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Studying the Spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping' s Important Reply Letter and Leveraging Modern Media Technology to Build High-Quality Academic Journals: A Case Study of *Contemporary Rhetoric* (Postprint)

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Abstract

General Secretary Xi Jinping' s reply letter to all editorial staff of the Literature, History and Philosophy editorial department articulated earnest expectations and new, higher requirements for successfully operating philosophy and social science journals. Contemporary Rhetoric integrates its publication history, positioning, and distinctive features to deepen the application of modern media technology in forging high-quality academic journals. In its practical work, the journal implements the spirit of this important reply letter comprehensively and multidimensionally, making due contributions to accelerating the construction of philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics and to the innovative development of China' s disciplinary, academic, and discourse systems in philosophy and social sciences.

Full Text

Introduction: President Xi Jinping' s Important Reply and Its Significance

On May 9, 2021, Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, President of the People' s Republic of China, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, replied to all editorial staff of the *Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy* (*Wenshizhe*), expressing earnest expectations for running philosophy and social science journals well. In his letter, President Xi emphasized: “To strengthen the backbone and confidence of being Chinese and to enable the world to better understand China, we need to deeply comprehend Chinese civilization and thoroughly explain how to better

uphold the Chinese path, promote Chinese spirit, and gather Chinese strength from the combined perspectives of history and reality, theory and practice. Answering this major question requires the joint efforts of philosophy and social science workers to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of fine traditional Chinese culture under new era conditions. High-quality academic journals must stay true to their original aspiration, lead innovation, showcase high-level research achievements, support the growth of outstanding academic talent, and promote academic exchanges between China and other countries.”

For workers in philosophy and social science academic journals, President Xi’ s letter is both an inspiration and a spur. It requires us to be rooted in China while having a global vision, to implement the spirit of President Xi’ s reply in concrete editorial practice, and to take “staying true to our original aspiration, leading innovation, showcasing high-level research achievements, supporting the growth of outstanding academic talent, and promoting academic exchanges between China and other countries” as our fundamental principle. By combining the actual conditions of our journals and striving to build high-quality academic journals, we can make unique contributions to the prosperity of Chinese philosophy and social sciences, to telling the story of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, and to enhancing China’ s international discourse power. This article takes *Contemporary Rhetoric* as an example to explore how to comprehensively and multi-dimensionally implement this important spirit of President Xi’ s reply by examining the journal’ s history, positioning, characteristics, and existing experience.

History, Positioning, and Characteristics of *Contemporary Rhetoric*

Contemporary Rhetoric is China’ s first specialized rhetoric journal, supervised by the Ministry of Education and sponsored by Fudan University, and remains the only professional academic journal in the field of rhetoric in China to date. Founded in 1982 as *Rhetoric Learning*, it was established according to the last wishes of Chen Wangdao, the founder of modern Chinese rhetoric and the first translator of *The Communist Manifesto*. Initially co-sponsored by the Institute of Chinese Language and Literature at Fudan University and the East China Branch of the Chinese Rhetoric Society, it is now solely sponsored by Fudan University and is publicly distributed both domestically and internationally. It is a core Chinese journal in linguistics and a source journal for the Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI). In its early years, to meet contemporary socio-cultural needs, the journal adopted “popularization and improvement” as its mission. Since entering the 21st century, awareness of “prospering Chinese rhetoric and promoting the Fudan rhetoric tradition” has grown stronger, leading to its official renaming as *Contemporary Rhetoric* in 2009, with a renewed mission to “prosper rhetorical scholarship, promote rhetorical research, and guide rhetorical application.” The journal adheres to the principle of promoting re-

search through academic activities and driving editorial work through research, focusing on theoretical construction and methodological innovation in rhetoric, as well as exchanges with international rhetoric circles. While preserving Chinese rhetorical traditions, it breaks through the traditional research confines centered on rhetorical figures, pioneering the development of rhetoric studies with macro, dynamic, and diversified research concepts.

Since the mid-1980s, the journal has organized domestic and international scholars to conduct in-depth discussions on numerous topics, including the social functional stratification of Chinese—classification of language style types, rhetoric and verbal communication, rhetoric and grammar, and rhetoric and linguistic aesthetics, generating tremendous response. In recent years, *Contemporary Rhetoric* has undertaken two major areas of exploration in terms of inheriting tradition and promoting innovative development.

First, it emphasizes interdisciplinary and cross-field research. The journal actively focuses on research achievements that integrate different disciplines and various sub-disciplines within linguistics. In terms of topic selection and commissioning, it tends to favor research based on traditional rhetoric studies while simultaneously absorbing research findings from related and adjacent disciplines. It invites experts in relevant fields to contribute and compile special columns, such as “Rhetoric and Law,” “Rhetoric and Semiotics,” “Rhetoric and Grammar,” “Rhetoric and Discourse,” “Rhetoric and Pragmatics,” and “Rhetoric and Writing.”

Second, it continuously expands its international academic horizons. The journal uses dialogue and exchanges with international academia as an opportunity, employing numerous internationally renowned scholars as academic advisors and editorial board members, including Professor Chen Ping from the University of Queensland in Australia, Professor Julia Kristeva from Paris Diderot University in France, Professor Qu Chengxi from the University of Florida in the United States, Professor Jiang Yan from University College London in the United Kingdom, Professor Mao Lüming from the University of Utah in the United States, and Professor Tao Hongyin from the University of California in the United States. In addition to inviting these academic advisors and international editorial board members to contribute and commission articles, the journal also actively solicits contributions from other internationally influential scholars to ensure the frontier nature and scientific quality of its articles, with the aim of introducing advanced research concepts to the rhetoric discipline, promoting an international perspective on rhetoric development, and expanding new research fields for traditional rhetoric studies.

The editorial philosophy of *Contemporary Rhetoric* in recent years aligns with the spirit of President Xi Jinping’s reply in its general direction, staying true to its original aspiration and promoting tradition while also integrating knowledge and forging innovation. Precisely because it has grasped the correct general direction, *Contemporary Rhetoric* has achieved remarkable accomplishments and gained widespread recognition in the academic community: it has been contin-

uously selected for China's five most authoritative journal databases, with its ranking and various indicator numbers rising year by year; it has been reprinted and cited by numerous newspapers and periodicals, with its impact factor data continuously improving; and it has been selected for two consecutive years in the *World Academic Journal Academic Influence Index (WAJCI) Annual Report* released by the China Scientific Literature Measurement and Evaluation Research Center, competing alongside 1,429 Chinese academic journals and 11,659 overseas academic journals with significant academic influence, placing it in the Q2 zone (25%-50%) in the overall ranking of domestic and international language and script journals.

Leveraging Modern Media Technology to Build a High-Quality Academic Journal

It is well known that with the rapid development of new media, the limitations of traditional journal publishing have become increasingly prominent. In the context of the new era, *Contemporary Rhetoric* keeps pace with the times, continuously seeks innovative methods, strengthens the integration of traditional publishing and new media, and gives full play to its own advantages and characteristics to achieve sustainable development. In fact, in recent years, the reason why *Contemporary Rhetoric* has been able to rise rapidly in the academic journal world, apart from grasping the correct general direction, is also due to the comprehensive application of modern media technology in its specific editorial processes.

2.1 Creating a WeChat Official Account to Enhance Interaction Between the Journal and Readers

Among current public social cognition, mobile terminal media represented by smartphones are the most widely used new media forms with the most complex audience structure. Compared with official journal websites and microblogs, WeChat official accounts best highlight the characteristics of self-media and can disseminate journal-related information most quickly and extensively. On New Year's Day 2019, the *Contemporary Rhetoric* editorial department launched its 同名 WeChat official account "Contemporary Rhetoric," featuring three columns: "Disciplinary Information," "Selected Papers," and "Frontier Dynamics." Due to the nature of the discipline itself, the account had relatively few followers in its initial stage, but after more than two years of effort, the number of followers has approached ten thousand. In addition to regularly sending selected papers every Monday, "Contemporary Rhetoric" also forwards various academic and conference information related to language disciplines, disseminating journal information and published papers while also promoting academic exchange, disciplinary integration, and enhancing interaction between the journal and its readers, resulting in a significant increase in the account's dissemination index.

2.2 Adopting “Streaming Media” Technology to Optimize Reader Experience

Due to objective reasons such as manpower and technology, the WeChat official account of *Contemporary Rhetoric* initially used PDF-to-image conversion for its selected papers, requiring readers to click on and zoom into each image individually for clearer reading, which to some extent affected readers’ interest. To optimize the reading experience, *Contemporary Rhetoric* cooperated with Chaoxing Company to adopt a new reading mode—streaming media files (HTML)—during the paper uploading process. Compared with traditional PDF files, streaming media can adapt to screens automatically, particularly highlighting its advantages on websites and official accounts. The use of streaming media files has maximally solved the layout problems of WeChat official accounts while also optimizing readers’ reading experience, allowing readers to read comfortably and freely regardless of the type of mobile phone, tablet, or computer they use, thereby promoting the journal’ s publicity and academic exchange.

2.3 Experimenting with “Online First” to Accelerate Publication Timeliness

“Online first” can be said to be an important transformation in contemporary academic journal publishing models, embodying the “short, frequent, fast” Internet mindset. *Contemporary Rhetoric* has cooperated with CNKI to actively participate in and experiment with this new publishing model, no longer being limited by the fixed and lengthy printing and binding cycles of paper journals. It can flexibly focus on launching individual papers or special columns, or upload entire issues once finalized. As long as papers have undergone strict quality control by the editorial department to fully guarantee academic and editorial quality, they can be made public immediately, accelerating the speed of knowledge renewal and recognition of academic achievements while also facilitating the rapid and widespread dissemination and sharing of academic information.

2.4 Participating in the Co-construction of “Fudan New Academic Network” and Actively Promoting the Media Convergence Transformation of Academic Journals

Academic journals were born to promote academic exchange and knowledge dissemination, inherently containing the purpose of academic sharing. In the current context of media convergence, *Contemporary Rhetoric* actively promotes academic sharing. In addition to cooperating with several major well-known domestic databases, it also actively participates in the co-construction of “Fudan New Academic Network.” Combining the different needs of journal publishing and academic production, and working with Fudan University Press to build an academic community, the journal makes efforts in integrating academic resources, establishing academic orientation, exploring academic evaluation systems, and serving academic innovation. This not only expands the journal’ s dissemination scope and enhances its readership influence but also provides a

platform for academic exchange and sharing for scholars and students in humanities and social sciences, offering diverse services and support for Fudan University' s academic advancement and double first-class construction.

Development Direction and Construction Ideas for *Contemporary Rhetoric*

President Xi Jinping' s reply clearly points out the development direction and construction ideas for philosophy and social science academic journals. *Contemporary Rhetoric* will also continue to adhere to its original principles, combine its own characteristics, and run the journal well and excellently. While focusing on promoting the Fudan rhetoric tradition, it will use modern media technology to actively disseminate Chinese rhetorical culture, continue to strengthen exchanges with the international academic community, and promote Chinese rhetorical culture to the world, gradually implementing President Xi Jinping' s reply spirit of “staying true to our original aspiration and leading innovation” in concrete editorial practice. Relevant measures are as follows.

3.1 Taking Multiple Measures to Strengthen Rhetoric Ontology Research

The main research scope of traditional rhetoric includes rhetorical figures (commonly referred to as rhetorical methods), verbal rhetorical activities (mainly related to context and style), and verbal style. As the only specialized rhetoric journal in China to date, *Contemporary Rhetoric* should never forget its original editorial aspiration and firmly remember its mission to disseminate Chinese rhetorical culture. Therefore, it can use modern media technology to establish series columns on rhetoric ontology research across multiple platforms including paper journals, online journals, and the journal' s official WeChat account, such as “Rhetoric Tradition,” “Rhetorical Phenomena Research,” “Rhetoric and Style,” “Rhetoric and Discourse,” “Rhetoric and Grammar,” “Rhetoric and Writing,” and “Rhetorical Stylistics Research,” publishing a large number of high-quality papers to promote rhetoric ontology research, inherit and carry forward the rhetorical thoughts of predecessors such as Chen Wangdao, and revive the influence of Chinese rhetoric both domestically and internationally.

3.2 Promoting Integration and Development, Strengthening Translation and Introduction of International Frontier Rhetoric Theories

To strengthen exchanges with the international academic community, in addition to employing many internationally renowned scholars as academic advisors and editorial board members, *Contemporary Rhetoric* will also use network and mobile communication technologies to build consensus on integrated development, strengthen the translation and introduction of classic works, focus on translating and introducing the most cutting-edge international rhetoric theories, interpret classics by internationally renowned scholars, and solicit contri-

butions from influential scholars worldwide. It plans to open columns such as “American Rhetoric Studies from a Global Perspective,” “Western Rhetoric,” “Intertextuality and Rhetoric,” and “Rhetoric and Argumentation,” publishing a series of internationally influential papers written by renowned scholars at home and abroad, integrating the essence of Chinese classical rhetoric and Western rhetoric, and building a bridge for communication and exchange between Chinese and Western linguistic research for Chinese academia.

3.3 Leveraging Artificial Intelligence to Continue Promoting Interdisciplinary and Cross-Field Exchange

While strengthening rhetoric ontology research, *Contemporary Rhetoric* will continue to emphasize interdisciplinary and cross-field research. In recent years, the journal has actively focused on hot topics in academic research, establishing special columns such as “Rhetoric and Intertextuality,” “Corpus and Rhetoric,” and “Semiotics and Rhetoric,” and published a themed special issue on “Multimodality and New Media” in 2019, using the most cutting-edge academic theories to analyze the most characteristic linguistic phenomena of the times. Regarding the currently hottest topic of artificial intelligence, the *Contemporary Rhetoric* editorial department also held the “Frontiers Theoretical Workshop on ‘Artificial Intelligence and Rhetoric’ ,” gathering many renowned scholars in related fields to conduct in-depth exchanges on topics such as natural language and artificial language, human-computer dialogue and machine dialogue, human-computer interaction and interpersonal interaction, and the construction of multi-discourse systems, all of which align with current international frontier theories. The academic wisdom contributed by these scholars has also laid the foundation for establishing a column on “Artificial Intelligence and Rhetoric” in the future. Only by keeping pace with the times can we continuously lead innovation. In future editorial processes, *Contemporary Rhetoric* will continuously expand the theoretical paradigms of rhetoric research, promote interdisciplinary exchange and development of the rhetoric discipline, and lead new directions in rhetoric research.

3.4 Conducting Diverse Academic Exchange Activities to Support the Growth of Young Scholars

Contemporary Rhetoric adheres to the advanced concept of “promoting research through academic activities and driving editorial work through research.” Since 2008, it has held annual academic exchange activities such as the “Wangdao Rhetoric High-End Forum,” “Frontier Theoretical Workshop,” and the “Rhetoric Forum Series Academic Lectures,” inviting renowned scholars from home and abroad to attend and deliver academic reports, strengthening connections with authors and readers, establishing and improving disciplinary exchange platforms, while also enriching the journal’s manuscript sources and enhancing its academic influence. In the future, *Contemporary Rhetoric* also plans to actively support young scholars by holding “Young Scholars’ Forums” and “Graduate Student Fo-

rums” through multiple channels and forms, including online, offline, and hybrid conferences, to promote in-depth exchanges between senior scholars, professional journal editors, and young scholars, and to do its utmost to support and foster the growth of outstanding young academic talents. After the conferences, these papers can also be revised and published as collections, which not only facilitates the popularization and reproduction of professional academic knowledge but also develops and strengthens the rhetoric research community.

3.5 Using Modern Media Technology to Build a Chinese Rhetoric Research Brand

To meet the needs of current self-media and media convergence development and information transmission, *Contemporary Rhetoric*, in addition to running its paper journal well, will further strengthen and highlight the role of online publicity. On the basis of timely optimizing and updating its existing website, it will focus on strengthening the publicity of its WeChat official account platform and gradually develop related products such as the journal’ s official App to help traditional Chinese rhetorical culture go global. The official App of *Contemporary Rhetoric* is a further extension of the print magazine to mobile devices, aiming to provide a more comprehensive, diverse, and rich user experience suitable for mobile devices such as mobile phones and iPads. However, different from commercial Apps, the journal App will continue to adhere to its public welfare and academic mission, actively attempt to provide users with personalized information and content services, deeply explore academic exchange and interaction platforms in the App application environment, and create more multimedia-featured reading products, building it into an independent brand different from the paper journal. This will not only promote the digital transformation of academic journals but also help traditional Chinese rhetorical culture, Chinese rhetoric research go global and prosper.

President Xi Jinping’ s reply to all editorial staff of the *Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy* profoundly elaborates on the great significance of promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of fine traditional Chinese culture under new era conditions for upholding the Chinese path, promoting Chinese spirit, and gathering Chinese strength. It puts forward new and higher requirements for running high-quality academic journals, demonstrating strong theoretical, practical, and guiding significance, and pointing out the direction and providing fundamental guidance for the prosperity and development of philosophy and social sciences. It is believed that under the guidance of the spirit of President Xi Jinping’ s reply, with the support of supervisory and sponsoring organizations, and through the unremitting efforts of workers at many philosophy and social science academic journals represented by *Contemporary Rhetoric*, continuously supporting and nurturing outstanding academic achievements and deeply utilizing modern media technology, we will gradually build brands in various disciplinary fields, vigorously promote and disseminate Chinese culture, deeply integrate into international academia, and become aca-

demic journals with certain international influence. This will also make due contributions to accelerating the construction of philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics and innovatively developing China's philosophy and social science disciplinary system, academic system, and discourse system, fully embodying Chinese characteristics, Chinese style, and Chinese ethos.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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