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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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The Modernizing Process of Theoretical Studies in Traditional Chinese Literary Forms

Abstract The study of Chinese literary form, with a long and profound history, has long been at the center of literary scholarship in China. However, under the impact of Western learning during the late Qing and early Republican periods, the tradition of Chinese literary form studies was gradually overshadowed and marginalized. It was not until the 1980s that this tradition began to revive, rapidly developing into the most vibrant frontier of academic growth and becoming a focal point of scholarly attention. In terms of the overall research landscape, there is significant emphasis on the study of the literary form and history of literary forms, yielding a wealth of related achievements. In contrast, discussions surrounding literary form concepts and theoretical exploration remain relatively weak. It is crucial to summarize and reflect on the modern theoretical studies in literary forms over the 20th century, as this will promote the further development of traditional literary form studies and contribute to constructing a literary theoretical discourse system with Chinese characteristics for a new era.

Keywords tradition of literary form studies; theoretical studies; modern scholarship

Literary forms serve as the intuitive representation of literature. The history of traditional Chinese literature is simultaneously the history of the emergence, development, and evolution of literary forms. Correspondingly, literary form criticism and theory are central issues in traditional Chinese literary theory and criticism. Approaching the study of traditional literature from the perspective of literary forms and the theory of literary form has given rise to a long-standing academic tradition. This tradition was interrupted due to the sweeping political, social, cultural, and literary changes that took place during the late Qing and early Republican periods. It was not until the 1980s that it was revived and continued, and it has since maintained a thriving state of prosperity. It is of great significance to reflect on the tumultuous journey of the study of traditional literary forms over the 20th century and summarize the experiences and lessons learned from its successes and failures, as this endeavor will contribute to constructing a literary theoretical discourse system with Chinese characteristics for a new era, as well as promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese literary traditions.

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1 Overview of the Study of Traditional Literary Forms in China

The study of traditional Chinese literary forms is a discipline that is both ancient and ever-renewing. As early as the pre-Qin period, vague literary form concepts began to take shape with the emergence and development of literary form studies. They permeated early cultural and academic activities, influencing languages and scripts, ritual and music systems, text classification, literature citations, as well as the naming of works and forms. Examples include the classification of airs (*feng* 风), court hymn (*ya* 雅), and eulogy (*song* 颂) and the classification of narrative (*fu* 赋), analogy (*bi* 比), and association (*xing* 兴) in *The Book of Odes* 诗经, the categorization of *dian* 典 (lit. the records of the great deeds of emperors that set precedents for future governance), *mo* 谟 (lit. the plans and strategies presented by officials to the emperors concerning major state affairs), *shi* 誓 (lit. the military orders issued by the emperors), *gao* 诰 (lit. the announcements made by the emperors to the people), and *xun* 训 (lit. advice given by officials to the emperors) in *The Book of History* 尚书, and assertions like "poems express aspirations deep in one's heart, whereas songs are verses for chanting" 诗言志，歌永言 and "succinctness is valued in writing" 辞尚体要, all of which signify the nascent development of traditional literary form concepts. These early literary form concepts form the foundation of traditional literary form theories and represent the original characteristics of Chinese literary form studies. By the Han Dynasty, literary form studies gradually evolved beyond a phase of fragmented and ambiguous concepts. This period witnessed the emergence of monographs on literary forms and influential works imbued with literary form theory, such as the discourse on poetry in the "Introduction to *Mao's Version of The Book of Odes*" 毛诗序 and "Zheng Xuan's Preface to *The Classic of Poetry*" 诗谱序, the discussions on rhapsody by Liu An 刘安, Sima Qian 司马迁, Yang Xiong 扬雄, Ban Gu 班固, and Wang Yi 王逸, the classification of poetry and rhapsody in the "Treatise on Literature" of *The History of the Han Dynasty* 汉书・艺文志, and Cai Yong's 蔡邕 *Decision-Making* 独断 on court documents, all of which indicate the transition of literary form studies from spontaneous understanding to conscious exploration. The Six Dynasties marked a flourishing and maturation period for traditional literary form studies: Zhi Yu's 挚虞 *On the History of Literary Forms* 文章流别志论 comprehensively and systematically analyzed the origins and evolutions of various literary forms; Ren Fang's 任昉 *On the Origins of Various Literary Forms* 文章缘起 traced the early works that achieved independent form status, free from being defined by the Confucian classics, historical records, and philosophical writings; Xiao Tong's 萧统 *Selections of Refined Literature* 文选 established a literary genealogy in the minds of scholars in the Six Dynasties. Liu Xie's 刘勰 *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* 文心雕龙 standed out as a comprehensive and profound work that consolidated the literary form theory of the parallel prose era, establishing the basic contents and methodologies of traditional Chinese literary form studies, which have influenced all following generations. During the Tang and Song dynasties, under the influence of the theoretical advocacy and literary practices of Han Yu 韩愈, Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元, Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修, and Su Shi 苏轼, classical prose gradually supplanted parallel prose and attained a prominent status in the literary world. This shift brought about significant changes in aesthetic concepts within literature, leading to a transition in the literary form studies from a focus on poetry, rhapsody, and parallel prose to an emphasis on classical prose. The rise of classical prose notably

impacted the writing and literary form theory in the Ming and Qing dynasties.

The Ming and Qing dynasties marked another flourishing period for literary form studies in ancient China following the Six Dynasties. During this period, nearly all significant literary forms that emerged throughout history experienced a revival and prosperity, accompanied by the rise of new forms such as eight-part essays, birthday celebration essays, short prose, banner verse, and narratives accompanied by string music. The rich diversity of literary forms during the Ming and Qing periods allowed literary form studies to continuously surpass previous academic horizons, research depth, and academic achievements, showcasing a unique blend of comprehensive consolidation and innovative exploration. This remarkable progression can be observed in three primary aspects. First, literary form criticism flourished. It is a consensus among literary theorists of the Ming and Qing dynasties that "barely a work exists that is not differentiated by form" 文莫先于辨体 (Wu & Xu 1962, 80) and "every piece of literature falls into a form and should follow the intrinsic character of the form it belongs to" 文章自有体裁,凡为某体,务须寻其本色,庶几当行 (Hu 1979, 21). During these two dynasties, the normative structures and the evolution lineage of literary forms became central themes of literary criticism. Meanwhile, the meticulous classification of literary forms, the sophisticated analysis of the styles of writings and the temperaments of their authors, and the in-depth examination and accurate grasp of the development trajectories of literary forms all reached unprecedented heights. Second, several anthologies centered on literary form differentiation criticism emerged, including Wu Ne's 吴讷 *Form Differentiation of Writings* 文章辨体, Xu Shizeng's 徐师曾 *Various Literary Forms* 文体明辨, He Fuzheng's 贺复征 *Selections of Form Differentiation of Writings* 文章辨体汇选, Yang Shen's 杨慎 *Forms of Quatrains* 绝句辨体, Xu Xueyi's 许学夷 *Form Differentiation of Poetry* 诗源辨体, and Fu Guan's 符观 *The Orthodox Forms of Poetry in the Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming Dynasties* 唐宋元明诗正体. These innovative anthologies seamlessly integrated form differentiation criticism with specific works, featuring theoretical depth without being abstract or esoteric and often proving more influential than mere literary or poetic discussions. Third, new contents of form differentiation criticism, such as *xuti* 序题 (lit. expository preface) and *fanli* 凡例 (prefatory remarks), came to prominence. *Xuti* refers to the compilers' elucidation of the origins, evolution, and characteristics of various literary forms. This form differentiation differs from conventional poetic or literary criticism in that it "utilizes texts to argue for distinctions among forms" (Wu & Xu 1962, 78), leveraging the selected works to form a comprehensive understanding. Although the early forms of *xuti* can be found in Zhi Yu's *A Collection of Literary Forms* 文章流别集 and Zhen Dexiu's 真德秀 *Writings of the Orthodox School* 文章正宗. The term *xuti* only solidified during the Ming Dynasty and became an important and widely adopted method of literary form differentiation. Additionally, the compilation of literary collections saw a trend towards writing prefatory remarks during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Many of the prefatory remarks focused less on introducing editorial formats and more on articulating views on fundamental literary issues, exhibiting a distinct theoretical character. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, many renowned literary criticism topics were elaborated in prefatory remarks. For example, Gao Bing's 高棅 "Prefatory" of *Remarks on the Collection of Classified Tang Poetry* 唐诗品汇・凡例 advocated the classification of four Tang periods

and nine poetic styles (*Si Tang Jiu Ge* 四唐九格[1]); Wu Ne's *Prefatory Remarks on Form Differentiation Form of Writing* 文章辨体凡例 emphasized that "forms constitute the primary aspect of rhetoric" (Wu & Xu 1962, 9), and Fang Bao's 方苞 *Prefatory Remarks on A Collection of Eight-Part Essays Compiled by the Imperial Decree* 钦定四书文凡例 elucidated the development stages of eight-part essays and the standards of being "clear and classically elegant" 清真雅正 These prefatory remarks have all left a lasting impact on literary criticism and form studies, demonstrating the theoretical vitality of this new form of literary criticism.

The Opium War that erupted during the reign of Emperor Daoguang in the Qing Dynasty marked the beginning of modern Chinese history, and the subsequent series of significant events, from the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Movement, the Westernization Movement, and the Revolution of 1911 to the May Fourth New Culture Movement, set the stage for a drastic social transformation unseen in thousands of years, creating a grand backdrop of historical change and the collision between Chinese and Western cultures. Within this grand context, traditional Chinese literature gradually declined to an end while new literature began to flourish and grow in strength. Concurrently, traditional literary forms and literary form theories started moving from the center to the periphery of the literature world. On the one hand, traditional poetry and rhapsody, along with imperial edicts 诏令, memorials of gratitude or petitions 章表, petitions to the throne 奏疏, and various other practical literary forms prized as "pivotal to governing the state" 经国之大业, suddenly lost their social foundation and utilitarian value, surviving only as relics of knowledge. On the other hand, new literary forms represented by new literature works, official documents, periodicals, and expository writing, along with new literary theories, were widely introduced and adopted, disrupting the traditional literary canon and form concepts. The greatest impact on literary concepts came from the adoption of Western division of literary forms into four categories—novels, dramas, poetry, and prose—in evaluating the rich and complex traditional Chinese literary forms. This classification significantly elevated the status of lowbrow literature, including novels and dramas, which had historically been disdained by the higher circles, while undermining the traditional literary values centered on highbrow literature, including classical poetry and prose. It catalyzed a comprehensive reconceptualization in Chinese literary history, carrying both historical inevitability and positive implications for the development of new literature within the context of the May Fourth New Culture Movement. However, this fourfold categorization is rooted in Western social systems, ideologies, and literary concepts. When applied uncritically, it inevitably obscured and excluded a wealth of literary forms that were historically popular and had profound influences, leading to a regrettable result similar to cutting the feet to fit into a shoe or paying the price of a pearl only to buy its container. Faced with the acute contradictions and immense pressure generated by Western influence, some scholars, from the perspective of defending the centrality of Chinese culture, insisted on examining and tracing the development history of literature primarily through the lens of traditional literary

[1] *Si Tang Jiu Ge*, proposed by Gao Bing. *Si Tang* 四唐 refers to the early Tang, the prosperous Tang, the middle Tang, and the late Tang periods, which are the historical periods of the development of Tang poetry. *Jiu Ge* 九格 draws on the method of dividing poems such as "Poems," and according to the poets' creative characteristics, achievements, and status in the history of poetry, Gao establishes the nine items: *Zhengshi* 正始, *Zhengzong* 正宗, *Dajia* 大家, *Mingjia* 名家, *Yuyi* 羽翼, *Jiewu* 接武, *Zhengbian* 正变, *Yuxiang* 余响, *Pangliu* 旁流.

forms, as exemplified by Lin Chuanjia's 林传甲 *History of Chinese Literature* 中国文学史 (1904), Zhang Taiyan's 章太炎 "An Overview of Literature" 文学总略 (1910), Gu Jincheng's 顾荩丞 *ABC of Literary Form Theory* 文体论 ABC (1929), Chen Binhe's 陈彬龢 *Brief Discussion on Chinese Literature* 中国文学论略 (1931), and Shi Ji's 施畸 *Chinese Literary Form Theory* 中国文体论 (1933). Others, however, advocated for a measured incorporation of Western learning while maintaining the centrality of traditional culture, seeking to continue the tradition with appropriate adjustments. In 1901, Wang Zhaofang 王兆芳 authored *Interpretation of Literary Forms* 文体通释 (also known as *Interpretation of Writing* 文章释), in which he wrote, "Nowadays, Western scholarship is competing with our own. If we stubbornly adhere to the teachings handed down by our traditional scholars, our Confucianism may falter. I believe that scholarship should encompass the realm of Heaven, Earth, and humanity, and we should seek the truth by studying the classics of ancient saints and observing the world. We should uphold our traditions without deviation while continuously developing and innovating, striving to make our Confucianism so grand that it can encompass the merits of Western learning, while the merits of Western scholarship cannot match the greatness of our Confucianism. If we can achieve this, we are still effectively preserving our traditional teachings, aren't we?" (Wang 2007, 6256). The idea is to maintain tradition while invigorating it with Western learning, which reflects a progressive and adaptive stance. In 1907, Huang Ren 黄人 completed the first draft of his *History of Chinese Literature* 中国文学史, placing Chinese literature within the wider scope of world literary history and using Western concepts such as "grammar" in *Evolution and Ethics* 天演论, and "truth, goodness, and beauty" to assess its uniqueness. He applauded its cultural significance for its "unbroken lineage through generations" and its role in "preserving all national essence" while also dissecting its fragmentation and dissimulation, and advocating the "incorporation of additional folk and foreign elements" (Huang 2015, 3). Additionally, similar cultural viewpoints can be found in Liu Xianxin's 刘咸炘 *Literary Treatise* 文学述林 (1929), Guo Shaoyu's 郭绍虞 "Exploring the Evolutionary Trends of Chinese Literature through Literary Form Evolution" 试从文体的演变说明中国文学之演变趋势 (1929), Xue Fengchang's 薛凤昌 *Literary Form Theory* 文体论 (1934), and Yu Xisen's 余锡森 *Compendium of the Origins and Evolution of Chinese Literature* 中国文学源流纂要 (1948). This rational stance, which neither clings to the outmoded conventions nor blindly idolizes foreign things, was not mainstream in the radical times but gradually evolved into a consensus in academia after the storm subsided and still holds positive significance today.

In the 40 years following the founding of the People's Republic of China, the mainstream of literary studies was profoundly influenced by the Soviet Union's literary theory, which emphasized the political and social functions of literature. As a result, the significance of literary forms as artistic forms faced unprecedented neglect and rejection, often being labeled as "Formalism." Consequently, literary form studies fell to a historical low, with dedicated studies becoming exceedingly rare. Nevertheless, some works on literary history touched on various literary forms such as poetry, lyric, prose, fiction, and drama. Additionally, several compilation works, such as Luo Genze's 罗根泽 *Selections of Literary Theory and Criticism throughout Chinese History* 中国历代文学理论批评文选 (1957) and Guo Shaoyu's *Selections of Literary Theory throughout Chinese History* 中国历代文论选 (1962),

gathered and organized materials related to literary form studies. As for theoretical studies in literary forms, only a few papers stand out as exemplary, including Wu Tiaogong's 吴调公 "On Literary Forms" 谈谈文体 (1960), Lu Kanru 陆侃如 and Mou Shijin's 牟世金 "Liu Xie's Literary Form Theory" 刘勰的文体论 (1962), Wang Yunxi's 王运熙 "The Forms in Traditional Chinese Literary Theories" 中国古代文论中的"体" (1962). In stark contrast to the trough situation in the Chinese mainland, many Chinese scholars residing abroad either continued the tradition of literary form studies established since the late Qing and early Republican periods or were deeply influenced by Western literary theory, achieving remarkable accomplishments in literary form studies. Notable works include Xu Fuguan's 徐复观 "On Literary Forms of *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*"《文心雕龙》的文体论 (1959), Rao Zongyi's 饶宗颐 "On *The Art of Writing* and Music" 论文赋与音乐 (1961), Chen Shixiang's 陈世襄 "On the Chinese Lyric Tradition" 论中国抒情传统 (1971), Wang Mengou's 王梦鸥 "The Evolution of Aristocratic Entertainment Literature and the Literary Forms of the Six Dynasties" 贵游文学与六朝文体的演变 (1979), Chen Guoqiu's 陈国球 "A Study of Hu Yinglin's Poetics" 胡应麟诗论研究 (1983), and Wang Gengsheng's 王更生 "A Brief Discussion on the Structure, Naming, and Definition of Chinese Prose" 简论我国散文的立体、命名与定义 (1987).

Since the 1980s, with the ideological rectification and the liberation of thought, literary form studies, driven by new academic concepts, have increasingly garnered attention, evolving from a nearly forgotten domain into a vibrant academic frontier with significant research value and a focal point of academic interest. This shift has resulted in remarkable growth in research teams, expansion of research areas, and a notable increase in both the quantity and quality of scholarly achievements, marking the most prosperous phase in over a century. Traditional literary form studies have ushered in a comprehensive revival, which signifies a complete departure from the constraints of sociological analysis in traditional literary scholarship, as well as a return to the essence of traditional literature and to indigenous Chinese literary theory, marking a significant milestone in academic history.

2 Theoretical Studies in Taditional Literary Forms in the Context of Modern Scholarship

Since the late Qing and early Republican periods, although traditional literary form studies experienced a decline under the influence of Western learning, they have never completely vanished. Instead, they have permeated the linguistic expressions, thinking patterns, and aesthetic sensibilities of the Chinese people in various forms while continuously absorbing nutrients from foreign cultures, gradually transforming into Chinese literary form studies with modern academic significance. Several scholars have written papers on the modernizing process of literary form studies, which has lasted over a century. They provided retrospective reviews and summaries from various perspectives. For example, Wu Chengxue's 吴承学 "Prospects for Research on Traditional Chinese Literary Forms" 中国古代文体学研究展望 (2005), "The Study of Chinese Literary Forms: A Return to Indigenous and Essential Research" 中国文体学：回归本土与本体的研究 (2010), "Developing Chinese Literary Form Studies with Modern Significance" 建设具有现代意义的中国文体学 (2015), and

"A Century of Chinese Literary Form Studies" 中国文体学研究的百年之路 (2019), Shen Jinhao's 沈金浩 "The Academic Space of Literary Form Studies" 文体学研究的学术空间 (2001), Li Jianzhong's 李建中 "Paths and Prospects of Literary Form Studies" 文体学研究的路径与前景 (2011), He Shihai's 何诗海 "The Academic Space of Literary Form Studies in the Ming and Qing Dynasties" 明清文体学研究的学术空间 (2011), Zhang Muhua's 张慕华 "Traditional Chinese Literary Form Studies since the 1980s" 20 世纪 80 年代以来的中国古代文体学研究 (2013), and Sun Shaohua's 孙少华 "Several Issues in the Study of Pre-Tang Literary Forms in the 21st Century's First Decade" 新世纪十年来先唐文体学研究的几个问题 (2014). These papers provide a comprehensive overview on the traditional literary form studies since the late Qing and early Republican periods, reflect on existing issues, and explore new academic growth points, thus making significant contributions to the development of Chinese literary form studies with modern significance.

However, overall, while these academic historical reviews provide rich contents regarding literary forms and the history of literary forms and offer detailed descriptions, they fall short of adequately addressing literary form concepts and theoretical issues in literary form studies. The discussions on these aspects tend to be somewhat incomplete. This paper selects and analyzes the most noticeable theories of literary form studies over the past hundred years.

2.1 Definition of "Literary Form" and Research Objects of Literary Form Studies

The traditional Chinese literary forms are a literary writing system rooted in the foundation of politics, rites and music, and practicability, significantly differing from the pure literature system of the West. Correspondingly, "literary form" in traditional literature is a distinctive Chinese concept, referring both to forms or categories of literary forms and to styles and temperaments; it encompasses not only specific structural and expressive forms but also the essence of literary writing or literature itself, resulting in a rich and complex connotation. Traditional literary theory, characterized by intuitive, holistic, and perceptive thinking and expressions, seldom provides a clear and precise definition of "literary forms." Scholars have begun to focus on conceptual differentiation since modern times, influenced by Western scientific thinking. For instance, Liu Shipei 刘师培, in his works "The Origins of Literature" 文章源始 (1905) and "A Commentary on Ruan Yuan's 'Literary Discourse'" 广阮氏《文言说》(1909), expounds on Ruan Yuan's 阮元 literary views, arguing that the ornate and melodic parallel prose should be regarded as the authentic literary forms. He criticizes the Tongcheng 桐城 school of Writing and the Eight Great Masters the school highly praised, saying that "Drawing upon the wisdom of classics and historical narratives as the cornerstone for composition," "those who lack real knowledge and disrespect the past may still show off their writings, resulting in the loss of the authentic source and spirit of literature" (Liu 1905, 19). He thereby denies the Eight Great Masters' contribution to literature innovation. Zhang Taiyan, in his "An Overview of Literature," criticizes the views of Ruan Yuan and Liu Shipei, believing that all those written on bamboo and silk should be regarded as "literary works." "Literary works" shall be subject to the text itself rather than fancy phrases. Although these two viewpoints are sharply opposed, they both utilize the interpretation method to define the connotation of "literature" by interpreting its fundamental meaning.

In their interpretation, different connotations lead to varied understandings of "literary form" in its scope, characteristics, and other aspects. In his paper "Forms and Schools in Chinese Literature" 中国文学上之"体"与"派" published in 1927, Zhang Dadong 张大东 discussed literary forms and schools. He held that literary forms encompassed both forms and styles. The forms include rhapsody, *yuefu* poetry, five-character rhythmic poetry, seven-character rhythmic poetry, etc. Styles reflect both the styles of authors in "sourcing from temperaments of their authors" (Zhang 2020, 886) and the styles of the times in "sourcing from the influence of historical context" (Zhang 2020, 887). This represents one of the earlier efforts in modern academic history to clarify the connotation of "literary forms" by drawing upon Western literary theories. In *Literary Treatise*, Liu Xianxin (1929) thinks literature comprises two main components: "inner substance," referring to content and including things, reasons, and emotions; "outer forms," equivalent to structures formed by words, sentences, sections, chapters, and articles. Horizontally, structures include three aspects: forms, structures, and styles. Only when all three aspects are integrated can a work be recognized as "literature." This definition establishes the foundational premise for literary form studies. Jiang Boqian 蒋伯潜 further develops the ideas of Zhang Dadong in "Forms and Styles" 体裁与风格 (1936), delving deeper into the relationship between forms and styles. In "On Literary Forms of *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*," originally published in 1959, Xu Fuguan (2006) defines "literary forms" as the artistic expression found in literary works, which includes forms, succinctness, and stylistic characteristics. He argues that these aspects above are interconnected and contribute to a unified artistic expression, highlighting the subjective nature of styles. Xu distinguishes "literary forms" from "literary categories," as the latter is based on different subject matters and is more objective in nature. Beyond the novel and sharp arguments, Xu's paper significantly impacts previous studies of *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, prompting a series of critical responses, such as Gong Pengcheng's 龚鹏程 "On the Literary Forms of *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*"《文心雕龙》的文体论 (1987), Yan Kunyang's 颜昆阳 "On the Meanings and Relationships of 'Literary Forms' and 'Literary Categories'" 论"文体"与"文类"的涵义及其关系 (2007), Yao Aibin's 姚爱斌 "On the Theoretical Gaps in Xu Fuguan's Literary Form Studies on *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*" 论徐复观《文心雕龙》文体论研究的学理缺失 (2008), and Li Jianzhong's 李建中 "The Dilemma of *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* Studies: Methodological Reflections Triggered by the Controversy over Its Literary Form Theories" 龙学的困境——由"文心雕龙文体论"论争引发的方法论反思 (2012), illustrating the significant influence of Xu's work. This influence primarily occurres after the reform and opening up. Wang Yunxi, Mou Shijin, and Yang Mingzhao 杨明照 continue to follow mainstream interpretations of the concept of "literary forms" in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, established since the early Republican period. For example, in "The Forms in Traditional Chinese Literary Theories," Wang Yunxi (1962) holds that "forms" refer to both literary forms and styles, emphasizing the significance of styles in different aspects, including literary style, authorial style, historical style, and school style.

The definition of "literary forms" relates to fundamental issues in studies of traditional literary forms, including their content, objects, and scope, leading to heated discussions on this issue. In "Literary Forms and Their Creation" 文体与文体的创造, Tong Qingbing

童庆炳 defines "literary forms" as the text form created by a specific order of discourse, reflecting the unique mental structure, experiences, ways of thinking, and other socio-historical and cultural contexts of writers and critics (Tong 1994, 1). This definition includes three levels: form norms, the creation of writing styles, and the pursuit of style. Guo Yingde 郭英德 examines literary forms from the morphology perspective, suggesting that if literary forms refer to the discourse system and structural form of a text, then their basic structure should consist of four progressively deeper levels: systems, discourses, forms, and style and temperament (Guo 2004, 5). In "On the Tradition of Literary Form Studies of Ancient Chinese Literature: Research Objects and Methodology" 论中国古代的文体学传统——兼论古代文学文体研究的对象与方法, Qian Zhixi 钱志熙 points out that ancient Chinese scholars did not abstract "forms" as an independent factor; instead, they viewed it as a core element connecting various factors such as language expressions, styles, and emotional thoughts. "Forms are directly linked to the most important literary elements, such as 'meaning,' 'artistic appeal,' and 'writing,' forming an organic and interconnected network with other elements or conceptual categories" (Qian 2004, 97). In their work "An Outline of the Discipline of Traditional Chinese Literary Forms" 中国古代文体学学科论纲, Wu Chengxue and Sha Hongbing 沙红兵 (2005) draw upon previous viewpoints and summarized the connotation of literary forms. They argue that the literary form studies should encompass six major areas: categories of forms or literary forms; specific language features and systems; article structures and expressive forms; succinctness or general succinctness; style and temperament and stylistic characteristics; articles or the essence of literature itself. These discussions have continually clarified and defined the objects and content of traditional literary form studies, demonstrating that literary form studies are gradually maturing as an independent discipline.

2.2 Development and Evolution of Literary Forms

The history of literary development is largely a history of the emergence, development, and evolution of various literary forms. Therefore, the narration of the literary form history often intertwines with examinations of specific literary forms, particularly in works focused on literary form styles, such as Wang Guowei's 王国维 "History of Song and Yuan Operas" 宋元戏曲史 (1915), Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun's 冯沅君 "History of Chinese Poetry" 中国诗史 (1931), Liu Linsheng's 刘麟生 "History of Chinese Parallel Prose" 中国骈文史 (1937), Tao Qiuying's 陶秋英 "Research on the History of Rhapsody of the Han Dynasty" 汉赋之史的研究 (1939), Chen Bixiang's 陈必祥 "Introduction to Traditional Prose Form" 古代散文文体概论 (1986), and Yang Haiming's 杨海明 "History of Tang and Song Lyrics" 唐宋词史 (1987). A comprehensive examination of the development of various literary forms requires a specific literary purpose and a theoretical framework, leading to rich theoretical content in the narration of the literary form history. For instance, In "Exploring the Evolutionary Trends of Chinese Literature through Literary Form Evolution" 试从文体的演变说明中国文学之演变趋势 published in 1926, Guo Shaoyu (1983) draws upon such traditional literary theories as "literature arises from the expression of emotion" and "poetry expressing aspirations," alongside Western origins theories like "the Labor Theory." Guo defines primitive ballads

that integrate language, music, and movement as the origins of literature and categorizes the complex array of traditional Chinese literary forms into three main categories: historical poetry, lyric poetry, and dramatic poetry, to examine the evolution of Chinese literary history. Despite some contentious aspects of this theoretical framework, Guo's effort to blend traditional scholarship with new insights has been enlightening for subsequent scholars.

Research on the history of literary forms inevitably involves perspectives on the origins of literary forms. A fundamental proposition in traditional literary theory is that "literary forms originate from the Five Classics," viewing the Five Classics as the foundation for all literary forms. Deng Guoguang's 邓国光 works, *Literary Origins: Research on Traditional Chinese Literature and Literary Theory* 文原：中国古代文学与文论研究 (1997) and "Literary Forms and Systems: Changes and Schools of Chinese Literary Form Studies" 文章体统：中国文体学的正变与流别 (2013), systematically examine the relationship between traditional literary forms and Confucian classics. Deng deeply analyzes the ideological and academic backgrounds that led to the rise of the "the theory of literary form origins" during the Six Dynasties, arguing that the thought of classical studies was essential to the vitality of literary theories in that period. The "theory of literary origins" traces various literary forms back to the Five Classics, emphasizing the exploration of literary forms and a return to humanistic values (Deng 1997). In "Examination of Literary Forms on 'Literary Forms Originate from the Classics'" 对"文本于经"说的文体学考察, Wu Chengxue and Chen Yun 陈赟 (2006) think that the traditional belief in "literary forms originating from the Five Classics" was based on the premise that each Classic had its form. This view has had a profound impact on the classification of literary forms, as the study of traditional literary forms was constructed on this foundation, creating a system of literary forms rooted in the Classics. Often, tracing literary form origins back to the Five Classics serves as a theoretical strategy that nominally respects the Classics while essentially honoring the literary forms. In the paper "On the Theory that 'Literary Forms Were Established in the Warring States Period'" "文体备于战国"说平议, He Shihai (2010) argues that Zhang Xuecheng 章学诚 identified the Warring States period as a turning point in the rise and fall of ancient and modern scholarship, proposing that "literary forms were established in the Warring States." This theory is insightful in describing the flourishing literary scene of the Warring States, highlighting characteristics such as the promotion of *The Book of Odes*, the sophisticated use of analogy and association, elaboration and embellishment, as well as the influence of Warring States literature on later writings. However, Zhang's argument relies on literary forms in *Selections of Refined Literature*, but insufficient evidence leads to some forced conclusions. This sparked subsequent debates about whether literary forms had been established during the Western Han, Eastern Han, Tang, and Song dynasties. Despite these shortcomings, Zhang's work retains significant philosophical depth and theoretical value. In "When Were Literary Forms Established? The Way of Establishment of the Framework of Traditional Chinese Literary Forms" 文体备于何时——中国古代文体框架确立的途径, Chen Minzhen 陈民镇 (2018) asserts that while the Warring States period saw breakthroughs in literary forms, it cannot be said that literary forms were fully developed then, as the framework was only beginning to take shape. The literary forms flourished comprehensively in the Han Dynasty, especially during the Eastern Han, when they not only inherited those of previous eras but also introduced significant

innovations, thereby establishing the foundational framework of traditional Chinese literary forms. Hence, Zhang concludes that "literary forms were established in the Eastern Han."

2.3 Classification of Literary Forms

Classification of literary forms is a crucial aspect of literary form theory, as it reflects people's understanding of the essence and characteristics of literary forms. Classification of literary forms has long been a focus in the academic circle. Since the Republician period, several literary history works, including Lü Simian's 吕思勉 *Literature of the Song Dynasty* 宋代文学 (1929), Qian Jibo's 钱基博 *Literature of the Ming Dynasty* 明代文学 (1933), Zheng Zhenduo's 郑振铎 *History of Chinese Folk Literature* 中国俗文学史 (1938), Liu Yongji's 刘永济 *An Overview of Literature in Fourteen Dynasties* 十四朝文学要略 (1945), Tan Disen's 谭帝森 *History of the Evolution of Chinese Literature* 中国文学演变史 (1982), Yan Tingliang's 颜廷亮 *Literature of Dunhuang* 敦煌文学 (1989), Cheng Yizhong's 程毅中 *The Evolution of Chinese Poetic Forms* 中国诗体流变 (1992), and Zhang Bigong's 章必功 *History of Literary Forms* 文体史话 (2006), have all described the development history of literary through their specific classifications by literary forms. It demonstrates that literary form classification is the theoretical foundation for their narrative outlines. Liu Yunsun's 刘云孙 "Classification of Literary Forms" 文体之分类 (1920) and Dai Hongfu's 戴宏复 "Discussion on the Classification of Literary Forms: A Comparative Study of Xiao Tong's Selections of Refined Literature, Yao Nai's The Anthology of Traditional Prose, and Zeng Guofan's Collection of Outstanding Writings on the Classics" 文体分类之商榷——由萧统《文选》、姚鼐《古文辞类纂》、曾国藩《经史百家杂钞》以比较 (1931) specifically explore the issue of literary form classification. They both express dissatisfaction with traditional classifications represented by *Selections of Refined Literature* and *The Anthology of Traditional Prose* and propose new classification methods inspired by Western literary theories. Specifically, Liu Yunsun introduces two dimensions of classification: by forms (including forms and rhythm) and by essence (including narration, lyricism, and argumentation). Dai Hongfu categorizes literary works into two major types: "emotional literature" and "intellectual literature." Both scholars aim to construct a classification framework that is logically consistent and inclusive of various literary forms. At the beginning of reform and opening up, Guo Shaoyu published "An Advocacy of Literary Form Classification" 提倡一些文体分类学 (1981). In this paper, Guo argues that "literary form classification is closely related to rhetorical studies and also a major aspect of the study of the history of Chinese literary criticism" (Guo 1981, 2) and calles for establishing literary form classification as "a new independent discipline" (Guo 1981, 11). In "A Brief Discussion on Classification of Traditional Chinese Literary Forms" 略论中国古代文体分类 (1989), Jin Zhenbang 金振邦 outlines the evolution of traditional literary form classifications, which are from rough to refined, from complex to simple, and from application-oriented to function-oriented. Qian Cangshui's 钱仓水 *Study of Literary Form Classification* 文体分类学 (1992) is the first academic monograph dedicated to literary form classification. This book overcomes the limitations of traditional literary form classifications, which often "classify merely for the sake of classification and discuss literary forms without broader contexts." Instead, it presents

literary form classification as an emerging independent discipline, systematically addressing its objects, categories, methods, and standards, thereby offering significant theoretical value.

Since the turn of the 21th century, literary form classification has remained a hot topic. In *Research on the Classification of Chinese Literary Works* 中国文章分类学研究, Zhu Guangxian 朱广贤 (2000) proposes a scheme called "two categories, eight types, and various forms," establishing a new classification system for Chinese literature within the framework of general literary works. Guo Yingde's papers, such as "On the Classification of Traditional Chinese Literary Forms" 中国古代文体分类学刍议 (2005) and "From Behavioral Modes to Textual Modes: On the Generation of Traditional Chinese Literary Form Classification" 由行为方式向文本方式的变迁——论中国古代文体分类的生成方式 (2005), examine the reasons and characteristics behind the generation of traditional literary form classification in China. He identifies three main ways of generation: literary form classification as a behavioral mode, literary form classification as a textual mode, and literary form classification within the literary system. In "On Literary Form Classification in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*: Comparison with *Selections of Refined Literature* in Literary Forms"《文心雕龙》的文体分类论——和《昭明文选》文体分类的比较 (2007), Zhang Shaokang 张少康 analyzes the similarities and differences between the literary form classifications in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* and *Selections of Refined Literature*. Ma Jianzhi's 马建智 *Research on the Classification of Traditional Chinese Literary Forms* 中国古代文体分类研究 (2008) combines historical and theoretical approaches to outline the development trajectory of traditional Chinese literary form classification, uncovering the underlying ideas, methods, and aesthetic psychology involved. In "Viewing Literary Form Classification Ideas in the Qing Dynasty through Prose Writings Anthologies" 从文章总集看清人的文体分类思想, He Shihai (2012) holds that the classification of literary forms among Qing scholars exhibited both a tendency towards increasingly detailed categorization and a movement towards simplification through the consolidation of similar types. This dual approach led to a clear theoretical framework for literary form classification and a three-tiered classification system. In *Aesthetics of Practical Literary Forms in Classical China* 古典中国实用文类美学 (2016), Ke Qingming 柯庆明 analyzes various practical literary forms in ancient China, such as essays of argument and persuasion, prefaces and postscripts, and biographies and memorials. He summarizes universally applicable aesthetic principles related to these forms, navigating the intersections of tradition and modernity and the classical and the West. Hu Dalei's 胡大雷 "Theory of Traditional Literary Forms" (2018) holds that the construction of traditional literary form systems underwent the transition from centering on people to focusing on literary forms, and the emergence of general collections, or anthologies became the key in this transition. Liu Xianglan's 刘湘兰 "Respecting Confucian Classics and Emphasizing Literature: Two Ideological Dimensions in the Classification of Literary Forms in Ancient China" 尊经与重文：中国古代文体分类的两个思想维度 (2021) explores the relationship between classics and literatures, examining the two contrasting and tension-filled dimensions of "literary forms originate from the Five Classics" and "the Six Classics all originate from literatures." Jiang Lüjia's 蒋旅佳 *Study on the Division and Classification of Prose Writings Anthologies from the Song and Yuan Dynasties* 宋元文章总集分体与分类研究 (2021) systematically reviews the phenomena of division and classification in the prose writings

anthologies from these periods and investigates the literary ideas and changing concepts of literary forms contained within.

2.4 Literary Form Concepts and Literary Form Criticism

The differentiation and evaluation of the characteristics, functions, and aesthetic features of poetry and literature are at the core of the concept and study of traditional literary forms, with particularly rich research outcomes. Zhu Ziqing's 朱自清 "On 'Using Prose Writing Techniques in Poetry'" 论 "以文为诗" (1939) studies the phenomenon of "prose as poetry" in literary creation from the Tang Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty, as well as the related theoretical debates within the literary criticism community. The article argues that before the Classical Prose Movement 古文运动, the boundaries between poetry and prose were unclear, so there was little controversy over form infiltration. However, starting from the Song Dynasty, with the further development of the Classical Prose Movement, poetry and prose became distinct, giving rise to disputes. Yan Yu 严羽 and others, who regarded the Airs (*feng* 风) poems in *The Book of Odes* as orthodox, criticized Song poets for "using prose writing techniques in poetry" 以文为诗, arguing that this approach was not authentic. Following Yan Yu's view, Ming poets upheld Tang poetry and condemned Song poetry, opposing the "use of prose writing techniques in poetry." In contrast, during the Qing Dynasty, scholars supported Song poetry and justified the appropriateness of "using prose writing techniques in poetry." This article represents one of the earliest modern academic essays focusing on the "use of prose writing techniques in poetry." Involving the poetry transitioning from the Tang to Song periods, it is rich in theoretical significance, leading to continued related discussion. For instance, articles, such as Huo Songlin's 霍松林 "Discussion about 'Using Prose Writing Techniques in Poetry' through the Poem 'Journey North'" 从《北征》看以文为诗 (1979), Wu Zhongsheng's 吴中胜 "Distinction between Poetry and Prose" 诗文之辨 (2012), Xu Zong's 许总 "Using Prose Writing Techniques in Poetry: The Innovation and Integration of Tang–Song Poetic Forms" 以文为诗:唐宋诗格的创变与整合 (2014), and He Shihai's paper "The Theory of 'Poetry and Prose Interconnection' in the Qing Dynasty" 清代 "诗文相通" 说 (2021), are all extensions and further explorations of this discussion. Wu Chengxue's articles "Explore Aesthetic Value Orientations in Ancient China from Writing Based on Breaking-Down Forms" 从破体为文看古人审美的价值取向 (1989) and "Form Differentiation and Breaking-Down Forms" 辨体与破体 (1991) systematically explore the common phenomenon of breaking-down forms in literary creation, such as "using prose writing techniques in poetry," "using poetry writing techniques in lyric" 以诗为词, and "emulating pre-Tang regulated verses" 以古为律, revealing their inherent logic and aesthetic aims. They hold that the formation of literary forms is related to the unique expressive objects, application contexts, and formal factors of literary forms. Form differentiation is used to honor the literary forms, emphasizing the importance of form norms, while breaking-down forms used for innovation stand as essential paths for literary forms to maintain vitality and vigor. They form a dialectical relationship. Further development of these ideas from different perspectives can be seen in Wang Shuizhao's 王水照 "Honoring Literary Forms and Breaking-Down Forms" 尊体与破体 (1997), Jiang Yin's 蒋寅 "The Form Convention of 'Using the Superior Literary

Form to Polish the Inferior One' in Traditional Chinese Literary Form Infiltration" 中国古代文体互参中"以高行卑"的体位定势 (2008), Luo Zongqiang's 罗宗强 "Origin Tracing, Form Differentiation, and the Purpose of Literary Form Research: Reading Notes" 寻源、辨体与文体研究的目的——读书手记 (2012), and Pan Wuzheng's 潘务正 "The Theory of 'No Rhetoric in Classical Prose' in the Qing Dynasty" 清代"古文辞禁"论 (2018). Wang Lijian's 王力坚 "A Discussion on the Lyric Theory of 'Honoring the Literary Forms as the Foundation' in the Early Qing Period" 清初"本位尊体"词论辨析 (1998) extends the discussion to lyric form criticism. Form differentiation criticism plays a key role for traditional literary critics to conduct literary criticism and promote their literary views. Zhou Xunchu's 周勋初 "A Study of the Evolution of Literary Ideas through the Competition for the Title of 'First in Seven-Character Regulated Verse' among Tang Poets" 从"唐人七律第一"之争看文学观念的演变 (1985) introduces the Song-to-Qing-period debates over the title of "First in Seven-Character Regulated Verse" among Tang poets, revealing the conflicts between different literary standpoints, literary form models, and aesthetic ideals behind the relevant debates, as well as the reflected evolution trajectory of the history of literary form concepts and the history of literary thoughts. Articles, such as Zha Qinghua's 查清华 "The Competition for the Title of 'First in Seven-Character Regulated Verse' among Tang Poets in the Ming Dynasty" 明代"唐人七律第一"之争 (2001) and He Shihai's paper "The Debate over the 'Best Prose of the Ming Dynasty" "明文第一"之争 (2019), are inspired and influenced by this article in terms of problem discovery and refining, as well as research ideas and methods. In addition, Xu Jie's 许结 "A Discussion of the Theory of 'No Rhapsody in the Tang Dynasty' in the Ming Dynasty: Concurrently Discussing the Creation of Rhapsody in the Ming Dynasty and the Retro Trend of Thoughts" 明代"唐无赋"说辨析——兼论明赋创作与复古思潮 (1994) analyzes the realistic significance, cultural character, and theoretical essence of the theory of "no rhapsody in the Tang Dynasty" in the Ming Dynasty. Xu believes that this theory is to use extreme literary form criticism and retro theory to oppose empty, sparse, rhetoric, and weak literary style, which has the dual significance of negating the metrical development of rhapsody catering system in the Tang Dynasty and the prose development of new art of writing in the Song Dynasty. Meanwhile, Sun Zhimei's 孙之梅 "Reflection on the Concept of the 'Poetry History' in the Ming and Qing Dynasties" 明清人对"诗史"观念的检讨 (2003) examines the evolution of the connotation of the theory of "poetry history." This theory was put forward in the Tang Dynasty and admired enthusiastically in the Song Dynasty, gradually evolving into a lofty poetic concept. However, it was challenged in the Ming Dynasty. The discussion about retro poetry in the Ming Dynasty focused on form differentiation, advocating poetry's lyrical function and characteristics of analogy and association, thus questioning the value of the theory of "poetry history." However, under the advocacy of Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲, Qian Qianyi 钱谦益, and Wu Weiye 吴伟业, this theory was affirmed again during the Ming-Qing transition. Works such as Zhang Hui's 张晖 "Tradition of Chinese 'Poetry History'" 中国"诗史"传统 (2012) and Xiang Niandong's 项念东 "Rethinking the Theory of 'Poetry History'" "诗史"说再思 (2017) promote the discussion on the theory of "poetry history." Chen Guoqiu's "Research on the Tang Poetry Theory of the Retro School in the Ming Dynasty" 明代复古派唐诗论研究 (2007) explores the close relationship between retro thoughts as the mainstream of Ming

literature and form differentiation criticism and literary form theory. Li Guanlan's 李冠兰 "A Study of the Name Combination and Concepts of Literary Forms in the Pre-Qin Period" 论先秦的文体并称与文体观念 (2017) discusses early literary form concepts based on the name combination of literary forms in the Pre-Qin period, offering a distinctive perspective.

In addition to the works mentioned above, many other comprehensive studies in literary forms also offer rich discussions on literary form theory. For instance, Zhang Yi's 张毅 *An Introduction to Literature and Literary Form* 文学文体概说 (1993) explores the theory of literature and literary form and the principles of applying this theory to literary form criticism. Wu Chengxue's *Literary Forms of Traditional Chinese Literature* 中国古典文学风格学 (1993) examines literary forms and introduces the relationship between literary forms and language, regions, and the individuality of authors. *Studies of Traditional Chinese Literary Forms* 中国古代文体学研究 (2011) presents both a theoretical framework of literary forms and a pluralistic exploration of the history of literary forms, showcasing a broad research perspective and offering exemplary theoretical methods. This work represents the highest theoretical level and academic achievement in contemporary literary form research. *The Formation of Early Chinese Literary Form Concepts* 中国早期文体观念的发生 (2019) explores the formation of early literary form concepts through various aspects of ancient societal life, such as rituals, political education, government officials, language, authors, texts, audience, and media. Guo Yingde's *Essays on Traditional Chinese Literary Forms* 中国古代文体学论稿 (2005) summarizes the theoretical analyses by traditional Chinese literature critics regarding literary form classification, as well as the composition, features, and functions of different layers of literary form structures. Furthermore, works such as Tao Dongfeng's 陶东风 *The Evolution of Literary Forms and Their Cultural Significance* 文体演变及其文化意味 (1994), Li Shibiao's 李士彪 *Literary Forms of the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties* 魏晋南北朝文体学 (2004), Jia Fenran's 贾奋然 *Studies on Literary Form Criticism of the Six Dynasties* 六朝文体批评研究 (2005), Fang Xiqiu's 方锡球 *Research on Xu Xueyi's Poetic Thought* 许学夷诗学思想研究 (2006), Xi Tongyun's 奚彤云 *A History of Criticism of Traditional Chinese Parallel Prose* 中国古代骈文批评史稿 (2006), Deng Xinyue's 邓新跃 *Studies of the Theory of Poetical Form Differentiation in the Early and Mid-Ming Dynasty* 明代前中期诗学辨体理论研究 (2007), Xi Wenqian's 郗文倩 *Research on the Function of Traditional Chinese Literary Forms: Centered on Literary Forms in the Han Dynasty* 中国古代文体功能研究——以汉代文体为中心 (2010), Lü Shuangwei's 吕双伟 *Research on Parallel Prose Theory of the Qing Dynasty* 清代骈文理论研究 (2011), Li Siya's 李思涯 *Research on Hu Yinglin's Literary Thought* 胡应麟文学思想研究 (2012), Yao Aibin's *Speculations on Traditional Chinese Literary Form Theory* 中国古代文体论思辨 (2012), Li Jianzhong and Li Xiaolan's 李小兰 *Outline of Critical Literary Form Theory* 批评文体论纲 (2013), Gu Shuguang's 谷曙光 *Integration and Mastery: Research on Literary Forms in the Song Dynasty* 贯通与驾驭：宋代文体学述论 (2016), and Ren Jingze's 任竞泽 *Critical Research on Traditional Chinese Form Differentiation Theory* 中国古代辨体理论批评研究 (2016) all further promote the study of the traditional Chinese literary form theory from different aspects.

2.5 Interdisciplinary Study of Literary Form Theories

Unlike pure literature in the West, traditional Chinese literary forms are artistic forms built upon politics, the system of rites and music, and practicability. Therefore, the literary form theory is not a pure literature theory but a comprehensive theory system that merges and integrates multiple disciplines. Wang Yao's 王瑶 "Classification and Analysis of Literary Forms and the Emergence of Anthology" 文体辨析与总集的成立 (1951) focuses on the relationship between politics and literature in early medieval China and argues that the particular focus on literary form analysis in terms of the literature theory during the Six Dynasties is first closely related to the political emphasis on the unification of "duty," "official title," and "position" at that time. Secondly, with the flourishing of writings, the increasing complexity of literary works, the expansion of collections in imperial archives, and the emergence of sectional recording, there would inevitably be methods and concepts of classification. Thirdly, as the status of literature rose and the number of writers and the practice of excerpting increased, these naturally led to the emergence of anthologies and classification guidelines, as well as the analysis of the categories, styles, and temperaments of poetry and prose. Fu Gang's 傅刚 "The Academic Origins of Literary Form Differentiation and Analysis in the Han, Wei, and Six Dynasties" 汉魏六朝文体辨析的学术渊源 (2000) analyzes the writing purposes and methods of literary criticism works, anthologies, Buddhist works, and historical works that emerged in the Han, Wei, and Six Dynasties. It is believed that the prevailing trend of analyzing the origins of literary forms during this time can be traced back to Liu Xiang's 刘向 "Book Introduction Catalog Collection" 别录, Liu Xin's 刘歆 "Book Introduction Catalog Collection Containing Seven Volumes" 七略, Ban Gu's "Treatise on Literature" in *The History of the Han Dynasty*, and other bibliographies in historical records, and these works are the inheritance and practice of Liu Xiang and others' thought of "relying on bibliographical studies to critique academic traditions across generations and explore their origins for discernment" in the field of literature. In "The Literary Form Significance of Prose Anthologies in the Song Dynasty" 宋代文章总集的文体学意义, Wu Chengxue (2009) argues that prose anthologies in Song Dynasty, such as *Best Literary Works* 文苑英华 fully absorbed the achievements of literary form reform in Tang and Song dynasties although they still adopted the traditional compilation style of *Selections of Refined Literature*. Particularly noteworthy among them are the literary form concepts centered on traditional Chinese prose, with particular emphasis on Tang and Song literary works. Moreover, the inclusion of a large number of historical records and philosophical writings in anthologies reflects the Song literati's expansion of the boundaries of literature and their consciousness of reshaping literature classics.

The relationship between linguistic styles and literary forms and that between linguistics and literary form studies have been a particularly noteworthy focus in interdisciplinary literary form studies. Liu Shipei's "The Origins of Literature," starting from tracing the origins of language and writing, discusses the divergence of "language" (*yan* 言), "utterance" (*yu* 语), and "writing" (*wen* 文). Liu defines "'language' as straightforward communication, 'utterance' as argumentative discourse, and 'writing' as rhetorical ornamentation," such as rhyme, parallel structure, and literary embellishment. Liu explains that, in the Six Dynasties period, "works with rhyme were considered 'writing,'" while proses without rhyme, such as

classical proses of the Eight Great Masters or the Tongcheng school of Writing, were merely regarded as so-called "utterance" in ancient times or so-called "technical writings" (*bi* 笔) in the Six Dynasties period and could not be called "writing." According to Liu, in the Six Dynasties period, "parallel prose was the orthodox form of literary form." Qing literati such as Chen Weisong 陈维崧 and Wang Zhong 汪中 revived parallel prose in the Six Dynasties period, holding "it as the authentic literary form, continuing its rich use of rhetoric" (Liu 1905, 19). This view inherits Ruan Yuan's theory of "literary writings and technical writings" as the theoretical basis for constructing literary history. It is biased to relegate classical prose to a lower status in literary history. However, this theory breaks away from the shackles of "literature as a vehicle of ideas" 载道论 and considers literature history and literary form history according to the unique artistic aesthetic feeling of Chinese language and writing such as rhyme, parallelism, antithetical parallelism, etc., revealing the concept of pure literature in a modern sense. It has its own positive significance. Subsequent works, such as Hu Huaichen's 胡怀琛 "Discussion about Literary Writings and Technical Writings" 文笔辨 (1926) and Yang Runsheng's 杨润生 "Literary Writings and Technical Writings" 文与笔 (1928), explore similar themes and are similar to traditional academic notes in the research methods, mainly presenting materials without in-depth theoretical analysis. However, more modern academic approaches appeared in works such as Chen Jing's 陈竟 "A Review of the Debate over Parallel Prose and Prose" 骈散之争述评 (1937) and Lu Qinli's 逯钦立 "Talks about Literary Writings and Technical Writings" 说文笔 (1948). Chen's work comprehensively sorts out the disputes over parallel prose and prose in past dynasties, which can be roughly divided into three schools: The first school, represented by figures such as Xiao Tong, Ruan Yuan, and Liu Shipei, strongly opposed prose and championed ornate literary expression; the second school, including the Tang-Song school from Han Yu 韩愈 onward and the Tongcheng school of writing, criticized parallel prose as inferior in style; the third school, led by Liu Xie and Huang Kan 黄侃, adopted a more balanced approach, holding a moderate position between the two forms, acknowledging the merits of both parallel prose and prose styles. Chen's article also probes into the evolution of literary thought, literary form concepts, and even academic atmospheres throughout history reflected by this dispute. Lu Qinli's "Talks about Literary Writings and Technical Writings" re-evaluates the "theory of literary writings and technical writings" prevailing in the Six Dynasties from a modern academic perspective, offering unique perspectives on its origin, historical development, connotation evolution, etc. Lü Shuangwei's "Zeng Guofan and the Rise of Parallel Prose Criticism in Hunan during the Late Qing" 曾国藩与晚清湖湘骈文批评的崛起 (2017) discusses the rise of parallel prose criticism in Hunan and the decisive role played by Zeng Guofan's parallel prose thought from the perspective of region and literary form. Lian Yantang's 连燕堂 "From Classical Prose to Vernacular Chinese: The Literary Revolution and Literary Form Evolution in Modern Times" 从古文到白话——近代文界革命与文体流变 (2000), starting with the evolution of ancient and modern linguistic styles, explores the change of writing concepts and literary forms since modern times. Liu Ning's 刘宁 "The Literary Forms of Chinese Thought" 汉语思想的文体形式 (2012) discusses the conflict and integration between the style of Western learning works and the traditional literary forms of Chinese thought in the context of the modern eastward spread of Western culture. Finally, Li Jianzhong's "The Modern Western Learning

Context of Chinese Literary Form Research: An Investigation Based on the Relationship between Literary Form and Language" 汉语文体学研究的现代西学背景——基于文体与语言之关系的考察 (2013) explores the influence of language research-centered theories in the early 20th century, including Russian Formalism, New British, and American Criticism, and linguistic structuralism from Prague to France, on the revival and maturity of Chinese literary form research awareness.

3 Prospects for the Study of Traditional Literary Form Theory

In conclusion, over the 20th century, particularly since the 1980s, the study of traditional literary forms has yielded fruitful results, significantly promoting the development and prosperity of traditional literature discipline. However, there are also problems. First, the collection and research of historical materials related to literary form theory are still insufficient. Second, research efforts are unevenly distributed, with more focus on pre-Tang literature. The research on literary form theory from the Tang period onwards, especially in the Ming and Qing dynasties, remains relatively weak. Third, in terms of research content, more attention is paid to hot issues and classical works in traditional literature theory, such as "Discourse on Literature" in *On the Standards for Literature* 典论・论文, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, and *Selections of Refined Literature*. There are even many low-level repeated studies. However, a large number of issues and works with rich literary form values outside the hot topics and classics are still neglected by the academic circle. This has resulted in a narrow research perspective and insufficient expansion and exploration of theoretical issues. Additionally, the research methods employed tend to be limited, with insufficient integration of traditional and modern approaches, as well as a lack of synthesis between Chinese and Western scholarship. There are more local case studies than macro comprehensive studies, and there are more descriptions of superficial phenomena than deep theoretical analysis and law discussion. These issues hinder the further development of the traditional literary form theory. To remove the obstacles and establish Chinese literary forms with modern significance and a high academic level in the 21st century, it is urgent to make efforts from the following aspects.

3.1 Exploration and Expansion of Historical Materials on Traditional Chinese Literary Form Studies

The study of traditional Chinese literary forms, while related to literary history and the history of literary theory criticism, is distinct in several respects. Its sources of historical materials share similarities with those of other disciplines yet possess their uniqueness. However, due to the absence of an independent awareness of literary forms as a discipline for a long period of time, no special attention has been paid to the collation and study of historical materials on literary forms. Instead, they are attached to historical materials on literature and literary theory criticism. For example, the Classical Chinese Literature Historical Materials Research Series 中国古典文学史料研究丛书 published by Zhonghua Book Company, Selected Works on Classical Chinese Literary Theory Criticism 中国古典文学理论批评专著选辑 published

by People's Literature Publishing House, and *Compilation of Chinese Literary Criticism Materials* 中国文学批评资料汇编 published by Cheng Wen Publishing, as well as historical material works such as *Poetry Remarks over the Dynasties* 历代诗话, *Song Poetry Talks* 宋诗话, *Ming Poetry Remarks* 全明诗话, *Qing Poetry Remarks* 清诗话, *Continuation of Qing Poetry Remarks* 清诗话续编, *Literary Remarks over the Dynasties* 历代文话, and *Continuation of Literary Remarks over the Dynasties* 历代文话续编, though rich in historical materials on literary forms, primarily focus on literary history or the history of literary theory criticism, with the significance and values of literary forms not being distinctly or clearly highlighted. Zeng Zaozhuang's 曾枣庄 *Traditional Chinese Literary Forms* 中国古代文体学 (2012) is currently the only comprehensive and systematic work that focuses specifically on literary forms historical materials and stands as a monumental achievement in the development of the discipline of traditional Chinese literary form. It contains five volumes: Volume I titled "Collected Literary Form Materials from Pre-Qin to the Yuan Dynasty," Volume II "Collected Literary Form Materials from the Ming Dynasty," Volumes III–IV "Collected Literary Form Materials from the Qing Dynasty," and Volume V "Collected Literary Form Materials from the Modern Era." However, due to the highly complex source of literary form historical materials, which are widely dispersed across classical works such as the Confucian classics, historical records, philosophical writings, and miscellaneous works, as well as unearthed documents, it was naturally impossible for the author, working alone, to comprehensively include all the relevant literary form historical materials in this monumental work. Notably, many valuable literary form materials from works outside of miscellaneous works, such as the Confucian classics, historical records, and philosophical writings, were not included in the monumental work. For instance, in the Confucian classics, the phrase "after seeking divine guidance through divination, a favorable omen appears, ensuring a peaceful and prosperous outcome" 卜云其吉,终然允臧 from "Ding Zhi Fang Zhong" 定之方中 (When Ting Culminated) in the "Airs of Yong" in *The Book of Odes* 诗经・鄘风 and the interpretation of the theory of "Nine Abilities" in *Mao Heng's Annotation to The Book of Odes* 毛亨传・九能 reflect early societal expectations regarding the mastery of etiquette, rhetoric, and literary form by the scholar-officials. Similarly, dictionary works such as *The Ready Guide* 尔雅 and *The Analytical Dictionary of Chinese Characters* 说文解字 contain extensive organizational frameworks and semantic elucidations of literary form terms, offering important insights into ancient understandings of literary form origins, nature, and functions, as well as classification consciousness, making them important historical materials for studying literary form development and early literary form concepts. As for bibliographical works of historical records, Zheng Qiao's 郑樵 "Monographs of Art and Literature" in *General History* 通志・艺文略 discusses the literature form classification and the evolution of origins, and *Collected Statutes of the Ming Dynasty* 大明会典 compiled by Shen Shixing 申时行 and others provides detailed records on the writing formats and measuring standards for imperial documents and imperial examination literary form in Chapter 75 titled "Formats for Memorials and Annotations" 表笺式 and Chapter 77 titled "Imperial Examination" 科举, which are ignored in general literature history and critical history studies. Philosophical writings offer all-inclusive contents and a classified compilation style, which are often important documents for studying literary form classification and genealogy rather than merely for the collation

and compiling of lost documents. For instance, Ming scholar Zhu Quan 朱权 wrote the *Book on the Origins of All Things in the World* 原始秘书 out of dissatisfaction with Song scholar Gao Cheng's 高承 *Records of the Origins of Affairs and Things* 事物纪原, aiming to explore the origins of all things in the world. In Chapter VII, "Documents of *Fu* and *Xi* and Imperial Edicts" 符檄诏敕 and "Literature, History, and Classics" 文史经籍 encompass more than 110 literary forms. This is far beyond what is found in the *Records of the Origins of Affairs and Things* and exceeds the number of categories in Ren Fang's *On the First Piece of Classic Work for Various Forms* by more than 30. These works are highly valuable for examining the classification concepts of literary forms during the Ming Dynasty. In addition, works such as Wang Sanpin's 王三聘 *Investigations into Things and Affairs Old and New* 事物考, Xu Ju's 徐炬 *Newly Engraved Original Compendium of Ancient and Modern Things* 新镌古今事物原始全书, Wang Qi's 王圻 *A Compilation of Folklore or Old Street Stories* 稗史汇编, and He Sanwei's 何三畏 *Newly Published Classified Excerpts for Writing by He* 新刻何氏类镕 all contain a rich wealth of content related to literary form studies. Systematically collecting, organizing, and effectively interpreting relevant materials can not only enrich and broaden the sources of historical data but also expand research fields, revealing and refining new theoretical issues in literary form studies.

3.2 Uncovering and Refining Theoretical Issues in Literary Form Studies

Literary forms represent the essence and core of literature. Traditional literary theory and criticism largely focus on literary form theory and criticism. However, the Confucian perspective on literature, which places excessive emphasis on its practical and educational functions, as well as on the moral cultivation of authors, combined with the characteristics of traditional literary criticism—primarily intuitive and experiential—has led to a lack of theoretical induction, analysis, and summarization. As a consequence, thoughts and concepts related to literary form studies are largely scattered across poetry talks, literary talks, commentaries, letters, prefaces and postscripts, notes, and even Confucian classics, historical records, and philosophical writings. Works with a coherent system, such as *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, *The Critique of Poetry* 诗品, and *An Investigation into Forms of Poetry*, are indeed rare exceptions. Research in literary form studies should transcend tradition and explore new frontiers. It is essential to reexamine the specific contexts and rich details of traditional literary form theory through a modern academic lens, perspective, and theoretical framework. This involves uncovering and refining theoretical issues that embody literature ontology and local characteristics from literary forms' diverse and complex phenomena. Additionally, it requires a logical interpretation of their modern significance that remains consistent with historical contexts, while systematically organizing the theoretical framework of traditional literary form studies. In the history of traditional literary criticism, numerous theoretical issues have arisen. However, in most critical contexts, critics have not given adequate attention to these issues' implications on literary forms. For example, the discourse on literary writings and technical writings that flourished during the Six Dynasties represents the first instance in the history of criticism where literature was entirely liberated from the constraints of political education views. This theoretical exploration centered

on artistic form and aesthetic characteristics, engaging with significant issues such as the essential features of "literature," the classification of literary forms, and the relationship between language and literary forms, all carrying profound theoretical implications. The retro movement was the dominant literary thought in the Ming Dynasty, while the trend of form differentiation criticism reached its zenith during that time. Is there an inherent connection between the two? An examination of the literary history and literary criticism history of the Ming Dynasty reveals that the retro movement was the intrinsic driving force behind the flourishing of form differentiation criticism, while form differentiation criticism served as the primary tool for promoting the retro movement and advocating literary propositions. The retro movement required the establishment of literary form models and objects of enlightenment through education. It was accomplished by differentiating form, tracing their origins, clarifying transformations, and evaluating their quality. Thus, form differentiation criticism became central to literary criticism in the Ming Dynasty, with many key topics and debates among literary schools fundamentally linked to the concept of "form differentiation." For instance, the retro theories of the Former and Latter Seven Masters, although marked by internal differences, essentially respect literary form norms and advocate for exemplary literary forms. The Gong'an school and the Inner Self 性灵 school argue that rigid adherence to literary forms can damage one's inner self and stifle artistic creativity. Consequently, they advocate for the free expression of the inner self, unconstrained by conventions, and encourage acting with self-assurance. In contrast, scholars like Wang Tingxiang 王廷相, Tu Long 屠隆, and Li Weizhen 李维桢 acknowledge the pitfalls of archaism and imitation while expressing dissatisfaction with the extreme disregard for norms. They promote a synthesis of inner self and literary form standards. Ming Dynasty literary criticism primarily arose from the interplay and convergence of these three streams of thought. This gave rise to debates such as the dispute over Tang and Song poetry, the competition for the title of "First in Seven-Character Regulated Verse" among Tang poets, dialectical interpretation of the poetry history, and extreme assertions like "no rhapsody in the Tang Dynasty" and "no poetry in the Song Dynasty," all of which utilized "form differentiation" as their primary tool. Form differentiation criticism has become the central focus and primary method for guiding literary thought and stimulating literary debates, serving as a crucial key to understanding the literary movements of the Ming Dynasty.

During the Ming and Qing periods, alongside the form differentiation criticism inspired by the retro movement, there were also numerous vigorously debated topics marked by the distinctive characteristics of the periods. Building on the discourse about the style and temperament of poetry and prose that originated in the Song Dynasty, the literary criticism of the Ming and Qing periods gave rise to debates over the "difficulty of poetry and prose," exploring which form of writing—poetry or prose—presents more challenges, and identifying the specific difficulties inherent in each. Although varying subjective factors, such as the talents and scholarly backgrounds of authors, hinder a unified understanding among critics, the topic is not only connected to the writers' creative abilities and techniques but is also closely linked to the literary ideas and literary form concepts of the critics themselves. Consequently, examining the debates surrounding this topic is of significant importance to the history of literary thought. It not only enhances our understanding of the functions, style

and temperament characteristics, and creation techniques of poetry and prose but also offers a unique perspective for examining the evolution of literary movements across different periods. The transition from the traditional and mainstream belief that "poetry is more difficult than prose" to the emergence of contrasting views during the Ming and Qing periods, such as "prose is more difficult than poetry," reflects a natural evolution in the understanding of the nature, functions, and hierarchies of poetry and prose. Additionally, topics such as the challenges of narrative discourse, the debate over "the best prose of the Ming Dynasty," the idea that each literary generation has its own significance, the assertion that literary form principles originated during the Warring States period, and the claim that the Six Classics are all about history represent literary form issues with broad influence and considerable theoretical depth. Meticulously analyzing and distinguishing related topics, along with uncovering, refining, and summarizing their theoretical value, is essential for moving beyond conventional narrative models of literary thought and criticism that focus solely on dynasties, scholars, or monographs. This approach is vital for constructing a literary form theory system that embodies national characteristics and reflects its historical context.

3.3 Preservation and Innovation in Research Methods

Wu Chengxue argues that research in literary form studies should build upon the classical paradigm advocated by Liu Xie, which emphasizes "tracing their origins and exploring their evolution; clarifying their names and elucidating their meanings; selecting examples to define their structures; and then elucidating their regularities to illustrate their writing principles." Furthermore, it should "be informed by Western scholarship, supported by technology, examined through institutional frameworks, and validated by tangible evidence" (Wu 2011, 4). In other words, it is crucial to respect tradition and stay connected to the original contexts and cultural backgrounds that gave rise to traditional literary form studies. Simultaneously, it is also important to draw on Western scholarship to fully harness the strengths of modern academic concepts, perspectives, literature, technology, and methodologies. This approach seeks to establish a modern discipline of literary form studies that both honors tradition and encourages innovation, ensuring that "it remains aligned with global intellectual trends while preserving its intrinsic cultural lineage" (Lu 2005, 57). If we stray from tradition and disregard the cultural context of traditional literary form studies, blindly applying Western literary concepts to analyze traditional Chinese literary forms and literary form studies, we will risk excluding many forms that have historically wielded significant influence in the lives and spiritual realms of scholars—such as edicts, petitions to the throne, responses, and eight-part essays—from the literary form system. This would severely compromise the integrity, richness, and indigenous characteristics of traditional literary form studies. Interpretations of relevant literary form theories may often be incompatible, clumsy, and misguided. In "Discourse on Literature" in *On the Standards for Literature*, Cao Pi 曹丕 asserts that literature is pivotal to governing the state and an immortal pursuit. Modern scholars often interpret this statement strictly through a literary lens, suggesting it represents an unprecedented elevation of the status of literature and writers and signifies the independence and self-consciousness of literature. In fact, a close reading of "Discourse on Literature" in

On the Standards for Literature shows that Cao Pi's notion of "literature" primarily refers to works inspired by the writings of sages, such as *The Book of Changes* 易, *The Book of Rites* 礼, and *The Book of History* 书. These works are considered noble idea-advocating sources capable of conveying an independent thought rather than the pure literary poetry and prose envisioned by later generations. What he calls "immortal pursuit" is merely an extension of the pre-Qin Confucian concepts of "setting moral examples, performing great deeds, and spreading noble ideas" 立德、立功、立言, particularly the notion of "advocating lasting noble ideals untouched by time." It does not embody the contemporary concepts of literary independence and self-consciousness. In discussing the distinctions between the primary and secondary aspects of literature, Cao Pi identified four literary forms: "Official memorials and rebuttals should be elegant, letters and treatises should be rational, inscriptions and eulogies should uphold facts, and poetry and rhapsody should aim for beauty (Cao 1986, 2271). The primary focus is official memorials and rebuttals that serve governance, followed by letters and treatises that convey independent thought. At the same time, the so-called pure literary forms of poetry and rhapsody are considered the least important. It is evident that his literary form concept is rooted in the traditional Confucian view of literature as a tool for political education rather than a modern notion of pure literature. In fact, traditional Confucians universally pursue self-cultivation, moral education, state governance, and the goal of bringing peace to all under Heaven, with few considering themselves as "pure literati." Poetry and prose that do not align with the objectives of political education are often met with skepticism and disdain. This sentiment is encapsulated in the saying, "Once one becomes a literatus, there is nothing worthy of admiration." The concept of pure literature, along with the ideas of literary independence and self-consciousness, is actually a relatively recent development and has never held a mainstream position in traditional literary concepts. To truly grasp the theories of traditional literary form studies, one should understand and respect this tradition.

Respecting and adhering to tradition does not mean following it unthinkingly or fearing to step beyond established boundaries. Instead, it involves inheriting the tradition while also innovating and transcending it. Otherwise, contemporary literary form studies can at best reach the level of Liu Xie, falling far short of achieving the goal of developing modern and academically sophisticated literary form studies suitable for the 21st century. To innovate and transcend, it is essential to first draw on Western scholarship. As previously mentioned, applying the literary form quartation to traditional Chinese literary forms certainly leads to the drawbacks of forcing conformity. However, it also offers positive implications, such as reshaping Chinese literary history and elevating the social status of popular literary forms like novels and operas. In this context, a new tradition in literary research and literary form theories has been established since the late Qing and early Republican periods. Its reasonable core still holds reference value today. The essential components that define literary forms are language and script. The distinctive form, sound, and meaning of the Chinese language and script are fundamental and indispensable factors in shaping the national and local characteristics of Chinese literature. Therefore, research in literary form studies in the new era should return to its linguistic roots. As Guo Shaoyu states, "Language and script are intimately connected to a country's culture, and literature embodies the products of various

cultures. Thus, when examining traditional Chinese literary forms and categories, distinguishing between written and spoken forms can most effectively clarify the characteristics of traditional Chinese literature and identify the key issues in literary form classification" (Guo 1981, 9). Although academic discussions about the discourse on literary writings and technical writings and the rivalry between parallel and plain prose have touched upon linguistic issues, they often remain confined within traditional academic frameworks, lacking modern theoretical interpretations and constructs. Drawing broadly on the theories and methods of Western linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure and Noam Chomsky, as well as the contributions of scholars like Roger Fowler, Wayne Booth, Roman Jakobson, Viktor Shklovsky, David Robey, and others in the field of linguistic literary genres, we should conduct an in-depth examination of traditional literary forms and related theories. This should be approached from the perspectives of phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, rhythm, prosody, and rhetoric. Such a comprehensive analysis will reveal the aesthetic psychology and artistic trends embodied in literary forms, providing creators with aesthetic references, offering audiences a contextual background for understanding, and supplying critics with a logical basis for analysis. Moreover, the literary form concept and literary form theory are not only articulated in theoretical writings, such as poetry talks, literary talks, commentaries, and prefaces and postscripts, but are also significantly reflected in the practice of literary form creation. As French writer Marcel Proust notes, style for a writer, like color for a painter, is question not of technique but of vision. It is the revelation, which would be impossible by direct or conscious means, of the qualitative difference in the ways we perceive the world (Zhao 1984, 2). It is evident that the selection and creation of literary forms reflect the writer's core worldview, acting as a concrete manifestation of their literary concepts and theoretical principles. For this reason, Cheng Qianfan 程千帆 advocates for research on traditional Chinese literary theory in the 1980s, emphasizing the importance of studying both "traditional Chinese literary theory" and the "theory of traditional Chinese literature" (Cheng 2008, 24). The "theory of traditional Chinese literature" involves uncovering and refining the literary concepts and theories of ancient scholars from their works. This research method is equally applicable to literary form studies. However, 40 years have passed without any significant breakthroughs in the study of the "theory of traditional Chinese literature." Research in literary form theory that follows this direction holds vast potential for exploration. For example, the year-end sacrificial poems that originated during the Tang Dynasty were initially an inconspicuous form of poetic creation. By the Qing Dynasty, they had evolved into a distinctive type of literary criticism, integrating visual, auditory, and performative elements, and becoming an integral part of Qing literary criticism. Additionally, the popular "group poems of nostalgia" from the Qing Dynasty often centered on literati as their subjects, with narratives and discussions frequently highlighting literary activities and creative achievements. As a result, they aligned with styles such as on-poetry poems, evolving into a form of contemporary literary criticism rich in immediacy. The theoretical and critical significance of these literary form creations has received little attention in academia and deserves deeper exploration. With the rapid advancement of internet technology and big data, a notable new trend in research involves leveraging the strengths of digital humanities—such as data, platforms, and teams—to explore the characteristics of literary forms and their evolutionary patterns. In summary, the challenge

of building on tradition while bridging the ancient and modern, and integrating Eastern and Western perspectives, remains a key issue for advancing the study of literary form theory and developing a discourse system for philosophy and social sciences in a new era.

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