

Marxist Philosophy's impact on the development of Chinese reportage style

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Abstract: Marxism and its philosophy exert an important influence on the development of reportage. This phenomenon is more prominent especially in China. Reportage has the essence of dialectics, and it is because of the unique content, the needs of the external form and internal choices that the reportage text development and the practice of the writers' reportage should absorb and use the dialectical materialism epistemology and methodology to realize the healthy development of the text itself and the social value of the works guided by the scientific theory. This is what reportage differs from the rest of the texts from the start. As China is highly developed in terms of reportage and it has had tremendous achievements made by generations of writers in the past one hundred years, it should undertake the historical responsibility to promote common development of the world's reportage. The great development of China also brings a brilliant future to the cause of reportage. Therefore, Chinese reportage, which is closely linked to the great "Chinese dream", will become increasingly mature and perfect both with the practice of the majority of writers and with the appreciation of vast numbers of readers.

Keywords: Chinese reportage, reportage style development, Marxist philosophy

1. Introduction

1.1. The Birth of Reportage Literature and Its Modern Industrial Root

The emergence and development of Marxism have had a profound impact on the formation and evolution of the reportage literary style. It is a widely accepted academic view that "reportage literature" is not an invention of China. In the 1930s, the renowned Chinese scholar Yuan Shu said, "The term 'reportage literature' is still quite new in China... Sometimes it is also referred to as 'correspondence literature,' which is a translation of 'REPORTAGE'; and this REPORTAGE originates from the word 'REPORT' (report), a new term. Naturally, this form of literature did not exist from ancient times. It is a product of modern industrial society." [1] The Japanese literary artist Mr. Kawaguchi Hiro also emphasized that the "literary form of reportage, of course, did not exist before. It has always been a product of modern industrial society. After the development of printing, all documents were disseminated in the form of movable type printing, and this gave rise to modern prose—commonly referred to as REPORTAGE (reportage literature—my note), which is a sibling of this form." [2] As early as the 17th and 18th centuries, non-fiction literary works in European countries (i.e., reportage literature) had a certain social and ideological foundation, which is directly related to the social background of the industrial revolution in these countries. The development and change of social productive forces triggered the famous Renaissance, and even Goethe, known for romanticism, proposed to create works that could directly record real life. At that time, the works of European writers, such as Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" and "Journal of the Plague Year," German writer Georg Forster's "A Journey Down the Rhine" and "A Voyage Around the World," and American writer Mark Twain's "Life on the Mississippi," although they are all novels and travelogues, are called "new journalism" written with "literary techniques." The reason these works are called "new journalism" rather than "novels," in addition to "true record," is that most of the authors were newspapermen, and the works were also published in newspapers. Their "true record" and the news nature of the newspapers made them "refreshingly new" compared to the purely fictional

novels of the past, and they were more satisfying to read. It can be said that the material carrier of the emergence of reportage literature—the appearance of newspapers—has achieved the first and most prominent element of reportage literature—newsworthiness, which is a distinctive feature deeply branded since the birth of reportage literature. With the rapid development of modern industry, newspapers and periodicals flourished and prepared sufficient material conditions for the emergence of reportage literature. This material basis broke the conservative and closed state of traditional literature that was difficult to spread rapidly, intensifying and promoting the development of literary forms and content towards the "real" and "fast" newsworthiness of literary style. Reportage literature with a distinct "news" color was born under this material preparation.

1.2. Marxism and the Emergence of Modern Reportage Literature

The material carrier of reportage literature is the newspaper, but it does not mean that reportage literature emerged as soon as newspapers appeared. "Before news and newspapers could provide a possibility for the expression of reportage literature, reportage literature could only be a fantasy. ... Before the term 'reportage literature' came into being, even if there were many works similar to or close to reportage literature, ... they were not reportage literature." [3] So, when did reportage literature become a truly new literary form? There is not much disagreement in the international academic community on this issue, because whether someone identifies Jack London's "The People of the Abyss," published in 1903 in the United States, as "the earliest reportage literature," or Gorky refers to Turgenev's "A Sportsman's Sketches" as reportage literature in form, or the French claim that Zola is the "founder of modern reportage literature," and so on, a clear common fact is: the works of these writers were all published in modern times, in the social turmoil and changes brought about by the industrial revolution after the vigorous development of the printing industry, producing "documentary works." And it is precisely because of the "documentariness" that some people always bring up works like China's "Records of the Grand Historian" to illustrate that China's reportage literature has "existed since ancient times," with the prominent representative being Liu Bai Yu [4]. In response to this disagreement, Mr. Mao Dun gave a good answer in the February 20, 1937, issue 11 of "Zhong Liu" magazine in his article "On 'Reportage Literature'": "Every era produces its characteristic literature. 'Reportage' is the characteristic literary style produced by our hurried and changeable era." This actually points out the two major elements of reportage literature: one is its contemporary realism, and the other is its news timeliness. The difference between documentary literature like "Records of the Grand Historian" and the true meaning of reportage literature is mainly in these two points, that is, ignoring its news nature. The contemporary famous literary scholar Mr. Feng Mu also emphasized: "Reportage literature... is a new literary form. I cannot agree... that reportage literature is a literary variety that has existed since ancient times." [5] Therefore, we believe that modern reportage literature should have the following decisive factors in its internal connotation: First, the emergence and prosperity of the newspaper industry caused by the development of the printing industry, and the news consciousness of the newspaper creative subject that followed; second, the social, political, cultural, and economic shocks during the transformation or intense change period, and the active expectations of the audience for in-depth reportage style; third, the emergence of a considerable number of writing subjects who take Western democratic ideas, including following the thinking of Marxism-Leninism, as their own way of thinking, and begin to constantly reflect on and criticize social reality and demand reform of the current situation. Among them, the birth of Marxist theory and its subsequent widespread dissemination and development around the world, has played a guiding and influencing role in spirit and practice for the formal establishment of this literary form of reportage literature from "vassal to a great power" and its continuous maturity.

Before the mid-19th century, just like the European bourgeois revolutions, the European literary movements had not yet obtained a scientific theory that could profoundly reveal the essence of capitalist society and guide the direction of human social development. The birth of Marxism was like a bright lamp in the dark, leading the social changes in Europe and the world towards the development of overthrowing the rule of capitalism. The literary revolutions, including the "new journalism" that was flourishing in Europe, also underwent qualitative changes. Among these, the influence of Marxism on the reportage literature, which later rapidly became an independent new literary form, came from two important aspects: First, the proletarian revolutionary leaders such as Marx, Engels, and Lenin strongly advocated writing "real" literary

works that reflect social changes. Second, the initiators of Marxist doctrine themselves wrote works with passionate political artistic forms. These two points, when concentrated, can be summarized as: the emergence of Marxism made both the content and form of the "new journalism" works that had appeared in Europe undergo qualitative changes, with authors clearly showing a stance of praising or criticizing social reality. Since then, almost all outstanding works of reportage literature and the creative attitudes of their authors have shown either a praising or a critical stance towards social reality—a hundred years later, if we talk about the content of reportage literature, it is still these two major factions.

1.3. Marxism's Influence on the Pioneers of Reportage Literature

The world-renowned master of reportage literature and the founder of international reportage, Egon Erwin Kisch, is a prime example of someone whose career in reportage was influenced by Marxist thought. Born in Prague in 1885 under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the young Kisch served in the military and then became a journalist, working for several newspapers. Later, he went to Germany, the epicenter of World War I, where he witnessed the turbulent state of society and was deeply influenced by Marxist thought: "Nothing could make 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles' clearer than Karl Marx, with a passion full of the call to battle, compelling me to truly expose this ugly world!"[6] In 1908, Kisch published "Bits and Pieces from the Streets of Prague," followed by a series of works such as "Adventures in Prague," "Soldiers in the Prague Legion," which boldly exposed the dark side of social life in Prague and various ugly phenomena in the army, truthfully depicting events of poverty, crime, and military corruption, and providing incisive analysis and discussion of the social roots of these phenomena. After experiencing World War I and the revolutionary workers' movement, Kisch's thoughts and perspectives became even more incisive. His later works, such as "The Roaring Reporter," "World Adventures," "Paradise America," "Dramatic Changes in Asia," and after coming to China, the works published in 1933, "Secret China," "No Entry," "Landing in Australia," "Strange Tales of the Square," are all true and specific in content, full of emotion and passion, and flexible and changeable in form, integrating combativeness, criticism, and artistry, and are recognized by later generations as models of world reportage literature. Kisch thus became the founder and master of international reportage literature, "he created this new era's literary genre of reportage literature"[7].

Another contemporary of Kisch and the author of the famous "Ten Days That Shook the World," the American writer John Reed, is a renowned reportage literary figure who was influenced by Marxist thought. Reed's work is a reflection of his personal experience during Lenin's leadership of the October Revolution. After Lenin read this work, he personally wrote a preface in the American edition: "I wholeheartedly recommend it to the workers of the world. ... It provides a correct and exceptionally vivid description of events of great significance for understanding what the proletariat and the dictatorship of the proletariat are." [8] Lenin's endorsement had an immeasurable impact at the time, both in the Soviet Union and around the world. Especially in the cradle of socialism, the Soviet Union, this was like a literary spring rain, enabling the new literary form of reportage to quickly have a broad impact in the literary community and society. In the Soviet Union, literary masters like Gorky also took up their pens to write reportage; and in countries like the United States, which were hostile to the socialist bloc, reportage also became the most sought-after works for a time. This trend continued into the 1960s and 1970s, when American "non-fiction literature" (reportage) reached its peak, sweeping away novels and film and television works that had always been dominant in the literary world, and even natural science readers had to give way to it. If it were not for the technological revolution in the media industry (the popularization of online information and television media), "non-fiction literature" (reportage) might still be leading the trend in American society. In addition to "Ten Days That Shook the World," there is another "reportage" work worth mentioning at the time, which is the American journalist Edgar Snow's "Red Star Over China." This was the first time that the heroic chapter of the 25,000-mile Long March experienced by the Chinese Communists under the leadership of Comrade Mao Zedong was truly recorded in the form of reportage literature.

The formation and development of Western reportage literature, represented by Europe and America (also known as "non-fiction literature"), especially its process of becoming an independent genre and reaching maturity, is an objective reflection in the minds of writers who are good at thinking and have the heart for reform, of the material world and the turbulent and changing society. The emergence and

maturation of reportage literature evolved and developed alongside the dramatic social changes of the time. The birth of Marxism, along with its incisive critique of the old world's materialist ideas and the epistemology and methodology for observing and analyzing the world, undoubtedly provided writers who sought human reform and progress with a weapon of thought, making their works more vivid, profound, mature, and colorful. Many writers used the technique of "real people and real events" to express this great revolutionary movement and literary struggle of criticizing the old world and creating a new one. This made reportage literature quickly become "a true reflection of the people's voice, recording the footsteps of history." Its "social value and role are no longer limited to newsworthiness; it transcends time and borders, calling for the proletariat, oppressed nations, and revolutionary people to engage in the struggle for liberation." [9] It thus became magnificent and rapidly rose to prominence as an independent new literary form, leading the literary field. Therefore, can we conclude that the emergence of Marxism played a promoting role in the ideological theory, spiritual preparation, and artistic expression of reportage literature that was brewing and forming at the time, and from its birth to the changes over the past century, the pursuit of truth and sincere critical attitude towards social malpractices that it has maintained is the effect of Marxist thought in the development of reportage literature. Although it cannot be affirmed that all reportage literary works after the birth of Marxism expressed the will of the proletariat, or that reportage writers became proletarian revolutionaries, one thing is certain: most reportage writers tirelessly pursue the spirit of expressing truth, advocating for the weak, and dedicating themselves to the cause of human social progress in their works, which is almost unmatched by participants in any other literary genre. In addition to "red writers" like Kisch and Volek (the author of "Reportage from the Gallows"), many other writers who created outstanding reportage works, such as Capote, the author of "In Cold Blood," Mailer, the author of "The Armies of the Night," Wolfe, the author of "Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test," Jack, the author of "The People of the Abyss," Sinclair, the author of "The Jungle," Hersey, the author of "Hiroshima," Schlesinger, the author of "The Disuniting of America," Follett, the author of "On Wings of Eagles," and Ryan, the author of "The Last Day," are all Western writers and free writers. Their political positions may be completely anti-Marxist and anti-socialist, but this does not prevent them from creating outstanding reportage works that have influenced the history of world literature. Marx himself once highly praised such writers: "The political and social truths they reveal in their excellent and vividly descriptive books are more than all professional politicians, politicians, and moralists put together." [10] This is the special contribution of reportage writers to society and the cause of human progress and the special artistic charm of reportage literature.

1.4. Marxism and the Evolution of Chinese Reportage Literature

The development and rise of China's reportage literature from the early 20th century to the present should be an important part of the history of world reportage literature, and the development of Chinese reportage literature has hardly been separated from the guidance and influence of Marxist thought. First of all, the writers who participated in the early creation of Chinese reportage literature were themselves Marxists. Although some people also attribute Liang Qichao's "New Continent Travel Notes" and Wang Tao's "Travel Notes" to the early Chinese reportage literature, their works, influenced by Western bourgeois liberal thought, played an initiating and catalytic role in the development of Chinese reportage literature. However, because the bourgeois democratic revolution they were involved in never set off a magnificent struggle in China, a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country, their perspective and viewpoint on understanding the world and society could not dissect the essence of Chinese society more profoundly, hence their works were not spread for a longer time. On the contrary, a group of Chinese Communists who accepted Marxist doctrine brought the new literary form of Western reportage to China in the early 20th century while spreading Marxist thought, with their creative passion and literary talent. Among them, Qu Qiu bai and Zhou Enlai, two proletarian revolutionary leaders, laid a foundational ideological and directional model for the development of Chinese reportage literature in the next hundred years during their youth. From 1920 to 1924, Qu Qiu bai inspected the former Soviet Union, the first socialist country in human history. He was filled with emotion about the success of the revolution and construction under the leadership of Lenin, and wrote "The Diary of a Journey to the Motherland of the Hungry" and "The History of the Red Capital" in the form of a travelogue. Although the author himself referred to these two works as journalistic reports at the time, overall, these two texts are more inclined to be travel essays. The difference is that various literary

genres such as poetry, novels, and prose poetry, as well as non-literary genres such as speeches and aphorisms, are introduced and integrated in a standardized manner in the text, making it more cross-genre characteristic of reportage literature. These are two works that promote the socialist revolution under Lenin's leadership and Marxist thought in the form of cross-genre literature. Zhou Enlai's "Travel Communications in Europe," written in early 1920, is a deep "report" based on the facts of his own study and work-study life in Europe and the Chinese students studying in France fighting for their own destiny. The documentary nature of the text content is greater than the artistry of the text. If we evaluate their works together, the former is a revolutionary with an artistic temperament, and the "literariness" of his works is stronger; the latter is a pragmatic politician, and his works pay more attention to objectivity and record. If we could combine their works of different styles, it would be the mature model of Chinese reportage literature later, that is, the combination of mature literariness and newsworthiness.

After the birth of the revolutionary literary front, writers used reportage as one of the combat weapons to overthrow the reactionary ruling class, which led to the rapid development of reportage. In the process of creating reportage, writers evolved from unconscious Marxists to conscious and steadfast proletarian revolutionaries. In August 1930, the "Left Alliance" Executive Committee's resolution "New Situations in the Proletarian Literary Movement and Our Tasks" and another resolution by the "Left Alliance" Executive Committee in November 1931, "New Tasks of the Chinese Proletarian Revolutionary Literature," both clearly advocated for writers to use reportage as a new genre in the revolutionary struggle to participate in the revolutionary cause and write outstanding works. This led to the saying that Chinese reportage was the "light cavalry of the revolution" and a "combat weapon." Under such circumstances, after the Battle of Shanghai in 1932, the first collection of reportage edited by Ah Ying was published, titled "From Shanghai Incidents and Reportage."

1.5. The Evolution of Chinese Reportage: From 'The Bonded Laborers' to 'The Goldbach Conjecture'

Reportage in China became more widely recognized and accepted with the publication of "The Bonded Laborers" by Xia Yan in 1936. As a writer associated with the "Left Alliance," Xia Yan conducted arduous field investigations and lived among the underprivileged in Shanghai, specifically in a Japanese-owned cotton mill. Through the depiction of the tragic lives of bonded laborers, he exposed the heinous social system of the time. "The Bonded Laborers," being a true record of real life and focusing on character portrayal, greatly surpassed general news reports in terms of ideological content and artistic level. It also had stronger literary and readability qualities compared to ordinary novels, representing the highest standard of early Chinese reportage and is widely recognized as a symbolic work in the formation of the reportage genre in China. Xia Yan's "The Bonded Laborers," like the reportage of Gustav Regler, is a complete work needed for the proletarian revolutionary struggle advocated by Marx and Engels, which aims to "smash the old world and create a new one." As a result, it became a creative model influencing generations of reportage writers. Following Xia Yan, before the establishment of New China, the creation of Chinese reportage had become a "very popular cultural movement," with famous works such as Fan Changjiang's "The Northwest Corner of China," Zhou Libo's "War Diary," Ding Ling's "Sketch of Peng Dehuai," and Zhou Erfu's "Bethune." By this time, Chinese reportage had not only established itself as an independent genre but also shone brightly.

After the establishment of New China, reportage played a role in the socialist construction under the guidance of Mao Zedong's literary and artistic thoughts of "serving the people" and "facing the workers, peasants, and soldiers." During this period, works such as Wei Wei's "Who Are the Most lovely People," Xu Chi's "Under the Qilian Mountains," Ba Jin's "The Story of Auschwitz Concentration Camp," Wang Shi and others' "For Sixty-One Class Brothers," and Mu Qing and others' "A Good Role Model for County Party Secretaries - Jiao Yulu" had a profound influence on several generations. Reportage became linked with the socialist heroes that emerged in this era, and praise became the main theme of reportage. As a literary form, reportage also often became a propaganda tool within the mainstream ideological system, replacing its original critical and supervisory nature with compliance. Strangely, although reportage "touched people's hearts" during this period, its status as an independent genre was ruthlessly stripped away. The independent Chinese "reportage" genre, which had been established since the 1930s,

disappeared during these years, being categorized under "feature articles," "essays," and "correspondence," which is a rare phenomenon in the history of reportage. It can be seen that the "leftist" ideology not only had a counterproductive effect on China's social progress but also hindered the development of a genre. During the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, the fate of reportage was a further deepening and extension of this phenomenon, a literary anomaly of a certain historical period that deserves our attention.

The emergence of "The Goldbach Conjecture" symbolizes the comprehensive revival and maturity of Chinese reportage under the influence of Deng Xiaoping's theory. The dramatic social changes of the new era have made the forms of expression of this new genre more diversified. Deng Xiaoping's theory is the development of Marxism in China, and its important hallmark and outstanding contribution is the establishment of a complete theoretical system for building socialism with Chinese characteristics. Among them, the theoretical expressions that science is the primary productive force and intellectuals are part of the working people are significant contributions of the second generation of Chinese leaders led by Deng Xiaoping to Marxist theory. In January 1978, Xu Chi published "The Goldbach Conjecture" in "People's Literature," which immediately had a strong impact on society and readers. Its important significance lies in: it broke through the literary and artistic taboos set during the "Gang of Four" period, which prohibited the portrayal of real people and events, and the writing about living people; it warmly praised the spirit of intellectuals and their persistent pursuit of science as the positive and main content of the image; it criticized the fallacy that intellectuals who were dedicated to scientific research were labeled as "only specialized and not red" through the real-life experiences of the protagonist Chen Jing run; it severely criticized the behavior of the "Cultural Revolution" that hindered the development of productive forces through the real experiences of the protagonist, passionately calling for society to respect intellectuals and science. The appearance of "The Goldbach Conjecture" reflects that under the influence of Deng Xiaoping's theoretical thoughts, the development of Chinese reportage has entered a new historical period of comprehensive revival. As a new genre, reportage has since established its unchangeable position in the history of Chinese literature and Chinese society. After "The Goldbach Conjecture," the theme of intellectuals became popular. In addition to Xu Chi's own creations such as "The Light of Geology" and "The Evergreen Tree of Life," there were also works like Huang Zongying's "The Love of Geese," Chen Zuo fen's "The Motherland is Above All," and Huang Gang's "The New Rise of the Asian Continent"; after Tao Si liang's "A Letter Finally Sent" was published, the theme of "intellectuals" suddenly expanded to the rectification of the "Cultural Revolution," resulting in a series of excellent works such as Yang Kuang man and Guo Baocheng's "Destiny," Zhang Shu Shen's "The Song of Righteousness" written for the female fighter Zhang Zhi Xin who sacrificed herself for the defense of truth, Luo Haiou's "General Peng Returns to His Hometown," and Yu Luo Jin's "A Winter's Fairy Tale."

1.6. Chinese Reportage in the Era of Reform: From Deng Xiaoping's Theory to the 'Three Represents'

Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping's reform initiative, a wave of change washed over China, and reportage with themes of reform once again took the mainstream stage. Notable works include Zhang Qie's "Hot Current," Li You's "Ode to Middle Age," "The Sword of Pride," Li Yanguo's "On This Land," "The Great Trend of Chinese Farmers," Yang Shou Shong's "Suzhou Fellow Villagers," Yuan Hou Chun's "Million-Man Army Reduction," "The First Secretary of the Provincial Committee," Lu Guang's "Chinese Girls," and Huang Zongying's "The Little Wooden House," among others. After 1986, with the rectification of past errors and a historical reflection advocating for reform and opening up, social life underwent transformation, and the social contradictions during the transitional period became intricate and profound, injecting new vitality into the creation of reportage. The main focus shifted to reflecting and revealing deep-seated social contradictions. Critical reportage, exemplified by Liu Binyan's "Between Man and Monster," came to the fore, along with Zhao Yu's "China's Vital Issues" and "The Dream of a Strong Country," Sha Qing's "Beijing Out of Balance," Su Xiao kang's "Sacred Anxiety Record" and "Yin and Yang Great Fission," Lu Yue Jiang's "In the Name of the People," Qian Gang's "Tangshan Earthquake," and Xu Gang's "The Awakening of the Woodcutter," etc.

Entering the 1990s, with Jiang Zemin as the general secretary of the third generation of leaders, the banner of Deng Xiaoping's theory was upheld high, guiding the people to build a socialist market economy. Chinese society rapidly developed, and the forms of media and people's reading methods diversified unprecedentedly with changes in lifestyle. Reportage no longer merely followed political and situational changes. The independent thinking and creative forms of writers made reportage present a colorful scene, either panoramically scanning society, focusing on a certain event for in-depth dissection, or reflecting on a certain historical event, or raising a warning sign when people are confused and puzzled about new events in the new century. Influential works at this time included Dong Han he's "The Hardship of the Female Soldiers of the Western Route Army," Deng Xian's "Chinese Educated Youth Dream," Huang Jiren's "The General's Decisive Battle is Not Only on the Battlefield," Li Ming sheng's "Aerospace Quartet," He Jianming's "The Republic in Emergency," and Xu Jian's "The Long Sword of a Great Country," etc.

At the turn of the century, writers' attention began to shift towards the living conditions of ordinary people, vulnerable groups, and the direction of anti-corruption, especially under the influence of the important thought of the "Three Represents." A number of excellent works revitalized reportage in the era of mass reading. The most influential works include He Jianming's "Tears Are Gold," "China's College Entrance Examination Report," and "The Fundamental Interest," Huang Chuan hui's "Documentary of the Hope Project," Yi He's "Black Face," Yang Li Guang's "Home Without a Soul," and Wang Hong jia's "The Storm of Wisdom," etc.

There is no doubt that throughout the new era in China, Deng Xiaoping's theory and the "Three Represents" important thought have made writers more mature and adept at grasping the direction of creation and closely linking it with social life. The genre of reportage has also become increasingly rational in adapting to social changes and the needs of readers.

2. Dialectical materialism in reportage

2.1. Dialectics in Reportage Literature: Critical and Revolutionary Nature

In the "Afterword" to the second edition of Volume 1 of "Capital," Marx once elucidated the essence of dialectics, stating: "Dialectics, in its understanding of the affirmative aspect of existing things, simultaneously encompasses the negation and understanding of these things, that is, the comprehension of their inevitable decay; dialectics perceives every established form from the perspective of its ceaseless motion, and thus also its ephemeral nature; dialectics does not venerate anything, for in its essence, it is critical and revolutionary." If we are to contemplate the significance of reportage literature texts, there are two primary tasks: the critical and revolutionary aspects of objective reality—naturally, these are critical and revolutionary in the literary aesthetic sense. The inherent nature of dialectics in reportage literature is a choice necessitated by its unique internal content and external form, compelling reportage literature, in its textual development and the creative practice of writers, to assimilate and apply the epistemology and methodology of dialectical materialism. It must achieve its own healthy growth and the social value of the work under the guidance of this scientific theory. This distinction has been inherent in reportage literature from its inception, setting it apart from other textual forms.

2.2. Reportage as a reflection of social reality and catalyst for change

Truth is the most fundamental and prominent feature that distinguishes reportage literature from other forms of fictional literature. For a considerable time, there have been varying perspectives on the authenticity of reportage literature, primarily falling into three categories: one view is that reportage literature must be entirely factual, akin to the truthfulness of news, without any element of imagination or artistic embellishment; another perspective holds that since reportage is a form of "literature," its authenticity is "artistic truth," meaning the essence of the subject matter is true. This viewpoint implies that reportage can be appropriately "imagined" and "crafted" when necessary; the third view suggests that while reportage literature should respect and document real people and events, it may incorporate some "fiction" for artistic purposes. The debate among these three viewpoints has persisted throughout the development of the reportage literary genre, and although the third view is seldom mentioned today, some

still engage in this kind of "fiction" in actual creation. Disagreements are inevitable, and such differences and disputes have a positive impact on the refinement of reportage literature. In my opinion, authenticity, as the lifeblood of the reportage literary genre, should be nurtured in various ways, but all aim to preserve its vibrancy. The organic integration of advocating journalistic truth, focusing on the essence of life, and employing artistic methods to enhance the appeal of truth reflects the core significance of dialectical materialism as advocated by Marxism in understanding the nature of the world. The emphasis on "humanized nature," "practice as the primary," "authenticity of details," and "portraying typical characters in typical environments" are not just principles upheld by Marxism but also resonate with the challenges we face in maintaining the authenticity of materials in reportage literature. Therefore, I further believe that regarding the authenticity of reportage literature, those who hold the first view are identifying the fundamental premise for the creation and vitality of reportage literature, which must be adhered to; the second view of authenticity is an essential exploration that enriches the depth and pursuit of truth in reportage literature's role in understanding and transforming the world, which is also where its unique charm lies compared to news reporting; while the third view is not encouraged, since reportage literature is part of the literary domain, its aesthetic significance is indispensable, and this does not imply that there can be "fiction" in the actual acquisition and processing of materials. If "fiction" exists, it must be an artistic treatment based on true materials, which aligns with the dialectical materialist epistemology of Marxism and is consistent with the intrinsic characteristics of the reportage literary genre.

In the creative works of the classics, there is indeed a practical experience in understanding and applying authenticity. When discussing the creation of "The Bonded Laborers," Xia Yan once stated: "Reportage literature, if it loses its authenticity, ceases to be reportage literature. The people and events depicted here (referring to 'The Bonded Laborers'—my note) are all true, without any fabrication or exaggeration. The character known as 'Lu chai Bang' is also a real person, but since no one knows her real name, she can only be referred to in that way. I observed her and saw her several times; although I couldn't speak with her directly, this character is not a figment of my imagination." Mr. Xia has passed away, and we cannot converse with him, but if he were still alive, I would very much like to engage in a dialogue with him about the authenticity of the character "Lu chai Bang." For instance, I would ask him: Since reportage literature must be entirely true, how can you be certain that 'Lu chai Bang' is indeed "her"? Even if others call her "her," she is not actually "Lu chai Bang." Isn't this a "distortion of the truth"? I believe my question might not hold much significance, but it is indeed a crucial reason for the ongoing debate about "authenticity" in reportage literature, which stems from different understandings and perceptions. We are all aware that the "Lu chai Bang" in Xia Yan's writing is a real person, and her portrayal in "The Bonded Laborers" exemplifies the entire principle of authenticity in reportage literature. This "principle" dictates that the "Lu chai Bang" in real life and the one in the work are one and the same person, one and the same event, and any alteration would not constitute authenticity in the context of reportage literature. The authenticity of reportage literature encompasses not only the direct recording of truth as seen in journalism but also includes what is traditionally referred to in literary works as "the essential truth of art," as well as what some might call "slight fiction" when necessitated by artistic demands. A complete work of reportage literature should be an organic unity and a close integration of these three elements.

Only by adhering to such principles of authenticity can reportage literature deeply reveal the social essence when reflecting real life, and demonstrate the value and significance of the text's existence in promoting historical development and human progress.

2.3. Research and Refinement key to reportage literature's popularity

The authenticity of reportage literature is not conjured out of nothing; it is acquired by the writer after profound reflection on society, coupled with rigorous investigation and interviews, and even personal experience and participation in specific events. To depict the true face of social reality, a writer must engage in meticulous and repeated examination and research to potentially grasp the "essence of the entire social life." The distinctive formation of the reportage literary style is precisely because its authors have always adhered to a serious and rigorous creative approach. Regardless of being a literary scholar or a sociologist, to attain a genuine and profound understanding of real social life, one must immerse oneself in life, respect objective reality, and uphold the fundamental principle of prioritizing practice, all of which

are academic styles consistently advocated by materialists. We already understand that reportage literature is a "non-fiction literature," meaning that its text does not grant the author the "freedom to arbitrarily construct any historical narrative"[12]. Moreover, the "journalistic truth" required by reportage literature should not be confined to a linear comprehension, that is, it should not be captured from a purely philosophical epistemological perspective of the so-called "true" aspects of social life. Since "truth" itself is a polysemous, multi-tiered linguistic system—it encompasses the writer's view of truth, the text's authentic posture, and the reader's sense of truth across three major strata. In other words, concerning the writer's view of truth, the demand for an absolutely true representation of the real world, even when expressing with slight fiction, can lead the writing style into a misunderstanding. I encountered such an awkward situation when writing a reportage on the theme of "fighting the epidemic": during the SARS epidemic in Beijing, both myself and those around me hoped that I would compose a reportage that genuinely reflected the Beijing epidemic. Later, in early May, I was commissioned by the Central Propaganda Department and the Beijing Municipal Committee to go to the frontline for interviews. It should be said that on one hand, the public expected me to "truly" report on the SARS epidemic, and on the other hand, the authorities ordered me to write about the true situation of "fighting the epidemic." Both sides needed me to write about the "true" Beijing SARS events, and I conducted extensive interviews and investigations, acquiring many genuine situations. However, the more I delved into it, the more I felt unable to write. Why? There were too many truths unknown to the public, such as when the public complained about the leaders and the government being irresponsible, the actual situation was that our leaders and government were doing their utmost to find ways to ensure the safety of people's lives; on the other hand, when the officials wanted me to comprehensively and truly depict the mental state of the "white-clad angels" facing SARS, the deeper I investigated, the less I could write, why? Because some "white-clad angels," at the most severe and critical moments of the epidemic, were simply "beasts and wolves." Their irresponsible behavior towards patients and life was appalling! This illustrates that the "truth" in the objective world is a philosophical concept rather than something we can fully grasp visually, audibly, and sensually. The objective world we usually perceive is merely a flat reflection of a certain social form. The true objective world should be three-dimensional, influenced by the environment, and possibly changing constantly. Marxist philosophy teaches us that an outstanding reportage writer must master two skills: they must obtain first-hand materials from the objective world through arduous interviews and learn to observe, think, and even draw on the correct true materials that are already considered to be true. Only by organically combining these two types of true materials and testing them in practice, proving them to be "true," can the authenticity of reportage literature achieve genuine "truth" in a meaningful sense.

In the present day, with the relentless advancement of technology and intellectual thought, the objective world that unfolds before us has been veiled by numerous artificial appearances. For reportage literature to attain authenticity, the challenge appears to be more daunting. What methods can be employed to peel back these layers of unreality? The resolution should be addressed through the epistemology of dialectical materialism as espoused by Marxism. And the practical approach, as Chairman Mao once said, is that when you genuinely seek to understand the flavor of a pear, the best course of action is to taste it yourself. To ensure the authenticity of reportage literature, conducting aspristine as possible in research and interviews is essential. I have engaged in such creative experiments. Before I penned "Tears Are Gold," which sheds light on the plight of impoverished university students in China, numerous reports on this issue had already surfaced in the media, yet they seemed to have elicited little societal response. Between 1997 and 1998, I dedicated nearly a year, in fits and starts, to researching and interviewing over 300 individuals across more than 40 universities, culminating in this lengthy reportage spanning over 300,000 words. Once published, the work swiftly sparked a potent reaction across various sectors. The societal impact of this piece provided me with a benchmark in both theory and practice: the myriad news stories, films, television programs, and novels about impoverished students that emerge annually, numbering in the thousands or tens of thousands, may not leave as profound an impression on readers as "Tears Are Gold." The reason for this might be attributed to the substantial effort I devoted to "original ecological" interviews and the artistic refinement of these "original ecological" materials.

2.4. Contemporary alignment revitalizes reportage literature

Staying true to reality, life, and the masses — these are the directives issued by the new leadership with Hu Jintao at the helm for the realm of literature and art, and indeed, they reflect the temporal perspectives of Marxist philosophy within the domain of literature and art. The intrinsic features of reportage literature dictate that it requires a "threefold closeness" more than any other literary form, and this "threefold closeness" in the context of reportage literature is interpreted as its realism. Although the founders of Marxism did not provide specific discussions on "realism" in relation to specific reportage literary creation, their emphasis on the notion that literary works should keep pace with the era, stay grounded in reality, and enable readers to derive aesthetic pleasure from the reading experience has consistently been interwoven through their thoughts on literature and art and their philosophical framework. Particularly, their approach of adhering closely to reality and aligning with the contemporary context as demonstrated through their own genius in artistic creation has served as an exemplary model in advancing the maturation of the reportage literary form.

The evolution of a literary genre is invariably shaped by the cultural discourse of its time. This is particularly the case with the development of reportage literature. Since its founding, Marxism has spanned a historical timeline that roughly coincides with the gestation of the reportage literary form, and the cultural context of the era under Marxist influence bears a striking resemblance to the cultural context within which reportage literature has evolved. I cannot assert whether all reportage writers have been influenced by the cultural milieu of Marxism, but based on my personal research, I have reached a conclusion: in examining the development of reportage literature (initially dominated by European and American works, and later by the century-long history of reportage in China), their respective cultural contexts have nearly traversed a parallel path to that of the cultural context of the era defined by Marxism.

Marx (including Engels), Lenin (including Stalin), Mao Zedong, and Deng Xiaoping—the cultural contexts of their times, along with the ideological doctrines they established and the theoretical armaments they led, generally follow this fundamental pattern: During Marx's era, the primary context he utilized was political and critical, with seminal works such as "The Communist Manifesto" and "Capital"; Lenin's context was predominantly constructive, with key works like "Philosophical Notebooks" and "Letters to the Congress"; Mao Zedong's context was hymnal, with notable works such as "A Study of the Peasant Movement in Hunan" and "Annotations on the Surge of Socialist Construction"; Deng Xiaoping's context was pragmatic, seeking truth from facts, with significant works including "Emancipate the Mind, Seek Truth from Facts, and Unite as We Look Forward" and "Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics". Early European reportage literature during Marx's time was also largely critical, with classic works exposing societal ills, such as Gustav Regler's "The Owl of Minerva" and Jack London's "The People of the Abyss"; Lenin's era saw reportage literature primarily with a constructive context, exemplified by John Reed's "Ten Days That Shook the World" and Maxim Gorky's "January 9th"; During Mao Zedong's era, especially the decades surrounding the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the prevailing context in Chinese reportage literature was hymnal, with representative works like Wei Wei's "Who Are the Most Lovely People" and Mu Qing's "The Role Model of the County Party Secretary—Jiao Yulu"; In Deng Xiaoping's era, reportage literature embraced a pragmatic and diverse context, seeking truth from facts, with representative works such as Xu Chi's "The Goldbach Conjecture", Liu Binyan's "Between Man and Monster", and Li You's "Ode to Middle Age".

Throughout the more than one hundred years of history since the founding of Marxism, the cultural context with distinct personal characteristics exhibited by each mentor is not entirely a product of his subjective consciousness, but rather determined by the society of their times. This is understood by anyone with some knowledge of revolutionary history, and I, the author, will not elaborate further on this point. However, I am earnestly seeking an answer to another phenomenon: why the linguistic context pursued by reportage writers in their creative endeavors over the past century has been so similar to the cultural context pursued and advocated by Marxists during each historical period? Does this suggest that throughout the human history of the past century, Marxism, as a progressive and scientific theory, has indeed played a guiding role in the development of society—particularly in the European and American countries during World War I at the turn of the 19th to the 20th centuries, and in the European countries centered around the former Soviet Union before and after World War II, and later in the Eastern countries

centered around China? Given that reportage literature is characterized by its close connection to the times, does this make it more susceptible to the influence of the Marxist cultural context of the same era, or has it consciously conformed to the cultural context created by the Marxists of that era?

The term "context" (Context) in linguistics refers to the interrelationship between the immediate text and its surrounding and sequential elements. What we commonly refer to is the broader significance of this term, that is, the ambiance of discourse and the societal and temporal environment that fosters such an ambiance, which translates to the cultural backdrop of society. The construction of this cultural backdrop is inevitably influenced by the economic and political landscape of the era, hence the "context" we speak of essentially pertains to the general state of culture and psychology among people under the political and economic conditions of a specific time. With this understanding, let us re-examine the reason why the contextual fabric within the development history of reportage literature bears such a striking resemblance and integration with the context within the evolution of Marxism. There can only be one rationale: Marxism, as a scientific theory that guides and propels the progress of human history, has carved out and initiated a new epoch over the past century. The genre of reportage literature, characterized by its proximity to the times, is thus inevitably influenced—both consciously and unconsciously—by the cultural context shaped by Marxism. It forms its own cultural context, either wittingly or unwittingly, under the guidance and inspiration of the zeitgeist created by Marxism. Consequently, the distinct cultural contexts engendered during various phases of Marxist development have, in turn, influenced the directional trajectory of the reportage literary context. The century-long development history of China is, in essence, a narrative of the struggle to build an independent and formidable modern nation, with the spirit of the times serving as its core support and impetus. Contemporary Chinese Marxists, represented by figures such as Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, and Jiang Zemin, have aimed to accomplish two significant missions through the spirit of the times they championed during the nearly century-long process of leading the Chinese people to overthrow the old rulers and establish a modern socialist state: enlightenment and construction, and salvation and survival. These missions encapsulate the entire purpose of reportage literature's independent existence and establishment as a genre. To enlighten oneself and one's people to emerge from ignorance and confusion and to construct an ideal world of freedom; to rescue the dying and defunct old systems and institutions, and to preserve the traditional spirit of the nation and the nation's striving, enterprising pursuit to create a new world. This shared pursuit aligns with the philosophical actions of Marxism and the soul of the reportage literary genre, bringing their cultural contexts together, with the former naturally serving as the theoretical guide for the latter. It must be noted that while the reportage literary context consciously and unconsciously embraces the cultural context created by Marxism, it still requires an independent consciousness. Without it, detours are just as likely. Observing the reportage literature from Mao Zedong's era in China, one can discern a prevalent "leftist" hue in the cultural context of that time. Lacking its own independent contextual awareness, reportage literature was markedly tinged with "leftism," with the vast majority being laudatory works singing praises and speaking well. In contrast, critical works in pursuit of truth were nearly absent. This represents a deficiency in the history of Chinese reportage literature's development, influenced by "leftist" effects.

3. Timely practices for reportage literature's maturation

3.1. Reportage Literature in China: Development, Characteristics, and Future Directions

Surveys show that over 70% of readers in China today prefer to read and purchase non-fiction books, that is, books and works represented by reportage literature and documentary works. However, as non-fiction reading has become the main source for people to acquire information and knowledge, it has been observed that since the new genre of "reportage literature" was introduced to China at the beginning of the 20th century, it has not had a clear and complete definition after a century of development and change. Some believe that reportage literature, like a "neither donkey nor horse" mutant beast, is constantly squeezing other genres while running and howling in the wilderness, thus making the literary world and the news industry full of chaos and noise. The author, on the contrary, believes that: it is precisely because reportage literature, as a combination of news and literature, has shown a continuous change and development trend with the rapid changes of the times, and it is precisely because of this

characteristic that it has more changeability than any other genre, which makes it more and more bear the responsibility of narrating and releasing history and reality, and is full of vitality, and more and more influence people's increasingly mature context and broad vision. Human society and the objective form of things are always developing towards continuous pursuit and perfection, which is the essence of the genre of reportage literature that is closely connected with the times and is constantly changing and "never mature", and its changeability will be an eternal trend. This trend and the law of development conform to the Marxist materialist view of the development of social forms. Literary and artistic activities are both a conceptual production activity (the writer's creative labor) and a creative activity of aesthetic creation (the purpose of the writer's creation is to let readers obtain spiritual enjoyment). Therefore, we need to study the future development prospects and directions of the reportage literary genre, we need to understand the law of social subject activity, and at the same time, we must consider the unique emotional, willful, spiritual, and individual life forms of the individual subject (the writer's independent creative intentions and consciousness). Therefore, to study the development tasks of the reportage literary genre in the new historical period, it is necessary to consider its two aspects: one is the emphasis on the objective truth and the characteristic of being close to the times of the reportage literary genre, and the second is to respect the writer's originality under the feelings, feelings, and feelings of the times and social transformation in the new historical period. The former, the main task is to clarify the basic direction of Chinese reportage literature in the new century, and the positioning and direction of its "revolutionary" and "contemporary" issues. As Comrade Jiang Zemin pointed out at the Fifth National Congress of the China Writers Association: "The socialist literature and art is an important front, undertaking the solemn responsibility of cultivating 'four haves' new people with ideals, morals, culture, and discipline, and inspiring the people to unite and forge ahead." "Serving the people and serving socialism determine the nature and direction of our country's literature and art." Literature and art belong to the ideological field, belong to the construction of spiritual civilization, and are an important part of the national culture of a country. The second and third generations of Chinese leaders have established the direction of the Chinese nation's progress by taking the socialist road with Chinese characteristics and comprehensively building a well-off society. The development of the reportage literature cause is undoubtedly inseparable from such a major development background of the nation and the country. We already know that contemporary Marxism has defined such a definition for the socialist culture with Chinese characteristics: it should be a culture of the nation, the masses, science, and facing all mankind. Then, as an important part of Chinese culture, the basic direction of the reportage literary genre should also be a genre with Chinese characteristics of the nation, the masses, science, and should be a genre that continuously integrates and exchanges with the same kind of text internationally (including many reportage literature by the author and others have been translated and introduced to foreign countries). China's reportage literature has developed to today and has become an indispensable part of the literary and publishing circles, a strong combat contingent. The total amount of reportage literary works (including other documentary works) published in various newspapers and magazines each year, and by publishing houses, exceeds any other kind of literary text, and at the same time, there are also many excellent works that have won a wide reputation in society. Xu Chi once wrote the final literature on the issue of reportage literature in his life with the full passion of a poet: "Our country's reportage literature is a pioneering literary genre in itself. With the development of revolutionary literature, its momentum is becoming more and more vigorous. Reportage literature has emitted a series of lightning-like rays, followed by a series of thunderous thunder." At the turn of the century, reportage literature in China is even more "thunderous," and it has been more and more integrated with the great pace of the Chinese nation's era, becoming an important aspect of inspiring and motivating the people's spiritual struggle.

Certainly, as we delve into the history of reportage literature's development, we are often struck by the fact that in the hundred-plus years since its inception, neither the academic community nor reportage writers have ever agreed upon a formal definition of what constitutes "reportage literature"! Yet, without a clear understanding of what "reportage literature" even is, this new genre has enjoyed a history of over a century marked by vigorous development and has achieved the acclaimed status of a "great nation," which seems quite inconceivable! Reflecting on the century-long development of reportage literature, we find that this situation highlights a significant characteristic of the genre: reportage literature has always been

an evolving and perfecting new form, with its intrinsic meaning and scope potentially remaining uncertain in an eternal process; its nature as a new and cross-genre form has forged the "century wonder" of the hundred-year development of reportage literature.

3.2. Understanding the Elusive Nature of Reportage Literature: Challenges and Characteristics

In reality, "reportage literature" defies a single definition, and the existence of a hundred varying definitions is a noteworthy and intriguing aspect of its academic history. A common scenario is that a lengthy news report in a newspaper or magazine might, for some reason—perhaps due to financial incentives—append the label "reportage literature" in parentheses after the title, thereby transforming an ambiguous article into a self-proclaimed piece of "reportage literature." The current less-than-stellar reputation of reportage literature is partly due to the uncertainty of its genre definition, which has turned it into an indiscriminate "melting pot." Although academia tends to agree with the definition by reportage literature critic Mr. Li Bing yin: "Reportage literature refers to prose articles that provide a truthful and artistic account of social phenomena, events, and individuals rich in thought and emotion and of widespread public interest in a timely manner." [14] However, there is no unified understanding of the intrinsic form of reportage literature. A prevalent view is that there are two types of reportage literature written by two distinct groups: one by journalists, the other by writers, with their works showing significant differences in form and stylistic presentation. Dr. Wang Hui, a scholar in the history of reportage literature, after reviewing the century-long evolution of Chinese reportage literature, concluded: "We can easily observe that in the works of both journalist and writer authors, the genre of reportage literature often manifests in two forms: 'literary reports' and 'reporting literature'." [15] Mr. Wang Hui's classification of two different styles of reportage literature based on writing style, I believe, is highly imprecise. For example, Mr. Wang Hui categorizes me as a "journalist-type" reportage writer, yet the works I create indeed have many external characteristics of a "literary report" style. My own definition of "reportage literature" has consistently been "news reports crafted with literary techniques and skills." However, in reality, the reportage literature I have always pursued must achieve two effects internally: First, in terms of focusing on society and reality, it should seek the depth, breadth, impact, and sensation of news reporting, even surpassing news in intensity and directness. Second, in terms of literary quality, it should strive for the artistic influence similar to that of a novel, moving readers to laughter or tears as the work intends, such as my works "Tears Are Gold" and "Fundamental Interests," which are representative of this intention. Moreover, I now have an additional requirement: once a work is completed and "thrown" into the market, it must generate sales heat, ideally being pirated in the short term—because "piracy" is a distorted sign of bestsellers in the Chinese book market. These three self-imposed requirements are actually indispensable for contemporary reportage literature.

The first requirement pertains to the news nature of the reportage literary genre—its narrative content and materials should be as recent as possible but not ordinary news. The second requirement is distinctly artistic; since reportage literature possesses a "literary" attribute, it must have the same artistic appeal as other literary forms such as novels, poetry, prose, and drama. I believe that a good reportage literature text should not only be publishable in print media but also adaptable for film, television, and radio, with poetic language, dramatic conflict, and musical rhythm all being expressible within the text. All the points I have listed above and the experiences encountered in creative practice illustrate the diversity, cross-genre nature, and fluidity of the reportage literary genre. It is these factors that determine that reportage literature still cannot have an accurate and standardized "definition" to date. Some people, due to the existence of this phenomenon, label the genre of reportage literature as a "freak" and deny its value and necessity, with dictionaries referring to it as "a type of prose," which subtly reveals an academic intention to "eliminate" the independent genre form of reportage literature. My view is that excessively expanding the genre extension of reportage literature and overly narrowing the internal structure of its form are not conducive to the genuine development of the reportage literary genre. The news form, literary form, and the combined form of news and literature in reportage literature are the most distinctive cross-genre features of the genre.

These factors are what have prevented reportage literature from having a precise and standardized "definition" thus far. Some individuals, due to the presence of this phenomenon, label the genre of

reportage literature as a "freak" and negate its value and necessity, referring to it in reference books as "a form of prose," which subtly indicates an academic tendency to "extinguish" the independent stylistic form of reportage literature. My perspective is that excessively amplifying the stylistic extension of reportage literature and overly constricting its internal structural development are both detrimental to the genuine evolution of the genre. The news format of reportage literature, its literary format, and the fusion of news and literature within reportage literature represent the most salient features of its cross-genre characteristics.

The news form, exemplified by newspaper media, has only a history of two to three hundred years since its inception worldwide. The evolution of news forms has been rapidly changing since the twentieth century, continuing to transform on a daily basis, and thus we cannot demand that the genre of reportage literature, which originated from the body of news, become fixed today. Similarly, the literary quality of reportage literature dictates that this new form of literature will display entirely distinct styles across various subjects and authors. Even within the works of a single author, there may be times when the writing adopts a tone of political commentary and other times when it employs a language as poetic as poetry. Consequently, we naturally cannot ascertain at a certain period what kind of reportage literature possesses more "literariness." Even when using the most fundamental literary and reader interactive elements such as "attractiveness" and "readability" for judgment, some works might be popular among readers at one time and not appreciated at another. There may also be instances where works favored by Chinese readers are not liked by foreign readers, and so on. The third characteristic, that reportage literature is a hybrid of news and literature, encompasses even greater variability. Without discussing the extent and direction of change in modern news and literature themselves, according to the basic laws of development, nothing in the world, with the exception of the arithmetic principle that "one plus one equals two," will readily adhere to such a straightforward law of motion and combination. Reportage literature is no exception.

The philosophical viewpoints of Marxism inform us that society advances through continuous change. The development of any entity follows inherent laws. Literary works, as forms of ideology, reflect the objective world within a writer's mind; they are both a product of the spirit and a process of "labor and practice"—essentially "the outcome of people's interactive activities." [16] Thus, my perspective is that whether we consider the three external attributes of reportage literature recognized by academia, which posits that reportage literature may belong to the genre of news, the genre of literature, or a marginal genre intersecting both news and literature; or if we examine the three elements that constitute the core of reportage literature—objective representation, subjective appeal, and artistic expression—due to the close tie of reportage literature to the evolving times, its stylistic construction is still in its nascent stage. To achieve a more refined and perfected form of reportage literature, it is imperative to guide its development with the ever-evolving thoughts of Marxism, to continually adapt and consciously integrate into the currents of the era that correspond with the development of social material production, and to diligently engage in practice and reflection within this progressive temporal evolution. It is only in this manner that the genre of reportage literature can fulfill and realize the mission it has aspired to since its inception.

4. Conclusion

In recent years, the creation of reportage literature in China has reached a level where it is on par with, or has even surpassed, other literary genres in both quantity and quality, achieving the true momentum of a "great nation." However, we must also see that today, influenced by the market economy and other factors, there have been quite a few issues in the development of reportage literature. First, the quality needs to be improved; the "reportage literature" and "advertising literature" that are neither one thing nor the other are very prevalent. Second, the market satisfaction has not been achieved, and the reading needs of the Chinese people often have to be met by "American blockbusters" and similar works. A few years ago, some documentary foreign works broke into the Chinese market like bamboo shoots after a rain, such as Yeltsin's "Midnight Diary" and Hillary Clinton's "Living History," which could immediately capture the Chinese market, while our reportage literature (including other documentary literary works) is still far from having the competitive ability for "domestic sales" and "exports." Therefore, we should look further, deeper, and broader in our development. As a great nation on the rise, the Chinese nation wants to be

understood by the world, and we also hope to be understood by the world. Reportage literature is an important means, in addition to newspapers and television media, that can play a significant role in this task. This requires writers engaged in reportage literature to be more proficient in accepting the various textual and technical challenges of "non-fiction texts" and to maintain the national characteristics of Chinese reportage literature at the same time. This is a new task for the contemporary Chinese reportage literature community and also another level and requirement for the maturity of the Chinese reportage literary genre.

How can we achieve this level and meet these requirements? Upholding Marxist ideology as our guide and continuously exploring and innovating in practice, in accordance with the natural developmental laws of the reportage literary genre, is our fundamental principle. With this premise in mind, efforts should be concentrated in three main directions: (1) Today's society is intricate and ever-changing. China is currently in a new era of building socialism with its unique characteristics and forging the great "Chinese Dream" of the Chinese nation. Reportage literature must align with this broader context and focus on this core in order to fully exhibit the genre's inherent allure; (2) The transitional nature of society means that many social forms are in a state of flux and uncertainty. The reportage literary genre must adapt to these uncertain characteristics of the times and discover its own developmental patterns within the shifting social landscape, thus fulfilling its fundamental role of being relevant to the era, meeting reader expectations, and impacting society; (3) Reportage writers should embody the same fervor and spirit of wholeheartedly engaging with the vibrant life of their times as they did in the past. Amidst a climate where many writers are adopting an elitist approach to writing, reportage writers must resist this trend.

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