

## Reflections on Political Policies and Statements in Arts and Literature in PRC

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**Abstract:** This paper investigates the political policies and statements in arts and literature in the People's Republic of China (1949-present). The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has always taken arts and literature as essential parts of its political and ideological rule, and, as such, they constitute a distinct Chinese model or Chinese path in the studies of arts and literature in the modern world. This paper examines the four stages of the political discourse and statements of literature: (1) as an engine of the revolutionary machine in the Mao era (1949-76); (2) as an object of aesthetic appreciation in the decade of "Culture Fever" (the 1980s); (3) as a cultural commodity (1990-2010), and (4) as a vehicle of soft power in the Xi era since 2013.

## **Jiangang YANG and Gongyan JIANG**

### **Reflections on Political Policies and Statements in Arts and Literature in the PRC**

Cultural policies or statements have always been a major vehicle employed by the Chinese Communist Party (hereafter CCP) to macro-manage, control, or regulate arts and literature at the institutional level in order to sustain its hegemony in ideology and culture. The political and policy statements, speeches and writings about arts and literature by Chinese leaders, the CCP state functionaries, are an essential part of the CCP's cultural hegemony; as such they constitute a distinct Chinese model or Chinese path in the studies of arts and literature in the modern world. Statement is a key notion in Foucault's archeology of knowledge. As Foucault puts it:

The statement, as it emerges in its materiality, appears with a status, enters various networks and various fields of use, is subjected to transferences or modifications, is integrated into operations and strategies in which its identity is maintained or effaced. Thus, the statement circulates, is used, disappears, allows or prevents the realization of a desire, serves or resists various interests, participates in challenge and struggle, and becomes a theme of appropriation or rivalry (105).

This paper draws on Foucault's notions of discursive formations and statements as an indispensable theoretical prism through which to interrogate the Chinese praxis. In what follows, I interrogate the ways by which these political and policy statements about arts and literature in the PRC have been able to serve or resist "various interests, participate in challenge and struggle, and become a theme of appropriation or rivalry" over the seven decades of the PRC. I break down political discourse on the arts into roughly four periods: first, as an engine of the revolutionary machine in the Mao era (1949-76); second, as an object of aesthetic appreciation in the decade of "Culture Fever" (the 1980s); third, as a cultural commodity (1990-2010), and, finally, as a vehicle of soft power in the Xi era since 2013.

#### **I. Mao Era (1949-76): Literature as an Engine of the Revolutionary Machine**

The CCP refers to the country before 1949 as the "Old China" and thereafter as the "New China." Within it, the time spanning from 1949 to 1976 is commonly known as the Mao era. A prominent characteristic of this era is that literary studies were largely dominated by politics (Ji, "Transition" 23). The then-leading literary figure Guo Moruo, who served as the first president of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, claimed that "we always have had a great tradition of integrating literary movements with political movements. Since the May Fourth Movement (1919) and in almost every historical period, the mainstream of the 'new' literary movements has always been a major combatant for the revolutionary political movements" ("Fight" 41). Mao Zedong's (also as Mao Tse-tung) "Talks at the Yan'an (also as Yen-an) Forum on Literature and Art" (1942) is the canonical text of such a tradition. Mao in his talks addressed "the relationship between work in the literary and artistic fields and revolutionary work in general" and thus defined the nature, function and task of revolutionary literature and art. Drawing on Marx and Lenin, Mao proclaimed that "literature and art are subordinate to politics" and that "the revolutionary struggle on the ideological and artistic fronts must be subordinate to the political struggle" (87). He borrowed Lenin's metaphor in calling revolutionary literature and art "cogs and wheels in the whole revolutionary machine" (86). According to Liu Kang's incisive study, essential to Mao's revolutionary theory and practice, or what transpired to be Chinese Marxism, or Mao Zedong Thought, is the two pillars of ideology and armed struggles with two armies, so to speak, the "army with pens" and the "army with guns." Mao regards literary and art criticism as "one of the principal methods of struggle in the world of literature and art" (88).

After 1949, the CCP took Mao's Yan'an Talks as the "general direction for literary and art workers" (Guo, "Speech" 3). They accordingly set a new guideline for literature and art, namely, to serve politics and class struggle. Even though the CCP has gained power, it seemed that they still took relentless ideological struggles as the end itself. Consequently, literary and art criticism had become a major weapon for such "continued struggles" in the domain of ideology. Zhou Yang, the CCP's propaganda head at the time, made it clear that "literary and art criticism is the vanguard of ideological struggles. Class struggles often find expression in literature and art. The bourgeoisie unremittently attack us through literature and art, and vice versa, we fight back through literature and art" (31). Henceforth, literary movements in the Mao era are essentially political and ideological campaigns. The battlefield is in literature and art, with literary and art criticism as the vanguard. If armed struggle was the engine of revolution in wartime, then literary and art criticism, once simply called "cogs and wheels," became the new engine in the Mao era.

The first literary movement in the Mao era started with the criticism of the movie "The Life of Wu Xun" (also as Wu Hsun). Wu Xun was a vagrant-beggar in late Qing. He saved a little money and funded a tiny school for children from poor families. When the movie was released in late 1950, it received favorable reviews. But Mao denounced the movie and criticized that, "in an era of great struggle by the Chinese people against foreign aggressors and domestic reactionary feudal rulers," a fellow like Wu Xun "did not lift a finger against the feudal economic base or its superstructure; on the contrary, he strove fanatically to spread feudal culture" ("Pay Serious Attention" 57). Essentially, he concludes, the behavior of Wu Xun is "disgusting." To approve or praise such behavior is to "approve or tolerate abuse of the revolutionary struggles of the peasants, abuse of Chinese history." Since "reactionary bourgeois ideas have found their way into the militant Communist Party," it is imperative to "thoroughly clarify the confused thinking on this question" ("Pay Serious Attention" 58). Hence shortly after the founding of the PRC, China's literary and art circles started their first ideological campaign. Within a few years, nation-wide campaigns were waged, involving such leading literary figures as the veteran classicist Yu Pingbo (1954) and the Marxist theorist Hu Feng (1955). Such political campaigns culminated in the Anti-Rightist Movement (1957-59), aiming at rectifying all intellectuals. Obviously, the purpose of these incessant political campaigns in the cultural arena had been to unify thoughts under the banner of Mao Zedong Thought (U 971-989).

The movement reached its peak in the criticism of the new historical play "Dismissal of Hai Rui" (also as Hai Rui) (1961) written by Wu Han, a historian and then a vice mayor of Beijing. The play featured the honest official Hai Rui of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). In 1965, Yao Wenyuan wrote a scathing and highly politicized critique of the play. He accused the author of "coining a false Hai Rui" and "making veiled criticism of contemporary people with ancient people." In his view, Wu Han the historian/playwright had "actually replaced the Marxist-Leninist concept of the state with that of the landlord class and the bourgeoisie, and the theory of class struggle with the theory of class reconciliation" (783). In 1966, Jiang Qing, Mao's wife, organized a forum on literature and art of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). They asserted that the Chinese cultural arena was all corrupt, having "followed the anti-Party and anti-socialist line" ever since the founding of the PRC. They thus determined it imperative to "resolutely start a socialist revolution on the cultural front" ("Minutes" 6-7). This event marked the beginning of the Cultural Revolution "under the dictatorship of the proletariat." Admittedly, policy makers did make some adjustments around 1960. But during the Mao era in general, literary and art criticism metamorphosed into political campaigns. Literature and arts remained an engine of Mao's revolution.

## **II. Culture Fever (the 1980s): Literature as an Object of Aesthetic Appreciation**

Mao died in 1976. Shortly afterwards, several important events took place and left profound impacts on China. Hua Guofeng, Mao's designated successor, vowed to "continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat to the end" (Hua "Continue") and proposed a doctrine of "Two Whatevers" - uphold whatever policy decisions Chairman Mao made, and follow whatever instructions Chairman Mao gave. Then in 1978, a lecturer of philosophy from Nanjing University wrote an article insisting "practice is the sole criterion for testing truth" (Hu "Practice"). Taking this opportunity, Deng Xiaoping initiated a nationwide debate on the criterion of truth, which started the first ideological emancipation movement in this period. Finally, at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenary Session of the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of CCP, Deng laid down a new guideline for the country - "emancipate the mind, seek truth from facts and unite as one in looking to the future." The new guideline shifted the CCP's attention from class struggle to "socialist modernization." "Realizing four modernizations" thus became "the biggest politics" ("Realizing").

During the 1980s, the political domination in arts and literature during the Mao era came to an end. A new critical discourse was taking shape. In 1979, Deng Xiaoping gave a symbolic speech greeting the 4<sup>th</sup> Congress of Chinese Writers and Artists. Later, he also commented on this topic on several other occasions. All these political statements gave rise to two basic principles concerning literary and art criticism.

The first principle concerns the relationship between politics and literature and art. Deng promised to "drop the slogan that literature and art are subordinate to politics, because it is too easily used as a theoretical pretext for arbitrary intervention in literary and art work" ("Present Situation"). Although literary and art criticism cannot be divorced from politics, in Deng's view it should strike a balance with politics and abide by its own laws. In a word, literature and art should serve the people and serve socialism. This is called the principle of "Two Serves." Against this background, literature and art became objects of aesthetic appreciation.

The second principle concerns academic freedom. Deng promised to uphold the principles of "letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend" (also known as "Two Hundreds"). He encouraged the unhampered development of different forms and styles in literature and art, as well as the free discussion of theories of literature and art among exponents of different views and schools of thought. In contrast to Mao's metaphor of cogs and wheels, Deng insisted that "greater scope must undoubtedly be allowed for personal initiative, individual inclination, thought and fantasy, form and content" ("Speech Greeting"). For literary and art criticism, Deng reaffirmed the principle of "Three Don'ts" – don't pick on others for their faults, don't put labels on people, and don't use a big stick ("Present Situation"). For literary and art circles, Deng advocates "comradely, friendly discussions in which facts are presented and things are reasoned out" ("Speech Greeting").

If literary and art criticism in the Mao era was a battleground of political movements, then in the Deng era it became a vanguard in ideological emancipation. This new trend fully manifests itself in the criticism of the movie "Sun and Man" (also known as "Unrequited Love"). The movie, scripted by Bai Hua in 1979, tells the story of an overseas Chinese who returned to the New China only to be persecuted during the Cultural Revolution. After knowing about his suffering, his daughter asks him a tough question "I know you love your motherland, but does your motherland love you back?" Out of fear or aversion to politicized literary criticism developed during the Cultural Revolution, art critics at the time had become too cautious to give their opinions. Deng soon gave his own opinion. He held that "whatever the author's motives, the movie gives the impression that the Communist Party and the socialist system are bad" ("Concerning Problems"). Hence he deemed it right to criticize the movie, but also warned against resorting to the convergence of political attacks and literary and art criticism. He insisted that criticism must "be democratic and reason things out." The aim was to root out elements of "bourgeois liberalization" and "spiritual pollution," creating a stable political environment for the CCP leadership in modernization drives.

This ideological emancipation set off a "Culture Fever" in China. Western culture and thoughts found wide reception among Chinese academics, who were eager to seek new directions for their country. Western thoughts also cast new light on literary creation and studies. For instance, under the influence of western modernist literature, avant-garde writing surged in China. Writers such as Ma Yuan, Mo Yan, Yu Hua, Can Xue and Ge Fei were all trying new narrative techniques and forms. Meanwhile, Western aesthetic theories from Kant and Hegel to Croce and Sartre were retranslated en masse and enthusiastically embraced. New theories also included Russian formalism and Anglo-American New Criticism (Yang, "The Evolution"). In such a context, Chinese literary scholars began to rethink the nature of literature, asking: "What is literature?" Some of them called for "returning to literature itself" and "doing justice to literature and art." A consensus took shape in cultural circles that viewed literature as an object of aesthetic appreciation with its own laws (Du).

### **III. Commercialization (1990-2010): Literature as a Cultural Commodity**

In 1987, the CCP's 13<sup>th</sup> National Congress decided to take economic development as the central task. But ideological loyalists within the Party were afraid it would mean restoring capitalism. Wary of his project of reform and modernization being completely scrapped by the ideological rearguards who then overwhelmed the CCP leadership, Deng in 1992, then made a famous Southern Tour trying to popularize an alternate route for China. In his talks during the tour, he affirmed that "the essence of socialism is to liberate and develop productive forces," and this should be the chief criterion for judging "whether the road is capitalist or socialist" ("Excerpts"). In the subsequent CCP's 14<sup>th</sup> National Congress, the Party declared that the target of China's economic restructuring was to establish a socialist market economic system. Concerning literature and art, the CCP leadership also made a series of cultural policies and statements. For instance, at the 14<sup>th</sup> National Congress in 1992, Jiang Zemin, the General Secretary of the CCP (1989-2002), vowed to "adhere to the principles of Two Serves and Two Hundreds" and "push forward the reform of the system of managing cultural undertakings" (228). At the 17<sup>th</sup> National Congress in 2007, Hu Jintao, the General Secretary of the CCP (2002-2012), promised to "enhance the vitality of cultural development and release cultural productive forces" ("Report").

Despite that neither Jiang Zemin nor Hu Jintao endorsed in unequivocal terms the commercialization of culture, the political and economic strategies of the CCP under Jiang and Hu created favorable conditions for this transition in literature and art. As of the 1990s, the notion of literature and art as a cultural commodity has prevailed in cultural circles, notwithstanding occasional attacks from the CCP propaganda apparatus against the vulgar and morally degenerating tendencies of consumer popular culture. It should be noted here that, in sharp contrast to the Mao era and the Deng era, when Mao, Deng and other CCP leaders constantly issued political statements on literature

and arts, the two decades or so under Jiang's and Hu's leadership saw a steady decrease, if not disappearance, of such statements and speeches made by the CCP top leaders. In hindsight, during Jiang Zemin's and Hu Jintao's reigns, the Chinese cultural scene experienced a rare period of relative freedom from the tight ideological and political straitjacket of the CCP. As a result, a liberalized, relaxed milieu ensued for cultural and intellectual pursuits, insofar as no red line was crossed and all criticism of the CCP's leadership was quarantined. In fact, the CCP tacitly allowed, and often times encouraged commercialized popular culture to thrive, particularly at the local provincial and municipal levels. The purposes was to promote business profits or "cultural and creative industries and economies," as well as to create a rosy atmosphere of "All's Well That Ends Well" for the Chinese public, whose real world discontent and anxieties could thereby be dispelled or alleviated. In lieu of political statements from CCP leaders, the following account largely focuses on discussions amongst Chinese intellectuals, writers and artists.

The rise of popular literature represented by Wang Shuo was a direct result of literary commercialization. Criticism concerning Wang Shuo's works has sparked a hot debate on the "humanistic spirit" among Chinese academics. Wang Xiaoming, a Shanghai critic, accused the writer of betraying humanism. Chinese Cultural Minister Wang Meng, who is also a well-known writer, in contrast, supported the deconstructionism and post-modernism in the same works of Wang Shuo, praising their potential in ideological emancipation. The debate shed light on the turmoil in the minds of intellectuals. But at the turn of the century, as commercialization continued apace, such anxiety gradually gave way to a thirst for profit. Writing for profit has been accepted by the public. Online writings and their adaptation into TV series or movies have become fashionable in the cultural market.

Commercial movies are the best representatives of cultural commodities. If Chinese movies were dominated by politics in the 1970s and by aesthetics in the 1980s, then they become dominated by the market in the 1990s (Rao, "Thirty Years"). Zhang Yimou, Feng Xiaogang and the so-called fifth-generation directors began to try their hand at commercial movie-making. At the same time, many Hollywood blockbusters also entered the Chinese market. Their business model further spurred the commercialization of Chinese movies.

Mass entertainment in the form of various performances and shows also underwent commercialization. After entry into the WTO, the CCP distinguished between "cultural programs" and "cultural industries." Cultural programs were services provided by the government, while cultural industries were simply businesses catering to the needs of the market. Or, in the CCP's word, "culture builds the stage, and economy sings the opera." Some statistics show that the cultural industries have become one of the pillars of the national economy.<sup>1</sup>

The pursuit of profit is the driving force of the market economy. Chasing economic returns at the expense of social benefits will inevitably make literature and art into slaves to capital, or so the CCP believes. In their view, the solution is to strike a balance between literature and art as commodities and as ideology. Thus, the CCP leadership have repeatedly asserted the role of literature and art in "giving correct guidance to the public and fostering healthy social trends" (Hu, "Report"). To this end, Jiang Zemin in 1997 required arts and literature to "give full expression to the theme of our times while advocating diversity" (36). Hu Jintao in 2011 demanded that literature and art works should "unify ideology, artistry and enjoyability" ("Speech"). There were also other policies specifically denouncing the so-called "money fetish," "decadent cultures" and "Three Vulgarities" – vulgar, cheap and kitsch forms of culture. All in all, both Jiang and Hu stressed the need to "give top priority to social benefits and try to ensure both good economic returns and social benefits" (Hu, "Report").

The notion of cultural commodity also bears on literary studies. Theorists became more interested in the relationship between political, aesthetic, and commercial dimensions of literature and art. After the mid-1990s, the Frankfurt School critique of the Culture Industry, critical studies of mass culture, and western Marxist, left-wing theories of postmodernism and postcolonialism began to gain traction and momentum. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Chinese academics focused their discussions on the prevalent consumer culture and aestheticization of daily life. It was assumed that as China further globalized became more in sync with global cultural trends, more universalist and cosmopolitan visions for the arts, literature and criticism would come to the fore. Meanwhile, as China becomes economically wealthier and stronger, nationalistic sentiments under the guise of national pride and patriotism were steadily on the rise, culminating in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Nevertheless, at the end of Hu Jintao's tenure, China entered a new era under Xi Jinping, and the Chinese cultural scene began a new episode, which will be addressed below.

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<sup>1</sup> For more on China's cultural industry, see Li Hui's article in this issue.

#### IV. Xi Era: Literature as a Cultural Soft Power

The CCP's 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress in December 2012, in Xi Jinping view, ushered in a "new era for socialism with Chinese characteristics." From his perspective, the Chinese nation "has stood up, grown rich, and is becoming strong." And now it has come to "embrace the brilliant prospects of rejuvenation." Xi sees a cultural dimension to the Chinese dream. He vows to enhance "cultural soft power" and develop a "great socialist culture" ("Report"). Whereas his predecessors like Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao stressed the role of hard science in nation building, Xi seems to place more hopes on humanities and social sciences, reiterating Mao's theory and practice of cultural and ideological revolution.

When Xi took up his position as the General Secretary of the CCP in the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress, he first wanted to re-position himself with respect to the conflicting "Left" and "Right" ideologies within the CCP. In 2013, Xi formulated his theory of the "Two No-renouncements" – that the Mao era's legacy cannot be renounced in the name of reform, and vice versa, the legacy of reform (under Deng, Jiang and Hu) cannot be renounced in the name of Mao. This position represents an attempt to reconcile and perhaps converge Deng's reform and Mao's legacy as Xi's new benchmark.

In 2014, Xi addressed a forum on literature and art in Beijing, a parallel to Mao's landmark talk on culture delivered in Yan'an in 1942. Xi's talk demonstrated strong resemblance to the latter in both organization and rhetoric (Zhang, "Analysis"). Most importantly, Xi reiterated Mao's view that the arts must serve a social purpose. However, whereas Mao took the arts as an engine of revolution, Xi sees them (and practically all humanities and social sciences) as a vehicle of the country's cultural soft power. This notion has foreshadowed all the policies concerning literature and art in the Xi era. It has become crystal clear that Xi's ideological and cultural policies and priorities are central to his new master plan, or Xi Thought, for realizing the "Chinese Dream." These policies are summarized and analyzed as follows:

(1) Retain Marxism as the guiding ideology.

Marxism has always been the guiding ideology of the CCP. The CCP takes it as their primary task to retain and strengthen that ideology in college education and humanities and social sciences research. The Ma Project (Marxism Theory Research and Construction Project) is a typical example. Hu Jintao launched this project back in 2004. Shortly afterwards, the Ministry of Education organized a variety of working groups to compile teaching materials used in humanities and social sciences. As of today, these groups have compiled over 150 types of so-called Key Coursebooks guided by Marxist ideology. All colleges and universities across China are required to use these coursebooks. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress, the CCP has been intensifying their efforts in the Ma Project. For instance, Xi's theory of culture has been introduced into coursebooks, especially those used in the domain of literary theory, literary history, comparative literature and even aesthetics.<sup>2</sup>

(2) Integrate ideology with artistry and enjoyability.

The CCP leadership has been concerned with contradictions between literary works' ideology, artistry and enjoyability. Both Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao tried to deal with such a problem. However, this problem appears not to have been solved, instead only intensifying over the years. In Xi's words, since the reform and opening up, literary and art workers have produced "large amounts of universally appreciated works." But the problem is that "there is quantity but no quality." Therefore, Xi called on Chinese writers to create a large number of "quality works living up to the times." He takes this as the only way to enhance China's cultural soft power and promote the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. According to Xi, these quality works should "gain ideological and artistic successes and receive a welcome on the market." And most importantly, they should "carry forward the Chinese spirit and concentrate Chinese strengths" ("Speech at the Forum").

(3) Strengthen cultural confidence and cultural security.

Globalization has brought enormous influence to China from Western cultures. There was a time when China's cultural circles seemed to have lost their subjectivity. It became almost a fashion to imitate, beautify or even idolize the West. The same thing happened to China's literary studies and aesthetics. As noted by Liu Kang, the methodology or paradigm of that time was "addressing Chinese issues with western discourses" (323). In 2015, Xi addressed a seminar on philosophy and social sciences. In his speech, he warned that such "Western centralism has absolutely no future." The future of the country lies not in Westernization, but in "socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics" ("Speech at the Seminar"). Xi urges the Chinese to "strengthen confidence in Chinese culture," and Chinese academics to "persist in the standpoint of Chinese culture" and "inherit and carry forward China's excellent traditional culture" ("Speech at the Forum"). These political statements sparked a fever of traditional

<sup>2</sup> For more on coursebooks of literary theories compiled by the Ma Project, see Li Song's article in this issue.

culture throughout the whole country. As directed by such statements, Chinese academics in the fields of humanities and social sciences are now working on the "innovative transformation and creative evolution" of China's traditional culture. Meanwhile, the CCP also vows to "defend against ideological and cultural infiltration" in order to "safeguard national cultural security" ("Decision"). At present, the incongruity between Western theories and China's practices in social sciences and humanities is becoming ever more alarming. Literary theory and criticism are a prominent example in this regard. Theorists and critics are now working on a consensus to answer the China question within a Chinese discourse system.

(4) Encourage cultural exchanges with the outside world.

Adherence to Chinese "cultural subjectivity" does not mean a total rejection of outstanding cultural achievements from the outside world. The CCP has also promised to adopt a more open attitude towards absorbing those achievements. Over the years, Chinese academia has translated many Western theoretical works of philosophy, arts, and literature. These works have deeply influenced the patterns of research in China's humanities and social sciences. In the case of literary studies and aesthetics, Western theorists are also sought after and given much attention. And this wide reception is still ongoing. To counterbalance this "cultural deficit," the CCP has been eager to promote Chinese culture on the world stage. In 2002, the CCP inaugurated a strategy of "Chinese culture going global." The objective was to enhance the soft power and international influence of Chinese culture through Confucius Institutes, various international cultural exchange programs, and the Translation Project of Chinese Humanities and Social Science.<sup>3</sup> In Xi's view, the strategy is not only to let the world know "China in academics, in theory, and in philosophy and social sciences," but also to provide the world with "Chinese wisdom and a Chinese plan" ("Speech at the Forum").<sup>4</sup>

(5) Increase funding for research in humanities and social sciences.

Rapid economic growth has allowed the CCP wide latitude to increase funding for projects in humanities and social sciences. All researchers must subject their research plans to stringent evaluations by the authorities at national, ministerial, provincial or city level. It is from those same authorities that the projects obtain their funding.<sup>5</sup> This management system has produced two results. First, researchers are facing ever keener competition from their counterparts. And secondly, it has exerted a negative influence on free academic exploration. To streamline the evaluation process, the CCP has inaugurated a wide variety of research institutes or bases. Statistics show that they are steadily channeling projects and funding into these agencies. For instance, the Ministry of Education has founded altogether 151 "Key Research Bases" since 2000, covering almost all disciplines in humanities and social sciences. Literary studies, for instance, are the specialty of 17 bases. The CLTA where the author is working now is one of them.

## V. Conclusion

Each era has its own literature and definition therewith. Shifting themes of the former give rise to different notions of the latter. These notions in turn find expression in literary theories and criticism and cultural policies. The four notions we have discussed above are the result of the complex interactions between macro-history and the history of ideas and academic studies. In short, they are the indispensable indices to China's historical transformation under the CCP's seven decades of reign. Each transition foregrounds a certain attribute about literature, and that attribute, in its part, gives essence to a different notion. As Terry Eagleton rightly points out, all literary theories and criticism are intrinsically political. Critical discourses hardly ever come into being without certain attitudes or viewpoints on the part of theorists and critics. Literary theories and criticism have never been apolitical. The question is simply "the nature of the politics involved" (169). In contrast, cultural policies have never been purely academic ponderings over arts and literature. Instead, they are the

<sup>3</sup> The National Office for Philosophy and Social Sciences (全国哲学社会科学工作办公室) is responsible for examining and funding all national projects in social sciences. The Translation Project of Chinese Humanities and Social Science is one of them. The Office selects works with high academic value and reflecting a high level of research and has them translated and then published by foreign publishing agencies. The project has been in operation for many years. Altogether 154 works were selected by the Office in 2019.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of China's efforts of "external propaganda" to promote its global image and soft power, see Liu Kang (2012): "Searching for a New Cultural Identity: China's soft power and media culture today," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 21:78, pp. 915-931.

<sup>5</sup> Take the projects funded by the National Planning Office and by the Ministry of Education in 2019. The statistics show that there were altogether 364 national major projects, 214 national art projects, and 4,632 national annual projects. The Ministry of Education funded 49 major projects and 3,678 general and western projects. The total funding for these projects exceeded 1.7 billion yuan.

"political statements" in Foucauldian terms, serving the "ideological state apparatuses" in Althusser's parlance. They have been permeated with "political metaphors" and "power-relations." The massive political statements, ideological and cultural policies by the political leadership of the CCP, which have greatly prioritized ideology and culture, constitute a distinct "Chinese model" or Chinese path in the studies of arts and literature in the modern world. No other socialist state, including the defunct Soviet Union and the surviving North Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba, can rival China in this regard.

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