

# A Probe into Literary Aesthetics and Creation Mechanism

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**Abstract:** At present, many scholars have carried out research on literary aesthetics and creation mechanism. They have explored the influence of the internal and external environment of literary creation mechanism on literary creation from different perspectives of literary aesthetics and the relationship between literary aesthetic awareness and literary creation. All scholars have provided more possible perspectives for their research, but they are inevitably a little extreme. This article aims to analyze the elements of the literary creation mechanism by defining the literary aesthetics and creation mechanism and exploring the literary works' level and creation mechanism. The literary language ability, material processing ability, knowledge structure, cultural background, and literary aesthetic quality of the writer are combined to form a comprehensive ability to nurture literary thought and form in literature. Literary aesthetics and creation mechanism are rooted in the clear inner world, observing the external life-world, brewing talents, triggering inspiration and literary thoughts, prompting writers to create a unique art world, and dedicating excellent works to readers. Studying literary aesthetics, creative mechanism, and the relationship between the two will help clear the source, allow literary aesthetics and literary creation to accompany each other, and always move on the right track of literature and arts.

**Keywords:** Literary Aesthetics, Creation Mechanism, Inspiration and Literary Thought, Literary Discourse, Art World

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## 1. Introduction

At present, many scholars have carried out research on literary aesthetics and creation mechanism. They have explored the influence of the internal and external environment of literary creation mechanism on literary creation from different perspectives of literary aesthetics and the relationship between literary aesthetic awareness and literary creation. Some believe that literary creation needs the inspiration to break through routine life, present, and law. Some believe that literary aesthetic creation begins with questioning reality. Some believe that imagination stimulates memory activities and creation. Some try to use Freudian psychoanalysis theory to uncover the underlying structure of literary activities. And others believe literature is such a mysterious discipline that only a genius can create excellent works. All scholars have provided more possible perspectives for their research, but they are inevitably a little extreme.

The creation mechanism from the perspective of literary aesthetics refers to the law composed of multi-dimensional aesthetic factors that nurture new literary ideas and form

them in works. It affects the author's conception and state of creation in aspects of literary language, material processing ability, literary aesthetic quality, knowledge structure, and cultural background. Only with enough literary quality can "the world of life" become "the world of arts." Suppose there is a defect in one or several items of the literary creation mechanism. In that case, it will inevitably affect the literary creation in some aspects – the language is dry and difficult to express, the rhetoric is splendid but meaningless, the article is too elaborate, the material is listed in a disorderly manner, and the language is poor. The words are incomprehensible, or the expression is too plain, lacking in spirituality, etc. Exploring the operating laws of literary aesthetics and creation mechanisms is conducive to objectively examining the complex laws of literary creation, helping authors improve their creative standards and write beautiful essays with excellent literary quality.

This article aims to analyze the elements of the literary creation mechanism by defining the literary aesthetics and creation mechanism and exploring the literary works' level and creation mechanism: excellent literary works consist of seven levels and two structures.

## 2. Literary Aesthetics and Creation Mechanism

As the name suggests, literary creation uses literary thinking and language to write literary works with new subjects, distinctive themes, and unique forms. The articles and types of literary creations are splendid. Still, their essence remains the same, and they all follow essential literary aesthetics and writing rules. In the era of new media, fast-food literature is prevalent, and consumerism has impacted the aesthetic values of literature. The role of literature in leading ideological trends and improving the spiritual realm is increasingly weak. Studying literary aesthetics, creation mechanisms, and the relationship between the two will help clear the source, which makes literary aesthetics and literary creation go hand in hand and create excellent works that reflect the times and life.

### 2.1. Literary Aesthetics

The subject of literary aesthetics feels, analyzes, appreciates, and criticizes. In contrast, the literary aesthetic object includes the analysis of the aesthetic characteristics of the work created by the image, structure, language, image, atmosphere, skills, etc. In the second creation of the readers, enrich and improve the work, create a personalized image, artistic conception or implication of the reader, generate resonance and emotional sublimation, which enriches the multiple interpretation possibilities of the text enriches the art world in the reader's mind. As *Zhu Guangqian*<sup>1</sup> pointed out, "Beauty is not only in things or in the heart, but also in the relationship between the heart and the things... It is the expression of the heart through the image of things. No inherent beauty in the world is easy to find, and all beauty has to pass through the creation of the mind." [1].

Aesthetic consciousness is a form of consciousness that takes the independent value of beauty as the center and standard of consciousness activities. It is not only a kind of observation consciousness but also a kind of evaluation consciousness. Contemplation consciousness is a mental process that can directly observe, experience, recognize, and evaluate things without going through abstract concepts. As far as its consciousness is concerned, it appreciates and discriminates the beautiful style and characteristics of things and obtains the enjoyment of aesthetic arts.

### 2.2. The Mechanism of Literary Creation

The mechanism of literary creation is a relatively innovative research topic in literature theory study. The literary creation mechanism is an environment for cultivating novel literary thoughts composed of multi-dimensional factors. It affects the writer's conception, creation status, and literary work value from the aspects of literary language ability, material processing ability, literary aesthetic quality,

knowledge structure, and cultural background. When mature writers create literature, inspiration flows out like a spring; the works are natural, and their content and form are combined. Literary creation is a high-level manifestation of the extensive use of language. Without a rational understanding of the mechanism of literary creation, it is challenging to create a high-level masterpiece.

Based on a clear mind, the writer keenly observes the external world, brews rich literary thoughts, and then creates excellent works with brilliance and substance. From the perspective of psychological cognition, the essence of literary creation is to integrate various dimensions of literary creation factors, such as literary language ability, material collection and processing ability, literary aesthetic quality, knowledge structure, and cultural background knowledge to express the subjective or objective imagery with literary languages. Defects in one or more literary creation mechanisms will inevitably affect the fluency and appeal of literary works. People have different endowments, and excellent literary creative talent requires high literary accomplishment and long-term writing practice. Otherwise, even if you understand the mechanism of literary creation, it is challenging to create classic works, so you can only linger in front of the literary temple.

## 3. Elements of the Mechanism of Literary Creation

The essence of literary creation is to map literary language, material collection and processing ability, aesthetic literacy, knowledge structure, and cultural background into the author's mind to spark thinking and inspiration. The ideas and events form literary language expression.

### 3.1. Literary Language Ability

Literary language expression is higher than the expression of ordinary practical writing. It is not only to express certain information by arranging and combining words but to use poetic language to reproduce the people, things, and things the author wants to describe with unique and unconventional word order. Literary works are not mechanical imitations of reality but reflect unique experiences in the author's mind. "The grand style is best for swaying emotions, the plain style for conveying information, and the middle or 'tempered' style for giving pleasure." [2] The author must have a rich vocabulary and use grammatical, even statements that break out of grammar to vividly and appropriately display the image in mind, usually using appropriate rhetorical devices to express a specific meaning. Talented writers often have more control over words than ordinary writers. In other words, they have internalized language as an instinct for their writing, almost to the extent of not thinking about it. Therefore, when the writer's literary thoughts burst out, he is eloquent, the writing is well-organized, the charm is smooth, the artistic conception is natural, and the originality is unique without any craftsmanship.

<sup>1</sup> *Zhu Guangqian* (1897–1986) was one of the founder of the study of aesthetics in 20th-century China.

### 3.2. The Structure of Literary Knowledge

Lu You once said, "You must learn more things before writing poems." Writing materials are not a bunch of messy, raw materials. It needs to digest, integrate and master the accumulated knowledge. Before or during the creation process, materials need to be selected, combined, processed, summarized, and sublimated. When writing, you can ask for citations from time to time, your thinking can be released and closed, and you can write lively, complete, and brilliant articles. When the literary creation mechanism runs, the writer invokes relevant information, such as sound, text, pictures, film, and television, including vision, hearing, touch, taste, etc. The knowledge structure is usually established through intuition and quickly collides with bizarre thinking sparks to write unique works. Literary creation takes famous Chinese and foreign works as a learning model and draws on its advantages in narrative mode, character description, situation setting, and language expression.

### 3.3. Cultural Background Knowledge

The cultural background covers many national customs, religions, history, legends, customs, architectural monuments, etc. Any tremendous literary work is born in a specific cultural background and reflects the living conditions of all social levels in that era. In the long-term cultural accumulation process, certain words or images will construct the specific growth memory of a certain nation or region, usually implying or applauding or depreciating, proud or shameful, or noble or humble. Such works are authentically and appropriately, which remind people of the cultural traditions of a specific ethnic group and resonate widely. Literary works are not a one-dimensional collection of words behind which there is the cultural memory of a specific ethnic group or even the entire human race. "Literature is not a simple aggregation of books, poems, and plays. It is a system of words. Our entire literary experience, at any given time, is not a disjointed arrangement of memories or impressions of what we have read, but an imaginary and organic whole of experience." [3] The works rooted in the cultural background significantly extend the time and space of the readers' thinking and broaden the readers' expectations and literary aesthetic space.

### 3.4. Material Processing Capability

Writers can process materials quickly and have the ability to judge the essence through appearance, for example: to find that two things that are not related on the surface are alike in spirit, or two similar things are very different. Many writing materials are cropped or deformed, added with bright tones, processed into dark colors, and classified and stored in the author's material library. When the author needs related materials to attach his image, emotion, or ambition to create, he can do it at his fingertips, and the written works have something to say rather than vain. There are at least two ways to accumulate materials: one is to obtain (direct materials)

from social and natural phenomena that are usually heard and seen; the other is to obtain materials from media such as libraries, archives, museums, society, books, audio-visual products and Internet (indirect material). The sensitivity to the material is closely related to the author's creative talent. In "Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio" [4] by Pu Songling, many story materials were from rural people. Lu Xun<sup>2</sup> once said, "I think literature and arts are probably due to the feelings of current life, and what I feel personal will be photocopied into literature and arts." [5] If the writer lacks insight, the work will be superficial and unable to withstand the baptism of time.

### 3.5. Literary Creation and Conception

Accumulation and integration are the preparatory stages for literary creation. Literary works need ingenious ideas, fully mobilize imagination and empathy, and immerse themselves in creation with enthusiasm. The most important thing is to create with a heart that loves society and life – This is what Liu Xie said about "the literary mind," which "strives after literary forms." [6] Writing skills do not mean applying character settings and plot ideas mechanically but refer to ingenious ideas and expressions with profound connotations as the words saying "still water flowing deep" to awaken many readers' deep memory. For example, Yu Hua's "To live" and "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" resonate strongly with readers in the seemingly calm narrative.

Auguste Rodin regarded art as "the reflection of the artist's heart upon all the objects that he creates." [7] Leo Tolstoy's "War and Peace" explores love, life, rights, nation, and human nature with "war" and "peace" as the dual axes. This masterpiece's genre style also breaks traditional norms, integrating realism, romanticism, and classicism. Turgenev praised it as "a unique and multifaceted work that combines epic poems, historical novels, and customs." [8].

### 3.6. Aesthetic and Non-aesthetic Unity

Aesthetics means that the creative subject observes the creative object with a clear and tranquil state of mind and observes, perceives, and experiences the external and internal beauty of the creative object in a way that is not utilitarian, purposeless, and not kidnapped by the old morality. In the grasp of life, the aesthetic subject always involves feeling. "Quietly absorbed in contemplation, his thinking reaches back one thousand years." [9] If the aesthetics are absent, it will lead to a lack of spirituality, the interest between the lines is dull, and there is craftsmanship without originality.

However, aesthetic and non-aesthetic are contradictory in unity. Social culture and humanistic customs are the soil for aesthetic growth. Literary works such as "A Romantic Love Story at Peony Pavilion" and "Romeo and Juliet" excluding ethics, religion, human nature will similar to the beautiful

<sup>2</sup> Zhou Shuren (1881– 1936), better known by his pen name *Lu Xun*, was a Chinese writer, essayist, poet, and literary critic. He was a leading figure of modern Chinese literature.

flowers having no branches to rely on.

Creation is closely related to literary aesthetic psychology, perception, imagination, and reasoning ability. *Lu Yao*<sup>3</sup>, a famous Chinese writer, once said, “Writing the most ordinary life and the most familiar characters are expressing the most familiar experience... It is not just the experience of the external form of life, but the experience of emotions and feelings – the most nuanced psychological experience, and the most important and moving parts of your work.” [10].

## 4. Layers and Creation Mechanisms of Literary Works

Roman Ingarden argues that literary works include multiple levels: phonetic and higher-level phonetic combinations, units of meaning, multiple schematized aspects and their aspect continuum, and representational objects. Literary creation link factors such as literary language ability, material processing ability, literary aesthetic quality, knowledge structure, and cultural background. It uses the most appropriate literary discourse to create a literary level and structure with multiple cultural implications.

### 4.1. The Hierarchy and Structure of Literary Works

Masterpieces imitate characters and stories of a specific era and region. Their rich connotations have a specific penetrating power of time and space, reflecting the collective unconscious of human beings.

*Jin Jianren*, a Chinese professor, believes that literary works consist of seven levels and two structures [11] as shown in Figure 1.

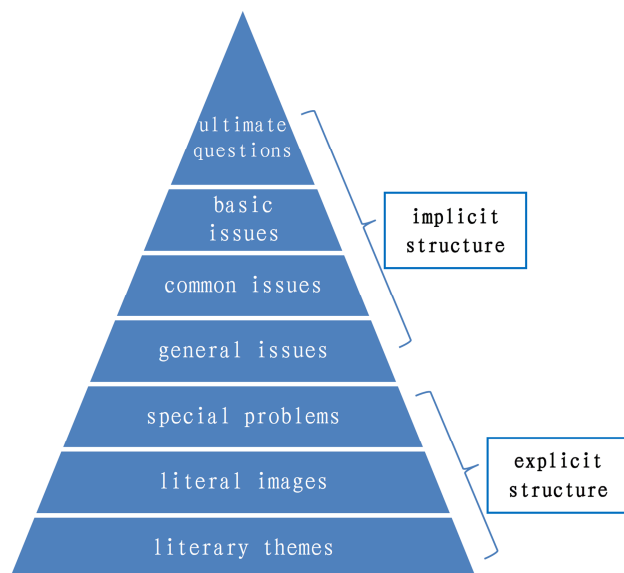


Figure 1. Literary works consist of seven levels and two structures.

<sup>3</sup> Wang Weiguo (1949–1992), better known by his pen name *Lu Yao*, was a Chinese novelist. In 1991, he finished his most famous work, *Ordinary World*, which won the Mao Dun Literature Prize.

If the literal meaning of phonetics and semantics constitute the explicit structure of the work, then the associative meaning and viewpoint of semantics constitute the implicit structure of the work.

The first layer of “literary themes” is the material written into the work. It is the primary material for the content of the work and refers to all areas of life. In the second layer of “literal images,” the language and words compile the material into an imaging system with sound or literal meaning, which calls the reader to create a second time. The third layer is the “special problems,” which is the conflicting problem in a specific time and space displayed by the work.

These three layers are called the apparent structure, the most basic structure of a literary work. The author’s artistic conception forms a specific text. Whether the work can impress readers depends on the implicit structure under the apparent structure can or cannot break through time and space limitation and expresses its deep meaning.

The fourth layer is about “general issues,” breaking through the limitations of specific times and the general contradictions of social life in historical stages. The fifth layer is about “common issues” within different cultural communities. The way of thinking and behavior formed by language, geographical environment, cultural history, etc., contains unique cultural genes. The sixth level is of “basic issues,” that is, significant contradictions closely related to the survival and development of human beings, such as life and death, food and sex, affection, and love which mainly correspond to philosophical thinking. The seventh layer is of “ultimate questions,” such as “what is the essential meaning of human beings,” “what is the most love, perfection, and beauty of human beings,” and so on.

These four layers make up the implicit structures. If the work is written too realistically and lacks the flexibility to penetrate deep and stop at the special problem layer, the deep meaning of the work will be difficult to highlight, and so will the artistic charm.

### 4.2. The Mechanism of Literary Creation

Literary creation is the ability of the highest stage of language application. It refuses to be mediocre and rigid, refuses to repeat old tunes, and always chooses the most appropriate language to describe the beauty of life and literature. It sets high standards for the author’s literary language ability, material processing ability, and literary aesthetic literacy and has high requirements for its knowledge structure and cultural background. “The artist himself is often envisioned as the agent holding the mirror up to nature, and even the originality of a genius is explained in large part by his possessing the zeal and acuity to invent (in the root sense of ‘discover’) aspects of the universe and of human nature hitherto overlooked, and the imaginative ingenuity to combine and express familiar elements in new and surprising ways.” [12] In the author’s writing process, it is often necessary to blend several factors naturally, connect the triggered inspiration with language and materials, and mobilize the implicit rhetorical language to shape it into the

text. The works created in this way have rich connotations and infinite artistic charm.

Literary creation is to organically connect and integrate factors such as literary language ability, material processing ability, literary aesthetic quality, knowledge structure, and cultural background. Use the most appropriate words to express it instead of being reduced to a pile of words that can only be rhetorical and without spirituality. Literary works require “meaningful form.” For example, *Zhu Ziqing’s*<sup>4</sup> prose “*Seeing Father from the Back*” does not simply describe the back but completely integrates himself into it, which contains the deep emotions of the father and son, which resonates strongly.

The complexity of the literary creation mechanism determines that the creation of works is a complex and arduous task. Literary works’ ideal form and content must be innovative and “do not involve reasoning and logic, and do not fall into language’s shackles.” [13] *Zhang Fa* also pointed out, “Poets, ordinary people, and consciousness represent the daily life, the present, and laws; Poetic gods, geniuses, the unconscious represents the transcendent, the non-present, and the transcendental laws.” [14] The writer’s clear state of mind, keen observation, and original ingenuity are the essential literary qualities for constructing literary works’ explicit and implicit structures. The writer feels what things should be and creates a novel with a unique image through keen literary thinking, breaking through the limitations of specific eras and regions, and writing works with long-term vitality.

## 5. Conclusion

This article explores the elements of the literary creation mechanism by defining the literary aesthetics and creation mechanism. The truth is that nearly every excellent work consists of seven levels and two structures. The literary aesthetic subject has aesthetic object reification activities by feeling, analysis, appreciation, and criticism of literary works. The mechanism of literary creation is an organic system composed of observation, thinking, imagination, and language expression. The writer is rooted in a clear heart. Through keen observation of the external world, he has brewed a creative ideal of the eruption of inspiration and created excellent literary works. Knowing the mechanism of literary creation can promote a qualitative leap in the level of creation. The literary creation mechanism explores the formation principle and operation law of the literary creation mechanism, which is beneficial to improving the literary creation and the level of literary appreciation.

## Note

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## Biography

**Qiangchun Wang**, Master of Arts, an associate professor at Sichuan University of Media and Communications, mainly engaged in literature, culture and media studies.

<sup>4</sup> *Zhu Ziqing* (1898 – 1948), born *Zhu Zihua*, was a renowned Chinese poet and essayist. He studied at Peking University, and during the May Fourth Movement became one of several pioneers of modernism in China during the 1920s.