

Introduction: A Multidimensional Exploration of Literature and Critical Theory

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This special issue focuses on contemporary literary studies and critical theory, bringing together essays that delve into literary, philosophical, social, cultural criticism and relevant interdisciplinary research. These essays, ranging from book reviews to in-depth literary critiques and theoretical inquiries, offer fresh perspectives on intellectual thoughts, narrative spaces and digital humanities. This special issue not only showcases the latest developments in contemporary literature and critical theory but also creates a new platform for discussion about the literary production and theoretical criticism in the future. To provide the readers with a good experience of reading, the essays will be organized into three main sections: book reviews, literary criticism, and critical theory.

Book Reviews: Critical Reflections on the Contemporary Western Thoughts

The first three book reviews primarily focus on the monograph *Comprehensive Review of Contemporary Western Writing Theories Centering on Jean-Luc Nancy* by Professor Qi Wang, which addresses the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy's ideas of writing, especially the complex relationship between writing and sense. Chen Chen believes that writing is not only a physical act of presenting words in specific forms but also an authentic mode of existence in which the humans could express themselves freely and creatively. Bihan Chu and Yuhui Jiang present a deep analysis of Wang's work, arguing that it reveals the historical trend of writing evolving "from being concealed to unconcealed" and, more importantly, connects writing with sense, body, art and literature. Lijun Zhao and Pengfei Gu also assert that, through "writing", Wang has actually initiated a dialogue with contemporary Western theories and then constructed the multiple facets of Nancy's idea, namely, openness, difference, and emptiness. Moreover, Qian Xie and Jun Zeng provide an overview of Jacob Gaboury's *Image Objects: An Archaeology of Computer Graphics*, showing how "objects" constitute the images we view, modify, and create in our computing devices and how they are related to the objective material world. These reviews provide readers with a comprehensive critical lens, suggesting the profoundness of Western writing thought and image theory.

Literary Criticism: Narrative and Representation in the Texts

This section encompasses various topics with a focus on the representation of space, community and their socio-historical significance. With William Morris' diagnosis of "the famine of art" in the Victorian society, Ying Lin explains why the author advocates "the lesser arts" to start off a redistribution of the collective sensibilities within the social community. Kaiyue He argues that the boarding houses and bedsits in Muriel Spark's fiction are the space for her to write in, which reveals her treatment of the estrangement and oppression endured by social outcasts while serving as the alternative living space of liberation for vulnerable groups. Ruofei Han deals with the early American Jewish immigrants' dream for a "home" in the foreign land and considers it as the impetus for their

literary performance. In this process, the wave of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe adds more dimensions to their senses of “home,” becoming a universe of “at home,” “uncanny” and “back home.” Besides, in a postmodern poetics of landscape, Hanzheng Guo decodes the dynamic transitional space it creates, seeing it as a process of cultural practice that functions in an ecological revolution and the formation of a complex network of cultural, national and political identities. Generally, with new dimensions of narrative and spatial representation, these articles illustrate the intricate interplay between geographical, spiritual space and textual form, or to be more precise, between space, identity, history, and literature.

Critical Theory: Interdisciplinary Explorations of Thoughts and Methodologies

In this section, the authors engage in cross-disciplinary analyses, drawing from intellectual history, religious beliefs, critical theories and methodologies. For instance, Ruixiang Li elucidates Martin Luther’s textual interpretation of the *Psalms* and its the significant role in shaping the contemporary thoughts, especially Martin Heidegger’s and Karl Barth’s revitalization of Luther’s “Theology of the Cross.” Qiqi Sun delves into the temporal structure of Walter Benjamin’s theory of capital, uncovering how his spacial-temporal stance contains not only the change of perception mode but also the psychological immanence of the so-called modern city. Meanwhile, Penghan Zhang proposes that Gadamer, in *Truth and Method*, attempts to de-subjectivize the process of understanding but ironically presupposes a certain subjectivity through the construction of textual ethics. Drawing on the views of Baudrillard, Paolo Virno, Hardt and Negri, the author further investigates the potential of reading as a process of both consumption and production. More interestingly, based on their teaching experiences, Jia Xie, Shimin Zhang and Xiaojie Chang document the designs, practices, and challenges of digital humanities in the international universities and thus would offer rich pedagogical insights and theoretical suggestions for those teachers and scholars in the same field.

Basically, this special issue spans book reviews, literary criticism, and critical theory, covering a wide range of research areas and highlighting the diverse outcomes of contemporary academic studies. These articles not only address the cutting-edge theoretical issues but also prompt us to reconsider the complex relationships between literature, history, space, and technology. Through these considerations, the issue intends to engage the readers in the evolutionary perspectives, theories and thoughts in humanities and, more importantly, provides essential inspirations for the scholarly inquiries in the future.