

I SAGGI DI LEXIA

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Direttori

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Aprire una collana di libri specializzata in una disciplina che si vuole scientifica, soprattutto se essa appartiene a quella zona intermedia della nostra enciclopedia dei saperi — non radicata in teoremi o esperimenti, ma neppure costruita per opinioni soggettive — che sono le scienze umane, è un gesto ambizioso. Vi potrebbe corrispondere il debito di una definizione della disciplina, del suo oggetto, dei suoi metodi. Ciò in particolar modo per una disciplina come la nostra: essa infatti, fin dal suo nome (semiotica o semiologia) è stata intesa in modi assai diversi se non contrapposti nel secolo della sua esistenza moderna: più vicina alla linguistica o alla filosofia, alla critica culturale o alle diverse scienze sociali (sociologia, antropologia, psicologia). C'è chi, come Greimas sulla traccia di Hjelmslev, ha preteso di definirne in maniera rigorosa e perfino assiomatica (interdefinita) principi e concetti, seguendo requisiti riservati normalmente solo alle discipline logico-matematiche; chi, come in fondo lo stesso Saussure, ne ha intuito la vocazione alla ricerca empirica sulle leggi di funzionamento dei diversi fenomeni di comunicazione e significazione nella vita sociale; chi, come l'ultimo Eco sulla traccia di Peirce, l'ha pensata piuttosto come una ricerca filosofica sul senso e le sue condizioni di possibilità; altri, da Barthes in poi, ne hanno valutato la possibilità di smascheramento dell'ideologia e delle strutture di potere. . . . Noi rifiutiamo un passo così ambizioso. Ci riferiremo piuttosto a un concetto espresso da Umberto Eco all'inizio del suo lavoro di ricerca: il "campo semiotico", cioè quel vastissimo ambito culturale, insieme di testi e discorsi, di attività interpretative e di pratiche codificate, di linguaggi e di generi, di fenomeni comunicativi e di effetti di senso, di tecniche espressive e inventari di contenuti, di messaggi, riscritture e deformazioni che insieme costituiscono il mondo sensato (e dunque sempre sociale anche quando è naturale) in cui viviamo, o per dirla nei termini di Lotman, la nostra semiosfera. La semiotica costituisce il tentativo paradossale (perché autoriferito) e sempre parziale, di ritrovare l'ordine (o gli ordini) che rendono leggibile, sensato, facile, quasi "naturale" per chi ci vive dentro, questo coacervo di azioni e oggetti. Di fatto, quando conversiamo, leggiamo un libro, agiamo politicamente, ci divertiamo a uno spettacolo, noi siamo perfettamente in grado non solo di decodificare quel che accade, ma anche di connetterlo a valori, significati, gusti, altre forme espressive. Insomma siamo competenti e siamo anche capaci di confrontare la nostra competenza con quella altrui, interagendo in modo opportuno. È questa competenza condivisa o confrontabile l'oggetto della semiotica.

I suoi metodi sono di fatto diversi, certamente non riducibili oggi a una sterile assiomatica, ma in parte anche sviluppati grazie ai tentativi di formalizzazione dell'École de Paris. Essi funzionano un po' secondo la metafora wittgensteiniana della cassetta degli attrezzi: è bene che ci siano cacciavite, martello, forbici ecc.: sta alla competenza pragmatica del ricercatore selezionare caso per caso lo strumento opportuno per l'operazione da compiere.

Questa collana presenterà soprattutto ricerche empiriche, analisi di casi, lascerà volentieri spazio al nuovo, sia nelle persone degli autori che degli argomenti di studio. Questo è sempre una condizione dello sviluppo scientifico, che ha come prerequisito il cambiamento e il rinnovamento. Lo è a maggior ragione per una collana legata al mondo universitario, irrigidito da troppo tempo nel nostro Paese da un blocco sostanziale che non dà luogo ai giovani di emergere e di prendere il posto che meritano.

Ugo Volli

XIANZHANG ZHAO

TEXT – IMAGE THEORY
COMPARATIVE SEMIOTIC STUDIES
ON CHINESE TRADITIONAL LITERATURE
AND ARTS





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Introduction

The “image theory of literature” is a new domain of literary theory that springs up in the new century in China, as well as a new concept in the entire new era of literature. So it is necessary to offer adequate explanations to its background, implications, motivations, and methods prior to the formal landing of this study.

1. Generation by Generation: The “New Learning”

Just a century ago, Wang Guowei lamented that “each generation has its own representative literature [...] but later generations fail to carry on the establishments of their predecessors”¹, which unveils his great confidence and pride in ancient literature; one hundred years later, as literature lost its former clout, we could hardly tell what the most predominant genre is, poetry, fiction, or prose? Neither, as the “appearance” of the entire literature has been blurred; only narratives intimately related to images or even pre-chewed by image signs are universally favored. Ruminated by this kind of cross-media “new literary style”, “black characters on white paper” has already changed its original look, while “literary readers” also turn into “literary spectators”. This is “the coming of an image era” and “the finality of literature” exclaimed by persons of literary ideals, whose deep anxiety and frustration have effused in their works. In this day and

1. Wang Guowei, *History of Traditional Opera in the Song and Yuan Dynasties: Preface*, Beijing: China Theatre Press, 1999, p. 1.

age, the relationship between literature and image is unprecedentedly complex in terms of the severe tensions and distressing entanglements in between; what's more vexing is that this situation will be tougher with in the foreseeable future, and image's nibble of literature, backed by its productivity, namely the ever-changing "technology", will further grow in intensity.

More importantly, behind the so-called "literature crisis" lies a "sign crisis" confronting the entire human race, which points to the deeper, tougher challenge of image signs that human society has started to undergo since the popularity of television culture in the second half of the last century. Neil Postman, American scholar, wrote a book entitled *Amusing Ourselves to Death* to profoundly criticize the culture of image represented by TV by denouncing it as mass media that would "amuse Americans to death". It is worth noting that the Internet has not yet entered people's daily life when Postman worked on this book in the mid-1980s, and "amusing to death" was just a metaphor then; in this age of network, "amusing to death" induced by "net-addiction" has already become a bloody ongoing fact² that "amusement" proves to be the symbolic essence of all images, which include TV, network, and mass culture; while image, as the most powerful media sign, is intruding into each and every inch of the territory of politics and ideology swiftly, immoderately, and forcibly. Irresistibly tempted by image signs, humans are gradually losing their thinking habits and withering their linguistic competence. Worse still is that the "losing" and "withering" are getting under way unknowingly, just like a frog that jumps into slowly heating water, apparently unaware of its approaching end. This is the "sign crisis" beneath the "literature crisis", a crisis that may hammer and wrench harder on human existence. Therefore, the humanities should not remain silent in the face of it but re-understand "language" and "image" and develop a persuasive interpretation of the symbolic relationship between the two. The study of this relationship from a literary view, namely the study of relationship between literature as language art and visual image, turns out to be a bounden academic responsibility of literary theory.

2. On January 31st, 2012, a 23-year-old man in Xinbei, Taiwan, died after playing online games continuously for 23 hours. The police arrived at the cybercafé and found that his body was still sitting in front of the computer, with his two hands stretching as if they were still tapping the keyboard. Misfortunes caused by "net addition" are now nothing new.

It is beyond doubt that the understanding and interpretation of the relationship between literature and image must be historical and academic instead of being stuck on the level of emotional judgment; furthermore, only the historical can be the academic, so only academic analysis based on historical mastery is reliable. So, before entering this argument formally, we may as well look back upon the entire modern process of literary theory at the macro level, and then proceed to discuss how we should deal with the “sign crisis”.

We all know that Wang Guowei lived at the turn of the two centuries. As far as the totality of “world literature” is concerned, the 19th century before his presence is apparently an era of focus on “literature and society”, in which critical realism with the “authentic representation of society” as its mission became the mainstream of literature. The manifestation in terms of literary theory is the rise of literary sociology represented by French literary theories. Literary sociology regards literature and art as a social phenomenon, studies it in view of the sociological theories and methods, and draws social conclusions. “Literature and art are social phenomena” is the most fundamental view of literary sociology, and serves as the springboard for its studies on literature. Starting from such a basic conception of literature and art research, literary sociology will necessarily focus more on the study of the social nature and social laws of literature and art. As a result, theories of literary sociology are mostly social judgments on literature and art, with interactions between literature and art and the society as its basic theme. Literary sociology, as a discipline, is a confluence of literature and art study and sociology; as a method, it is the thinking of the social nature and social laws of literature and art from a sociological angle³. Accordingly, “literature and society” has become the basic “motif”⁴ of literary theory in the 19th century, which is mainly characterized by emphases on the value judgment of literature. The reasons why “literature and society” became the motif embrace not only the most direct literary background

3. The author has provided a detailed interpretation of literary sociology in *General Method Theory of Literature and Art* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Art and Literature Press, 1999, 1st edition, Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2006, revised edition), which is elided for brevity here.

4. “Motif”, or “core argument”, refers to the mainstream or centric academic argument of a certain period or era. Other arguments are mostly directly or indirectly correlated with the “motif”, or to say, they are literary theory subjects derived or generated from it.

of critical realism, but most fundamental of all, the social contradictions caused by capitalist primitive accumulation, while the social currents including Marxism, socialism and empirical philosophy are its ideological resources.

The 20th century after Wang Guowei is an era of focus on “literature and language”. In other words, “literature and language” is the motif of literary theory in the 20th century, with the linguistic form of literature as its focus and springboard. The motif “literature and language” originates from formalism and aestheticism in the 19th century. For social reality back then, formalism and aestheticism, despite being a sort of struggle or criticism, could never become the mainstream discourse or core proposition in the historical context of the time. The fact that “literature and language” has jumped to the motif of literary theory in the 20th century is not only backed by its direct background featuring literary and artistic modernism and postmodernism, but more, by the rise of modern linguistic philosophy and semiotics after Saussure. Throughout the 20th century, ideological issues have evolved into primary contradictions of this era. Behind the series of ethnic, religious and political conflicts is nothing but ideological clashes and confrontations, which are essentially ideological oppositions and rivalries between different ideological systems. “Ideology” comes down to a matter of “signification”, and ultimately boils down to a linguistic issue⁵. Consequently, linguistic theory ushered in its heyday and rode a leading wave among the generation, which has produced a significant impact on the whole humanities and social sciences; literary and artistic creation adopted more original linguistic forms, resulting in an untiring game of “iconoclasm” and challenges against the literary conventions. The innovation or “revolution” in language forms has not only become the mainstream ideographic style of literature, but also the main options for literary theory research in the 20th century.

Looking to “the coming of an image era” in this way, it seems justified to infer that the 21st century may be the century of “literature and image”, or, “literature and image” may become the fundamental motif of

5. As to why the language issue has risen to the “motif” (core topic) of humanities in the 20th century, the author has not yet found any relevant research for reference. The author makes this point for reference solely on the premise of no argumentation, and welcomes any critical discussion.

literary theory in the 21st century. If so, Wang's remark that "each generation has its own representative literature" is to be rewritten in another sense, so will his path of literary research. For example, it is not enough to study *The Spirit of Qu Yuan's Literary Works* only, but he should also study the relationship between image and Qu Yuan's literary works; it is not enough to talk over *Comments on Ci Poetry*, but he should also talk over the relationship theory between Ci poetry and image; it is not enough to develop the *History of Traditional Opera in the Song and Yuan Dynasties*, but he should also develop the "history of language-image relationship" in operas and dramas; it is not enough to offer *Comments on A Dream of Red Mansions*, but he should also comment on the relationship between *A Dream of Red Mansions* and image. As thus, the space of literary research will be greatly expanded, the paths of literary research will be reclassified, while the academic ideals of literary research will be redefined. Undoubtedly, what's presented here is a new academic horizon poles apart from that in Wang's era. So not only does "each generation have its own representative literature", but in the meantime, each generation have its own "new learning" and literary theory. We may as well name this "new learning" of literary theory as "image theory of literature", which holds it possible to take "literature and image" as the fundamental motif of literary theory in the 21st century.

That's the evolution trajectory of modern literary theory depicted in the sphere of "world literature": from the 19th century to the 20th century, the motif of literary theory has undergone a transformation from "literature and society" to "literature and language", and is now heading towards "literature and image" in the 21st century, just as the saying goes, "The literary and art changes with the turn of the ages [...] The evolution of literary works concerns the social ethos, while the wax and wane of literary genres concerns the course of times"⁶. If "literature and image" truly becomes the motif of literary theory in the 21st century, it is for sure catering to the call and expectation of the times. Moreover, it is also something of a "phoenix's nirvana" that will lead our literary theory to a way out of the existing quandary.

6. Hsieh Liu, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, translated by Vincent Yu-chung Shih, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1983, pp. 342-349.

2. Motivations for the Naming of “Image Theory of Literature”

The proposition of “image theory of literature” was inspired by Wittgenstein’s “picture theory of language”. In *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, he uncovered the isomorphic structure of “language” and “world” in terms of logical sequences, arguing that “image” can be used to map this relationship on an one-to-one basis. That is Wittgenstein’s “Picture Theory of Language”, also known as “Theory of Picture”. The “image theory of literature” was derived from it, holding that literature, as the art of language, is a kind of “image-thinking” language logically connected with the world via image. Therefore, the exploration of the iconic relationship between literature and the world not only caters to the call of reality, but is also marching forward along Wittgenstein’s footsteps on the right track of academic study history, or rather, is to face our problems by “making use of them”.

The iconic relationship between literature and the world is manifested on the one hand as the “verbal icon” display of the world instead of illustrating the world with the “concept”; on the other hand, it is reflected in the externalization and extension of verbal icon text to visual image, the results of which are characters and textual modeling, poetic paintings, literature illustrations, comic strips, as well as literary adaptations. So, the image theory of literature is directly confronted with the issue of elucidating the logical relationship between visual image and literature as the art of language. In this regard, despite an absence of the proposition of “image theory of literature”, there has been a place for research on the relationship between literature (language) and image since the ancient times in China and abroad. For example, Western philosophers have noted the relationship between poetry and painting since the ancient Greek period: “Painting is silent poetry and poetry is painting that speaks” (Simonides) and “As is painting so is poetry” (Horace) are classic poetic fragments left by Western sages⁷. In medieval times, hermeneutics and

7. This view of Simonides (about 556 BC–468 BC) was paraphrased by Plutarch (about 46–119 AC), Greek writer in the Roman times. See *European and American Classicists’ Discussion on Realism and Romanticism (Volume 1)*, Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1981, p. 56. Horace’s “Ut pictura poesis” (As is painting so is poetry) can be found in his *Ars Poetica*, and the original words are: “A poem is like a picture: one strikes your fancy more, the nearer you stand; another, the farther away. This courts the shade, that will wish to be seen in the light, and dreads not the critic in-

iconology coexisted and launched a heated debate, which was the initial debate between the two ideograms—language and image. Controversies on the relationship between poetry and painting represented by Winckelmann and Lessing during the Enlightenment continued Western literary and art circles' concern on this issue, and still have significant impact hitherto. In the 20th century, Western philosophy of language, iconography and semiotics touched on plentiful arguments regarding the language–image relationship over “words, images, meanings and the world”, thereby becoming vital references for the image theory of literature. Specifically, it's worth noting that the particularity of Chinese character orthography, Chinese culture and Chinese thinking results in the intimate, complicated, and fickle relationship between Chinese (literature) and image in the Chinese context, which has thus contributed to the accumulation of more abundant academic resources. The so-called “image–hieroglyphs relationship”, “name–reality relationship”, “word–image–meaning relationship”, “poetry–painting relationship”, “imaginal thinking” as well as adaptations of literature are indeed theoretical criticism of literature–image relationship in the history of Chinese literary and art theory.

Remarkably, over the past two decades, especially since this new century, the research on the literature–image relationship has entered a new perspective, that is, to discuss the survival strategies and future destiny of literature in the “era of image” while confronted with the realistic concept of “literature's encounter with the image era”, such as Jin Huimin's *The Appreciation of Image and The Current Crisis of Literature* and Gao Jianping's *The Antinomy and Symbiosis of Literature and Image*. These works feature distinct realistic solicitude and a strong consciousness of unexpected hardship, and have pushed the research to the academic frontier of literature fundamentals. On the other hand, the fledgling study of literature–image relationship in the face of the “era of image” could hardly avoid expressions biased in favor of value judgment or emotionality, thus leaving plenty of scope for in-depth theoretical investigations. This is the dimension that the image theory of literature should strive to develop, that is, to explore the theoretical logic of literature and image at the level of basic theory—how does literature

sight of the judge. This pleased but once; that, though ten times called for, will always please”. See the bound volume of Aristotle's *The Poetics* and Horace's *Ars Poetica*, translated by Yang Zhouhan, Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1962, p. 156.

make “the world held by image” in the “era of image”⁸, thus providing theoretical reference for the current relationship between literature and image.

Despite the fact that “image theory of literature” is derived from Wittgenstein’s “picture theory of language”, it is neither the same as the latter nor the sort of “back-translation”, but simply aims to exhibit essentials of the motif “literature and image” by this means. As is known to all, Wittgenstein developed the concept of “language game” later on, which seems to be the negation and transcendence over the “picture theory of language”. However, that’s not the case. As a matter of fact, the “picture theory of language” and the “theory of language game” supplement each other and have jointly contributed to Wittgenstein’s language philosophy by dialectically unveiling the two sides of the “coin” of linguistic signs—It is an inseparable whole, so is the “image theory of literature” as a neutral concept in this regard: as the art of language, literature embraces both the side of representation or expression and the side of game or deconstruction, and the two sides have co-constructed its logical relationship with the world. Compared with the iconic relationship between language and the world, the iconic relationship between literature and the world seems to be more complex and profound, and even beyond words in some aspects. It may embrace more than “two sides”, or be arranged in looming crisscrosses, or even be “multifaceted” or “infinite-sided”. On the one hand, it is because the intervention of “image” signs has resulted in the fission and restructuring of the internal relationship of literature as a language art; on the other hand, as it has entered the alien domain of “literature”, the image itself may also run into fission and restructuring as sign; what the “image theory of literature” intends to explore is the relationship between the two signs that have undergone fission and restructuring, as well as their “new relationship” generated with the world after they coagulate as “new style”.

There is no denying that previous literary theories have touched on the “iconic” aspect of literature quite often, especially the abundant studies on literary imagery and figure, which, however, are confined to the scope of literary works itself; there are scanty in-depth studies and theoretical developments on how to extend literature, the “icon” of language art, into the “image” of viewing except for Lessing’s “heterogeneity of poetry

8. Martin Heidegger, *Die Zeit des Weltbildes, Holzwege*, translated by Wang Qingjie, Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 2004, p. 91.

and painting” and ancient Chinese theory on “compatibility of poetry and painting”. Although these ancient classical theories are instructive and valuable academic resources for the “image theory of literature”, neither of them comes close to explaining the problems confronting contemporary literature. The reason is simple: Whether it be Lessing or ancient Chinese sages, they did not have to deal with the “era of image” as well as the consequent “literature crisis” and “sign crisis” that we face today, which happens to be the cardinal idea and the most fundamental academic position of the “image theory of literature”.

It follows that the “image theory of literature” is neither juggling with the names and concepts nor deliberately following the academic fashion, but a “new learning” that backs on history, bases on reality, and faces the future. It defines “image” as a new frame of reference beyond the boundaries of “theory of literary imagery” and “theory of literary figure” in order to get re-acquainted with self and discover “new self” in the dialogue between “literary language” and “literary image”. This is obviously a new domain and topic for our literary theory. As a result, the future of “image theory of literature” may be accompanied by various difficulties and confusions, and up to date, we can hardly how far it goes, but one thing is for sure though: it is walking on the right road of the academic history of literary theory.

3. Literature Concept of “Image Theory of Literature”

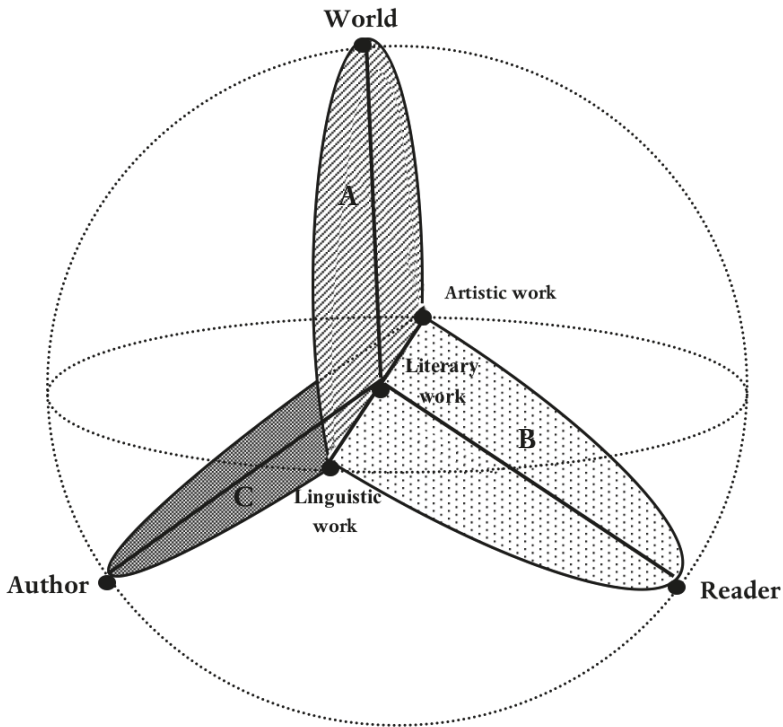
As a “new learning” of literary theory, the “image theory of literature” should first determine its legitimacy at the level of literature concept. It seems to us that it is particularly important to return to Aristotle’s simple, plain view of literature that “literature is the art of language”. Although this concept is not Aristotle’s original words, it is an idea that he states explicitly in the opening to *The Poetics*⁹. Various concepts of literature or

9. After Aristotle put forward the imitation essence of literature and art in the opening of *The Poetics*, he distinguished the differences of imitation forthwith from the aspects of “medium”, “object”, and “way”, and carried out refined analysis. In his view, due to differences in the medium of imitation, for example, some use color or gesture, while some use sound or language, so there are painters, sculptors, musicians or poets. In other words, Aristotle used “language medium” to define poetry, which contains the idea that “literature is the art of language”.

literary definitions emerged thick and fast after Aristotle. The post-isms have endowed it with too many branches, which made it more ambiguous, but one thing is certain: there is no definition after Aristotle that can negate or subvert his overall grasp of literature. This is precisely the reason for “returning to Aristotle”, the purpose of which is to clear up the source, eliminate the detritus and retain the nub, and to restore the clarity and true colors of theory. “Complicating simple questions” can never be the character of theory, for theory, as an abstract generalization, always keeps it ideal state as “simplifying complicated questions”.

If so, the “image theory of literature” should systematically review previous concepts of literature that still weigh on us, among which Abrams’s “coordinates of literary theory” has unquestionably produced a tremendous impact on China’s literary theory in the new period. In other words, it can be billed as the most influential “literary definition” since then, and has even become an inevitable reference for “textbook styles” or “theoretical systems”. Nevertheless, it’s not difficult for some careful readers to find that Abrams’s viewpoint raised in “Orientation of Critical Theories” in the introduction of *The Mirror and the Lamp* was just to determine a theoretical direction for its “Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition” (subtitle of *The Mirror and the Lamp*) rather than create a definition for literature as a whole at the level of “world literature”. At least, that is the author’s subjective intention. If this judgment is roughly correct, “language” and “art” should be the “blood relatives” of literature as the art of language, whereas the so-called three elements, namely “author”, “reader” and “world”, are merely its “neighbors”. If we take into account that the “three elements” all revolve around linguistic and artistic works, a new “solid” structure can be generated by integrating this “longitudinal axis” with Abrams’s “plane coordinates” (as shown below).

In this new solid structure, Abrams’s “coordinates of literary theory” is in the middle; the plan composed of “linguistic works” and the three elements (“author”, “reader” and “world”) is in the front of it, while the plan composed of “artistic works” and the three elements are located to its rear. A new spherical relational structure diagram comes up by stitching together the three plans. It is a quite complete system of literary ideas, or more specifically, a system of literary ideas derived from Aristotle’s concept of literature. The name for this system of literary structure is “image theory of literature”.



The “spherical view of literature” that we should hold fast to is also an essential motivation for the study of the literature–image relationship—Literature, as the art of language, is the visualization of language, which is in turn the main representation of aestheticization of language. It means that literature is associated with the world necessarily via “verbal icon” rather than “concept”¹⁰. Accordingly, “literary icon” should be the externalization and overflow of artistic images as well as the new generation of visual objects. The logical relationship between them is exactly the research object of “image theory of literature”.

Of course, not all theorists can accept the literary ideas above, even those scholars known for “ontological study” or “formal study”. For example, Wellek, in his *Theory of Literature* coauthored with Warren, regards the study of literature–art relationship as a “trivial parallel” and terms like

10. The visualization of language refers to its virtuality and aestheticization, which thus makes literature rather than common language works. This issue has been discussed by the author in “Real and Virtual Reference of Language–Image Signs” (*Literary Review*, No. 2, 2012), so it is elided for brevity here.

“Ut pictura poesis (As is painting so is poetry)” and “sculptural” as merely “obscure metaphors”, implying that poetry can convey similar effect of painting or sculpture, “but we must recognize the desolation in poetry is something very different from the tactual sensation of marble, or the imaginative reconstruction of that perception from whiteness; that stillness in poetry is something very different from stillness in sculpture”¹¹. But he did not deny that there is a connection between literature and other arts, hence placing himself into an untenable contradiction. The reason is that he has pushed “language ontology” to its extreme, and got stuck in the trap of “language uniqueness”¹². Our “return to Aristotle”, however, is entirely different: on the one hand, the literature concept of image theory of literature acknowledges that “literature is the art of language” while on the other hand recognizes the intimately correlations between literature and other elements such as author, reader, and the world. So, it is reasonable to study literature by resorting to a multidisciplinary approach or studying literature between different disciplines, including the comparative study of the literature–art relationship.

It is undeniable that literature differs from art in terms of the medium, to say nothing of the comparison and replacement between the levels of “medium”. However, the “apperception” between different media can be shared on the psycho–social aspects, and “shared apperception” turns out to be the “public space” in which language art and image art meet each other. Saussure holds that the ontology of language is “sound” of present speech, and also a sound accompanied by image. “Language” is merely “pictorial presentation of sound” and “acoustic representation of image”. As for the rule set by Saussure for linguistic signifier, “speech” should meanwhile be “image–sound”, and the latter itself contains the former. If so, literature and image are linked inextricably at the level of language ontology. Wellek’s negation of comparative study between literature and art not only collides with his language ontology, but also fails to fit to serve as a model in the case of linguistic theory. This is another form of deviation from Aristotle’s concept of literature.

11. René Wellek, Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, New York: Penguin Books, 1963, pp. 125–127.

12. Wellek’s mistakes on this issue will be discussed in the second part of the first chapter of this study, so it is elided here.