Feng, Chao 冯超: *The Yellow River: A Study of a Major Literary Journal During the Period of China's War of Resistance against Japan*. (《抗战文艺名刊〈黄河〉研究》), People's Publishing House (人民出版社), China, 2025. ISBN: 978-7-01-027026-5.

Modern Chinese literature of the 1940s underwent profound transformations in its development, modes of production, and internal structure in response to the severe national crisis. The territorial fragmentation and displacement of cultural centers caused by the Japanese invasion endowed the literary production of this period with marked regional differentiation and mobility. Within this historical context, literary journals rooted in diverse political regions and cultural milieus functioned not merely as vehicles for the circulation of texts but also as critical sites for observing the plurality, internal tensions, and aesthetic configurations of wartime China's literary field. As an integral component of modern Chinese literary history, the advancement of research on the War of Resistance Literature depends on sustained attention to, and comparative integration of, literary practices across regions and institutional forms. It is in this regard that Feng Chao's study deliberately redirects scholarly focus to the long-neglected literary sphere of the northwestern KMT-ruled area. Taking the large-scale literary monthly *The Yellow River*, published in Xi'an, as its central object, the book combines meticulous historical documentation with a systematic effort at theoretical articulation.

The most significant scholarly contribution of this volume lies in its pioneering, systematic, and in-depth holistic investigation of the wartime literary and artistic ecosystem of the KMT-ruled Northwest, with Xi'an as its centre and literary journals as its primary analytical focus. For a long time, scholarship on the War of Resistance Literature has concentrated predominantly on political and cultural hubs such as Yan'an, Chongqing, Guilin, and the "isolated island" of Shanghai. As a result, the literary landscape of the vast KMT-ruled Northwest—particularly its core city, Xi'an—has received limited sustained scholarly attention. As the longest-running, largest-scale, and most influential comprehensive literary monthly published in Xi'an, *The Yellow River* provides an especially productive vantage point from which to examine the literary sphere of the Northwest under KMT rule. Through his close examination of *The Yellow River*, Feng demonstrates that the War of Resistance Literature of the KMT-ruled Northwest was by no means a marginal footnote in the grand narrative of modern Chinese literary history. Rather, it constituted a vibrant literary space marked by internal tensions, stylistic diversity, and a complex dynamic of both convergence with and divergence from the national literary mainstream. Conceptualizing *the Yellow River* as a "living fossil" dynamically generated within a specific literary field, the author employs it as a lens through which to explore the regional imagination of the War of Resistance Literature. This approach ultimately establishes a tripartite analytical framework operating at macro, meso, and micro levels.

At the macro level, the study investigates the external conditions that enabled the journal's emergence and continued operation, situating it within the distinctive political and military landscape, cultural policies, and regional traditions of the KMT-ruled Northwest during the Stalemate Phase (xiangchi jieduan 相持阶段) of the War of Resistance. This analysis elucidates how external forces shaped both the publication's orientation and function. At the meso level, the focus shifts to the journal's developmental history, meticulously reconstructing its full trajectory from founding through suspension and resumption to its eventual cessation. Particular attention is paid to the editorial collective—especially successive editors-in-chief—and to their evolving editorial philosophies, strategic decisions, and negotiations of

cultural identity across different periods. At the micro level, the study turns to close readings of texts published in the journal, including fiction, poetry, and drama, and undertakes a detailed analysis of their thematic concerns and aesthetic strategies. Taken together, this comprehensive, multi-layered examination demonstrates a research approach that grasps literary journals as holistic, multifaceted literary phenomena.

More specifically, the book's core arguments are closely aligned with the macro–meso–micro analytical framework outlined above. Chapter One reconstructs the historical conditions surrounding the journal's emergence and early development from both temporal and spatial perspectives, analyzing the broader circumstances following the transition of China's War of Resistance into the Stalemate Phase (xiangchi jieduan 相持阶段), as well as the process through which Xi'an's local Resistance Literature evolved from its nascent beginnings to a period of relative flourishing under KMT rule. Chapter Two turns to the journal itself, examining its successive stages of development, its distinctive integration of literary and historical concerns, and its flexible yet efficient editorial strategies, thereby offering a meso-level portrait of *The Yellow River* as an institutional and cultural entity. Chapter Three shifts to micro-level textual analysis, discussing the journal's achievements in realist fiction, War of Resistance poetry, and a diverse range of dramatic works, and providing a detailed account of how it responded to the era's challenges while articulating regional particularities through concrete literary practices. Chapter Four further extends journal studies into the more vivid and concrete terrain of historical interpersonal relations and intellectual spheres. Through an in-depth case study of editor-in-chief Xie Bingying, it elucidates her complex and ambivalent relationship with *The Yellow River*, probing the editorial philosophy, existential predicaments, and inner world that underpinned her often "self-justifying" editorial practices.

Feng's work does not confine itself to the historical reconstruction of specific periodicals, but extends further to a reflection on research methodologies for literary journals and a reassessment of their value within literary history. As the author emphasizes in the conclusion, the unique contribution of *The Yellow River* lies first in its "consistent prioritization of national consciousness, striving to transcend the limitations of partisan politics" while broadly uniting literary and artistic workers in service of the grand objective of resisting Japanese aggression and saving the nation. Secondly, the journal made distinctive contributions to the creation and dissemination of specific literary genres, such as "anti-war literature" and "production literature". Particularly profound is the author's application of the "delayed effect" perspective, which demonstrates that geographical isolation and dissemination lag paradoxically granted *The Yellow River* a unique vantage point for distant, rational scrutiny and reconsideration of nationwide literary movements like "Articles to the Countryside, Articles to the Army." This "delayed" engagement constituted a complementary development to the War of Resistance Literature. This discovery not only reveals the distinctive cognitive patterns and critical potential formed by regional publications under specific historical conditions but also significantly enriches and deepens our understanding of the internal dynamics, complex structures, and multiple possibilities within 1940s literature. Building upon this, the author further reflects on the current state of literary journal studies, arguing that it must avoid mere accumulation of historical materials or compilation of texts. Instead, it should comprehensively examine the "external ecological environment and internal operational mechanisms" of publications to broaden the horizons of modern literary research and achieve a

profound revelation of the complexity of literary history. This methodological awareness elevates the book beyond the scope of a case study, endowing it with universal academic significance.

In sum, *The Yellow River: A Study of a Major Literary Journal During the Period of China's War of Resistance against Japan* is an outstanding academic work that fills a significant scholarly gap. It features a rigorous research framework, a solid foundation in primary sources, and offers highly insightful perspectives. The work successfully brings *the Yellow River*, a publication rich in historical information, into sharp relief against the increasingly distant memories of the War of Resistance. Through its multidimensional analysis, it powerfully reshapes our understanding of the literary landscape in the northwestern areas under KMT control during the war period. Not only does this work provide a robust documentary foundation and rigorous case study for related fields of research, but its mature methodological awareness also offers a valuable paradigm for future studies of modern literary periodicals and more nuanced literary historiography. This undoubtedly represents a substantial and significant advancement in the study of modern Chinese literature, particularly in the field of 1940s literature and wartime literary and artistic research.

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