

**INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL MEDIA ON CONSUMPTION AND DISSEMINATION
OF LITERATURE RESOURCES**

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Abstract

There is an increasing agreement within the field of literary studies that the interpretation and understanding of literature necessitates a consideration of its specific mode of dissemination and preservation. The aforementioned realisation can be deemed a revolutionary development in the field of literary studies. Its most noteworthy implication is the merging of literary studies and theory with media studies and theory. The fields of media studies and media theory are dedicated to examining and understanding the diverse range of media that convey information. As a result of these fields of study, the medium through which literature is conveyed is no longer viewed as secondary to the literary substance or structure, but rather as meriting examination in its own right. Moreover, the literary content and form are often significantly impacted by the modes of their dissemination and the media prevalent during their creation in a particular time and place. The manner in which literature is received can be impacted by prevailing forms of media. The present chapter initiates a discussion on the fields of media theory and media studies, exploring their inception and contemporary relevance in the industrialised world, which has been propelled by the proliferation of novel media. Subsequently, we shall examine ten instances of the correlation between media and literature across diverse historical and cultural settings.

The advent of digital media has revolutionised the manner in which literature resources are both consumed and disseminated. This paper provides a comprehensive review of recent scholarly research pertaining to the effects of digital media on the utilisation and distribution of literary resources. Our research centres on the impact of digital media on the

practises of reading, writing, publishing, and sharing literature. This study also explores the obstacles and prospects engendered by digital media for the literary sector, encompassing alterations in the commercial strategies of publishers and writers, the emergence of novel literary genres, and the democratisation of literary customs. Ultimately, the forthcoming discourse will delve into prospective avenues of investigation and the necessity for a nuanced comprehension of the influence of digital media on the literary ecosystem.

Keywords: Digital media, media studies, media theory, history of media, new media, comparative literature

Media Studies and Current Media Theory

Media theory pertains to the examination of the ways in which media impact perception and operate. Media studies is an academic field that focuses on the examination and evaluation of the diverse media utilised by individuals for the purpose of communicating and preserving information.

History of Discipline

Marshall McLuhan, widely regarded as the founder of media studies, initiated a paradigm shift in this field of study with his assertion that "*the medium is the message.*" McLuhan's theoretical approach, while not unique, emphasised the medium as a primary focus for analysis. This perspective played a crucial role in prompting a broader shift within the humanities and social sciences towards prioritising process, social context, performance, and other aspects that were previously considered secondary or non-essential to the study of texts or artefacts. Contemporary media and literary theories have exhibited a growing interest in the material circumstances surrounding communicative actions. This includes historical examinations of writing technologies, as well as more recent inquiries into the phenomenology of new media and its impact on our perception of the world. The work of Friedrich Kittler, a prominent German literary theorist, has significantly influenced scholars to perceive literature as a subcategory of media. This perspective has been imparted to a

cohort of academics. The methodology he introduced as a historicist places significant emphasis on literature as a means of generating information, which is largely influenced by the reproduction and archival technologies that were prevalent in its historical and cultural milieu.

Theory of New Media

The primary focus of new media theory is on media that relies on digital technology, rather than analogue technology. Digital technology refers to the technology that employs binary code to transmit or store data. Data that has undergone archiving or transmission is subsequently reconstituted in a format or interface that satisfies the end user's specifications. Analogue technology, in contrast to digital technology, facilitates the transmission and storage of information without the need for encoding. However, it is important to note that the content of the information may undergo modifications. Analogue technology, such as the telephone, functions by transforming the air vibrations generated by a speaker's vocal cords into an electronic pattern that is subsequently replicated by a receiver located at the opposite end of the communication channel. The process of transmitting information through digital technology involves encoding patterns into binary code and subsequently reassembling them using a suitable interface on the receiving end. This can be achieved through the use of a telephone or computer. A significant portion of contemporary media theory has been dedicated to demonstrating that the shift from analogue to digital technology constitutes a fundamental transformation in the ways in which individuals structure knowledge and interpret reality. Theorists specialising in new media with a focus on literature contend that this fundamental transformation is likewise manifested in the genre of literature produced and the manner in which literature is consumed. Furthermore, scholars in the field of film studies have promptly recognised that the advancements in communication technology have had an equally significant impact on the film industry. Presently, a significant proportion of contemporary Hollywood films incorporate computer-

generated imagery. Upon a preliminary analysis of the correlation between literature and its respective medium throughout history, we shall revisit this subject matter.

Instances from the past

The extensive history of literature and its transmission through various media can be illustrated by a few examples from diverse cultures and historical periods, highlighting the profoundly complex relationship between media and literature.

The process of transmitting information or knowledge through spoken words or verbal communication is commonly referred to as oral transmission.

Throughout history, societies have been categorised according to their predominant mode of communication, either oral or literate. Oral cultures are characterised by a lack of familiarity or limited utilisation of written language. A society can be deemed as literate if the ability to read and write is prevalent among its members. The scholarly contributions of Milman Perry and his pupil Albert Lord have significantly impacted the academic perspective on the literary works that have traditionally been held in high esteem as the cornerstone of Western culture. The epic poetry of Homer was believed to have been orally transmitted and performed by poets, as well as being the work of a sole author prior to its dissemination. Perry conducted a research trip to Kosovo, formerly known as ancient Greece during the time of Homer. During his visit, he conducted an examination and documentation of the *guslars*, who are known for their song composition that bears a remarkable resemblance to the epic poetry of Homer. It is worth noting that the *guslars* are often illiterate. The individual in question arrived at the conviction that epic poetry, such as the *Iliad*, was crafted through oral tradition by storytellers who transmitted their narratives across successive generations, as opposed to being the product of a solitary author. Current academic discourse has initiated an inquiry into the oversimplification of the dichotomy between orality and literacy. This discourse posits that the fundamental aspect of

information transmission lies in the medium employed, rather than in the mere presence or absence of a writing system within a given culture.

Pictography

Pictography is a writing system that employs visual representations to communicate information. The employment of pictograms can be traced back to Mesopotamia, and it is plausible that they underwent a transformation into the cuneiform inscriptions of the Sumerians during the fourth millennium BCE. However, some academics argue that the inception of writing systems can be attributed to accounting practises rather than pictograms. Pictograms serve as the foundational elements for intricate pictographic writing systems, including hieroglyphs and ideograms. Ideograms are graphical symbols that denote concepts, while hieroglyphs, which are predominantly linked with ancient Egypt, are symbolic representations that encompass both ideographic and alphabetic elements. As writing systems undergo development, symbols that signify a phonological unit of the spoken language gradually adhere to the rebus principle and denote a particular entity or idea. Alphabetic systems are generally considered to be more versatile than pictographic ones due to their ability to combine phonological elements to represent a wide range of concepts. It is plausible that the pictographic systems utilised in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica also integrated phonetic components. According to certain academics, it is argued that a significant number of Mesoamerican societies possessed knowledge regarding the feasibility of phonetic writing systems, but consciously opted against their advancement due to the belief that they were of lesser value compared to the pictographic system. Writing systems that rely solely on pictures or symbols, known as pictographic or ideographic writing systems, would remain highly reliant on contextual factors. The utilisation of pictographic symbols in various nations to differentiate between the restrooms designated for men and women would pose a challenge in a society where the conventional association of dresses and pants with women and men, respectively, does not exist. The production of literature within cultures that primarily utilise pictographic writing systems necessitates the

utilisation of highly culture-specific modes of expression. Consequently, the process of interpreting pictographic writing systems becomes notably challenging, exceeding initial expectations. The interpretation of hieroglyphs remained elusive until the unearthing of the Rosetta stone in 1799, which presented a parallel rendition of a particular text in two archaic tongues (Egyptian and Greek) utilising three separate scripts (Demotic Egyptian, Hieroglyphic, and Greek).

While there may be differing opinions regarding the specific type of data conveyed through the khipu, it is widely acknowledged that this artefact served as the primary means of communication within the pre-Colombian Andean society. The khipu, a collection of coloured threads arranged in customary knot patterns, was predominantly employed for bookkeeping objectives, although it could have also served as a medium for communicating intricate data, including concise messages and historical accounts. There exist various alphabetic texts from the colonial era that claim to be transcriptions of khipus. Academic analysis has been conducted on these narratives, leading to the conclusion that their content and form are distinctive. It is probable that a dialogic relationship existed between the khipu medium and the communication practises and global experience of the civilization. The khipu's centrality may have fostered a predominantly numerical mode of conceptualising stories and narration, thereby impacting the alphabetical depictions of Andean historiography in the colonial period.

Manuscript

Despite the utilisation of alternative materials, a manuscript refers to any medium that conveys handwritten information on paper or parchment. The term "inscription" pertains to the act of pressing letters or figures into a malleable surface with the aid of an instrument, while "printing" involves the imprinting of letters or figures onto a surface through the use of blocks or moveable type, thereby enabling their repeated reproduction. This distinguishes it from the aforementioned process. The manuscript has been present in various cultures for thousands of years and continues to be a relevant form of communication in contemporary

times. The period during which manuscripts held sway as the exclusive or preeminent mode of communication has elapsed. The advent of the printing press, pioneered by Johannes Gutenberg in Germany during the 1450s, initiated the onset of the waning of manuscript culture in Europe. Nevertheless, it cannot be asserted that Gutenberg was the originator of the printing press. The technique of block printing has been in use for several centuries in Europe and Asia. However, the innovation of movable type, which facilitated faster page arrangement, can be traced back to the early 15th century in China. As per the analysis of experts in mediaeval literature and culture, the utilisation of manuscripts for the purpose of preserving and disseminating knowledge resulted in distinct practises and assumptions. To facilitate the dissemination of manuscript information, it is necessary to transcribe it manually. Throughout the course of this process, the copied text would undergo both minor and significant alterations and commentaries, ultimately transforming into a work authored by multiple individuals. This phenomenon, known as *mouvance* among scholars of mediaeval French literature, is widely recognised. The interplay between *mouvance* and the contextual production of a manuscript resulted in a less autonomous connection between the text and its diverse material forms during the manuscript era. This stands in contrast to contemporary beliefs, which have been shaped by centuries of media evolution and gradual abstraction and independence. The strong association between religious practise and sentiment with manuscripts and other hand-written media can be attributed to the close material relationship that exists between the content of the writing and something written by hand. This has been evident historically and continues to be so. Across various cultures, handwritten words are believed to possess a unique power or even mystical properties that are not typically associated with printed text. In contemporary times, the signature of a renowned or esteemed individual remains a highly coveted item.

The advent of digital media has significantly altered the manner in which literature resources are consumed and disseminated. The proliferation of electronic books, audio books, and digital publishing and sharing platforms has granted readers an unparalleled

opportunity to access an extensive range of literary materials. Simultaneously, the advent of digital media has presented novel challenges and prospects for the literary sector, encompassing alterations in the commercial strategies of publishers and writers, the emergence of innovative literary genres, and the democratisation of literary culture. This paper provides a comprehensive review of recent scholarly research on the effects of digital media on the utilisation and distribution of literary resources. The advent of digital media has brought about notable transformations in the reading habits of individuals, particularly with regards to their engagement with literary works. The proliferation of electronic books and audio books has led to a wider range of choices for readers seeking access to literary material. The advent of digital media has facilitated the process of exploring fresh authors and genres for readers. Additionally, it has enabled them to exchange their reading experiences with others through online book clubs and social media. Nevertheless, certain studies indicate that digital reading could potentially yield adverse impacts on both reading comprehension and retention, in addition to the overall quality of the reading encounter. The advent of digital media has brought about significant changes in the process of writing and publishing literature. The advent of self-publishing platforms, such as Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing, has facilitated the circumvention of conventional publishers by authors, thereby enabling them to access a worldwide readership. The proliferation of new literary works, such as fan fiction and online serials, has been facilitated by contemporary publishing models, which have expanded the scope of literary content beyond what was previously feasible. The exponential increase in self-published material has raised apprehensions regarding the calibre and reliability of literary works, as well as the viability of conventional publishing frameworks. The impact of digital media on literary culture has been noteworthy, particularly in terms of the valuation, sharing, and consumption of literary content. The democratisation of literary culture has been facilitated by digital media, which has expanded the accessibility of literary content to a broader audience. Additionally, digital media has enabled readers to interact with literary content in novel and inventive manners. The advent of digital technology has brought about novel challenges for the literary sector,

such as apprehensions regarding copyright violation and the influence of digital piracy on the viability of publishing frameworks.

The multifaceted and complex nature of the impact of digital media on the consumption and dissemination of literary resources is a subject of academic inquiry. The advent of digital media has presented novel prospects for readers, writers, and publishers alike. However, it has also engendered fresh obstacles and ambiguities for the literary sector. Subsequent investigations ought to strive towards cultivating a more intricate comprehension of the influence exerted by digital media on the literary ecosystem. This includes an exploration of the manners in which digital media is altering the essence of literary content, the commercial frameworks of publishers and authors, and the cultural significance of literature.

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