere of mainstream literary evaluation even before receiving top-level recognition.

Attention from renowned critics and academic seminars further reinforced this effect. Multiple high-level meetings focused on the author Ouyang Qiansen and his works, including events organized by prominent literary associations. These critical activities, in conjunction with journal promotion, collectively enhanced the work's academic

reputation, laying the foundation for its award success. The interaction between publication in leading journals and critiques by prominent commentators amplified JRD's visibility and recognition, illustrating the reinforcing dynamics of symbolic capital.

2.3. *Government Support, Market Capital, and Autonomy*

Institutional support from the government and investment from market forces provided two-way empowerment, collectively forming the foundation for JRD's wide dissemination. In modern society, government and capital penetrate and reshape cultural domains, including literature. Capital often aligns with prevailing political currents, facilitating the transformation of literary works from elite to popular culture. Publishing houses print works recognized by experts, while media conglomerates adapt popular texts into film and television productions, extending their reach.

For individual writers, resources and influence are limited. The intervention of capital can rapidly expand the scope of dissemination. In the case of *JRD*, government involvement aligned with national narratives of poverty alleviation, while market forces detected both social relevance and commercial potential. The work received funding from initiatives such as the National Publication Foundation's 2021 Special Thematic Publishing Project, the Tianjin Key Publication Support Project, and the Chinese Writers Association's Reportage Creative Project on Poverty Alleviation. Its audiovisual adaptations also achieved market success. The author skillfully integrated societal expectations with personal literary pursuits, avoiding the pitfalls of a purely theme-driven approach.

However, this model of dual empowerment by political and economic forces raises questions regarding literary autonomy. According to field theory, the literary domain constitutes a struggle among various forces for the power to define legitimacy. In this case, political capital (government advocacy and project support) and economic capital (publication resources, film and television investment) were converted into symbolic capital (recognition by critics, leading journals, and awards). While this path established benchmarks of literary value, it may implicitly prioritize certain themes and narrative styles, potentially influencing the direction of literary production.

With the rise of internet dissemination, works are subject to public scrutiny and unpredictable reception. The internet functions as a "cultural filter," where audience feedback can reinforce or subvert mainstream promotion. Ultimately, the intrinsic qualities of a work determine its ability to withstand this process. JRD evolved beyond initial governmental and market control, achieving a measure of independence. Its reportage genre, vivid prose, rich character portrayals, and detailed depiction of societal cross-sections endowed it with enduring social value. The content demonstrates an engagement with contemporary society, reflecting the author's sense of responsibility and commitment to promoting social and historical progress.

3. Modes of Convergence: Transmedia Storytelling and Field Generation

Through its cross-media adaptation from literary text to television drama, Jiangshan Ruci Duo{jiao} (JRD) successfully transcended the traditional audience boundaries of literature, achieving a significant expansion in its communication reach. The communication methods inherent in media convergence disrupt the homogeneity of traditional media, liberating information flow from temporal and spatial constraints. Consequently, the relationship between sender and receiver evolves beyond a passive "transmission-reception" model, fostering a more dynamic interplay between the disseminating entity and its audience.

The work circulated not only through traditional print media but also in digital and video formats online, adapting to contemporary screen-reading habits. One of its chapters, "Lush Blossoms," was adapted into a television series and aired in a primetime slot on CCTV, receiving widespread acclaim. According to China Audio-Visual Big Data, since

its broadcast, the series achieved an average viewership rating of 1.327% and a reach rate of 2.393% per episode, both ranking at the top among television dramas during the same period. Moreover, it sparked lively discussion on Bilibili, a platform popular among younger audiences, and received a high rating of 9.3 points. This demonstrates that cross-media dissemination enabled the work to reach beyond literary readers to a broader television-viewing audience.

Throughout this process, the literary text remained a distinct medium for cultural and spiritual engagement, conveying the author's unique value orientation. Ouyang Qiansen consistently emphasizes a people-centered creative philosophy, asserting that literary and art workers must immerse themselves in everyday life, root themselves among the people, and tell China's stories authentically. He has highlighted that only passionate engagement with grassroots life can elevate creative expression to new heights and that the ultimate test of literature lies in whether it resonates with the people. Guided by this principle, the author documents historical fragments and reflects the spirit of the era through the text. In JRD, personal cultural memory and field experience are integrated with the theme of poverty alleviation, capturing specific local experiences that are subsequently disseminated through online media and audiovisual platforms. This approach reflects a commitment to creating works that are substantial in content, effective in communication, and aligned with contemporary social realities.

Although the dissemination of JRD initially depended on strong governmental and capital intervention, the communication process itself generated a complex literary field. This space is not a pure expression of "autonomy," but rather a temporary equilibrium negotiated between external forces and internal literary rules. The reportage genre necessitates a degree of authenticity and concern for social reality, providing a foundational basis for autonomy. Critics have noted that, within its grand thematic framework, the work emphasizes detailed depiction and personal narrative, employing strategies such as "addressing grand themes through nuanced details" and "the way of ultimate simplicity," thereby preserving literary quality within the mainstream narrative structure [3].

It is important to recognize that this "autonomy" remains limited, representing an outcome shaped through negotiation with external expectations and structural forces, rather than complete independence.

4. Content and Resonance: Constructing the Peasant Image between Achievement and Discipline

4.1. Representing the New Peasant

A writer must first allow the work itself to speak; the quality of its content constitutes the fundamental measure of literary power and influence. In Jiangshan Ruci Duojiao (JRD), the author's extensive field investigations aimed at giving voice to the peasant community resulted in the construction of the "new peasant" as a central figure that resonates with a wide and diverse readership. The work documents the transformations that have taken place in Guizhou's countryside over forty years of reform and opening-up, capturing the evolution of rural society and the complex socio-economic changes that have affected local communities.

Rather than focusing narrowly on a single individual or location, the author adopts a scatter-perspective approach, recording five representative villages situated in the contiguous impoverished areas of the Wumeng and Wuling mountain ranges: Haique Village in Hezhang County, Bijie City; Huamao Village in Bozhou District, Zunyi City; Shakan Village in Ziyun County, Anshun City; Zhusha Town in Wanshan District, Tongren City; and Hongyan Village in Zheng'an County, Zunyi City. Collectively, these villages include a total of twenty-four peasant figures, whose experiences and life stories converge into a broader portrayal of the peasantry in the contemporary era. By extending

the scope across multiple locations and individuals, the work achieves a panoramic representation that is both granular and collectively meaningful.

These peasants endure hardship without complaint, displaying perseverance and resilience that naturally resonate with readers. The author carefully selects six key figures as representative archetypes, each characterized by honesty, simplicity, and moral integrity. Rather than critiquing their human limitations or vulnerabilities, the narrative imbues these figures with qualities that reflect both ethical ideals and societal aspirations. For example, in the chapter "Seeing the Myriad Mountains Red," a revolutionary peasant named Li Laidi travels to Beijing to "see the National Congress," albeit watching it on a hotel television. While her individual action does not alter political outcomes, it symbolizes the enduring respect and solidarity that residents of historical revolutionary base areas hold toward leadership, reflecting the collective spirit of dedication and civic engagement. Through these portraits, the author constructs a nuanced yet idealized depiction of the peasantry, emphasizing moral fortitude, communal loyalty, and engagement with the broader socio-political context.

4.2. Resonance through Alignment with Cultural Expectations

The work meticulously captures both the lived realities of peasants and the expectations placed upon them by societal frameworks. Characters are portrayed as truthful, kind, and morally upright, aligning with popular cultural imaginings of the peasantry as honest, hardworking, and resilient. At the same time, these representations are infused with the striving spirit emblematic of the contemporary era, highlighting perseverance, adaptation to change, and a proactive engagement with modernization. By simultaneously "meeting" and "sublimating" the audience's horizon of expectations, the narrative cultivates a strong emotional resonance, eliciting empathy and admiration from readers across different social strata.

Fei Xiaotong's insight that "viewed from the grassroots, Chinese society is earthbound" [4] reinforces the enduring relevance of peasants in the social imagination, emphasizing that rural communities remain central to the fabric of Chinese society. Particularly in the context of contemporary consumerist culture, the depiction of resilience, simplicity, and industriousness provides a cultural counterpoint that evokes nostalgia and fulfills a spiritual yearning for authenticity. The peasant figures, through their perseverance in the face of hardship, function as models of ethical labor and moral endurance, offering readers both inspiration and reassurance amid the uncertainties of modernization.

Furthermore, the narrative's alignment with cultural expectations strengthens the work's communicative impact. By shaping characters who are both relatable and aspirational, the author fosters a dual-layered engagement: readers recognize the realism of the hardships portrayed while also appreciating the ethical and symbolic dimensions of the characters. This dual engagement enhances the depth of reception, allowing audiences to connect emotionally, morally, and intellectually with the narrative.

4.3. Balancing Authenticity and Narrative Discipline

Despite its considerable communicative achievements, the construction of these peasant images also raises critical questions regarding narrative authority, selective emphasis, and literary discipline. The power to shape meaning ultimately resides with the author, who functions as an intellectual spokesperson for the subaltern. The selective focus on traits such as perseverance, moral rectitude, and communal loyalty, along with the idealized portrayal of characters as universally truthful and kind, not only engages readers emotionally but also aligns with mainstream cultural and social expectations. In doing so, the narrative exercises a form of disciplinary guidance over perceptions of peasant life and values [5].

While the idealized figures achieve widespread resonance, they inevitably simplify the diversity of the peasant population, the complexity of individual life trajectories, and the multifaceted realities of rural existence. Homogenized behavioral patterns and consistent value orientations may diminish the critical acuity and investigative depth expected in reportage literature. Thus, the peasant images in JRD should be understood as carefully constructed literary products, formed under the dual constraints of narrative convention and socio-cultural expectation. Their success lies in negotiating the tension between "authentic representation" and "symbolic refinement," skillfully balancing descriptive fidelity with moral and ideological resonance. At the same time, their limitations are embedded within this balance, reflecting both the constraints and possibilities of reportage writing as a genre capable of engaging with broad societal audiences while shaping collective imagination.

By providing vivid, morally resonant depictions of peasants while acknowledging the constraints imposed by narrative expectations, JRD exemplifies a literary strategy that simultaneously achieves mass resonance and preserves core qualities of authenticity. It demonstrates how reportage can navigate between the demands of literary discipline, ideological context, and audience engagement, offering insights into the complex dynamics that govern the construction of contemporary cultural narratives.

5. Conclusion

The award and extensive dissemination of Jiangshan Ruci Duo{jiao} (JRD) should not be understood as an isolated literary event, but rather as a representative case of cultural communication in the era of media convergence. By analyzing its communication trajectory, this study highlights the crucial roles played by multiple forces, including political, economic, and cultural capital, in shaping a literary work's visibility and impact.

Media convergence has effectively broken down traditional barriers between literature and popular culture. Through the resonance generated across multiple media formats-ranging from textual narrative to visual imagery-JRD successfully transformed a regional story of poverty alleviation into a narrative that resonates nationally, reflecting shared societal values and contemporary aspirations. The work's success demonstrates how main-melody literature can leverage the interplay of government support, market investment, and cultural authority to achieve prominence within the contemporary literary landscape.

However, the very model that facilitates this success also warrants careful reflection. While political endorsement and capital investment efficiently enhance dissemination, they simultaneously reinforce a particular order of literary evaluation and production. Within this framework, the visibility, reception, and eventual canonization of literary works are closely tied to their alignment with prevailing ideological narratives and market logic. Consequently, questions arise regarding the autonomy of the literary field. When governmental promotion and commercial operation become the standard configuration for literary dissemination, the space for experimental, critical, or non-mainstream voices may be constrained, limiting diversity in thematic exploration and stylistic innovation.

The case of JRD serves a dual function. On one hand, it provides a template for successful literary communication in the digital and convergent media era, illustrating the power of coordinated media, cultural, and economic forces. On the other hand, it reflects the broader dilemma faced by contemporary main-melody literature and the literary ecosystem at large: how can literature maintain its capacity for independent scrutiny and critical engagement with reality, while simultaneously securing recognition, validation, and influence within official and commercial channels? This tension underscores the ongoing challenge of balancing artistic autonomy with societal, ideological, and market considerations-a central concern for the sustainability and development of contemporary literature.

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