

# Analysis on the Characteristics and Realistic Significance of Xi Jinping's Literary Thought\*

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**Abstract**—At present, China's social economy has entered a new normal period. Social culture and thought are diversified and the field of literature and art faces a series of new problems and new situations. In order to ensure the steady development of literature and art, Xi Jinping made a clear answer to the existing objective problems in the development of literature and art, clarified the essence of literature and art and pointed out the direction of literature and art development on the basis of absorbing the outstanding factors of literature and art. In order to better analyze and grasp the literary thought of Xi Jinping, the author analyzes the theoretical source of Xi Jinping literary and artistic thought and expounds the realistic characteristics of literature and art thoughts to better grasp the development trend of China's literary and art work and further develop literary creation and literary work to provide strong support.

**Keywords**—Xi Jinping; literary thought; features; practical significance

## I. INTRODUCTION

On the Cultural Work Symposium held in Beijing in 2014, Xi Jinping analyzed in detail the nature, direction, development problems and ideas of literary work which are also the concentrated reflection of Xi Jinping's literary thought. He made a deep analysis on the problems existing in current literary work and advocated applying dialectical thinking to observe the current literary and artistic practice, laying the literary and artistic fundamentals in pragmatic style and practically promoting the literary work in line with the realistic demands of development of the times. The proposal of Xi Jinping's literary thought provided a theoretical guidance for the current cultural construction work and clarified the specific orientation of the development of literary work. This analysis pays more attention to thinking about the characteristics of Xi Jinping's literary thought and explores its practical significance and

value for the development of the current literary work on the basis of a rational analysis of the theoretical source of Xi Jinping's literary thought.

## II. THEORETICAL SOURCE OF XI JINPING'S LITERARY THOUGHT

### A. Theoretical Foundation — the Marxism Theory of Literature

In the Marxism theory of literature, it advocates getting literature defined as a social ideology which depends on the corresponding economic base. The development and change of the economic base determines the orientation of literature. On this basis when creating literature, it is needed to find materials from real life based on the actual development condition and reflect the life through literary works. The literary and artistic, religious, conceptual and ideological consciousness of any era is the ideologies of the ruling class and both reflect the relation between material production and the ruling class. Marxism also believes that people can change the world through conscious, purposeful and oriented practical activities and can also create beauty in the process of changing the world<sup>1</sup>. From the perspective of literary creation, literature is produced from labor work. In the background of changes in social practice content, the direction and connotation of literary creation will also change to some extent.

### B. Direct Theoretical Foundation — Mao Zedong's Literary Thought

Some expositions and views in Xi Jinping's literary thought are derived from Mao Zedong's literary thought. Mao Zedong made a series of expositions on the development of literature, clearly explained the nature, role and position of literature, defined the standards for literary criticism and expounded the close relationship between literary work and the masses. His literary thought provided a theoretical basis for creating literary works and promoting the development of literature. Mao Zedong believed that

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<sup>1</sup> Feng Xianguang. Literature and Ideology [J]. Journal of Nanyang Normal University, 2008, (1): 67-73. (in Chinese)

serving the people is the essence of literary work. People should always maintain this point in promoting the progress of literary work. With respect to standard for literary criticism, Mao Zedong pointed out that it should be formulated from two perspectives, namely artistic standard and political standard<sup>2</sup>. An excellent literary work needs to have correct political and ideological content and reach a higher level in art in order to better play the role of literature in the dissemination of ideas and education. The "two standards" proposal provided an evaluation basis for the development of literature in China and also provided support for perfecting the literary evaluation standards in the future. Mao Zedong also pointed out that the creation of literary works should be rooted in life and should reflect life in content. This also requires literary workers to actively experience the real life, ask local people questions modestly and inherit all excellent cultural heritages in the process of creating literary works. In response to the issue of literary heritage, Mao Zedong insisted that literary heritage should be correctly criticized and rationally absorbed, without nihilism.

### *C. Important Theoretical Basis — the Literary Thought of the Party Leaders After the Reform*

Since the reform and opening up of China, the Party's collective leadership has had its finger on the pulse of the development of the times, practically analyzed the problems existing in the development of literature in China in the background of the times, persisted in realizing the great rejuvenation of Chinese nation and created the socialist literary theory in line with the situations in China on the basis of the predecessors' literary thought<sup>3</sup>. For example, when Deng Xiaoping deployed literary works, he advocated that literary creation should follow the "to let the arts have free expression and the schools of thoughts contend without restrictions" policy, encourage and support different styles and different forms of literary creation, allow putting forward different views and support free discussions among various schools. For the development of literary work, Deng Xiaoping believed that it is required to play the leading role of the Party. Party committees at all levels should respect the objective laws of literary development and strive to provide good conditions for literary creators. Jiang Zemin placed the development of literature onto the height of socialist spiritual civilization construction, affirmed the positive role played by literature in the construction of spiritual civilization and regarded the construction of literature as an important base for the construction of socialist civilization<sup>4</sup>. He advocated taking the pace of the times as the core in development of literature to carry forward the national spirit and required for

making a good planning for cultural industry to provide support for the sound development of literary work. Hu Jintao's literary thought are relatively rich. He paid special attention to the role of literature works played in all-round development of people and advocated better realization of the all-round development of the national people through the prosperity and development of literature. He believed that the creation of literary workers should focus on the main paces of development, reflecting the pulse and spirit of the development of the times. In addition, Hu Jintao also recognized literary work as the flame of the national spirit which can provide "light and heat" for the great rejuvenation of Chinese nation.

## III. ANALYZING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF XI JINPING'S LITERARY THOUGHT FROM MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS

### *A. People Orientation*

By analyzing and exploring Xi Jinping's literary thought, it is found that people orientation is the most obvious characteristic reflected in both external manifestation and core connotations of his literary thought. When elaborating his literary thought, Xi Jinping proposed that, fundamentally, socialist literature is actually the literature of people<sup>5</sup>. Meanwhile, this way of saying is in line with the idea that literature should serve the people. His clear explanation for the fundamental nature of literature from the perspective of socialist development is to grasp the direction of the development of literature and clarify the fundamental attributes of people orientation in literature. The existence of this concept also provides the keynote for Xi Jinping's literary thought. The people orientation in Xi Jinping's literary thought can be analyzed from two aspects: first, from the aspect of the sociality of people, people's daily life and sustainable development are inseparable from literature. The fundamental value of literature is actually to satisfy the spiritual needs of people, while the spiritual appeals and needs of people also promote the further development of literature. Second, the root of literary creation lies in the people. Any literary work isolated from people is impossible to be welcomed and recognized by people. In terms of literary evaluation criteria, he proposed to take people's satisfaction as the criteria. Regarding the creation of literature, Xi Jinping pointed out that the literary creators should actively go deep into the lives of people, practically observe people's real living status, receive people's opinions and create literary works based on people. Above all, Xi Jinping's literary thought show very significant characteristics of people orientation.

### *B. Practicality*

Practicality is a distinctive characteristic of Xi Jinping's literary thought. In related expressions of Xi Jinping's literary thought, there are many contents relevant to practice everywhere. This practicality is mainly reflected in two levels: first, it is of realistic pertinence. Xi Jinping insisted on

<sup>2</sup> Zhou Jiarong, Liu Xiaoqin. Mao Zedong's View on Literature and Art [J]. Journal of Beijing University of Technology (Social Science Edition), 2006, (3): 72-76. (in Chinese)

<sup>3</sup> Li Yan, Ma Ruoyun. Research on Xi Jin-ping's Literary Thought [J]. Academic Journal of Shanxi Provincial Committee Party School of C.P.C, 2015, (3): 96-99. (in Chinese)

<sup>4</sup> Zhou Xiangjun, Huang Shijun. Deepening and Developing of Deng Xiaoping's Theory of Restructuring Culture and Ethics [J]. Journal of Shandong University (Philosophy and Social Sciences), 2000, (3): 84-89. (in Chinese)

<sup>5</sup> Hu Yihua. Research and Review of Xi Jinping's View of Literature [J]. Hubei Social Sciences, 2017. (in Chinese)

taking the objective problem in current development of literature as the object for analysis, clearly pointed out the outstanding problems existing in the creation of literature. For example, although the number of literary works is very considerable, the qualities of literary works are not optimistic, and even show sharp and shoddy production problems. In addition, some literary workers pay too much attention to fame and fortune when creating literary works and do not have good morality. Therefore, Xi Jinping further pointed out that it is necessary to firstly rationally recognize the fundamental question about the serving object of literature and actively think about how to create and further develop literature, in the context of the new normal of social economy and in confronting with the reality of social cultural diversity and the development of network information. Xi Jinping embodied the problem consciousness of very clear realistic pertinence in the theoretical analysis. Second, his literary thought not only made theoretical analysis but also specified the development direction and specific strategy so that it is practicable. With respect to creation of literary works, Xi Jinping believed that the content of such work should be the dissemination of values, practically embody the Chinese spirit and reflect the aesthetic pursuit of people<sup>6</sup>. Literary workers should continuously pursue for self-improvement and strengthen knowledge reserve and accumulation of thoughts and should not regard fame and fortune as the starting point of creation. Xi Jinping further pointed out that literary creators should go deep into the lives of people, extract materials from people in practice and absorb nutrition from practice in order to better improve the quality of their literary works.

### C. Nationality and Times

Judging from the current background of the times, China is in a period of intense collision of various concepts, prominent cultural diversity and very active social thoughts. Xi Jinping's thought was right formed against this background of the times. Xi Jinping rationally analyzed the problems existing in the current artistic creations. In order to solve those problems, it is necessary to scientifically position the status and role of literary work and define the significance of literature for the formation and popularization of core values. Xi Jinping also had a finger on the pulse of the times and discussed the related issues of online literary workers, encouraging them to take advantage of the network medium to create excellent literary works. By analyzing from view of the national confidence on culture, Xi Jinping believed that literature played a very important role in enhancing national confidence and cultivating the sense of national pride. When propagating national values, literature should adhere to focusing on the core values of the society, practically highlight the times and nationalities and highlight the good spirit of Chinese at present.

<sup>6</sup> Qin Yuanyuan. The basic characteristics and significance of Xi Jinping's literary thoughts [J]. *Journal of the Party School of CPC Nanchang Municipal Committee*, 2017(4): 9-13. (in Chinese)

### D. Historic Inheritance

The formation of Xi Jinping's literary thought is not an independent creation lacking theoretical sources, but is further derived from the excellent literary thought of the predecessors. This formation and development process embodies the historical inheritance. Xi Jinping believed that people is the subject of cultural creation and social practice is the root of cultural creation<sup>7</sup>. This view reflects Marx's view of history. Xi Jinping's literary thought also blended Mao Zedong's literary thought. For example, they both believed that the development orientation of literary works should be laid on serving people, literary creation always needs to be people-oriented and go deep into, understand and reflect the lives of people. In the socialist market, some literary works are of low quality and literary workers are too fond of fame and fortune. In response to those problems, Xi Jinping pointed out that literary works can neither be full of odor of money nor just be a product catering to the market. For excellent works, it is not only needed to pay attention to the demand of the market but also needed to pay attention to the successful ideas and artistic forms of literary works. Those views also have the shining point of Deng Xiaoping's literary thought. Xi Jinping attaches great importance to Chinese traditional culture. He often quotes classics on various occasions and advocates that people should actively explore traditional culture and carry forward excellent traditional culture to provide cultural support for the development on the new era. Regarding the inheritance and promotion of traditional culture, Xi Jinping believes that dialectical criticism should be conducted and it is needed to get classics well used in present conditions rather than simple reverting to old ways.

### E. Strategy

When analyzing literature related problems, Xi Jinping did not think about the only aspect of literature separately, but put it literature in the shoes of the process of socialism with Chinese characteristics, namely, regard literature as an important component of the socialism. In development strategy, he also put forward that it is needed to scientifically coordinate and balance the relationship between the "two civilizations" (namely material civilization and spiritual civilization) in order to promote the construction and development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is necessary to make progress in both of the two civilizations. This is also the internal appeal of national rejuvenation and an important content of spiritual civilization construction<sup>8</sup>. From the perspective of world development, Xi Jinping also pointed out that if China wants to go to the world, tell the Chinese story to the world and spread the voice of China, it is necessary to do a good job in literature creation and improve the Chinese cultural soft power through the development of literature.

<sup>7</sup> Cui Liyong. On the subject of the people's value [J]. *Huxiang Forum*, 2012, (6): 31-37. (in Chinese)

<sup>8</sup> Jiang Suqin. On Developing and Cultivating the Great Chinese National Spirit [J]. *Social Sciences Journal of Colleges of Shanxi*, 2004 (10): 89-92. (in Chinese)

#### IV. ANALYZING THE PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF XI JINPING'S LITERARY THOUGHT

##### A. *Developing and Enriching the Achievements of Marxism in China*

Xi Jinping's literary thought is derived from the wisdom of the predecessors and is one of the important achievements in adhering to Marxism in China<sup>9</sup>. In the connotation of literary thought, he believed that the essence of literature is to serve the people, advocated adhering to the "to let the arts have free expression and the schools of thoughts contend without restrictions" policy and emphasized the developmental relationship between spiritual civilization and material civilization. Xi Jinping's literary thought is closer to the current reality and his concept of literature development is innovative. Xi Jinping believed that in order to realize the great Chinese dream, the creation and development of literature should follow the theme of the times "Chinese dream". On the road of national rejuvenation, literature can provide sufficient and inexhaustible spiritual support for the people and can burst out a huge spiritual power. For the objective problems in literary works in the current market, Xi Jinping proposed that the starting point, connotation and thoughts of literary works need to take into comprehensive consideration the market value and social value. For literary workers, they not only need to have outstanding moral qualities but also should have innovative thinking and development vision. Xi Jinping's literary thought shows remarkable people orientation and nationality, embodies the strategy for the times and develops and enriches the achievements of Marxism in China<sup>10</sup>.

##### B. *Advocating Rational Inheriting the Essence of Traditional Culture to Help Establishing National Confidence on Culture*

In the world, it is needed to rely on full cultural confidence, in order to effectively spread the voice of China and tell the story of China and problems in development. And the establishment of confidence on culture is based on an excellent culture. In exploring the development of literature in China, Xi Jinping put forward the concept of confidence on culture. He believed that confidence on culture not only refers to the culture in revolutionary period and the advanced culture of socialism but also involves the traditional excellent culture. Meanwhile, if a nation has sufficient confidence on its culture, it will inevitably provide endless spiritual support for construction of socialism and the great rejuvenation of the nation. Xi Jinping believed that the literature creation and development should always regard traditional culture as the fundamental base and only on the basis of inheriting Chinese traditional culture can it reflect the charm of the thousands of years of culture and better gain cultural confidence. At the same time, culture can also

provide rich materials for literary creation. Literary creators should reasonably absorb traditional culture and absorb and carry forward the excellent factors in traditional culture. In the process of building social core values, it is necessary to combine with the inheritance and carrying forward of traditional excellent culture. In the analysis, Xi Jinping pointed out that the fundamental connotation of literature lies in the pursuit of value, and the establishment of confidence on culture can be cultivated by virtue of core values. Hence, it can be seen that Xi Jinping's literary thought reflects the essence of traditional culture and has a positive effect on establishing Chinese cultural confidence.

##### C. *Criticizing the Problems Existing in Literary Works to Point out the Development Orientation of Literary Works*

From a rational point of view, there are still certain problems in the creation of literature. Some scholars have also clearly pointed out that the value of literature is the biggest problem that current development of literature is facing. Affected by market development and diversified thoughts, especially by the impacts of historical nihilism, Western humanism and so on, in some literary creations, there are some works denying the history and separating from science. Those works neither reflect the people-oriented value of the literature nor correctly review the laws of historical development. Xi Jinping clearly pointed out in his literary thought that correctly understanding the history and scientifically treating the history is a major event relevant to rise and fall of a country and nation. Under the impact of the diversified thoughts, the Marxism theory of literature shows the characteristics of marginalization, and the theoretical analysis direction and focus of scholars begin to shift. Some scholars in the academic circles pay too much attention to the theoretical analysis of Western literature and choose Western literature to explain Chinese literature issues. In the creation of literature, they believe in Western values too much to reflect the people orientation characteristic of literature. The disordered direction of literary theory exploration has caused obvious contradictions between theoretical analysis and social practice. In the background of the times, Xi Jinping criticized the problems existing in the work of literature, discussed the fundamental attribute of literature "people orientation" and fully affirmed the value and role of literature itself. He believed that in the process of building socialist core values, it is necessary to give full play to the advantages of socialist literature work. The value orientation of literary creation should be the core values of socialism<sup>11</sup>. Based on this understanding, he put forward specific requirements for the content and thought of literary works and encouraged creating literary works of higher quality. Some literary workers put forward some norms which can avoid them getting stuck in fame and fortune but pay core attention to quality of literary works. Xi Jinping's literary thought answered the problems existing in the current literary theory

<sup>9</sup> Ye Deyue. The Basic Empiricism in the Development Process of Marxism in China [J]. The Science of Leadership Forum, 2015, (1): 24-26. (in Chinese)

<sup>10</sup> Li Ying. Analysis of Xi Jinping's Literary Thoughts [J]. Journal of the Party School of Leshan Municipal Committee of C.P.C, 2017, (4): 103-107. (in Chinese)

<sup>11</sup> Yang Yehua, Fu Jun. Analysis of the Definition of Socialist Core Values [J]. Journal of Hubei University (Philosophy and Social Sciences), 2015(2): 6-12. (in Chinese)

and practice and pointed out the direction for development of literary work.

## V. CONCLUSION

In the context of the new normal of socialist market economy, literary thought and literary creation are facing a series of new problems. Based on this situation, Xi Jinping put forward a targeted development strategy on the basis of Marxist literary thought, Mao Zedong's literary thought and the literary thought of the Party leaders after the reform and in combination with the development of the times. Xi Jinping's literary thought shows distinct features of people orientation, practicality, nationality, feature of the times, strategy and historical inheritance and is an important achievement of Marxism in China<sup>12</sup>. The proposal of Xi Jinping's literary thought reflects the essence of Chinese traditional culture, has positive value for establishing Chinese confidence on culture, points out the objective problems existing in literary works, specifies the orientation for the development of literary work and has positive guiding significance for the development of literature in China.

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