A Brief Analysis of the Development Context and Theoretical Concerns of Literary Anthropology

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Abstract: The disciplinary practice of literary anthropology is mainly reflected in the two directions of the anthropologicalization of literature and the literaryization of anthropology. In this process of transformation and integration, the expansion of the category of "text", the sharing of the methodology of "field", and the construction of "expression" have become the core discourse of literary anthropology. On this basis, the practical research of literature also provides a new ideological path for the theoretical development of literary anthropology.

Keywords: Literary anthropology; Text; Field; Representation; Practice

1. A brief overview of the development of literary anthropology

"Literature is human science, and anthropology is a science related to people. The two disciplines have the same object, and they are destined to be connected one day. Literary anthropology is a new thing after the connection between literature and anthropology" [1].

The relationship between the two is related to the development context of literary anthropology.

The origins of literary anthropology can be traced back to the book "The Golden Bough" published in 1890 by the British classical anthropologist James George Frazer. Although the main content is the anthropological study of witchcraft and religion, it also involves many issues of literary origin, such as the mythological origins of images of Jesus and Venus in Christian literature, the exploration of the prototypes of Greek tragedies, etc. Therefore, it is also considered to have the modern significance of destroying Christian cultural values before the 19th century, or, in view of its significant influence on literary criticism, it is directly regarded as a work of literary criticism [2].

By the 1950s, since Northrop Frye proposed "literary anthropology" in his book "Anatomy of Criticism" in 1957 and used it to conduct interdisciplinary research, the development of literary anthropology had relatively clear research methods and practices. Fry believed that criticism begins with the text and ends with viewing

literary structure as an overarching form [3]. He used myths as "prototypes" to examine almost all literary genres, such as poetry, prose, novels, and dramas, and regarded all literary forms as a whole text, proposing the idea of "literature as a whole" [4]. But what he was thinking about most was his determination to tear down the barriers between different research methods [5].

Clifford Geertz's hermeneutics is an important contemporary literary experience that breaks down the barriers of literature, history, philosophy, and other disciplines. Its theoretical construction comes from the ideological nourishment of many sages in different disciplines. "The linguistic turn, the hermeneutic turn, the cognitive revolution, Wittgenstein...Kenneth Burke...all these make the focus on meaning an acceptable preconception for all scholars" [6]. For example, he learned from Max Weber. Weber drew on the concept that "human beings are animals suspended in self-made webs of meaning" and believed that culture is just these webs of meaning [7]. People also draw inspiration from Kenneth Burke's interdisciplinary innovation in literary criticism and rhetoric, focusing on cultural and social relations outside literature, and moving towards the study of motivations and meanings of social behavior. He believes that facts do not mean anything, and that meaning and truth come from elaboration and image construction, that is, rhetoric, and this also means the establishment of a perspective [8]. He also believes that "meaning, this elusive and unclear false existence that we once wished to leave to philosophers and literary critics, has now returned to the core of our discipline" [9].

By 1973, in his book The Interpretation of Cultures, Geertz believed that the task of anthropology is to recognize culture, to regard culture as text, and to regard cultural analysis as text analysis. He developed the concept of cultural text and believed that anthropologists should discover the space referred to by the text and interpret the meaning behind the text, just like literary criticism. Specifically, he believed that culture is symbolic and consists of systems of meanings and symbols. Understanding culture is like interpreting a work. "The job of analysis is to sort out the structures of meaning... It should be more like literary criticism — and to determine the social basis and meaning of these structures of meaning... Ethnography: It is a deep description... Engaging in ethnography is like interpreting a manuscript..." [10]. Therefore, the interpretation of culture is not to explore laws, but to interpret the meaning of specific cultural texts [11]. Therefore, what needs to be established is an interpretive discipline that explores meaning, rather than a science of empirical logic. In this sense, by taking culture as the research object and treating it as a literary text, using close reading and in-depth description of the text as methods, and aiming to explore symbols and meanings, anthropology has transcended the research paradigm of empirical science and achieved an intersection with literature.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, literary criticism's exploration of literary anthropology and the interdisciplinary requirements of cultural anthropology were further combined, thus enriching the research on the topic of "literary anthropology." In 1978, Wolfgang Iser, a representative figure of reception aesthetics, explicitly called for "moving towards literary anthropology" in his book Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology [12]. In his later book The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology, he believed that literature could be regarded as a kind of "sign" of things, and the method he gave for tracing the "meaning traces" of things was "fiction" and "imagination." He believed that these two determined the basic characteristics of anthropology, and literature was the product of their fusion. Therefore, by understanding all kinds of texts from the perspective of "imagination" and "fiction", readers can deepen their understanding of literature and humanity itself [13].

Literary anthropology: A New Interdisciplinary Approach to People, Signs and Literature, published by anthropologist Fernando Poyatos in 1988, advocates studying literature and culture through interdisciplinary

methods. It is one of the first works named "literary anthropology" in the international academic community. Included in it are many cutting-edge papers from the 11th International Congress of Anthropology and Ethnology in 1988, including anthropology, literature, ethnology, sociology, and other disciplines, all of which use literature as a source of information for anthropology, history, ethnology, and other disciplines. Poiatos believes that literary anthropology is a kind of anthropology and ethnology that relies on literature. It uses anthropological concepts and methods to use the narrative literature of different cultures (including myths, rituals, poems, novels, and other various linguistic or non-linguistic narrative forms) as rich analytical data, conducts anthropological research from synchronic and diachronic perspectives, and creates a semiotic typology model in order to more effectively understand the anthropological cultural elements in literary texts [14].

From Fraser and Frye to Geertz and Iser, and then to Poyatos, literary anthropology has continued to develop. It not only explores the role of literature in the lives of individuals, ethnic groups, and society, but also explains the social, cultural, or historical background and process reflected in literature. It also pays attention to the integrity and complexity of human society through literary works, which is the best medium and practice for studying human society. These practices and innovations in literary anthropology have gradually affected China on the other side of the ocean.

In Chinese tradition, for a long time, there was no concept of subject classification, let alone the concept of "pure literature." Traditional Chinese literature emphasizes harmony and synthesis and regards all scholarship as literature. Therefore, thinking about national and human issues is also integrated into a general and vast academic view. The concept of "literature" that people talk about today, corresponding to Western "literature", is the result of the transformation of ancient and modern times and the acculturation of China and the West in modern times [15]. It is an independent category of literature that was gradually established after the "May 4th New Literature Movement." Around the same period, emerging disciplines such as "anthropology", "ethnology", and "folklore" gradually poured into China, further promoting the fusion of ancient and modern Chinese and foreign ideas.

The uniqueness of Chinese literary anthropology also lies in the introduction of anthropological resources into literature. Anthropology focuses on the research and expression of human culture. It was born during the transformation of European modernity. The purpose is to use new concepts and discourses to explain the transition from religious sacred society to secular society, and to embody a process of interpreting society from theology to science. Therefore, it also establishes a discourse system for the modern world centered on Europe. China also established anthropology under the stimulation of Western anthropology during the modern transformation process of the integration of China and the West in modern times. For China, which was facing internal and external difficulties and drastic social changes at that time, the establishment of anthropology was not only a demand for localization and self-consciousness, but also a responsibility for national salvation and enlightenment. It hoped to use the perspective and methods of anthropology to explain the desacralized Chinese history and the cultural, social, ethnic, and other issues in the modern era.

It was also during this period that research on "ethnicity", "country", "history", "folklore", and other aspects was also gradually carried out in China. Among them, the relationship between literature and ethnicity, country, society, history, culture, and other aspects received widespread attention. "Looking at society through literature" and "looking at literature from society" became popular, and the comparison between the East and the West has become a potential discussion topic for many scholars. For example, during the New Culture Movement, in the interdisciplinary practice of literature and anthropology, a large number of scholars such as Wen Yiduo, Zheng

Zhenduo, Mao Dun, and Guo Moruo reinterpreted Pre-Qin texts from an anthropological perspective [16]. Their research aims at enlightenment, interprets Chinese culture and history from a new perspective, closely follows the modern pace of the world, and strives to construct Chinese academic discourse, laying an achievement that cannot be underestimated for the development of Chinese literary anthropology.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, when related research on the mainland was relatively lagging behind, Taiwan region's academic circles already involved the perspective and methods of literary anthropology in literary criticism around the 1970s. Among them, Li Yiyuan's research made more pioneering contributions. He believed that both literature and anthropology are comparable and diverse across nationalities and cultures. Therefore, he divided literature into two types: "oral literature" and "written literature." He emphasized the oral, performative, and process nature of literary anthropology, and further improved the theoretical construction of literary anthropology [17].

Later, with the reform and opening up, disciplines such as ethnology and anthropology in mainland China came back, and there was also a wave of cultural "root-seeking" in literature. Under the combined influence, the field of literary criticism began to introduce the ideas and methods of anthropology and ethnology. Literary research starting from "literary anthropology" gradually developed in the 1980s and 1990s. Among them, Fang Keqiang believes that "the essence of literary criticism is to use the perspective and materials of anthropology to examine literature...that is, to regard any literary work as a part or link of the overall human experience. Any criticism method and content that conforms to this dominant idea can be classified into the category of literary anthropological criticism" [18].

At the end of the 20th century, this trend of disciplinary convergence further developed, leading to the birth of the "Chinese Literary Anthropology Research Association" in 1996. As the first president, Xiao Bing believed that "literature and anthropology are both 'humanities', but one uses language images to unfold the secrets of people and their activities, and the other uses conceptual systems to reveal human nature and its essence." He believed that literary anthropology "is to use the theories and methods of cultural anthropology to study literature, and to use literary materials from ancient and modern times, both at home and abroad, to enrich and promote traditional anthropological research" [19]. In addition, scholars represented by Shu Xian have been gradually conducting research on literary anthropology since the 1980s and 1990s. After years of hard work, they have created rich results so far. Especially in the fields of mythology research and archetypal criticism, they have developed a theoretical perspective from "Chinese Mythology" to "Mythical China" and used this to deeply explore the cultural coding logic in the inner cosmology and values of Chinese culture [20]. In addition, the theory of "big and small traditions" has also been developed, which uses the presence or absence of writing as a medium and benchmark, paying attention to more and more in-depth history and culture that are obscured by writing or in the era when there was no writing [21]. Moreover, in order to better decode Chinese culture, the theoretical concept of N-level coding is proposed, and the corresponding methodological principles of the "four-fold evidence" method, and even the "N-fold evidence" method, thereby strengthening a comprehensive and dynamic understanding of the whole and depth of culture [22–24]. It can be said that up to now, the development of Chinese literary anthropology has shown a relatively diversified trend, and it is constantly striving to construct a Chinese version of the cultural text theoretical system.

2. Theoretical concerns and methodology of literary anthropology

Based on the above overview of the development of literary anthropology, it can be found that the disciplinary practice of literary anthropology is roughly reflected in two directions. The first is the literaryization of anthropology, that is, the introduction of literary resources into anthropology, such as literary anthropological ethnographic writing; the second is the anthropologicalization of literature, such as theoretical innovation and critical practice in literary or cultural research through anthropological theories and methods. No matter which direction it goes, literary anthropology has developed so far. Several important aspects of its theoretical concern are the focus on conceptual categories such as "text", "field", and "expression."

2.1. Development of the concepts of "text" and "field"

In the process of development, literary anthropology has focused highly on textual issues. Its theoretical concerns have tried to break through the limitations of the "narrow literature" view that limits "text" to written works, and expanded its scope of concern to include non-writing and even non-linguistic categories [25]. Therefore, text has expanded from the traditional concept of referring only to literary works to a concept of literary text that also includes non-written oral literature, and further expanded to a concept of cultural text that encompasses both written and non-written content, such as image narratives, museum symbols, ritual performances, etc. [26]. A leap has been achieved from "literary works" to "literary texts" and then to "cultural texts." What is reflected in this development and change is not only a linear evolutionary relationship, but also a kind of continuous inclusion of new forms of "text" with the emergence of the latter, and finally jointly constructed into a complex of "cultural texts" including "literary works" and "literary texts" [27].

Anthropology is an interpretive discipline that searches for meaning [28]. It takes culture as the object of analysis and explains the meaning behind it. The concept of culture includes not only the content of language and text, but also non-language and non-text images. Therefore, it is of great theoretical significance for literary anthropology to expand and deepen the connotation of traditional "text" from only literary works to the category of "cultural text."

First of all, the development of "text" into "cultural text" has become a bridge between anthropology and literary research. It is not only the focus of anthropology, but also the target of literary analysis. It is the overlap of concerns between the two. Therefore, everything contained in "text" is the object of concern of literary anthropology.

Secondly, the development of the meaning of "text" has not only broadened the boundaries and content of literary research but also expanded the traditional boundaries of anthropology. In terms of literature, oral literature such as ballads of human culture, rituals, archaeological remains (such as object symbols), and digital humanities and other written, non-written, and even non-linguistic aspects are included in cultural texts and have the legitimacy of literary research. They can be analyzed, interpreted, and disseminated, which strengthens the significance of literary anthropology for multilingual and multicultural practices in different regions [29]. In terms of anthropology, the field's focus of traditional anthropology has been expanded from the "living" culture of general life practice to the cultural category, including static written texts, making it possible for cultural interpretation and interpretation of written texts.

Furthermore, the expansion and deepening of the connotation of "text" has also promoted the innovation of theoretical vision and methodology in anthropology and literature research. In terms of anthropology, it is possible to shift from the scientific paradigm of cultural studies to cultural hermeneutics that emphasizes meaning

interpretation. In terms of literature, Geertz regards culture as text, and conversely, literary texts are also cultural texts, just as Rose De Angelis said, "Literature is both the creator and the product of culture. At the same time, anthropology is not only an observer of literature, but also a reader and interpreter" [30]. Therefore, researchers can also use literary texts as the research object to analyze social culture. As Tang Qicui and Ye Shuxian said, "The meaning of literature is not in words, nor in traditional literary units; they have multiple attributes of history and sociology" [31]. The study of literary texts should also focus on exploring their cultural context, shifting from traditional internal analysis of literature to anthropological interpretation of meaning, and strengthening the interpretation and interpretation of social, historical, and cultural structures inside and outside the text, in an attempt to reveal the complex literary and cultural practices of mankind [32].

Finally, the concept of "text" connects anthropology and literature, breaking through the previous divisions of human literature by nation, region, or era. While paying attention to the literature of each region, nation, or country and the corresponding historical processes, through the interdisciplinary perspective of literary anthropology, it understands the particularity and individuality of human literature and even culture while grasping its wholeness and universality. This dialectic between the special and the universal explains the complex and diverse dynamics of human culture.

In addition to "text" as a category that connects anthropology and literature, another common point in the theoretical construction process of literary anthropology is the understanding of "field."

"Field" is the core concept and disciplinary feature of anthropology. It is not only the method and research technology, and means for anthropology to obtain cultural understanding, but also contains the theoretical care and methodology of cultural practice.

Understanding the concept of "field" in literary anthropology is inseparable from the understanding of the above-mentioned "text." Specifically, the significance of "text" and "field" in literary anthropology can be understood from two aspects.

On the one hand, there is "text" as "field." This refers to both "text" as a source of field data and "text" as a theoretical horizon. First of all, whether a "text" is a "literary work", "literary text", or "cultural text", all the linguistic or non-linguistic, written or non-written content it contains can be used as research objects and data sources in literary anthropology. Secondly, "field" as a "cultural text" also provides a theoretical perspective for the intersection of literature and anthropology, and provides the possibility for the literaryization of anthropology and the anthropologicalization of literature. If it is the former (i.e., the literaryization of anthropology), for example, ethnographic poetics, while reflecting on the scientific nature of ethnography, turns to activate its literary nature, seeks cultural concepts that lead to interaction and historicality, and explores literary ethnography as a breakthrough in the interpretation of anthropological cultural meaning; if it is the latter (that is, the anthropologicalization of literature), the anthropological perspective should be incorporated into literary research, going beyond the purely literary interpretation of literary texts, and strengthening the historical and cultural analysis of texts, making the cultural interpretation of literary texts possible.

On the other hand, there is the "field" as a method. In this sense, "fieldwork" refers to the research work of field participation and on-site investigation, that is, "fieldwork", which is the basic methodology of anthropology and the practice and application of the "direct observation" method. Since "text" is the common source of "field" data for literature and anthropology, fieldwork is also the basic methodology of literary anthropology. In other words, fieldwork is also applicable to all content covered by the category of "text", including "literary text." Therefore, treating "literary text" as "field" has theoretical legitimacy and methodological feasibility.

2.2. The construction of "expression"

Regardless of "text" or "field", the study of literary anthropology is, in the final analysis, inseparable from the issue of "representation." One of the themes of the Fourth Annual Conference of Chinese Literary Anthropology in 2008 was the discussion of "literary writing" issues, which involved thinking about "expression" issues. By the fifth annual conference in 2010, with the theme of "Representing 'Chinese Culture': Multiple Ethnic Groups and Multiple Perspectives", and the seventh annual conference in 2017 with the theme of "Retelling China: New Discourses in Literary Anthropology", the focus of literary anthropology has repeatedly been focused on the issue of "representation." It can be seen that the issue of "expression" has become a core issue in literary anthropology.

Starting from the 1970s and 1980s, literature began to have an important influence on anthropology, especially the development of new literary criticism and hermeneutic theory, which gradually became an important source of anthropological theories and methods. Specifically, the influence of literature on anthropology is mainly reflected in two aspects. First, from the perspective of the external overall social science trend, the addition of literary ideas has turned anthropology from the social science that mainly pursued social theory to the description and interpretation of social background and practical problems; second, from the perspective of internal creation, ethnographic writing in anthropology has strengthened the literariness, making ethnographic experiments with literary characteristics an important practice in anthropological research. Under the influence of literature, the thinking on the "expression" paradigm of anthropology has made "anthropology as cultural criticism" possible [33].

Among the early literary anthropology's concerns about the issue of "representation", those who made important responses and breakthroughs at the theoretical and methodological levels included the aforementioned Wolfgang Iser, Ferlando Poiatos, and others. For example, Iser analyzes the relationship between reality, fiction, and imagination through the core issue of literary fiction and uses this to deeply explore why literature exists and why humans need literary fiction. In his article "Toward Literary Anthropology", published in 1978, he believed that "fiction is a creation that allows human beings to expand themselves, a state that can be studied from different angles" [34]. He believes that literary fiction reveals the basic needs of human beings in different ways. Moreover, in the book "The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology" published in the 1990s, Iser further believed that literature, as a product of fiction and imagination, transcends the troubles of all things in the world and the various structural frameworks of human nature. Its expression and representation functions wirelessly extend human plasticity into borderless cultural backgrounds, thus turning human self-presentation into a possibility that transcends the infinite [35]. In other words, literary fiction and imagination contain the profound roots of what makes people human. Thus, using "fiction" and "imagination" as an intermediary, Israel opened the bridge between literature and anthropology, and also gained theoretical legitimacy for literature as an expression of human beings in the field of anthropology. For another example, in his book "Literary Anthropology: A New Interdisciplinary Approach to People, Symbols and Literature", Boiatus believes that the reality pursued by anthropology is reflected in many aspects of literary anthropology, including narrative literature. Therefore, in his view, the realistic materials needed for anthropology can also be found in literary works [36]. In this sense, he provides the possibility for anthropological literary research.

In addition, since the 1970s and 1980s, anthropology has gradually intensified its internal reflection on itself. For example, from the perspective of postmodern criticism, it has questioned the possibility of anthropology understanding the other from a Western-centric standpoint. In addition, since Geertz's hermeneutics of meaning was proposed, the scientific nature of interpretation has also been questioned, and this questioning has been further extended. For example, anthropological ethnography, as a literary text, the subjectivity of the narrative strategy has

also challenged the scientific claims of anthropology. In the face of such criticism or questioning, some research practices in Chinese literary anthropology have provided some possible solutions to a certain extent.

For example, regarding the first situation, Xu Xinjian believes that behind the Western-centric stance of anthropology, there is an issue of identity politics. Based on this revelation, he believes that the issue of representation is crucial, and emphasizes that researchers in literary anthropology must have an academic ethics, that is, they must overcome the Han centrism in representation, highlight the representation power and meaning of ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups, and rediscover opportunities to "express China" from the perspective of diverse symbiosis and integration and interaction [37]. For example, based on the inherent structure of "expressing" and "being expressed", he proposed new analytical frameworks such as "self-expression" and "other expression", as well as "internal expression" and "external expression", which to a large extent eliminated the various restrictions brought by identity politics to the expression of literary anthropology, and also promoted the innovation of the "ethics of expression" in literary anthropology [38].

Regarding the second situation, that is, questioning the scientific nature of interpretation, it mainly focuses on the reflection and practice of anthropological writing issues. When anthropological researchers add certain literary writing strategies to ethnographic writing in order to better present different cultures, they are faced with the problem of how to maintain a balance between literary nature and scientific ethnography to ensure the perfect integration between literary narratives and other cultural facts. Pan Yingnian's writing practice of "anthropological novels" based on the "big literary view" of anthropology, and Luo Qingchun's (Aku Wuwu) experimental writing of anthropological essays and Weibo fragments, are all excellent experiments in interdisciplinary and cross-cultural creation of ethnographic writing [39–42].

It can be seen from this that the core issue that runs through various "representation practices" in literary anthropology is how to truly and objectively maintain the essence of cultural facts obtained from the field, and to vividly display those facts through expressive narrative methods, rather than being limited to boring and rigid expression modes. As Peng Zhaorong said: "The text of literature, especially the 'literariness' of ethnography, has gone far beyond the scope of good writing or unique style." Its greater significance is that "reflection on ethnographic narrative and writing culture has to a large extent transcended a certain way of expression, and even transcended the barriers and disciplines of a certain discipline. The principle category becomes the recognition and clarification of the basic 'meta-discourse' of the narrative paradigm" [43]. In short, the ultimate goal of ethnographic writing is to obtain a full understanding of culture, and its writing should not be limited to the limitations of the discipline. Therefore, the interdisciplinary writing method of literary anthropology is a possible path to this goal. The real dilemma of such an interdisciplinary narrative is how to find a balance between the empirical nature of science (that is, objectivity and rigor) and the artistry of literature.

3. Reflections on literary anthropology
3.1. Reflection on the concept of "text"

From the above discussion, people can see that the category of "text" is a bridge between anthropological knowledge and literary research. However, with the deepening of relevant research, some possible issues implicit in the concept of "text" have also aroused reflection in the academic community.

For example, after the triple jump from "literary works" to "literary texts" and then to "cultural texts", the category of "text" has been greatly expanded. However, in the wave of postmodern reflection, this integration

of literature, history, and even all forms of human expression, or even cultural practices, has also exposed the ambiguity between subjectivity and objectivity in the concept of "text." That is, the infinite expansion of the boundaries and connotations of "text" reveals the subjective production process that exists in it, calling into question the authenticity and objectivity of "text." Such textualism not only challenges the authority of "objectivity" or "truth" on which traditional humanities and social sciences are based, but also creates obstacles to the deep understanding of culture.

In addition, the transitional development of the concept of "text" can easily lead to the problem of "centralization" or rigidity of the text. From the original literary point of view, literary new criticism treats literary works as actual texts to analyze their internals. However, it should be noted that since the concept of "text" has been developed into the category of "cultural text", its content includes not only solid literary works, but also many linguistic, non-linguistic, static, or even dynamic cultural matters. In this case, there is a situation where almost all human cultural matters are textualized, that is, the widespread use of this article has an invisible hegemony that pulls all cultural matters out of their possible original complex free-flowing state, forcing them to become solid and static texts for interpretation. When faced with a vivid and rich cultural world, this approach of textualizing everything will not only hinder the analysis of the fluidity and variability of texts but also easily lead to a sharp binary opposition between the researcher and the research object, limiting cultural research that integrates subject and object.

Furthermore, as can be seen from the previous article, the "field" view based on "text" is also the key to breaking through the barriers between literature and anthropology. The development of the concept of "cultural text" not only makes the original written text of literature the object of anthropological analysis, but also brings all vivid cultural matters beyond written texts into the field of literary research. In this sense, "field" and "cultural text" overlap. But the problem is that when "field" becomes the premise and basis of examination of "cultural texts", researchers first conduct a "textualization" process on the cultural matters obtained from "field" and then interpret them. In this process, there is a processing process, that is, the process of "encoding" and "decoding", and the "textualization" that exists during this process "Obstacles, as well as errors and omissions caused by text analysis, have invisibly increased the distance between researchers and the "field." In other words, when everything is "textualized", whether researchers can truly enter the "field" and obtain real "field" data to understand culture more accurately has become a question that requires reflection.

It can be seen from this that although the concept of "text" was introduced from the field of literature to the field of anthropology, which promoted the shift of anthropology from cultural science to hermeneutics, the introduction of the concept of "field" from anthropology to literature not only greatly expanded the field of literary research, but also gave literary research a more reliable methodological support. However, the many problems mentioned above hidden in such integration also reflect the insight of Professor Ye Shuxian: "The core issue of literary anthropology is the complex relationship between literary texts and cultural texts" [44]. The limitations of the inherent research paradigms or discourse habits of the disciplines involved, as well as the various pros and cons in the actual application of this conceptual category, all vividly reflect the complexity brought about by such an intersection of disciplines.

3.2. Possibilities and reflections on literary practice research

Faced with the huge interpretive pressure of the literary and cultural world, and in order to explore more possibilities for interpreting the profound connotations of the literary and cultural world, in addition to thinking

about core issues such as "text", "field", and "expression", practice theory has also been introduced into the theoretical development of literary anthropology. For example, Chen Hailong tried to introduce practice theory into the field of literature, turning literary research into literary practice research. He believes that the study of literary practice "is to reduce an overly abstract literary concept to a vivid and concrete practical behavior, and to analyze the specific situations in which literature is produced, experienced, transmitted, and even defined and rewritten in a specific and subtle practical field. In the final analysis, it is to grasp the practicality of literature and the literariness of practice" [45].

First of all, in terms of the practicality of literature, it means that literature is no longer regarded as a closed and fixed literary text, but as a dynamic practical process of cultural production. Among them, the social and historical background, realistic situations, methods, and contents of literature being practiced are all objects that need attention. In this case, dynamic literary practice not only means the diversification of literary practice methods, further expanding the conceptual category of literary texts, but also the practitioners of literary practice have become unidentifiable subjects. All those who enter the field of literary practice can be regarded as the main objects of a certain literary practice study [46]. Although this development, that is, the infinite expansion of the category of literary texts and the uncertainty of practitioners, is conducive to a certain extent in grasping the anthropological significance of literature from the totality of human practice, it also implies many problems. For example, such expansion makes literary texts lose their boundaries and brings the risk of uncertainty and inoperability of literary texts. Therefore, the practical research of literature is faced with the problem of how to accurately grasp the cultural gist in the process of literary practice that is full of variability and uncertainty.

In terms of practical literariness, it means re-examining human behavior and its social and cultural patterns from a literary standpoint, and believing that many inevitable settings of modern society or social systems, concepts, and structures that people are accustomed to ignoring may be related to literature [47]. Specifically, the literariness of practice means understanding social culture from a literary perspective. For example, as a museum that represents human society and culture, the processes and contents included in the exhibition process, such as theme planning, collection classification, display methods, and tour procedures, all contain literary narrative strategies. To elaborate on the social and cultural perspective in practice from a literary standpoint, if it is implemented in specific research, the perspective needs to focus on the specific practice field. The advantage of this is that specific analysis of specific situations can help better understand how others create their own world of meaning, thus avoiding the presupposition of illustrating the experiential world of others from an external neutral position. However, the specific analysis of specific practice processes also has the hidden danger of "practical situations determine everything", which is likely to cause the interpretation of a certain cultural practice to be self-limited or essentialist. That is, the interpretation of a certain cultural matter is likely to over-rely on specific practical situations and overemphasize its scene, regionality, or uniqueness, etc., thereby ignoring the diversity and universality within culture, invisibly limiting cross-field and cross-cultural understanding, resulting in the dilemma of incommensurable meanings. Therefore, practice is indeed literary, but literary anthropology also faces the problem of how to find a balance between the difference and commonality of meaning in the analysis of specific practice fields.

4. Conclusion

Literary anthropology has continuously developed due to the relationship between literature and anthropology.

Among them, categories such as "text", "field", and "expression" have become the core discourse of literary anthropology. However, when the concept of "text" is expanded from literary works to the category of "cultural text" to bridge the gap between literature and anthropology, it also exposes many problems, such as blurring the subject and object, text-centrism, and alienation from the authenticity of the field. In addition, in thinking about the issue of "expression", there are also questions about the possibility of understanding other cultures from a Western-centric standpoint, as well as the issue of how to balance the scientific nature of literary Mandarin in ethnographic writing. However, Chinese literary anthropologists represented by Xu Xinjian proposed overcoming Hanocentrism from the perspective of multiple symbiosis and integrated interaction in "expression", as well as Pan Yingnian, Luo Qingchun, and others' attempts to write anthropological novels, anthropological essays, and other interdisciplinary writings, all provide more possibilities for the "expression" of literary anthropology. In addition, scholars represented by Chen Hailong have introduced "practice" theory into literary research, bringing literary research into the field of literary practice research. Although there is a risk that literary texts will lose their boundaries and be full of uncertainty due to the infinite expansion of literary texts and the uncertainty of practitioners, there is also the risk that "practice" and "situation determines everything" may bring obstacles to the interpretation of cultural diversity and universality. However, such an attempt is undoubtedly conducive to grasping the meaning of literature from the overall human practice, and is also conducive to examining the practical process from a literary perspective, adding new thinking paths to the theoretical development of literary anthropology.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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