

# Mainland Influence on Hong Kong's Literary History (1950s-1970s)

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**Abstract:** The current academic community tends to focus more on the differences in the writing of Hong Kong's new literary history, neglecting its reference to the tradition of writing new literary history in Mainland China. The Main land's literature, which is primarily emotional and evaluates writers' works through emotional tone and artistic expression, and the traditional historiography centered on "people," have had a significant impact on the writing of Hong Kong's new literary history. Wang Yao's "Draft History of Chinese New Literature" has provided a template for historians such as Li Huiying and Cao Juren to draw upon in terms of concepts and formats. The writing of literary history as a textbook plays an important role in shaping ideology, stimulating national identity, and reflecting the national will, and Hong Kong's writing of new literary history also shares similarities. Although there are differences in historiographical concepts and other aspects between Hong Kong's writing of new literary history and that of Mainland China, the presentation of many commonalities shows a deep influence from the Main land's historiographical tradition.

**Keywords:** Literary History Perspective, New Literary History, Hong Kong, Mainland, Traditional Historiography

## 1. Introduction

Introduction: The writing of Chinese new literary history began in the 1920s, often taking the form of "appendix-style" literary history compilation. Over nearly a century, the writing of new literary history has undergone several significant changes, corresponding to different periods such as the 1920s-1930s, 1950s-1970s, and since the 1980s. These changes reflect the dominant positions of different literary historical views such as "evolutionism," "class theory," and "modernity."

Due to its special colonial nature, Hong Kong's political and cultural contexts differ greatly from those of Mainland China, leading to a late start in the development and research of new literature (In 1927, Lu Xun gave two lectures in Hong Kong, providing a detailed introduction to the new cultural movement and the development of new literature in Mainland China, which attracted considerable attention from Hong Kong's people), and a "trend" was never formed. Around 1949, an influx of scholars from Mainland China promoted the prosperity of academic research in Hong Kong, and the study and writing of new literary history entered a new phase. The 1950s-1970s was the peak period for the writing of new literary history in Hong Kong, with the emergence of many influential works, such as Li Huiying's "Twenty Years of Chinese New Literary History" and "History of Modern Chinese Literature," Sima Chang feng 's "History of Chinese New Literature," Zhao Cong's "Biographies of Modern Chinese Writers," Cao Juren's "Fifty Years of Literary Circles," and Xu Shu's "Themes of Modern Chinese Literature."

The new literary history written in Hong Kong during the 1950s-1970s, compared with that compiled in Mainland China and Taiwan during the same period, shows "heterogeneous" elements. It demonstrates its unique value in terms of literary historical view, the system and compilation of new literary history writing, and has received considerable attention from the academic community. In stark contrast to the academic community's considerable attention, when researchers focus more on the "heterogeneity" of Hong Kong's new literary history writing that is different from Mainland China, there is less attention to the reference to Mainland China's literary history and the writing of new literary history in Hong Kong's writing. Many of

the compilers of Hong Kong's new literary history works come from Mainland China, and these participants in the new cultural movement have a strong understanding of the research model and writing methods of Mainland China's new literary history. Due to changes in the living environment, they have restarted or continued their academic research in different cultural contexts. Although different cultural contexts will bring different research aspects to researchers, the academic accumulation and educational background of researchers will also affect the writing of their new works.

## 2. Inheritance of Classical Historiography Methods

### 2.1. Sima Changfeng's Innovative Approach to Literary History

Chinese literature and historical writing have developed their own unique evaluative systems, such as "Poetry Talks," "Lyric Talks," "Biographies of the Literary Garden," and "Records of Literary Works," which often take emotional experience as the main body of research when discussing the development of literature and the characteristics of writings. By grasping the emotional tone and literary art of the works, they evaluate literary works and even the writers themselves. This emotional-based evaluative method is a manifestation of subjective lyricism, which is strongly reflected in the new literary history works of Sima Chang feng and others. Similarly, the "people-centered" writing method of traditional historiography has also had a significant impact on the writing of Hong Kong's new literary history, presenting a more distinctive style in the writing of new literature.

Sima Chang feng 's positioning of "History of Chinese New Literature" is: "This is not the best history of Chinese new literature, but it is the most original history of Chinese new literature." [1] The term "original" here has profound implications. Since the concept of "literary history" was introduced from the West through Japan, China has used the Western concept of "literary history" and its compilation methods to write the history of Chinese literature. However, it is quite rare to see someone like Sima Chang feng who focuses on "pure literature" and takes individual feelings as the ultimate measure of the value of the works. Feeling the current situation where the compilation of new literary history is greatly influenced by the cultural context, Sima Chang feng strives to return to the essence of literature and looks for the traces of "pure" literary history from the traditional Chinese literary history writing methods.

Traditional literary evaluation methods often engage the evaluator's senses, allowing the artistic value of a work to be felt through sensory impact, resulting in an experience of "beauty" on a spiritual level. Sima Chang feng 's evaluations of various modern literary figures are based on beauty and "emotion" as the sensory criteria, considering Zhou Zuo ren's "First Love" to be "delightful and touching," Zhu Dan's prose to have "a strange spirit, full of poetic sentiment, with a kind of sad and lingering beauty" [2], Fei Ming's "Tea Shop" to have "created the beauty of a lonely astringency" [1], "Border Town" to "show an extraordinary beauty" [1], Feng Zhi's "Sonnet Collection" to exhibit "the beauty of concentration and contemplation" [3], and Shen Cong wen's "Western Hunan" to possess an "irresistible beauty" [1]. Sima Chang feng pursues literature without purpose or utility, reflecting his pure literary view. He regards beauty as the standard for literature, emphasizing that beauty is an externalization of the author's true feelings from within, and that only creations without any utilitarian purpose, starting from one's own emotions, are truly beautiful works, real literature. This approach abstracts literature from its external context of creation and regards its existence as the spiritual product of the individual writer. However, the existence of literary works is not as simple as Sima Chang feng 's view suggests; neither works nor writers can exist apart from the context of their times. In ancient Chinese poetry and prose creation, since writing was monopolized by the "intellectual class," the social function of literary activities was relatively weak, to some extent becoming a need for the rich and powerful to vent their emotions. This situation has changed significantly after the New Culture Movement, where the emergence of spoken language literature and an important goal of the new literary revolution was to use literature to awaken the masses, and the simple expression of personal sorrow through low chanting was rejected. Because Sima Chang feng adheres to his literary position with poetic sentiment, beautiful prose, pure literature, and clear literature, he has continued the tradition of the literati's literary judgment while ignoring and rejecting some excellent literary works, such as considering Lu Xun's essays not to be literary works. The main body of pure literature is beautiful prose, and the standard of beautiful prose has the characteristics of poetry. Therefore, in "History of Chinese New Literature," he has always

used "poetic sentiment" as the standard to measure literary works, repeatedly emphasizing that the quality of a work depends on "how much poetic sentiment" it contains and the "strength and purity" of the poetic sentiment. This emphasis on "beauty," "poetic sentiment," and "pure literature" is fundamentally a reference to the traditional Chinese literary history. Ancient China was not without a history of literature; rather, the history of literature in ancient China focused on grasping the emotions of the works, starting from the emotional position of the writers, to sort out and grasp the context of the development and evolution of literature, which was an aesthetic experience that came first. Modern literary history tends to pay more attention to rational experience, emphasizing that literary history should abandon human factors and explore its objective side. Sima Chang feng abandons the "objective" external factors, abstracts the works from their cultural context, and summarizes the development of literature based on emotional experience, which is an inheritance of the ancient Chinese way of judging literature and historical writing.

## 2.2. Influence of 'Records of the Grand Historian' on Modern Chinese Literary History

Sima Qian's historical pursuit of "comprehending the changes between ancient and modern times, to create a unique discourse" has had a profound impact on subsequent historiography and literature. Lu Xun, when mentioning the "Records of the Grand Historian," summarized it as "the ultimate song of historians, the 'Li Sao' without rhymes." There are already many papers on the influence of the "Records of the Grand Historian" on the development of Chinese literature and the development of modern Chinese literature, which will not be repeated here. The "Records of the Grand Historian" centers on individuals, first listing historical facts to clearly narrate historical events, and then commenting on the characters and events at the end of the text in the form of "The Grand Historian says," thus forming a writing pattern of separating historical narrative and discussion, which has had a significant influence on the writing of Hong Kong's new literary history. Zhao Cong's "Biographies of Modern Chinese Writers," from the title alone, is a continuation of the writing tradition of the "Records of the Grand Historian." Sima Qian, according to the different statuses of the characters, divided the compilation style of the "Records of the Grand Historian" into "Annals," "Hereditary Houses," "Treatises," "Tables," and "Biographies," which provided an excellent reference for Zhao Cong to write the development of new literature centered on individuals. In Zhao Cong's work, centered on individuals, records their participation in associations and literary organizations through their activities and pursuits, and then connects the writers' creative works, which is a more "characteristic" existence in the writing of new literary history. If Zhao Cong's "Biographies of Modern Chinese Writers" has made a greater reference to the compilation style and writing form of the "Records of the Grand Historian," then Xu Shu's "Themes of Modern Chinese Literature" has inherited the deep-seated historical concept of the "Records of the Grand Historian."

"Themes in Modern Chinese Literature" is Xu Shu's discussion on the phenomena and activities of modern Chinese literature. It cannot be considered a strict modern literary history because it lacks discussions of writers and their works, contains historical errors, and the narrative of historical facts is too brief and incomplete, lacking a complete framework of literary history. However, by examining the structure and content connection of "Themes in Modern Chinese Literature," although it appears to be a combination of 11 independent "topics," it internally presents a logic of the development of modern literature.

The first chapter is "Review of the Debate between the New and the Old." The debate between the new and old literature was a hot social topic from the late Qing Dynasty to the "May Fourth" period. By setting the time in the late Qing Dynasty and deeply exploring the origins of new literature, Xu Shu takes the late Qing as the basis for the origin of vernacular literature. The second chapter discusses realism and romanticism. Realism and romanticism were the literary propositions of the Literary Research Association and the Creation Society in the early period of "May Fourth" new literature. The third chapter discusses the period of free literary creation from "May Fourth" to before the Northern Expedition. The fourth chapter, "Debate on Revolutionary Literature," discusses the literary trends between 1928 and 1929. Chapters five, six, seven, eight, and ten discuss the League of Left-Wing Writers active in the 1930s, involving the establishment of the League, its literary theory and the proposition of "popularization of literature and art," the internal contradictions and division of the League, and the process and reasons for the split, connecting with the initial scale of new literature development in the 1920s and 1930s. The ninth chapter discusses the

anti-war literature of the 1930s and 1940s. The eleventh chapter, "Foreign Literary Styles and Native Literature," summarizes the overall situation of the rise and fall of new literary creation on the two development lines of tradition and Westernization since the "May Fourth" movement. In terms of chapter design, "Themes in Modern Chinese Literature" has the demand to show the context of the development of new literature, and the author's pursuit runs through the writing, making it a part of the writing of Hong Kong's new literary history, showing the research results of Hong Kong's new literary history, and also speaking with evidence.

### 2.3. Separation of Narrative and Discussion in Literary History Writing

From the perspective of literary history writing, the method of separating historical narrative and discussion in "Themes in Modern Chinese Literature" is a result of the influence of traditional Chinese historiography and is also a characteristic of this work. In the chapter "Review of the Debate between the New and the Old," the first section lists articles advocating for literary revolution by new literature proponents such as Hu Shi. Hu Shi's "Preliminary Proposals for Literary Reform" and Chen Duxiu's "On Literary Revolution" are divided into several parts, with each part briefly introduced and explained, followed by a brief commentary on the views of the opponents of the new literature. This method of discussion constructs the opposing camps of the new and old literary views, restoring the early growth environment of the new literature. In the final section of the writing, Xu Shu detaches himself from the "narration" to provide an overall analysis of various literary phenomena. In the chapter "The Issue of the Popularization of Literature and Art," Xu Shu first puts forward the advocacy of the popularization of literature and art by the League of Left-Wing Writers in the first section, and then lists large sections of the original speeches by Lu Xun and Qu Qiu bai published in "Mass Literature and Art," with brief explanations and comments. In the second section, Xu Shu fully discusses his own views and concludes on the popularization of literature and art with such a statement: "In fact, the language of the masses is fundamentally a non-existent illusion. If it did exist, wouldn't the Soviet Union have had a popular Russian language long ago?" [4] The entire work is constructed on this writing model, allowing readers to see a style of commentary similar to "The Grand Historian says" while reading.

In essence, history refers to the objective facts that existed in the past. How those complex events of the past can be preserved for future generations depends on the selection and recording by historians, which is already within the realm of historiography. When recording, historians must make reasonable choices based on certain criteria and select a narrative method to present them. In this process, the personal color of the historian inevitably mingles, including individual subjective intentions and the influence of the objective environment. The literary history we usually refer to encompasses this process. When recording a historical fact, the wording and attitude of the historian's narration are the external manifestation of "discussion," which is the main embodiment of the historian's value position. Although objectivity and fairness are the ultimate pursuit of history, the inevitability of "discussion" is also the fate of historical writing itself. Therefore, any historical writing cannot escape this "fetter," and historians can only try their best to "remove" subjectivity, and the same is true for literary history. In terms of the structure of "history" and "discussion," some literary histories try their best to hide "discussion" in "history," submerging the historian's voice, in order to achieve the goal of objectivity and fairness. On the other hand, some literary histories have "discussion" that clearly overshadows "history," manifesting as a writing style where subjectivity overrides objectivity, which potentially damages the pursuit of truth in "history." The writing of literary history is the history of literature, focusing on literature as the core of historical research. The emotional characteristics of literary works and the diversity of reading experiences inevitably lead to commentary when writing, which includes not only the grasp of the ideological content of the works and the appreciation of their artistic value but also the value position of the historian. In this way, "history" and "discussion" inevitably form a coexisting situation in the composition of literary history, which is an inevitable structure of literary history.

Looking at the distribution of "history" and "discussion" in the writing of literary history, it is either "substituting discussion for history" or "substituting history for discussion." "Substituting discussion for history" more infiltrates the historian's thoughts and values into the discussion of historical facts, reflecting

the historian's subjective characteristics and embedding "history" within "discussion," making it difficult to distinguish the boundaries between history and discussion. This writing style presents a blurred narrative of literary history. "Substituting history for discussion," on the other hand, lists as much historical material as possible, aiming for the richness and detail of the data, focusing on the organization and collection of events, and is a compilation of historical materials or a lengthy chronicle of literary history. It lacks discussion of the development and evolution of literature and the "voice" of the literary historian, losing some of the characteristics of literary history to a certain extent. Xu Shu's separation of historical narrative and discussion creates a clear distance between history and discussion, making the historical facts and viewpoints clear and explicit, and the historian's personal comments and factual identification are clear and understandable. This provides readers with a clearer way of judgment and a relatively fair and objective presentation of literary history. In fact, the separation of historical narrative and discussion is essentially a form of "substituting history for discussion," where "substitute" is more inclined to "carry," a form derived from history to carry "discussion." "Carrying discussion with history" is more rational than "substituting history for discussion," as it not only follows the presentation of historical facts but also highlights the historian's position, while giving more consideration to the clarity of the discussion, allowing readers to clearly judge the authenticity of the facts and the penetration of the historian's subjective ideas. This method of writing history has had a great influence on the development of ancient Chinese historiography, but it is relatively rare in the writing of new literary history or modern Chinese literary history. Reading Xu Shu's "Themes in Modern Chinese Literature" again brings a fresh reading experience to the traditional historical writing style.

### 3. The Influence of Wang Yao's Writing

#### 3.1. Influence of Wang Yao's 'Draft History' on Hong Kong's New Literary Historiography

Wang Yao's "Draft History of Chinese New Literature" (first volume published in 1951, second volume in 1953) was the earliest work of new literary history to appear after the founding of the People's Republic of China. It was also a work that had a significant impact and sparked considerable controversy over an extended period. The writing of Chinese new literary history in Hong Kong during the 1950s to 1970s not only inherited the traditional Chinese historiography methods but was also deeply influenced by the contemporary mainland Chinese new literary history, especially Wang Yao's "Draft History of Chinese New Literature." During this period, Li Huiying's "History of Modern Chinese Literature" and Cao Juren's "Fifty Years of Literary Circles" prominently displayed the narrative patterns of Wang Yao's "Draft History of Chinese New Literature." The emergence of this phenomenon is not only a manifestation of the immaturity of historical concepts in the pioneering period of new literary history writing but also indicates the origin and connection between Hong Kong and mainland Chinese new literature researchers. It also shows that despite different "branches," there is a consistency in the focus of Hong Kong and mainland researchers in drawing nourishment from new literature.

Li Huiying was a well-known "Northeastern writer" in the 1930s and moved to Hong Kong in 1950. In 1967, he started teaching a course on "History of Chinese New Literature" at the United College of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. To meet the needs of teaching, he published "History of Modern Chinese Literature" in 1970 at the East Asia Press in Hong Kong. His work "Twenty Years of Chinese New Literature (A.D. 1919-1939)," published under the pen name Lin Mang in the 1950s, was the "predecessor" of this book. The organizational structure of "History of Modern Chinese Literature" follows "Twenty Years of Chinese New Literature," expanding the amount of historical materials and periodizing the new literature. Due to its nature as a textbook, "History of Modern Chinese Literature" may not delve deeply into academic rigor while fulfilling its teaching function. However, as a textbook, "History of Modern Chinese Literature" includes information on the development of new literary history in Hong Kong, which is one of its highlights.

#### 3.2. Li Huiying's 'History of Modern Chinese Literature': Echoes of Wang Yao's Structural Model

"History of Modern Chinese Literature" bears the imprint of Wang Yao's "Draft History of Chinese New Literature." Wang Hongzhi once said, "If we also look at Li Huiying's 'History of Modern Chinese Literature' from the perspective of compilation, it is not difficult to find that it completely applies this

structural model." [5] This "structural model" refers to the writing style of Wang Yao's "Draft History of Chinese New Literature." Since the 1950s, the strengthening of political ideology in the writing of mainland new literary history has led to the overthrow of many previous works of new literary history. Wang Yao's writing of new literary history tried to keep up with the theme of the times and grasp the essence of political control over literature and art, making it a representative of the writing of new literary history at that time. In the 1950s, the compilation of Chinese new literary history entered a new historical stage. Wang Yao's "Draft History of Chinese New Literature" was compiled according to the teaching requirements for "Chinese New Literature" in the "College Curriculum Draft for the Faculty of Arts and Law" issued by the Ministry of Education in 1950. "It is the first work of new literary history that strives to be guided by Mao Zedong's 'On New Democracy' and 'Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art'." [6] "Draft History of Chinese New Literature" is a work that writes the history of new literature as part of the history of the New Democratic Revolution, establishing the pattern for the writing of mainland Chinese modern literary history thereafter. The traces of Li Huiying's reference to Wang Yao can be seen in the chapter settings of "History of Modern Chinese Literature." Many chapter titles are basically directly used, and then further developed on this basis. Huang Xiu ji commented on "Twenty Years of Chinese New Literature History," saying, "This book has less than 80,000 words, ... and it obviously draws some content from Wang Yao's 'Draft History of Chinese New Literature'." [7] Gu Yuan qing said in "A History of Contemporary Hong Kong Literary Criticism," "... It also lies in the lack of its own unique framework, and the influence of Wang Yao's 'Draft History of Chinese New Literature' is too obvious." [8] Wang Yao's "Draft History of Chinese New Literature" adopts a block superimposed structure, using four periods as four parts, each part is divided into five major categories, and the development achievements of different periods are summarized respectively with overviews, novels, dramas, poetry, and prose as the subjects of discussion. Li Huiying's "History of Modern Chinese Literature" divides modern literature into three volumes, and the first chapter of each volume is a general discussion, explaining the achievements and artistic directions of the literature of this period. In the following chapters, chapters are set up to discuss poetry, novels, prose, drama, and main literary propositions, which is completely consistent with the settings of Wang Yao's "Draft History of Chinese New Literature." Although Li Huiying did not highlight it clearly in the division of literary history, in the introduction of "History of Modern Chinese Literature," he said, "The 'History of Modern Chinese Literature' to be taught here is not from 1917 to the present. Due to some special circumstances, ... this course only talks up to 1949." [9] And in the discussion of the three volumes, it is divided into 1917-1926, 1927-1936, and 1937-1949, basically ten years as a stage, which also coincides with Wang Yao's division method. The establishment of chapters and the writing history method of first narrating the literary trend and then showing the achievements of different works show the consistency of the historical writing models and formats of the two historians. Before entering the overall discussion of literary history, Wang Yao's "Draft History of Chinese New Literature" has an "Introduction" section, which clearly defines the beginning, nature, and leading ideas of new literary history from the perspective of the New Democratic Revolution. In the selection of compilation and chapter titles, it tries to close to the political ideology of the time. Words such as "The Great Beginning and Development," "Awakening and Singing," "Daggers and Spears," and "Exposure and Praise" appear repeatedly in the "Draft History of Chinese New Literature" as the summary of chapter names, highlighting the author's efforts and pursuits to keep up with the pace of the times. Wang Yao himself did not conceal the concept of writing history at the time, which was to show the development of Chinese new literature according to Mao Zedong's "On New Democracy." He tried to grasp the writing of new literary history with the political theory framework of New Democracy, especially highlighting the development of literary trends, and in each period, he first discussed the main line of the literary trend at that time. Although Wang Yao had his own firm beliefs in the guiding ideology of writing history, due to his own direct or indirect participation in the development of new literature, when judging writers and works at the micro level, he showed more of his academic judgment based on the level of literature and the value of the works. These academic judgments now seem more objective, compared with the Chinese new literary history collectively written by the Chinese departments of various colleges and universities in the mainland later, showing more objectivity, touching the forbidden zones of the time, such as writing writers who should not be included in the history, ignoring the political standards of literary judgment, etc. The emergence of this situation made Wang Yao criticized several times at the time, and "Draft History of

Chinese New Literature" was replaced by other more radical works. Today, looking back at the writing of new literary history at that time, the personal mark revealed by Wang Yao's "Draft History of Chinese New Literature" under the guidance of the era's ideology is still the unique value of this work. Perhaps it was because they had witnessed the development process of new literature together, or perhaps it was due to the shortage of materials and insufficient research preparation, etc., Li Huiying has largely followed Wang Yao's narrative model in his "History of Modern Chinese Literature."

Li Huiying's writing, which emulates Wang Yao's structural model, appears on the surface to be a reference to or "imitation" of Wang Yao's work, but in essence, it reflects Li Huiying's literary and historical perspectives. Li Huiying was known for his novel writing in mainland China in his early years and had a close relationship with the League of Left-Wing Writers from the beginning of his career. His debut work, "The Last Class," was published in the League's organ, "The Big Dipper," which initiated his connection with the League. According to Hong Kong scholar Wang Hongzhi's record in "The Accident of History," the editor-in-chief of "The Big Dipper" at the time, Ding Ling, greatly appreciated Li Huiying's talent. After "The Last Class" was published, she invited Li Huiying to several writers' tea parties she hosted. He also accepted Ding Ling's solicitation and wrote the novel "Wan bao Mountain," which was praised by Zhou Yang. In this way, Li Huiying had the opportunity to meet more left-wing writers while interacting with a group of left-wing individuals. At that time, Li Huiying's hometown in the Northeast had fallen, and he was forced to become a refugee, filled with a strong desire to resist Japan, which naturally brought him closer to the left-wing writers who were strongly demanding resistance against Japan. In the spring of 1933, he joined the League and participated in some of its anti-Japanese activities. With the support of the League, he successively founded the monthly magazines "Creation," "Sheng sheng," and "Idle Talk and Comics," which were greatly supported by Lu Xun. His relationship with Lu Xun was also established at this time, but after Lu Xun's death, he became increasingly distant from the League until he eventually left [10]. The motive for Li Huiying to join the League was that it matched his anti-Japanese sentiment at the time. He once said:

Especially the "September 18th Incident" stimulated my mood to resist violence. "Wake up, can't you change the direction of your novel's pen?" I said to myself, "You should turn the tone that writes about leisurely and elegant interests into a weapon to fight against your enemies!" From then on, I took the initiative to stand in the left-wing literary and artistic camp led by Mr. Lu Xun and started to contribute to the "League" publications. [10]

### 3.3. Li Huiying's Literary Activism and the Influence on His Historical Writing

From this, we can see Li Huiying's view of literature. He believed that literature is not a tool for entertainment but a weapon to fight against the enemy. Li Huiying regarded literature as a tool for protecting the country and family, resisting aggression, and promoting anti-Japanese sentiment. Literature is not a special thing in the free world, but a tool serving politics, which is "carrying the Tao." And this "political" Tao is his spirit of patriotism and his anti-Japanese sentiment, which his early works witnessed. His debut work "The Last Class," the "Anti-Japanese Trilogy" of "Wanbao Mountain," "Amongst Us," and "Front Line" all take the War of Resistance against Japan as the theme, vividly depicting the valiant spirit of resistance of the Chinese people under the brutal aggression of the Japanese army. During the Anti-Japanese War, he actively participated in anti-Japanese activities, enthusiastically engaged in the fight against the war, founded magazines related to the resistance, wrote novels and plays on the theme of resistance, and joined the writers' battlefield visit group during the Anti-Japanese War, all of which were expressions of his patriotic feelings.

In this light, Li Huiying was not simply imitating and copying the structural model of Wang Yao's "Draft History of Chinese New Literature," but rather recognizing the literary view it revealed. This is the attraction and reference of the similar artistic pursuits of the two historians, and it is also the reason why "History of Modern Chinese Literature" discusses Lu Xun's novels and essays in a special section, while other writers rarely have this kind of "treatment." Understanding this, readers can also understand why the literature and art of the liberated areas and the Yan 'an Rectification Movement in the 1940s can enter the field of vision of his literary history, while in other new literary history works overseas, they are basically ignored. Li Huiying has an affirmative attitude towards the popularization of literature and art. He affirms the view of literature

and art serving the public and the popularization of literature and art proposed at the Yan 'an Forum on Literature and Art, which is essentially determined by his literary view and is also the reason for his deep identification with Wang Yao's new literary history.

In the comparison of "similar literary views," Li Huiying regarded literature as a tool, believing that literature is a vessel for the national consciousness and a call for the unity of the entire nation in the fight against Japanese aggression. This is similar to Mao Zedong's definition of the function of literature in "On New Democracy." He believed that the instrumental role is an essential attribute of art forms like literature that carry human emotions and consciousness, and that literature naturally records this emotional process when facing social change and national collective consciousness unrest. This is fundamentally consistent with Mao Zedong's theory of the "two armies." Li Huiying's view of literature is a spiritual product of his response as a writer to the great changes of the times. The view of literary history, based on this literary view, naturally highlights the revolutionary characteristics of literary history. Wang Yao's "Draft History of Chinese New Literature" uses the theory of the New Democratic Revolution as its framework, highlighting the leadership ideology of the proletariat in Marxism, which is an "application" of external theory to the writing of new literary history, reflecting the influence of value positions on the writing of literary history. Li Huiying, on the other hand, uses his literary view to drive the construction of a new view of literary history, which is an expression of internal identification and externalized writing. Although it is similar in form to the "Draft History of Chinese New Literature," this is a fundamental difference.

Despite the many references and similarities, the style of "History of Modern Chinese Literature" cannot be obliterated. In the preface of the work, Li Huiying clarified the nature of this textbook, regarding "History of Modern Chinese Literature" as a continuation of "History of Chinese Literature," rather than, like Wang Yao, trying to define the quality of the new literary history in the preface of "Draft History of Chinese New Literature." Li Huiying emphasized the social revolutionary role of the new literature, but only discussed it as an inevitable trend in the development of Chinese literature. Moreover, in the evaluation of specific writers and works, he tried to be as objective and calm as possible, with very few subjective comments. If there were any, they were only brief quotes from others, which to some extent maintained the objectivity of the historical writing. Some critics have pointed out that this kind of discussion, which lacks the historian's own concepts and only compiles materials by listing writers and works, is difficult to arouse readers' interest. However, the author's avoidance of excessive subjective emotions and attempt to present the development of new literature more objectively is also a reflection of the unique value of this historical work. Drawing on the "tradition" formed by Wang Yao's "Draft History of Chinese New Literature," but not limited to Wang's work, Li Huiying made his own voice heard in the compilation of new literary history in the 1950s to 1970s.

In addition to Li Huiying, Cao Juren's "Fifty Years of Literary Circles" is also influenced by Wang Yao's historical writing model. Although "Fifty Years of Literary Circles" presents historical facts in the form of "memoirs," which is different from the general "literary history" works that systematically discuss the development of literature in a divided and chaptered manner, its way of classifying different literary forms to show the achievements of new literature and summarizing the laws of the evolution of new literature all give it strong historical characteristics. Due to space limitations, I will not elaborate further here.

## 4. New Literary History as a Textbook

### 4.1. Teaching and Politics: The Genesis of Chinese New Literary History

The emergence of Chinese new literary history was primarily to serve teaching. Works such as Zhou Zuoren's "The Origins and Development of Chinese New Literature," Zhu Ziqing's "Outline for the Study of Chinese New Literature," and Wang Zhepu's "History of the Chinese New Literary Movement," as well as some literary histories compiled after the founding of the People's Republic of China, were mostly teaching materials or textbooks written for lectures. This role and positioning are also reflected in the writing of new literary history in Hong Kong.

The establishment of new literature as a discipline in Hong Kong occurred in the 1960s. This is related not only to the tradition of academic development in Hong Kong but also to the government's rule. In the 1950s to 1970s, the ideological confrontation between the mainland and Taiwan was extremely severe. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the compilation of "History of Modern Chinese



Literature" was presented as a cultural achievement of the victory of the New Democratic Revolution. The writing of "History of Modern Chinese Literature" was defined as the history of literary and artistic achievements obtained under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party in the revolution, the history of the growth of literature during the New Democratic Revolution period in our country, and also the history of the development of Marxist literary theory and Mao Zedong's literary thoughts in the struggle. At that time, the Kuomintang's cultural policies in Taiwan were against the new literature of the mainland. Many professors teaching in universities in Taiwan did not mention new literature and continued the teaching tradition of the Department of Chinese at Peking University in the 1930s, which was mainly focused on classical literature, and new literature was isolated. [11]

#### **4.2. The Flourishing of New Literature in Hong Kong: A Confluence of Freedom and Academia**

At that time, the Hong Kong region was detached from the disputes of different ideologies and had a great degree of freedom. Combined with its nature as a British colony, under the premise of maintaining the rule of the British government, some literary and artistic activities were allowed. In this way, the British government has always treated new literature with an attitude of "leaving some room." When new literature first entered Hong Kong in the 1920s and 1930s, the British government, in order to prevent the national consciousness of "new literature" from interfering with its "rule," mainly focused on traditional Chinese literature in the curriculum settings of primary and secondary schools and universities, leading to a tradition in Hong Kong's Chinese education that emphasized classical Chinese literature. After the 1950s, with the takeoff of Hong Kong's economy, on the one hand, the government devoted more attention to the field of economic construction and limited its attention to cultural and educational undertakings, which allowed academia to have further space for free development; on the other hand, the government also had a new understanding of new literature and was willing to widely accept works that did not have a strong national ideology. According to Chen Guo qiu in "A Preliminary Analysis of the Inheritance of Literary Education and Literary Classics: The Acceptance of Modern Chinese Literature in Hong Kong Junior High School Curriculum," among the Chinese teaching materials for both Chinese and English middle schools promulgated by the Hong Kong Education Department in 1956, there were 37 works by modern writers out of 87 liberal arts teaching materials. A notable feature of these articles is that they have no obvious political color, and writers such as Zhu Zi qing, Ye Sheng tao, Bing Xin, Hu Shi, Xu Dishan, Xu Zhimo, and Xia Mianzun all have works selected. This trend marks the good development prospect of new literature in Hong Kong and also ushered in the opening of new literature courses in Chinese universities in Hong Kong in the 1960s. Hong Kong scholar Huang Ji chi said in "Some Reflections on 'Research on Modern Chinese Literature'" that the opening of the "Modern Chinese Literature" course is not unrelated to the social background of the mainland at that time:

In the mid-1960s, when the study of "Modern Chinese literature" was taking shape in Hong Kong, it was at the same time as the "Cultural Revolution" on the mainland. Because the facts on the mainland were not fully understood, it was inevitable that there would be various interpretations of the Cultural Revolution, and with the world trend of thought to make a variety of interpretation. In the field of modern literature, there is a sudden upsurge in reading and discussing the literature of the 1930s (in fact, not only the 1930s). The formal opening of the college "Modern Literature" subject, how much because of students and "Social" promotion. Early teachers and researchers, or well-known new literary writers, or people living in Hong Kong writing, as well as a group of local college graduates... So "Chinese modern literature" in the University Department of Chinese once became the most "Sense of existence", national feelings, historical concerns of the discipline. [12]

The cited text mentions that researchers in modern Chinese literature are "prominent new literature writers," "local Hong Kong literary figures," and "a group of locally college-educated individuals," which shows the diversity of their composition. This represents a complementary research pattern between "society" and "academia," a relatively free and flexible research model that lacks academic standards but can overcome the rigidity of academic research and move towards a broader research space. The trend of complementary research between "society" and "academia" in the study of new literary history, in addition to the active participation of the research subjects, is more favorable due to the change in the research environment at that time, which opened up channels for the study of new literature in Hong Kong. Under

these conditions, the new literature courses at the Chinese University of Hong Kong were successfully established, initiating a new tradition in the curriculum setting of new literature courses in Hong Kong's colleges and universities.

### 4.3. Establishment and Impact of Modern Chinese Literature Courses in Hong Kong

The Chinese University of Hong Kong was established by the merger of New Asia College, United College, and Chung Chi College. Before the founding of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, each institution had its own development system. The curriculum settings for Chinese education also had their own traditions, and the acceptance of new literature courses varied. New Asia College started new literature relatively late, and it was not until 1973, when it moved to the new campus, that courses such as "Modern Chinese Literature," "Contemporary Chinese Literature," and "Modern Writers" were added to the Chinese curriculum. According to Chen Ping yuan, in the "New Asia College Profile" printed on July 1, 1955, the most basic curriculum for freshmen was 14 credits: "University Chinese" had 8 credits, and "Selected Works from Past Dynasties" had 6 credits. "University Chinese" and "Selected Works from Past Dynasties" mainly used the classics of Chinese literature from various dynasties as the main content for students to learn. The new literature created in vernacular Chinese had no place to stand at this time, and this awkward situation for new literature did not improve until 1973. Chung Chi College, a merger of Christian universities, did not have a deep connection with traditional Chinese culture, and the "Freshman Chinese" course also had 8 credits. In the "Chung Chi Overview (1957-1958)," there is a list of new literary works taught, and "Sophomore Chinese" even explicitly stipulates the teaching of modern literature. In the following years, the proportion of literature curriculum settings continued to increase. In 1965, Huang Jichi joined the faculty of Chung Chi College. As a famous local Hong Kong scholar specializing in new literature, his arrival greatly promoted the establishment of new literature courses at Chung Chi College. In the following years, "Contemporary Chinese Literature" gained a foothold in the Chinese Department with a curriculum arrangement of 6 credits and 2 semesters, completely consistent with the curriculum and credit arrangements of the Chinese Department of major universities in the mainland that value the discipline of "Contemporary Chinese Literature." The Chinese Department of United College also started the "History of Chinese New Literature" course in 1967. Li Huiying was invited to teach "History of Chinese New Literature" at United College. To meet the needs of teaching, he published "History of Modern Chinese Literature" at the East Asia Press in 1970. In the following years, the curriculum setting of "History of Chinese New Literature" was continuously improved, and the status of new literary history as a major course in the Chinese Department of Hong Kong's colleges and universities was established.

Li Huiying's "History of Modern Chinese Literature" was born at the time when the "History of Modern Chinese Literature" course was established in Hong Kong. As a textbook, "History of Modern Chinese Literature" naturally differs greatly from "expert literary history" and "popular literary history." However, as the earliest work of new literary history to appear in Hong Kong, its pioneering significance and the academic environment it touched upon at the time of its creation are invisible indicators that must be referenced in the continued study of new literary history in Hong Kong. In fact, the establishment of the "History of Modern Chinese Literature" course in Hong Kong has played a certain role in promoting the study of new literature and new literary history in Hong Kong, changing the previous situation where the entire society in Hong Kong knew very little about new literature, allowing the intellectual class in colleges and universities to touch the true face of Chinese new literature, and making new literature no longer confined to the research of a group of mainland scholars who came to Hong Kong. The establishment of the "History of Modern Chinese Literature" course has made an indelible contribution to the further dissemination of new literature in Hong Kong, and the establishment of the course, in addition to the permission of the Hong Kong British authorities at the time, was also influenced by the curriculum system on the mainland, especially the establishment of new literature courses in universities.

As a textbook-style literary history, it carries too many messages of ideological concepts, which is the most concerned part of ideology. In addition to the influence of the trend of "Western learning spreading to the East" and learning from Europe and Japan's new-style teaching, there is another important reason for the earliest establishment of the "literary history" course in Chinese universities: "It can tell a long history of Chinese literary tradition" [13]. At the end of the Qing Dynasty, the rule of the Qing government was on the

verge of crisis, and the call for reform was rising one after another. Learning from the West's system, culture, and technology has become the pursuit of people from all walks of life at the time to realize the dream of a powerful country. Therefore, the writing of "History of Chinese Literature," narrating the tradition of Chinese culture, showing the charm of the brilliant and colorful ancient Chinese culture, enhancing the intelligence and creative vitality of the Chinese nation, and strengthening the national self-esteem and confidence, and revitalizing the national spirit and patriotic enthusiasm of society has become an urgent task. As one of the pioneers of "History of Chinese Literature," Huang Ren said that through the history of literature, it can be known that "Our country can be said to be a continuous system for thousands of generations, touching people's patriotic and protective feelings" [14]. Lin Chuan jia's "History of Chinese Literature," written in 1910, was compiled according to the literary history course of Jing Shi Da Xue Tang, carrying the expectations of the Qing government for cultivating talents in literary history. In fact, since the establishment of the modern Chinese education system, the setting of courses has been closely linked with patriotism and national sentiments. From the Opium War in 1840 to the victory of the Anti-Japanese War in 1945, the spirit of resistance that the Chinese nation burst out in the face of foreign aggression and oppression over a hundred years has been passed on through education, especially the literary education in universities, which carries the national consciousness of "protecting the country and family." Even today, the patriotic consciousness inherited by literary education continues, which is the foundation of the existence of a nation and has an unshakable position in the entire education system. It can be seen that "The life of 'History of Chinese Literature' has always been accompanied by school teaching since modern times" [13]. This is the side of literary history that carries the national and patriotic consciousness. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the relationship between literary history and national ideology has become even closer.

#### 4.4. National Identity and Ideological Reflections in Hong Kong's New Literary History

In 1949, with the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the new national government's management of education and culture was reflected in the compilation of literary history. The ancient part of the "History of Chinese Literature," from the pre-Qin period to the end of the Qing Dynasty, continued the national consciousness and patriotic sentiments from the founding period of the "History of Chinese Literature." A notable feature of the compilation of new literary history from the 1950s to the 1970s was that it became a discourse expression of the national ideology. To highlight the new achievements in the literary and art circles, the "new literature" created in vernacular Chinese since the "May Fourth" movement was categorized as "modern literature" and "contemporary literature," thus naturally forming the "History of Modern Chinese Literature" and "History of Contemporary Chinese Literature." This made the history of new literature a reflection of the literary achievements in a certain stage of social development. The "History of Modern Chinese Literature" became a part of the history of China's New Democratic Revolution, recording the historical achievements in literature and art during the New Democratic Revolution; the "History of Contemporary Chinese Literature," on the other hand, was the writing of literary achievements made by the People's Republic of China in the socialist stage. Although Hong Kong's writing of new literary history maintained a certain distance from ideology, its existence as a course in a culturally free context has attracted more attention to the voices of different compilers, which in turn greatly expanded the influence and dissemination of new literature.

As a textbook, the history of literature plays an important role in stimulating national identity and reflecting the will of the state. Every leading regime will not ignore the role of literary history in building national consciousness, and the inclusion of literary history in the curriculum arrangement is a manifestation of its importance. By exploring the compilation of Hong Kong's new literary history in the 1950s to 1970s, in terms of inheriting the classical, drawing on the mainland, and following the mainland in the establishment of new literary disciplines, it can be seen more clearly that although the writers of Hong Kong's new literary history at this time had different ideas and value positions from the mainland in terms of historical management, they had a lot in common with the mainland in essence. The mainland cultural factors and educational foundations that Hong Kong's new literary writers themselves have determined that their new literary history works reveal the influence of tradition either explicitly or potentially. In summary,

Hong Kong's research and writing of new literary history at this time not only have their particularities but also contain the preservation of tradition.

## 5. Conclusion

In summary, the writing of the history of new literature in the Hong Kong region, although influenced by a specific political and cultural context, has also shown unique academic value and research characteristics. The article not only reveals the complex relationship between the writing of literary history and the context of the times, cultural traditions, and individual academic pursuits, but also reflects the development of literary history as a discipline and its evolution under different social and historical backgrounds. Through the examination of the writing of the history of new literature in Hong Kong, we can have a deeper understanding of the regional and temporal characteristics of literary historical research, as well as the challenges and choices faced by literary historians at different historical stages.

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