

The Flourishing Development and Global Influence of New Popular Literature and Art

National High-Level Think Tank of the Xinhua News Agency

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Introduction

Literature and art are a mirror and clarion call of the times that represent the visage of an era and guide the ethos of an era. The magnificent journey of Chinese modernization has nourished a literary and artistic landscape of boundless vitality.

In recent years, New Popular Literature and Art have surged forth like a spring tide, flourishing into a distinctive cultural landscape across the vast Chinese territory. Empowered by Internet technologies, they have broken down barriers between social circles, bridged the gap between refined and popular tastes, and enabled hundreds of millions of ordinary people to leap from passive spectators and consumers of literature and art into active creators, disseminators, and co-enjoyers. From the impromptu ditties scribbled on a cigarette pack by a food delivery rider to the village galas self-directed and self-performed in rural courtyards, from the raw, vibrant short dramas captured through mobile phone lenses to the collaborative chain-story creations by thousands in cyberspace..., the boundaries of contemporary literature and art are being continuously expanded, and their forms perpetually enriched. These artistic practices, imbued with the earthy fragrance of the soil and the lively spirit of everyday life, are at once a vivid depiction of the manifold facets of our times and a heartfelt distillation of society's spiritual strength.

New popular literature and art have not arisen from a vacuum; rather, they have been growing robustly at the confluence of ideological guidance, epochal development, technological transformation, and supportive policy frameworks. As President Xi Jinping pointed out in great depth, Internet technologies and new media have transformed the forms of literature and art, giving rise to a vast array of new literary and artistic genres while bringing about profound changes in artistic concepts and practices^①. He pointed to the need to adapt to the evolving situation, strengthen the creation and production of online literature and art, and intensify positive guidance.^② This important assertion reveals the underlying intrinsic connection between technological transformation and literary and artistic development, providing directional guidance for the innovative development of literature and art in the Internet age.^③ Robust economic and social development has laid a solid material foundation for new popular literature and art; the rapid evolution of digital-intelligent technologies has expanded the frontiers of artistic creation and dissemination; the continuously improving policy system safeguards artistic innovation and practice. With various elements empowering one another in deep integration, a new popular literature and art ecology has emerged, characterized by nationwide co-creation and overflowing vitality.

① Speech at the Forum on Literature and Art, Qiushi.com, October 15, 2024. https://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2024-10/15/c_1130209312.htm

② Speech at the Forum on Literature and Art, Qiushi.com, October 15, 2024. https://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2024-10/15/c_1130209312.htm

③ Wang Ying, *Building a New Cultural Ecology for New Mass Literature and Art under Internet Conditions (An In-Depth Reflection)*, People's Daily, July 14, 2026, Page 9.

Only by moving steadily can one go far. To promote the sustained flourishing of new popular literature and art, it is necessary to stay on the right course and calibrate the bearings through dialectical thinking. We must steer the direction amid the interplay between upholding fundamental principles and pursuing innovation, hold the bottom line while balancing social benefits with economic returns, maintain proper measure in the process of elevating and popularizing, and broaden pathways through the integration of culture and technology—thereby continuing to enhance the intellectual height, artistic taste, and presentation quality of literary and artistic creation.

New popular literature and art constitute both a vivid cultural footnote to China's path to modernization and a vital vehicle through which China engages in civilizational dialogue and participates in global cultural development. Through sincere expressions that transcend geographical divides and linguistic barriers, they sculpt a multidimensional image of China that is trustworthy, lovable, and respectable. With an open and inclusive posture, they merge into the global cultural tides, promote mutual learning and coexistence among different civilizations through mutual understanding and affinity, and ceaselessly write new chapters in which civilizations illuminate one another in shared brilliance.

Cultural lineage endures and all things are renewed. New popular literature and art represent the most authentic pulse and the most vivid countenance of our era. This mighty force, grown from the depths of the earth, will ultimately merge into the broad rivers of a cultural powerhouse, injecting vitality into the flourishing prosperity of Chinese culture and leaving profound, enduring echoes for the intermingling and shared advancement of human civilizations.

Chapter I

The Vigorous Development of New Popular Literature and Art

New popular literature and art are a brand-new, composite literary and artistic ecosystem that has emerged in the realm of literature and art, driven by the scientific and technological revolution encompassing the Internet, big data, and artificial intelligence. It features broad public participation in creation, dissemination, and sharing, and reflects the voice of the people and the themes of the times. It is not merely a matter of innovating artistic forms and reshaping the communication landscape; more importantly, it has profoundly transformed the cultural life patterns and modes of expression of hundreds of millions of people, constituting a "vital force" in the literature and art of the new era—one that stays close to the masses and brims with vigor. Rooted in everyday life, it responds to the aesthetic needs of the people, enriches their cultural and philosophical world, propels social and cultural innovation, and is increasingly showcasing Chinese characteristics, style, and manner in global cultural exchanges. With unprecedented exuberance, it grows and blossoms, becoming a luminous scenic line in the cultural landscape of the new era.

1. Burgeoning Enthusiasm Shown by a Diversity of Creators

Since the beginning of the new era in 2012, the field of literature and art has been undergoing a new wave of popularization, in which the masses are engaged with unprecedented scale, capability, and passion. They are not only the recipients of literary and artistic works, but have become active practitioners and vocal critics of creation, rendering the popular character of literature and art ever more distinctive and pronounced.

Popular science bloggers deconstruct hardcore knowledge into engaging and accessible narratives, achieving cross-boundary dissemination of scientific content. Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) bloggers breathe new life into traditional crafts through innovative interpretations, bringing such heritage practices as molten-iron fireworks and ice-and-snow sculpture into the spotlight and attracting tens of millions of views. Rural lifestyle bloggers use natural sounds and documentary-style imagery to record village landscapes and the authentic flavors of life, evoking the public's yearning for pastoral living.... These online creators, hailing from diverse fields and rooted in the soil of reality, employ unadorned means to express life and document the era, immensely enriching the socio-cultural landscape.

This is even more evident in the literary domain. Wang Jibing, the "delivery poet" who scribbled ditties capturing life's bittersweet moments on the margins between food

delivery orders; Fan Yusu, the domestic worker who persisted in recording her reflections on life amid personal hardship; Wang Ying, the sanitation worker who faced grueling labor head-on and held her pen to document her existence.... In the new discursive context of our era, an increasing number of amateur writers hidden across all trades and professions are coming to the fore. More significantly, online literature is one of the most dynamic fronts of new popular literature and art: in 2025, the number of online literature authors in China reached 32.694 million, an increase of 1.496 million over 2024^①. According to statistics, online literature authors span 57 major categories of the national economy, with writers from all walks of life continuing to infuse fresh blood into online literature.^② Amid this trend toward diversity and popularization of creative subjects, individualized expressive needs from different groups and perspectives are being fully unleashed, and literary and artistic creation has undergone a shift from "for the masses" and "writing about the masses" to "writing by the masses" and "sharing by the masses".

The field of literary and art criticism has likewise erupted with new vitality. User reviews, community discussions, and other forms of engagement have coalesced into new critical forces; critical and evaluative mechanisms are being continuously iterated and optimized in practice. Real-time "roasts" in the bullet-comment zones sparkle with witty remarks; "god-tier comments" cascade in comment sections. Internet-native cultural formats such as "film and television commentary", "derivative creations", and "viral memes" keep springing forth, breaking through the temporal-spatial constraints and discursive barriers of traditional literary and art criticism, and demonstrating unique strengths in immediacy, participatory engagement, and creativity. On video platforms such as Bilibili, massive audiences use scrolling bullet comments to deliver real-time critiques of works while comment sections form cascading collective interpretations. On reading platforms such as WeChat Read (WeRead), readers juxtapose their inspirations, critiques, and reflections alongside the main text in the form of marginalia, completing a transformation in identity from passive recipients to active exegetes.

Since 2026, particularly with the full-scale integration of generative AI into creative domains such as music, film, television, and literature, a literary and artistic ecosystem in which "everyone can create and everyone acts as a critic" has been taking shape at an accelerated pace. Public recognition has become an important yardstick for evaluating literary and artistic works. How to uphold the value bottom line of literary and artistic creation while respecting the creative enthusiasm of the masses to ensure that new popular literature and art continue to burst forth with vitality and vigor along a healthy and orderly trajectory—this has become a key issue in the evolution of the evaluation system for new popular literature and art.

① 2025 Research Report on the Development of Chinese Online Literature, Chinese Social Sciences Net, April 20, 2026. https://www.cssn.cn/skgz/bwyc/202604/t20260420_5981165.shtml

② 2023 Research Report on the Development of Chinese Online Literature, Chinese Social Sciences Net, February 26, 2024. https://www.cssn.cn/skgz/bwyc/202604/t20260420_5981165.shtml

2. Unprecedented Richness in Content and Forms

Since the beginning of the new era in 2012, a substantive, inclusive, and vibrant creative atmosphere for literature and art has gradually taken shape. From grand narratives to micro-expressions, from societal insights to the joys of daily living, from new adaptations of traditional tales to futuristic sci-fi imaginings—the thematic genres of new popular literature and art are fully diverse, offering a panoramic display of the abundant scenes and cultural lineaments of the vivid practice of Chinese modernization, and telling lively, spirited stories of the new era. In 2025, the number of online literary works in China reached 45.837 million titles, an increase of 4.186 million over 2024^①; the total number of uploaded online dramas, films, variety shows, documentaries, and animated productions launched in 2025 was 2,652, an increase of 18.87% over 2024^②; in 2025, 33,000 micro-dramas were launched for broadcast, reaching nearly 700 million domestic users^③.

The IP incubation and full-chain development of online literature are becoming increasingly mature. In 2025, approximately 9,000 new authorizations were granted for adapting online literature into micro-short dramas, with over half of the micro-short dramas originating from online literature. Among the top 20 new long-form dramas ranked by cumulative effective views, ten were adapted from online literature IP^④. There has gradually emerged a trend toward premium-quality online audiovisual content: works such as *The Long Season*, *Yao-Chinese Folktales*, and *Infinity and Beyond: Taiwan Season* have achieved dual success in both social benefits and economic returns, serving as vivid exemplars of high-quality development in new popular literature and art. At the same time, new forms—including virtual idols, interactive dramas, and immersive experience projects—have mushroomed one after another, with literary and artistic forms being rejuvenated through quality enhancement and cross-boundary convergence. Traditional opera has attracted new "piaoyou" (opera aficionados) through livestreaming; virtual streamer communities have coalesced into a new force of "meta-universe performance"; VR technology has enabled the millimeter-accurate digital reproduction of cultural artifacts; "cloud exhibitions" and "cloud performances" have enabled literary and artistic services to transcend physical spatial limitations. Scenic-spot performers—such as the "tumbler lady" at the Grand Tang Ever-Bright City of Xi'an and the "little beggar" at the Qingming Riverside Landscape Garden of Kaifeng—

① 2025 Research Report on the Development of Chinese Online Literature, Chinese Social Sciences Net, April 20, 2026. https://www.cssn.cn/skqz/bwyc/202604/t20260420_5981165.shtml

② Research Report on China's Internet Audio-Visual Development (2026), China Netcasting Services Association, April 15, 2026. <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/dDvCBYWJ5S8XZGFc8Xt0Vg>

③ State Council Information Office Holds Regular Policy Briefing to Introduce the Work Plan for Accelerating the Cultivation of New Growth Points in Service Consumption, China SCIO, February 6, 2026. http://www.scio.gov.cn/live/2026/38036/index_m.html

④ "Resonating with the World: Over 35 Million People Writing Chinese Online Literature", Xinhua News Agency, July 31, 2026. <http://www.xinhuanet.com/20260731/1c3215d4f5a347208470891447d398ef/c.html>

draw on local culture to precisely respond to tourists' desire for immersive experiences.

What merits particular attention is the fact that the new model represented by "AI + creation" is reshaping the logic of literary and artistic production—artificial intelligence not only assists in generating texts, images, and accompanying musical scores, but also has given rise to an original content ecosystem of "human-machine collaborative creation". The sci-fi short drama *Sanxingdui: A Future Revelation* employs AI technology to recreate the ancient Shu civilization from thousands of years ago, bringing cultural relics "to life". Amid the interplay of the virtual and the real, the multidimensional matrix of new popular literature and art is constantly expanding, with diverse literary and artistic forms thriving together in symbiosis. This not only satisfies the people's diverse and personalized cultural consumption needs, but also demonstrates the powerful vitality and contemporary adaptability of Chinese culture.

3. Full Release of Cultural Vitality

New popular literature and art are stimulating the vitality for cultural innovation and creation of the entire nation with unprecedented breadth and depth. Anchored in the rapid development of new business formats such as online literature, audiovisual content, and gaming, it continuously gains developmental momentum through business models including paid content access, user tipping, livestream e-commerce, and IP (intellectual property) adaptation, thereby driving the effective release of grassroots cultural vitality and the deepening of artistic innovation and practice. The vigorous influx of capital, combined with nimble and efficient market operations, has enabled new popular literature and art to exhibit the momentum for robust endogenous economic growth while maintaining its dynamism as the boundaries of the cultural industry are continuously expanded and its value steadily unlocked.

The creative transformation and innovative development of traditional cultural resources by new popular literature and art is forming a complete chain of cultural vitality—from the content end to the market end, and then to the societal end. In 2025, China's online literature reading market reached 50.21 billion yuan in scale, a year-on-year increase of 16.6%; the online literature IP adaptation market exploded to 367.61 billion yuan^①; the online audiovisual industry market reached 1,287.661 billion yuan, up 5.3% year-on-year^②; the domestic gaming market brought in an actual sales revenue of 350.789 billion yuan, with a user base of 683 million—all historic highs^③. Livestream e-commerce has innovatively launched a "culture + product sales" model, in which streamers use ICH products as vehicles for cultural livestreaming, broadening the

① 2025 Research Report on the Development of Chinese Online Literature, Chinese Social Sciences Net, April 20, 2026. https://www.cssn.cn/skgz/bwyc/202604/t20260420_5981165.shtml

② Research Report on China's Internet Audio-Visual Development (2026), China Netcasting Services Association, April 15, 2026. <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/dDvCBYWJ5S8XZGFc8Xt0Vg>

③ 2025 China Game Industry Report, Game Publishing Committee of the China Audio-video and Digital Publishing Association, December 19, 2025. <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/ueibgHPtcqPoPzOGa3oDLw>

market space for cultural products and rejuvenating traditional culture in contemporary consumption scenarios.

At the same time, the new popular literature and art sector has witnessed the emergence of a wealth of employment opportunities. New positions—including e-commerce livestream hosts, digital content operators, platform technical support, and IP derivative product developers—have kept cropping up. New types of professions such as independent musicians, independent film and television producers, and part-time online writers have attracted large numbers of young talent. In Shanghai, with the promulgation of the "Shanghai Eight Measures for AI Micro-Short Dramas", the local authorities have opened up a low-barrier "one-person company" entrepreneurial track for young creators. Livestream platforms continue to incubate cohorts of ICH broadcasters, enabling traditional culture and flexible employment to advance hand in hand. With the rapid popularization of generative artificial intelligence, cross-boundary positions such as AI prompt engineers and digital human livestream operators have emerged in response to demand, with platforms deploying dedicated digital human operators and other specialized talent to drive the sustained innovation of new cultural products—including immersive short dramas and AI-generated traditional Chinese-style content—infusing the cultural market with surging vitality. On the overseas communication front, as online literature, games, and dramas "go global" at scale, the demand has surged for positions such as cross-border content operators, overseas short-drama localization translators, and international IP licensing managers. Platforms going overseas, such as ReelShort and FlareFlow, have assembled localized operations teams numbering in the hundreds, adapting content for European, American, and Southeast Asian markets and executing global distribution, thus becoming a new force that propels Chinese cultural industries outward.

Chapter II

Drivers for the Rise of New Popular Literature and Art

The vigorous rise of new popular literature and art is both a major trend of the times and a great creation by the people. The magnificent practices of popular literature and art are guided by a people-centered creative orientation, rooted in a thriving economic and social environment, driven by rapidly iterative digital and intelligent technologies, and made possible with the continuous support of the policy framework. As literature and art move from cultural institutions to the streets and from the elite to the masses, Chinese civilization is radiating with even more vibrant creativity and vigorous vitality in the modernization process.

1.Guided by a People-Centered Creative Orientation

History and practice provide a profound revelation: leadership in thinking and cohesion in the spirit are the intrinsic forces that sustain a nation's lasting vitality. For a long time, under the Party's leadership, the vast majority of literary and artistic workers have maintained the correct direction of literary and artistic development and followed a people-centered creative orientation. They have regarded meeting the people's philosophical and cultural needs as the starting point as well as the ultimate goal of literature, art, and related work, treating the people as the subjects of artistic expression and as the connoisseurs and judges of literary and artistic aesthetics. This approach has provided a strong guarantee for the rise and thriving of new popular literature and art.

— Strengthening the connection between literature and art with the masses, and invigorating the endogenous momentum of new popular literature and art.

Strengthening the links between literature and art, on the one hand, and the masses, on the other, remains a common thread of the Communist Party of China (CPC)'s literary and artistic thought that has run through historical phases of the country's revolution, construction, reform and opening up. As early as the 1930s, the CPC led the establishment of the League of Left-Wing Writers, sparking a surge in the popularization of literature and art and emphasizing that literary works should be close to the people's lives and reflective of their struggles and ideals. During the Yan'an period, the discussions on and practices of the relationship of literature and art with the masses reached a new height. In his Speech at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art, Mao Zedong proposed that the fundamental orientation of literature and art should be to serve the people, particularly the workers, peasants, and soldiers. Literary and artistic creation should no longer be confined to traditional intellectual circles, but extended to rural areas and to workers, peasants, and soldiers. In particular, through popular forms

of folk art (such as Yangge dance—a rural folk dance, New Year paintings, wall newspapers, and War of Resistance songs), the ties of literature and art with the people were strengthened, giving rise to their close interaction and resonance with the audiences. This marked a shift from elitism to popularization and laid the theoretical ground for literary and artistic creation in the New China to come. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, popular literature and art continued to play an irreplaceable role as vital vehicles for publicizing the achievements of socialist construction, widely disseminating scientific and cultural knowledge, enriching the people's moral and cultural lives, and shaping socialist values. Into the 21st century, the extensive use of television and the Internet led to the intertwining and interaction of various literary and artistic genres across all social strata, including elite, mass, and mainstream literature and art, producing a diverse and open literary and artistic ecosystem.

Since the advent of the new era, President Xi Jinping has further deepened the pivotal role of "the people" in socialist literature and art by proposing a "people-centered" approach to literary and artistic creation. This theoretical innovation represents not only an inheritance of the clear stance that literature and art should serve the masses of the people as emphasized by Mao Zedong in his Speech at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art, but also a contemporary development and theoretical innovation in light of the new characteristics of socialist literature and art in the new era, further consolidating the literary and artistic creation foundation of "going into life and taking root among the people".

In the literary and artistic practices of the new era, the broad and sustained participation by the people in literary and artistic activities has not only become possible, but also made a breakthrough in the positioning of their roles. The role of "the masses" has been expanded from "targets of literary and artistic services" to the "subjects", "disseminators", and "value co-creators" of literary and artistic creation. The direct participation of the people in literary and artistic production has deepened the content of literature and art from "reflecting the people" to "self-expression by the people". The influence of literature and art no longer relies solely on a few channels, but generates broader social resonance through the proactive participation of the people.

—Upholding cultural subjectivity and consolidating the fundamental underpinning of the prosperous development of new popular literature and art.

Cultural confidence is the most fundamental, profound, and enduring force in the development of a country and a nation. Cultural confidence stems from cultural subjectivity. Upholding cultural subjectivity essentially means establishing confidence in the finest of traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture. This confidence enables new popular literature and art creators to be soberly aware that Chinese culture represents treasures of thinking that have been accumulated over thousands of years, a unique interpretation of China's own historical experiences, contemporary life, and future aspirations. By diving into them, creators are enabled to resist the erosion of nihilism from the root, unearth moving narratives from national history,

draw creative inspiration from folk wisdom, and distill moral themes from the practices of the times—these are precisely the cultural roots that trigger new popular literature and art's resonance with the general public.

The core of the new popular literature and art lies in the "masses". They must stay close to the moral and cultural world of the people and respond to the emotional needs of the masses, which are always deeply intertwined with the lineage of Chinese culture. From National Treasure (which renews museum artifacts and explores cultural significance through drama performance), the Chinese Festivals Program Series by Henan TV (which achieves a creative, contemporary expression of traditional aesthetics), to traditional Intangible Cultural Heritage interpreted innovatively by folk artists on short-video platforms, all of them, in essence, represent a steadfast commitment to cultural subjectivity: they do not separate the present from the past, but give off sparks from the collision of traditional cultural elements with modern aesthetic demands; they do not stray from national sentiments, but tell everyday stories by using cultural symbols familiar to the public. Such creation, rooted in its own cultural soil, has given rise to a unique artistic identity of new popular literature and art, allowing them to take root, sprout, and flourish among the masses.

Cultural subjectivity also underpins the continuous innovation of new popular literature and art. When absorbing and drawing on outstanding foreign achievements, China has consistently maintained a clear-headed approach of "prioritizing ours and making use of others'", neither blindly rejecting the outside world nor losing the sense of self. For instance, new media of popular literature and art—including modern animation, video games, and micro-dramas—after incorporating cultural elements like Chinese mythology, traditional philosophy, and folk aesthetics, not only form a "Chinese" creative style which is distinct from that of the West, but also reach global audiences on the strength of their uniqueness. Xianxia (Chinese fantasy) films and TV dramas are released on overseas streaming platforms in increasing numbers; video games featuring Chinese martial arts and fantasy narratives are repeatedly setting new records of sales and views abroad; micro-dramas artfully integrating Chinese lifestyles and Eastern aesthetics are "going global" through multilingual translation and production, bringing Chinese culture to global audiences. These paths to innovation through preservation and to development through innovation allow new popular literature and art to preserve cultural authenticity while keeping pace with the times by continuously expanding the boundaries of expression to meet the masses' increasingly diverse ethical and cultural needs, making a leap from the "plateau" to the "peak".

— Guided by core socialist values and shaping the moral character for the prosperous development of new popular literature and art.

New popular literature and art are deeply rooted in the social soil of contemporary China and are resonant with the pulse of the times. Core socialist values provide the moral essence for literary and artistic creation, foster broad creative consensus, and anchor such creation to the correct direction, thereby shaping the moral character that un-

derpins the thriving of new popular literature and art.

Faithful dedication to national development, responsibility in serving the people, pragmatic efforts to revitalize industries, the pursuit of scientific and technological innovation, steadfast commitment to grassroots posts, the warmth of mutually helpful neighbors, and the ethos of civility and benevolence, among others, are all graphic manifestations of how the core socialist values have taken root in the practical development of contemporary China. These real-life themes provide rich wellsprings of inspiration for new popular literature and art, and push creators to draw inspiration from life and produce works that resonate with the masses and reflect the era. Recent years have witnessed the emergence of some literary and artistic works such as *Minning Town*, *Medal of the Republic*, *Home Coming*, *To the Wonder*, *She and Her Girls*, and *Born to Be Alive*—works that depict the profound changes of the era and reflect the voices of the people.

Mainstream values such as patriotism, collectivism, and hard work were thoughtfully and emotionally integrated into vivid narratives to reveal genuine emotions in ordinary events and show responsibility amid the hustle and bustle of daily life, thereby achieving a harmonious unity of intellectual depth and artistic excellence.

Against the backdrop of a market economy and cultural diversity, new popular literature and art may develop unhealthy tendencies such as vulgarity and excessive entertainment without value guidance and aesthetic cultivation. The core socialist values provide clear value standards and guidance for literary and artistic creation, helping creators consistently uphold the cultural stance and maintain a high moral standard. Rather than a restriction on creative freedom, such guidance safeguards the healthy development of popular literature and art by enabling them to both fulfill the entertainment function while undertaking their social responsibility, and avoid losing their way amid market forces, thereby laying the foundation for the sustainable development of new popular literature and art.

2. Foundations Enhanced by Economic and Social Prosperity

Since the dawn of the new era, China's comprehensive national strength has surged significantly, the economy has maintained steady and healthy growth, society has enjoyed long-term stability, the people's living standards have risen markedly, and the cultural market system has been moving toward further refinement. These profound transformations, interacting with one another, have not only laid a solid material foundation for new popular literature and art, but also reshaped the creative ecosystem and consumption patterns, allowing for the continuous unleashing of vitality and dynamism in this fertile social soil.

— A wealth of creation resources. The tremendous social and economic changes have vastly expanded people's lived and social experiences, giving rise to more complex

narrative potential and dramatic tension, and providing an inexhaustible source of rich nourishment for the creation of new popular literature and art. The myriad practices in the progress of Chinese modernization can all serve as enormous sources of inspiration and vivid materials of creation for new popular literature and art, such as entrepreneurship breakthroughs amid the temporal torrent of the Reform and Opening-Up, pioneering efforts amid the developmental tide in the new era, the multi-facets of human life amid urban and rural transformations, the steadfast dedication behind technological leaps across land, sea, air, and space, and the determination of ordinary people to forge ahead on the path of dream chasing.

Meanwhile, the longstanding steady development of Chinese society, along with the continuous improvement in the overall educational attainment of nationals and the quality of the population, has driven the expansion of both creators and audiences in popular literature and art, and formed a virtuous growth cycle of "supply creating demand and demand driving supply". Currently, among the Chinese population, 272.33 million have received university education (i.e., three-year junior colleges and above) and 242.72 million have received senior secondary school education (including secondary technical schools)^①, accounting respectively for 19.38% and 17.27% of the national population; the size of the highly educated population continues to expand. In terms of creators, the professional skills, cross-disciplinary capabilities, and cultural depth of grassroots creators have significantly improved, enabling them to produce works that combine philosophical depth with artistic quality. The phenomenon of "top talent found among the masses" continues to manifest itself in the new popular literature and art sphere, with a steady stream of quality works created by non-professionals. In terms of audiences, the aesthetic standards and cultural demands of consumer groups have become increasingly diverse, inducing more segmented cultural markets and a greater variety of genres and types, thereby effectively transforming "demand-side upgrading" into an endogenous driving force for creative iteration. Consequently, the ecosystem of popular literature and art continues to iterate and grow through the two-way empowerment of supply and demand.

— Providing solid economic support. The fast-growing economic strength has provided solid and robust support for the development of new popular literature and art. Since the beginning of the new era, China's total economic output has continued to reach new milestones, with its GDP surpassing 140 trillion yuan for the first time in 2025.

On the one hand, China has continued to optimize its financial inputs for cultural development, promote the comprehensive advancement of its cultural undertakings, and consolidate the material foundation for the development of new popular literature and art. China's expenditure on culture and tourism rose from 48.01 billion yuan in 2012 to 124.92 billion yuan in 2025 while per capita expenditure on culture and tour-

^① Communiqué of the 1% National Population Sample Survey in 2025, National Bureau of Statistics of China, May 22, 2026. https://www.stats.gov.cn/english/PressRelease/202605/t20260522_1963789.html

ism increased from 35.5 yuan to 88.9 yuan in the same period. Public cultural facilities such as libraries, movie theaters, museums, and cultural centers have visibly increased; the modern public cultural service system has become increasingly refined; popular cultural activities have become more diverse. The sustained growth in fiscal inputs has not only provided stable financial support for literary and artistic creation, performance, and dissemination, but also offered institutional conditions for the incubation of grass-roots cultural talent and fostered high-quality cultural works, enabling new popular literature and art to transition from "spontaneous growth" to "conscious prosperity".

On the other hand, the continuous rise in China's per capita disposable income and the consistent upgrade in the structure of cultural consumption have created vast market opportunities for new popular literature and art. In 2025, with the nationwide per capita disposable income reaching 43,377 yuan, per capita consumption expenditure was 29,476 yuan and per capita expenditure on education, culture and recreation was 3,489 yuan, registering a 9.4% increase^①. In the first half of 2026, the total retail sales of goods and services increased by 2.7% year on year, out of which retail sales of cultural, sports, and leisure services increased by 10.4% year on year while retail sales of immersive experiences, such as literary and artistic performances and museums, grew by 28.3% and 24.6% respectively.^② Material abundance has upgraded people's demands for moral and cultural products from "meeting basic needs" to "pursuing quality experiences", continuously driving new popular literature and art toward high-quality development.

—Improving the cultural market system. The deepening reform of cultural systems and mechanisms has boosted the continuous improvement of China's cultural market system and has laid a crucial foundation for the rise and growth of new popular literature and art.

The market's production side has continued to gain strength, enterprises have expanded in scale and increased profitability, and new cultural business models have grown rapidly, giving a big boost to the upgrading of the entire value chain of new popular literature and art—from creation, dissemination to operation—and continuing to consolidate the developmental foundation of new popular literature and art, from content production to market monetization. In 2025, the nationwide business revenue of cultural industries surpassed the 20 trillion yuan mark, hitting another record high and realizing a total profit of 1,903.4 billion yuan (up by 7.3% year on year) out of which cultural enterprises above the designated size achieved a total profit of 1,393.3 billion yuan, up 5.6%; 16 industry sub-categories with distinct characteristics of new cultural forms brought in a business revenue of 7,665.1 billion yuan, up by 15.1% year on

① Households' Income and Consumption Expenditure in 2025, National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2026-01-20. https://www.stats.gov.cn/english/PressRelease/202601/t20260120_1962356.html

② Stable Growth with Improved Quality and Enhanced Resilience—An Analysis of First-Half Trends in Consumption, Foreign Trade, and Foreign Investment, Xinhua News Agency, July 23, 2026. <https://www.xinhuanet.com/fortune/20260723/c8179576169c4cb7bf6a3fa69a832866/c.html>

year.^① Among them, new business models in internet advertising services, multimedia games and animation, digital publishing software development, and other internet-based information services stood out in growth and became powerful drivers in the content supply-side economy.

The investment logic in the cultural market has become more rational and mature; there is a growing trend of capital concentration in high-quality content creation and integration of literature, art, and technology. This not only provides financial support for excellence in work creation in new popular literature and art, but also accelerates the application of cutting-edge technologies to artistic creation and dissemination, serving as a key driver for the content upgrade and form innovation of new popular literature and art. According to macro data, China's cultural industry investment and financing market has accelerated its recovery since the second half of 2024. In the first half of 2025, the number and value of financed projects increased by 63.2% and 88.9% respectively year on year.^② In terms of investment flow, high-quality original content and technology-culture integration have become key areas for capital relocation. In the first half of 2025, among China's cultural industries, the number of financings in the content creation and production fields grew by 168.6% year over year,^③ with IP incubation fields such as film and television, literature, and animation particularly favored; in the private equity market, the number of financed "AI + Culture" innovation projects accounted for 44.5% of the total while the total number of innovative projects that integrate culture and virtual reality (VR), low-altitude economy, and embodied intelligence accounted for over 30%^④.

3. Development Driven by Digital- Intelligent Technology Innovation

From empowering creation at the very beginning of artistic content production to precise dissemination when content reaches audiences, and further to deep public engagement in cultural consumption, digital- intelligent technology innovation runs through the entire development process of popular literature and art, achieving a triple leap in production quality enhancement, cross-over dissemination, and market expansion and propelling new popular literature and art in big strides toward greater prosperity, inclusiveness, and vitality.

— Making creation more efficient. In recent years, with the rapid development of digital- intelligent creation tools—especially the widespread application of generative

① Report on the Development of Culture and Related Industries in 2025, National Bureau of Statistics of China, June 30, 2026. https://www.stats.gov.cn/english/PressRelease/202607/t20260701_1964043.html

② Wei Boya, "Cultural Industry Investment and Financing Research Report Released and Cultural-tech Fields favored by Investment Market", Beijing News, September 24, 2025. <https://www.bjnews.com.cn/detail/1758716949168679.html>

③ Wei Boya, "Cultural Industry Investment and Financing Research Report Released and Cultural-Tech Fields Favored by Investment Market", Beijing News, September 24, 2025. <https://www.bjnews.com.cn/detail/1758716949168679.html>

④ Wei Boya, "Cultural Industry Investment and Financing Research Report Released and Cultural-Tech Fields Favored by Investment Market", Beijing News, September 24, 2025. <https://www.bjnews.com.cn/detail/1758716949168679.html>

AI in text generation, character design, multilingual translation, and visual pre-visualization—artistic creation efficiency has been significantly enhanced, creation cycles markedly compressed, and the feasibility of diversified creation improved across the board, releasing greater creative space. As of August 2025, a cumulative total of 538 generative AI services in China completed registration filings^① and the user base of generative AI reached 602 million. Application scenarios are mainly concentrated in content creation, with image/video generation/processing and text usage scenarios accounting for 47.8% and 37.6%, respectively^②. The Comic Drama Assistant launched by Yuewen Group covers the entire process from text parsing to scene rendering, significantly lowering the visualization threshold for novel IPs. Since launching its AI comic drama business in the second half of 2025, Yuewen Group has released nearly 1,000 AI comic drama works, among which over 100 have exceeded 10 million views and 12 have exceeded 100 million views.

Since 2025, benefiting from advancements in AI technology, animated micro-dramas have experienced a content explosion, yielding a large number of creative series, with a number of AI short dramas receiving positive market responses. The AI micro-drama *Monkey King*, based on the classic novel *Journey to the West*, endows the classic theme with new expressive tension, achieving nearly 200 million exposures across the web; the AI costume drama *Peach Blossom Pond Chronicle*, taking the inheritance of *Jing County's Xuan paper of the Ming Dynasty* as its main storyline, pursues a simple and pure everyday ancient style texture, sparking widespread discussion.

— Making wider dissemination. China's mature and sound cyber infrastructure, along with its advanced algorithms and computing power platforms, has continued to expand the communication boundaries of new popular literature and art, providing a stable and lasting dissemination foundation for quality artistic content to break out of niche circles and enter tens of thousands of households. As of the end of December 2025, China had built 4.838 million 5G base stations, with 5G accessible across all townships and 95% of administrative villages nationwide. The fruits of digital development benefit broader groups^③; this high-speed, ubiquitous network infrastructure has significantly narrowed the digital divide between urban and rural areas and across regions, building a vast dissemination space for new popular literature and art.

In recent years, "village-brand" mass cultural and sports activities such as Village BA, Village Super League, and Village Gala—rooted in local soil and benefiting people's livelihoods—have flourished in great variety. Relying on digital channels like short videos and live streaming, they have exploded in popularity across niche boundaries, becoming vibrant representatives of new popular literature and art. According to in-

① Report on the Development of Generative Artificial Intelligence Applications (2025), China Internet Network Information Center, October 23, 2025. <https://www.cnnic.net.cn/n4/2025/1021/c88-11391.html>

② The 57th Statistical Report on China's Internet Development, China Internet Network Information Center, February 5, 2026. <https://www.cnnic.net.cn/n4/2026/0304/c88-11549.html>

③ The 57th Statistical Report on China's Internet Development, China Internet Network Information Center, February 5, 2026. <https://www.cnnic.net.cn/n4/2026/0304/c88-11549.html>

complete statistics, during the "14th Five-Year Plan" period, the number of "village-brand" sports and cultural activities that received over 100,000 online views approached 8,000. In Rongjiang County, Qiandongnan, Guizhou, the local authorities proposed "turning mobile phones into new farm tools, data into new agricultural materials, and live streaming into new farmwork", driving the "Village Super League" to achieve over 130 billion cumulative total topic views across the entire network.^①

Big data and AI technology have turned the passive dissemination model of "people looking for content" into an active model of "content looking for people", enhancing the dissemination efficiency of new popular literature and art and optimizing audience experiences. Intelligent algorithms eliminate the crowding out of dissemination channels by trending content, allowing various niche content—such as traditional folk tales/ghost stories, rural documentaries, intangible cultural heritage handicrafts, and dialect folk songs—to secure channel resources and precisely reach dedicated audiences. This dissemination mechanism gives all kinds of artistic creation a chance to spread and satisfy diverse aesthetic demands, allowing the continuous emergence of diversified and personalized artistic creations and driving new popular literature and art to truly achieve a hundred flowers in full bloom and in diverse coexistence.

— Making consumption stronger. Technological development has profoundly reshaped the general public's consumption habits and behavioral patterns related to literature and art. Iterative upgrades of media terminals like smartphones and wearable devices make digital content accessible anytime, anywhere, leading to a noticeable increase in the time spent on consuming new popular literature and art. Innovations in artistic forms such as streaming media, short videos, and podcasts embed artistic consumption deeply into subtle moments of daily life—reading novels in the subway commute, listening to audiobooks while cycling, or watching short dramas while dining alone; artistic consumption habits are increasingly showing fragmented, scenario-based, and high-frequency characteristics. In 2025, the average weekly internet access duration per netizen in China was 32.5 hours, a year-on-year increase of 13.4%. Short video, long video, online reading, audiobooks, etc., which are closely related to new popular literature and art, ranked among the top ten in net increase in total usage time across all mobile internet sub-sectors^②.

Technological innovation has expanded the domain of audio-visual content consumption. Putting on virtual reality glasses and entering a video scene, one can travel through cloud-filled skies with Sun Wukong in *The Monkey King* or encounter the majestic prime of the Tang Dynasty alongside Li Bai, the great poet, in *Chang'an*. Virtual reality technology has brought "spatial narrative" to fruition, making progressive film viewing a reality and introducing it to the market.

① 2026 World Brand Moganshan Conference | Xu Bo: "From Traffic to Retention, Village Super League Carves Out a Replicable Path for Rural Brand Revitalization", Xinhua Net, May 9, 2026. <http://www.gz.xinhuanet.com/20260509/909c0b7b881c40d9a4969624cee3e576/c.html>

② The 57th Statistical Report on China's Internet Development, China Internet Network Information Center, February 5, 2026. <https://www.cnnic.net.cn/n4/2026/0304/c88-11549.html>

Consumer groups for new forms of content are gradually maturing, with their willingness to pay increasing steadily. Currently, the digital cultural entertainment industry chain has formed a complete closed loop of "upstream technical support—midstream content aggregation—downstream diversified monetization". Original content incubation methods such as literary IP sources and animation IP cultivation drive multi-dimensional downstream development like TV adaptations, game adaptations, and derivative products. This produces a linkage effect of "multi-terminal coordination and integrated development" across novels, short dramas, films and television, games, and character merchandise, continuously bringing new viral hits in digital content and helping shape a new trillion-yuan content consumption market. In 2024, the four online platforms that the China Association of Performing Arts focused on monitoring hosted 8,779 online performances, with total views exceeding 6.7 billion. The average cross-city attendance rate for large-scale performances remained above 60%, directly driving aggregate audience consumption to the tune of over 200 billion yuan in addition to performance ticket revenues^①.

4. Complete Policy System Building a Solid Safeguard

The vigorous rise and sustained thriving of new popular literature and art cannot have come about without the solid escort provided by a comprehensive, multi-level, and systematic policy framework. Over the years, China has, standing at a high vantage point with the overall vision of building a cultural powerhouse, planned development blueprints, introduced diverse supporting measures to cultivate fertile soil for artistic development, and simultaneously improved regulatory mechanisms to calibrate the forward course. The country has forged strong institutional synergy with clear orientation, comprehensive measures, and smooth operations in the field of literature and art, providing a solid institutional safeguard for the steady and long-term development of new popular literature and art.

— Strategic Blueprint. Into the new era, the Party and the State have attached great importance to literary and artistic work, charting a strategic blueprint for the development of literature and art in the new era. The year 2015 saw the publication of the Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Prosperity and Development of Socialist Literature and Art, which incorporated "online literature and art" in a CPC Central Committee document for the first time. In 2017, the Suggestions on Implementation of Projects to Promote and Develop Traditional Chinese Culture Excellence was issued, calling for the implementation of plans for the creation and dissemination of online literature and art, and promoting online literature, music, dramas, and micro-films to inherit and develop the finest of traditional Chinese culture. In 2020, the Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National

^① Zheng Hai'ou, "Total Revenue of the National Performance Market Reached 79.629 Billion Yuan Last Year, Up 7.61% Year-on-Year", *People's Daily*, April 17, 2025, p. 6.

Economic and Social Development and Vision 2035 of the People's Republic of China set forth a specific timetable for building a cultural powerhouse, emphasizing the need to strengthen online civilization construction and the implementation of quality improvement projects for artistic works. Released in 2022, the opinions on promoting the implementation of the national cultural digitalization strategy set out important deployments regarding the strategic paths and steps for advancing cultural digitalization. The Outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030), officially released in 2026, proposes "fostering new popular literature and art on the internet".... A series of strategic deployments have pointed to the direction and goals for the development of new popular literature and art, establishing a firm policy foundation for building a culturally strong nation.

— Policy Support. The central and local authorities have introduced a host of supporting policies covering funding, taxation, industry, talent, and awards, forming a multi-dimensional and multi-level support and incentive mechanism for new popular literature and art. In 2022, the Cultural Development Plan for the 14th Five-Year Plan Period explicitly proposed strengthening the construction of various online culture creation and production platforms, and encouraged multi-level development of original online works to guide and regulate the healthy development of online live streaming, among others. It called for strengthening and innovating online art commentary and extending the scope of artistic awards to include online artistic creation. In 2025, Several Economic Policies on Promoting High-Quality Cultural Development clarified the economic support policies in the fields of fiscal policy, taxation, finance, technology, land use, income distribution, etc. to promote high-quality cultural development. In the same year, the Guiding Opinions on Vigorously Developing Digital Consumption and Creating a Better Life in the Digital Era, jointly issued by eight government entities including the Ministry of Commerce, proposed supporting fine creation in fields such as animation, games, film/TV, music, and online literature and encouraging the virtuous development of secondary creation through modes like derivative licensing and cultural co-creation.

At the local level, in April 2026, Guizhou officially promulgated the Action Plan for the Prosperity of New Popular Literature and Art under Internet Conditions (2026-2028), making it the first institutionalized document in the country centered on the theme of "new popular literature and art". It rolled out 25 specific measures across five areas, pressing the institutional "fast-forward button" for a new popular literature and art ecosystem characterized by "participation by everyone and co-creation by all" in the Internet era. From top-level national strategic planning down to local action plan implementation, a top-down linked, progressively advanced policy matrix is taking shape, continuously paving the way, bridging the gap, and accumulating the momentum for the prospering of new popular literature and art.

— Regulation and Guidance. Bolstering regulation and guidance to foster a healthy ecosystem is an important prerequisite for the development of new popular literature

and art. The revised Copyright Law of the People's Republic of China improves the relevant provisions on copyright protection in cyberspace and sets out stringent constraints to protect the original development of new popular literature and art. Regulations such as the Provisions on the Governance of the Online Information Content Ecosystem, Provisions on the Management of Algorithmic Recommendations in Internet Information Services, and Provisions on the Management of Multi-Channel Distribution Services for Internet Information Content are dedicated to strengthening the value guidance of online content, encouraging and supporting high-quality content, cracking down on harmful information, regulating the order of online information dissemination, and promoting diversified dissemination. A series of regulatory specifications, including the Circular on Further Strengthening the Administration of Radio, Television and Online Audiovisual Arts Programmes, Detailed Standards for Content Review of Online Short Videos (2021), and Measures for the Administration of the Development of Micro-short Drama, not only clearly define the governance standards, but also encourage orderly development to ensure that new popular literature and art are both "vibrant" and "well-managed". Measures such as the Interim Measures for the Management of Generative Artificial Intelligence Services and Measures for the Identification of AI-Generated Content have come into effect in succession, making AI-empowered creation of new popular literature and art more trustworthy, controllable, and sustainable. At the same time, the Guidelines on Strengthening Literary and Art Criticism in the New Era propose promoting effective interaction between professional criticism and popular criticism, strengthening research and guidance on online algorithms, and carrying out comprehensive governance of online algorithm recommendations to keep erroneous content out of dissemination channels. In addition, a series of documents that regulate online performance activities, marketing, and streamer behavior have provided timely guidance for new popular literature and art to embark on a path of healthy and regular development.

At the end of 2024, the 17th "Best Works Award" for Cultural-Ethical Progress organized by the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee included online literature and art as an independent category for awards for the first time, granting the Outstanding Work Award to 10 online literary and artistic works. In July 2026, in the selection of the 9th Lu Xun Literature Prize, *Low Flight*—a work by the "delivery rider poet" Wang Jibing—won the Poetry Award, demonstrating the powerful practice efficacy of policy empowerment in facilitating popular creation and leading industry quality improvement.

Chapter III

Correctly Understanding the Dialectical Dynamics Shaping New Popular Literature and Art

For new popular literature and art to flourish in today's internet-driven environment, we must follow the scientifically sound guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Culture and consciously apply the standpoint, viewpoints, and methods of dialectical materialism. This calls for a focused effort to master and manage four key dialectical relationships: upholding fundamental principles while pursuing innovation, securing social benefits alongside economic returns, balancing artistic elevation with popularization, and integrating culture with technology. These four relationships run through every link of the entire chain—from creation and production to dissemination, operation, business-form cultivation, and ecosystem building. They directly shape the direction, underlying values, aesthetic character, and quality of new popular literature and art. Only by handling these major relationships through a scientific and coordinated approach can we resolve real contradictions, correct deviations in creation and dissemination, and remain steadfast in a people-centered creative orientation. Only by so doing can we fully demonstrate the defining strengths of this field—its deep roots among the masses, its tech-empowered modernity, and its open, inclusive character—while continuously producing outstanding works that meet the people's cultural needs and fortify their inner strength.

1. Upholding Fundamental Principles and Pursuing Innovation

For new popular literature and art, only by upholding fundamental principles can we ensure that development remains on the right track without losing its cultural foundation; only through innovation can we inject inexhaustible momentum and renew its vitality for the modern era. Thriving new popular literature and art must come from courageous innovation on a solid foundation of principle, bringing the two into organic unity.

Upholding fundamental principles means, first and foremost, staying on the correct path—taking core socialist values as our guide and adhering to a people-centered creative orientation. Secondly, it means preserving cultural roots—never forgetting our heritage and continuing to draw nourishment from the rich treasure house of Chinese history and culture. Thirdly, it means honoring the integrity of art itself—respecting the laws of creative work and ethical boundaries to provide society with edifying, heart-warming, and soul-enriching cultural products. At present, certain contemporary works

are undermining mainstream values and conveying biased ideas or jettisoning cultural roots and stacking up foreign elements; the root cause lies in a failure to uphold these principles, leaving the works devoid of a spiritual core and cultural identity.

Innovation is the lifeblood of literature and art. New popular literature and art cannot do without fresh approaches to the subject matter, content, form, and means of dissemination. We need continuous breakthroughs across content, form, style, and genre, harnessing new technologies and tools to create new experiences that answer the public's evolving aesthetic expectations rather than settling into rigid formulas. Yet, while literature and art must innovate, they must never veer into the grotesque or the discordant, nor fall into the trap of prizing formal novelty over substance—papering over intellectual emptiness with gaudy effects or chasing fleeting attention with derivative copies. Only by pursuing innovation on the foundation of principle and safeguarding principle through innovation can new popular literature and art command both vigorous vitality and broad appeal as well as far-reaching influence and powerful moral force—steering clear of the dead end where novelty for its own sake severs the bond with the people.

2. Balancing Social Benefits and Economic Returns

Properly balancing social benefits and economic returns is essential to the healthy development of both socialist cultural undertakings and cultural industries. For new popular literature and art to flourish, social benefits must always come first and, on this basis, the organic unity of social and economic returns must be achieved to secure both a correct value orientation and sustainable development.

This means that works of new popular literature and art must help promote core socialist values, contribute to the people's physical and mental well-being, advance social harmony and progress, and facilitate exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations. This requires that, throughout the development of new popular literature and art, we must remain grounded in a people-centered creative orientation, delve into real-life subject matters and convey positive values, steadily improve its evaluation system, leverage the role of both public comments and professional criticism, and strike a balance between providing cultural and ethical guidance and meeting the aesthetic needs of the general public so that social benefits rest on a solid foundation of greater reality. On this premise, market mechanisms should be actively explored and employed to enhance economic returns, funding should be ensured, and sustained momentum provided for the continuing production of outstanding literary and artistic works through diversified business models and sound operational management. In particular, the protection of original creations must be strengthened, a healthy creative ecosystem cultivated, and the rights and interests of creators effectively safeguarded—all to fortify the groundwork for sustainable development.

Crucial to this process is a clear understanding and proper handling of the dialecti-

cal relationship between high traffic and positive energy. In the Internet era, traffic is gradually becoming a key measure of a work's reach, for, without it, there is no audience and a literary or artistic work is left speaking into the void, with both social benefits and economic returns out of the question. Yet, chasing traffic for its own sake will only disorient creative work and lead it astray. High traffic must surge with positive energy and positive energy must command high traffic. Only then can outstanding works reach the broadest public and play their proper role in guiding society. For this reason, we must stay alert to the dangers that have surfaced now in the development of new popular literature and art: creators' over-dependence on platforms and the resultant problems of jumping on the bandwagon, blind copying, plot borrowing, copyright infringement and, worse, the abandonment of originality in favor of gaming algorithmic rules. At the same time, full attention must be paid to the impact of recommendation algorithm on aesthetic diversity and to the need to avoid the risk of excessive platform power that may lead to distortion of the creative process itself, to the detriment of the field's healthy evolution.

3. Balancing Elevation and Popularization

Refined literature and art, with their intellectual depth, exquisite expression, and distinctive aesthetics, set the tone for broader cultural currents. Yet, if they become so aloof and rarefied as to lose their audience, they may lose extensive social influence. Popular literature and art, precisely because they are close to everyday life and readily accessible, make up the mainstream of mass cultural consumption. But when sliding into coarseness, banality, or outright kitsch, they will corrode the social fabric and atmosphere. The flourishing of new popular literature and art therefore depends on unifying elevation with popularization: raising the overall level of artistic taste while better satisfying people's multi-layered and diverse aesthetic needs, and building a cultural ecosystem that is both richer and more inclusive.

This requires action from us on several fronts. We need to bring refined art to a wider public through innovative channels and modes of expression such as online live-streamed concerts, digital museums, and the like so that more people can readily experience and appreciate its charms, thus raising aesthetic literacy and cultural taste across society. Meanwhile, we need to elevate the taste and caliber of popular art through refinement, encouraging the development of popular literature and art through finer craftsmanship, greater intellectual depth, and higher artistic quality even as they remain close to life, grounded, and easy to disseminate so as to eventually steer them toward higher, healthier ground. In addition, we must work hard to create the conditions and platforms for different artistic forms to engage in broad exchange and deep interplay, drawing on one another's strengths to remedy their own weaknesses, learning across traditions, and driving innovation so that new popular literature and art surge forward with fresh vitality.

4. Integrating Culture and Technology

Science and technology provide a powerful engine driving the evolution of literature and art, opening up new possibilities for humanistic expression. Culture is their root and soul, and the humanistic spirit it carries is what gives technological applications their value and depth. For new popular literature and art to thrive, we must achieve the deep integration and coordinated development of culture and technology, ensuring that science and technology better serve the artistic expression and humanistic concern of new popular literature and art. Even as we pursue integration of the two, we must fully respect what is intrinsically unique about the humanistic spirit, protect the transmission and development of traditional humanistic paradigms and classical art forms, and guard against the tendency of each new technological iteration wave to disregard the humanistic sediment that came before it. By so doing, we can cultivate the humanistic substratum of new popular literature and art.

This requires us to actively embrace cutting-edge technology, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, big data, 5G, and beyond, and put them to work across the entire lifecycle of new popular literature and art: creation, production, dissemination, and consumption. The goal is to push out the boundaries of art, enrich the user experience, transform how creative work is done, and widen the channels through which it reaches the public. Throughout, technology must remain firmly in the service of the humanistic spirit; we must remain vigilant to the tendencies of techno-centrism, hollow content, ethical drift, among others. We must ensure that technological innovation always serves the core purpose: telling stories well, expressing ideas, and conveying emotions. Progress in technology ought to deliver cultural products of greater warmth, depth, and moral power so that technology carries the warmth of humanism, and literature and art gain the empowerment of technology in order that both the quality and social impact of new popular literature and art are raised for real. In addition, we need to follow, study, and address the deeper challenges and problems that technological innovation poses to literature and art. This calls for strengthening ethical norms and advancing legislative research on issues such as the copyright status of AI-generated content, the derivative information cocoons spun by algorithmic recommendations, the erosion of artistic authenticity by deepfakes, and the boundary between data privacy and creative freedom. These pressing questions demand rigorous assessment and governance so that we can fortify the intellectual, aesthetic, technological, and ethical foundations for the development of new popular literature and art. In this way, culture and technology are integrated to form a powerful alliance, each empowering the other—not pulling in opposite directions and drifting ever further apart.

Chapter IV

The Global Significance of New Popular Literature and Art

At a time when the tides of globalization and digitalization converge, new popular literature and art are opening a fresh chapter in global cultural engagement. Departing from the one-way cultural export models of the past, they employ a multiplicity of narratives to shift China's image from one "defined by others" to one "expressed by itself". They draw on Eastern wisdom to offer a value reference for the shared dilemmas that confront the human race. Through openness and collaboration, they help break up the concentrated structure of the global cultural industry. And, by harnessing technology, they contribute to building a fairer global cultural order. Transcending the limits of geography and language, new popular literature and art are triggering far-reaching changes in how culture is produced and how societies engage with one another—revealing broad and profound global significance.

1. A Multidimensional Portrait of a Modernizing China

International perceptions of China have long been shaped through external lenses, ranging from the trope of a "stagnant empire" in 19th-century Western literature to the stock images forged by Cold War isolationism and confrontation in the 20th century. Even in the 21st century, some media outlets still follow the habit of viewing China through a predetermined perspective, with labels like "ancient", "closed", or "backward" pasted over the country's image for quite a long time. In the face of this long-standing Western-dominated shaping of cognition, new popular literature and art, with their rich and diverse digital content, are steadily dismantling these stereotypes, allowing the world to see a real China in which tradition and modernity coexist and the ancient merges with the young.

In the modern expression of traditional aesthetics, the video game *Black Myth: Wukong* draws on Chinese mythology as the backdrop, using hyper-realistic graphics and cinematic storytelling to weave traditional aesthetic elements, including the ancient architecture of Shanxi and the statuary of Buddhist grottoes, into the gameplay itself so that players around the world experience the allure of an Eastern fantasy realm through immersive exploration. Drama series like *Love Between Fairy and Devil* and *The Legend of Shen Li* deploy special visual effects to conjure Eastern dreamscapes, enabling overseas audiences to grasp the philosophical idea of "the unity of heaven and humanity", taste Eastern wisdom, and understand what makes Chinese culture distinctive through aesthetic experiences. The animated movies *Ne Zha* and *Ne Zha 2* mine China's an-

cient tales of gods and demons, threading the Taoist pantheon, ritual symbols, and traditional martial arts into their high-octane storylines so that audiences at home and abroad encounter the spiritual force of the declaration "I am the master of my own fate" in these destiny-defying stories.

Then, there is the multidimensional presentation of real life. Literature, as one of the core vehicles of new popular literature and art, provides an important textual means that captures the many dimensions of real life in China. Its nuanced portrayal of social changes and the full spectrum of human life supplies a sturdy content foundation and emotional core for a variety of derivative works that follow. Realist dramas such as the epic family saga *A Lifelong Journey*, the anti-gang thriller *The Knockout*, the business drama *Blossoms Shanghai*, and the life-suspense series *The Long Season* are steadily becoming important components of new popular literature and art going global. And every one of them rests on high-quality literary source material. No longer confined to a single genre or label, these works train their lenses on the city and countryside, the workplace and home, the past and the present, faithfully reproducing the ever-changing texture and emotional temperature of Chinese society. What overseas audiences see through them is a multidimensional China: a place of gleaming towers and bustling neighborhood markets, alive with the passion of striving and steeped in the warmth of human connection.

As for giving ancient China a contemporary register, virtual idols performing at overseas music festivals are now presenting AI-generated, cross-cultural works that fuse Peking Opera with electronic music. These works keep the deep heritage of traditional culture intact while appealing to a global audience through stylish, tech-empowered forms—a youthful way of expression that reveals the modern charm and open posture of China as an ancient civilization.

What new popular literature and art present is no longer a handful of flat symbols, but a China full of depth and texture. Tradition no longer appears as a static relic locked away in a cabinet, but is a living civilization woven into the fabric of contemporary life. Modernization is not a synonym of Westernization, but a unique experiment rooted in native soil. As China's landscapes and ancient monuments, its street-life bustle, and its youth culture enter the horizon of global cultural consumers in forms that "can actually be experienced", a new perception of the country is quietly crystallizing—one that is at once traditional and modern, ancient and young, confident and open. This is precisely the deep-lying power with which new popular literature and art are reshaping the image of China.

2. Conveying the Shared Value Pursuits of Humanity

The contemporary world is mired in multiple dilemmas. Shaped over a long period by the dominant Western cultural narrative, individual heroism simplifies success into a zero-sum game in which "the winner takes all", Social Darwinism repackages the law of

the jungle as a law of nature, and ecological crises expose the deep-seated limitations of the value centered on "conquering nature". Meanwhile, anxieties over the "clash of civilizations" are spreading around the globe, the estrangement and confrontation between different civilizations are steadily intensifying, and the deep confusion over the fundamental question of "how we should live in coexistence" is growing worldwide every day. Against this backdrop, new popular literature and art, through cultural products imbued with Eastern wisdom, offer a unique value reference in response to these dilemmas.

In terms of interpersonal relations, new popular literature and art turn family affection, homesickness, and the deep love for one's family and country into a bond that bridges cultural divides. The film *Dear You* sparked heated discussions in multiple Southeast Asian countries, with the story of a family letter that allows overseas Chinese to find emotional connections in shared memories and enables more people to understand the deep love for family and country as contained in the Qiaopi (overseas Chinese remittance letters) culture. Meanwhile, *The Wandering Earth II* transforms the traditional ethics of "family-state isomorphism" into a narrative concerning the destiny of the entire human race. In the film, the collective decision of rescuers from various countries—"Those aged 50 and above, step forward"—interprets the spiritual core of a shared human destiny through cross-border trust and collaboration.

When it comes to the relationship between humankind and nature, new popular literature and art have developed an expression of Eastern ecologism. The documentary *March of the Elephants* presents a heartwarming scroll of mutual respect and mutual protection along the journey between humankind and nature through authentic cinematic language, providing a gentle yet profound imaginative path for the contemporary world entangled in anxieties over climate crises and species extinction.

In the relations between civilizations, new popular literature and art are reshaping the framework of interaction with the wisdom of "harmony without uniformity". In the setting of the online game *Genshin Impact*, the world is divided into seven nations including Mondstadt, Liyue, Inazuma, and Sumeru, each infused with diverse elements from European, Chinese, Japanese, ancient Roman, and other cultures. These coexist harmoniously while retaining their distinctive appeal. Meanwhile, Chinese online literature platforms have attracted a large number of overseas creators during their overseas development, gradually forming a brand-new narrative mode that blends Eastern and Western elements. The "Xuanhuan + Western Fantasy" online novels on Webnovel fuse the Chinese immortals cultivation system with the European chivalry spirit, giving rise to cross-cultural genre innovation. Creators of new popular literature and art are expanding beyond "telling Chinese stories" to "telling human stories", exploring the concept of a community with a shared future in science fiction themes and highlighting the wisdom of harmony and convergence in historical narratives, engaging in dialogue with the world with an open narrative stance.

The most touching value of new popular literature and art lies in how it transforms

ren, yi, li, zhi, xin (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, intelligence, and good faith) into vivid stories, interactive games, and empathy, presenting traditional Chinese ethics no longer as cultural specimens meant merely for display, but as spiritual resources jointly cherished by global audiences. It proves to the world that people can fulfill and support one another rather than sinking into a zero-sum game, that humanity and nature can stay together in harmonious coexistence rather than engaging in conquest and plunder, and that different civilizations can appreciate their own beauty and that of others to achieve common harmony rather than heading toward conflict. These value expressions originated from the East, with their cross-cultural appeal, are laying an emotional foundation for a community with a shared future for humankind, echoing humanity's ardent yearning for reconciliation and coexistence.

3. Promoting Open and Inclusive Industrial Collaboration

The global cultural industry landscape has long exhibited a high degree of concentration. Hollywood controls approximately 70% of the global film market share while a handful of multinational content giants—such as Disney, Warner Bros., and Netflix—dominate global content production and distribution. Such a highly concentrated industrial order implies not only a one-way flow of economic interests, but also the shaping of cultural narratives, aesthetic tastes, and value orientations by the products of a few major conglomerates, gradually veering toward homogenization. Under this framework, although developing countries possess rich cultural resources, they have long remained in a low-value-added peripheral position in the global cultural industry chain due to the lack of global distribution networks, technology platforms, and industrial operation capabilities. Now, new popular literature and art are gradually breaking this monopolistic pattern through an open and inclusive model of industrial collaboration.

In terms of "localized production and global distribution", Chinese digital cultural enterprises are establishing localized operations in Southeast Asia, North America, and beyond, creating a cultural ecosystem of "localized production + global distribution", thereby shifting the overseas expansion of Chinese culture from "content breakthroughs" to "ecosystem empowerment". Tencent's WeTV has focused on local original series in Thailand and Indonesia, forming a forty-plus local production team in Indonesia. The online gaming company miHoYo has set up "creative studios" in Montreal and Los Angeles, engaging overseas employees in constructing the worldview of Genshin Impact. Its pioneering "open-world + character-driven" model has profoundly reshaped the paradigm of creative collaboration in the global gaming industry.

In the "global integration of industrial ecosystems", some online literature platform enterprises have engaged in deep IP cooperation with Disney, Netflix, Sony Pictures, and others, successively pushing *The Legend of Shen Li*, *Joy of Life Season 2*, and *The Tale of Rose* to global audiences, with cooperative television stations and new media

platforms covering more than 180 countries and regions. Yuewen Group signed a strategic cooperation agreement with the Singapore Tourism Board, launching a haunted house themed on the online novel *Dao of the Bizarre Immortal* in collaboration with Universal Studios Singapore in 2025 and establishing a trendy toy selection flagship store named Softopia in a core district of Singapore in 2026, integrating high-quality IP content into local cultural and tourism resources and achieving online-offline cultural co-creation.

The profound significance of industrial collaboration in China's new popular literature and art lies in its promotion of the global cultural industry landscape from "center-periphery radiation" to "multivariate coexistence". When content creators from different countries collaborate on equal terms and for shared benefit within the same network, cultural production is no longer the privilege of a few centers, but becomes a creative practice shared globally. This open and inclusive collaborative ecosystem provides a new structural momentum for the diversified development of the world's cultural industry.

4. Building a More Equitable Cultural Order

The cultural order in today's world is essentially continuing the "center-periphery" structure that has taken shape since the world entered modern times. To this day, Hollywood movies, British and American pop music, and Western bestsellers still dominate global cultural consumption, leaving non-Western cultures long in a position of "being defined". This imbalanced order not only marginalizes the voices of numerous regions, but also "trims" the colorful world culture against a single standard, creating inequality in opportunities for expression among civilizations.

New popular literature and art are providing a "decentralized" path to break through this dilemma. Unlike traditional cultural export, new popular literature and art are supported by digital technology and tied together by shared human emotions; this helps systematically lower the barrier to cultural participation in such links as content production, dissemination channels, and consumption experiences.

For a start, technological empowerment provides the foundational conditions for this transformation. AI-powered multilingual translation technology has dramatically reduced the costs of cross-cultural communication, allowing Chinese online literature to rapidly spread in non-traditional markets such as Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. According to data released by Yuewen Group, as of the end of 2025, its overseas reading platform Webnovel had accumulated a total of over 17,000 AI-translated works. Technology has not only lowered language barriers, but also enabled users in a broader range of minor language markets to access Chinese content; Japan, Spain, Brazil, France, Germany, etc. have become the fastest-growing countries in terms of Yuewen Group's overseas readership, effectively expanding the breadth and depth of cultural dissemination.

A more far-reaching significance lies in the fact that this technology-driven cultural dissemination allows vast numbers of people—those who were originally excluded from mainstream global cultural dialogue—to participate in global cultural consumption and production for the first time with an extremely low barrier to entry. When readers in Latin America follow updates of Chinese Xianxia novels on their mobile screens, when African creators tell their own stories in their native tongues on online literature platforms, and when gamers in Southeast Asia interact freely with Chinese cultural elements in an open world, a new cultural order is quietly taking shape. It does not replace the old center with a new one, but rather allows diverse cultures to have the possibilities of equal expression on the very same platform, giving every culture the opportunity to be seen, understood, and respected.

This redistribution of global cultural power, leveraged by technology, is shifting the cultural order from being "spoken for by the few" to being "spoken by all". It shows the world that when language is no longer a barrier and platforms no longer a privilege, every culture can become an equal participant in global dialogue. This not only injects solid real-world strength into cultural diversity, but also points to a new vision of world culture featuring genuine multivariate coexistence.

Concluding Remarks

The tides of the times surge forward; literary and artistic forms evolve with the world. The vigorous rise of new popular literature and art is a cultural epitome of Chinese modernization as well as an epochal achievement woven from the modern translation of traditional culture, the autonomous expression of the public spirit, and the deep empowerment of digital civilization.

Rooted in everyday life as its creative source and centered on mass empathy as its core value, new popular literature and art condense individual insights, the myriad aspects of life in the world, and the changes of the era into diverse and dynamic artistic expressions, turning cultural creation into a cultural practice in which the whole public can participate and share. This cultural vitality, originating from the people and born of the times, not only sustains domestic cultural-ethical progress and fosters simple social mores, but also provides the cultural confidence of China in the new era with its most solid foundation among the masses.

Standing at the grand coordinates of global civilizational integration, new popular literature and art transcend regional divides and cultural barriers through a soft, empathetic artistic tone and an open, inclusive posture of dialogue. Within the interactive coexistence of diverse civilizations, they vividly interpret the spiritual core of Chinese modernization, convey the Eastern wisdom of harmony and coexistence, and reshape a brand-new picture of global cultural interaction, providing an enduring force of Chinese literature and art to dispel civilizational prejudice and promote global cultural multivariate coexistence.

The cultural lineage endures, constantly renewed with fresh vitality. Through the trials of the times and iterations in practice, new popular literature and art have grown into a cultural form that possesses both local warmth and a global vision.

Looking to the future, new popular literature and art will remain deeply rooted in the fertile soil of the times, radiate with new vitality, and write new chapters on the magnificent journey of building a country with a strong culture, engraving a warm yet firm Chinese mark on enriching and developing a new form of human civilization.

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