



## CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture

ISSN 1481-4374

Purdue University Press ©Purdue University

---

Volume 20 | (2018) Issue 1

Article 1

---

### Frame, Preference, and Memory in Literary History Narration

Guoqiang Qiao

*Shanghai International Studies University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb>



Part of the [Comparative Literature Commons](#), [Other Arts and Humanities Commons](#), [Reading and Language Commons](#), and the [Rhetoric and Composition Commons](#)

Dedicated to the dissemination of scholarly and professional information, [Purdue University Press](#) selects, develops, and distributes quality resources in several key subject areas for which its parent university is famous, including business, technology, health, veterinary medicine, and other selected disciplines in the humanities and sciences.

*CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, the peer-reviewed, full-text, and open-access learned journal in the humanities and social sciences, publishes new scholarship following tenets of the discipline of comparative literature and the field of cultural studies designated as "comparative cultural studies." Publications in the journal are indexed in the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature (Chadwyck-Healey), the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (Thomson Reuters ISI), the Humanities Index (Wilson), Humanities International Complete (EBSCO), the International Bibliography of the Modern Language Association of America, and Scopus (Elsevier). The journal is affiliated with the Purdue University Press monograph series of Books in Comparative Cultural Studies. Contact: <[clcweb@purdue.edu](mailto:clcweb@purdue.edu)>

---

### Recommended Citation

Qiao, Guoqiang. "Frame, Preference, and Memory in Literary History Narration." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 20.1 (2018): <<https://doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.3163>>

This text has been double-blind peer reviewed by 2+1 experts in the field.

The above text, published by Purdue University Press ©Purdue University, has been downloaded 368 times as of 11/07/19.

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.

This is an Open Access journal. This means that it uses a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access. Readers may freely read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of articles. This journal is covered under the [CC BY-NC-ND license](#).

**CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture**ISSN 1481-4374 <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb>>  
Purdue University Press ©Purdue University

*CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, the peer-reviewed, full-text, and open-access learned journal in the humanities and social sciences, publishes new scholarship following tenets of the discipline of comparative literature and the field of cultural studies designated as "comparative cultural studies." In addition to the publication of articles, the journal publishes review articles of scholarly books and publishes research material in its *Library Series*. Publications in the journal are indexed in the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature (Chadwyck-Healey), the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (Thomson Reuters ISI), the Humanities Index (Wilson), Humanities International Complete (EBSCO), the International Bibliography of the Modern Language Association of America, and Scopus (Elsevier). The journal is affiliated with the Purdue University Press monograph series of Books in Comparative Cultural Studies. Contact: <[clcweb@purdue.edu](mailto:clcweb@purdue.edu)>

---

**Volume 20 Issue 1 (March 2018) Article 1****Guoqiang Qiao,****"Frame, Preference, and Memory in Literary History Narration"**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol20/iss1/1>>Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 20.1 (2018)**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol20/iss1/>>

---

**Abstract:** In his article "Frame, Preference, and Memory in Literary History Narration" Guoqiang Qiao analyzes the frame, preference and memory in literary historiography from a narratological and cognitive perspectives. He maintains that literary history is of multileveled narration that includes not only the perceptualized literary events, literary figures, and literary works, but also the conceptualized spirit of the time, national culture, and personal and collective memories. Qiao employs the basic concepts of frame, preference, and memory to suggest a cognitive approach to the narration of literary history. To illustrate the complex construction of literary historiography, he provides examples from Chinese literary history.

## Guoqiang QIAO

### Frame, Preference and Memory in Literary History Narration

A narratologist's study of literary historiography is chiefly concerned with the narration that helps (re)construct ideas both as an act and as a structure. As an act, the author of literary history organizes or orders its material, names its periods and schools, identifies and evaluates the significant phenomena, and conceptualizes its intentions and ideas. The narration of literary history can transmit messages to its reader and eventually configure a narrative that is endowed with ideas or concepts. However, as a structure, literary historians lends coherence to the narrative text through frames, preferences, and memory and therefore establish a so-called organic unity.

Like other historical work, the frame of literary history can be defined "as a network of nodes and relations" with "top levels" and "lower levels" and many "terminals—'slots'" (Minsky 2), that "denote(s) the cognitive model that is selected and used in the process of reading a narrative text" (Jahn 442). That is, the frame of literary history is composed using graded levels of frames for one thing, which takes shape of nodes and relations and eventually constitutes a network; for another, these graded frames emphasize and conceptualize pragmatic and cognitive details, interlocking with "interpreters' mental states and processes, thus giving rise to narrative experiences" (Herman "Cognitive Narratology" 46). Yet, to illustrate the idea of frame as the basic framework of literary history entails a composite view of the frames that not only reflect the structure within the literary history, but also helps establish a round-trip accessibility, a nexus of mind and text that can link the text and the reader. In other words, the composite view of frames denotes the hierarchical frames within as well as outside a literary historical text, constituting a (re)source for graded interpretation.

The frames can be hierarchical. At the top is an ideal type of a general frame for literary history, which reflects the mainstream consciousness, defines the literary historical narrative structure, governs the related narrative speed and value orientation, providing resources for interpretation. For example, the political and stylistic principles or the rules stipulated in advance and revised in the middle of the writing of literary history, which are usually adopted by most of Chinese or some other national literary historians, can be regarded as a kind of general frame for literary history. To a great degree, this ideal type of a general frame will be overtly or covertly the index to the characteristic literary temper of an age, and sets up a basic principle or rule by which to construct many-to-many links of literary works and connect the literary events spontaneously or subsequently happening in a certain period. In the frames all necessary narrative components of literary history produce a certain narrative-situation through narration, in which meaning dwells and incubates.

Yet to narrate the previously-chosen many-to-many links of literary materials into coherence means to have a certain in-framed conception and value bearing upon the whole procedure of narration. On the other hand, to interpret the meaning that is previously-determined through the choice and organization of the diversified or ramified but related literary materials means to make cross references with the whole set of things, namely, the mainstream consciousness, personal experiences, knowledge, aesthetic conception and value orientation. This bifurcation exposes the two cognitive dimensions that the meaning of a literary historical text finds expression both in the author's (un)conscious activity that is endowed with meaning and in the critic's conscious activity that leads to the meaning he is able or intends to construct. But both of the author's and the critic's (un)conscious activities are in-framed with the collective or the mainstream consciousness, though they may choose to do some modulation or modify it in degree or direction. The writing and critique of Chinese literary history proves to be the case in point. In the past decades in Chinese literary circle, writing and critique of literary history were guided and restricted by the core value of the mainstream, which no one can transgress against. Some literary figures such as Lu Xun, Ba Jin, Mao Dun, Zhou Yang, to name but a few, in Chinese literary history have been recognized by the mainstream. Thus, no one can challenge them. Yet with the passage of time, the mainstream's consciousness has changed anyway, one can, to some degree, negotiate with if not challenge what has been recognized (Hong, "A Talk from" 32-38), or mention those who have been blocked in the past such as Zhang Ailing (Zhao 211-25).

Nonetheless, this ideal type of frame cannot comprehensively encompass every situation, particularly the intricate correlations, narrative restriction, etc. Therefore, it demands a certain modulation of the organization of components, modes, speed, focalization, and all without losing the presupposed principle and value. Thus we have a sub-ideal type of frame that is lower in grade but plain in interpretation, particularly when the organization of the literary historical facts is conventional, the purpose of literary historiography is explicit, and the narrative-situation of a literary historical text is uncomplicated.

Thus said, the basic frame of literary history that pertains to a "network of nodes and relations" can be further divided into a tri-dimension frame that is concerned with reference, story and discourse no matter it deals with literary annals, literary biography, literary anthology or what is called literary history. Reference in this tri-dimension frame in literary history, which can also be considered as a sub-frame, refers particularly to a relation between social and literary facts in history and the facts that have been interpreted and will be interpreted. This reference that is restricted to what has existed or happened in reality rather than existed or happened in imagination can be further divided into the following situations: (1) The author of a certain literary history selects and deploys referents and therefore proves the validity and achieve readerly effects. But sometimes, the author might be in passive in the selection and deployment, which would happen on one hand when the reference is limited; on the other hand, when the reference is restricted. (2) The author who tells the social and literary facts in retrospect might revise the facts through addition, reduction, omission or overstatement, etc. and therefore, re-set the narrative dynamic situation, and thus over the course of the historiography, parts of the stated facts acquire less or lose more of the ultimate truth. (3) The author is responsible for the valid quotation and the overall arrangement of the quoted facts.

In this sense, there is more or less a certain uncertainty in the deployment of the reference due to the author's varied scholarship, aesthetic idea, and value orientation as well as the censorship that the author has to abide by. This uncertainty determines the quotation quality of reference as well as the validity of the literary history. More specifically, the author may quote a social or literary text directly or indirectly. If directly, the author should choose the quotation adequately so as to exactly fit in with the situation; but no matter how carefully the author does it, there might well be a gap between the original (con)text and the quotation, particularly taking the temporary situation and the quoted but abridged sentences into consideration. If indirectly, the author may revise the quotation through changing the person, the point of view, the tense, the situation, etc., which also gives rise to a gap between the original (con)text and the quotation. Yet, from the perspective of cognition, reference when it is quoted becomes in turn (re)source for interpretation, which working together with story and discourse, (re)gains meaning and significance. Yet the quality and validity of this kind of interpretation is to some degree problematic, open to criticism.

Story usually refers to "the what of narrative" (Chatman 9). However, from the cognitive perspective of story in this tri-dimension frame in literary history, the area of story is enlarged, referring not only to "the what of narrative," but also to the relation and interaction between "the what of narrative" and the what makes "the what of narrative" and thus makes a sub-frame of the general tri-dimension frame in literary history. Specifically, for "the what of narrative," it mainly refers to the narrated events (actions and happenings) and existents (characters, documents, and settings) (Herman *Routledge Encyclopedia* 566) in a given literary history, such as literary and historical events, documents, the literary works, the author, etc. Whereas for the what makes "the what of narrative," it mainly refers to what the author's response to "the what of narrative," including the textual structure of the literary history the author designs, the commentary of the literary events the author makes, the evidences the author quotes, and the like.

As the story in fiction, the story in literary history also has three components: the mimetic, the synthetic and the thematic (Phelan 1989). For mimetic, the author of literary history is committed to imitate the literary and historical reality to convince himself and readers that the story he tells is true and significant. Nonetheless, this mimesis may be taken as unreliable, particularly with the passage of time or in a time when the situation is dramatically changed people tend to be skeptical or critical. On the other hand, this mimesis may also be exposed more functional or pragmatic than actual or truthful, since a sequence of the quoted references or imitated literary and historical realities that help make up a story might not be necessarily the sequence of real events or happenings. The re-arranged sequence of the quoted references or imitated literary and historical realities synthesizes these related materials and, in the meantime, is resynthesized or reconstructed, reflecting both the author's and the reader's thematic concerns and value orientation. There is no such kind of thing as separability of story from discourse, since every mimesis is processed and thus contextualized and conceptualized in a discourse even though the story is arranged in a real chronological sequence. In this sense, the mimetic story within a literary history is different from the non-mimetic story that is outside the literary history and this difference constructs a relational frame, interacting with discourse and cognitive process. In other words, interpretation of these two different versions of story demands discrimination of and a double focus on the interrelationship and interaction between a story and a story in discourse. Yet, as an initial interpreter and actual narrator of these two versions of a story, the author of the literary history will surely consider the effects of story reorganized in a discourse as well as the interpretive message that he intends to pass to the reader.

As regards the thematic within the framework of story, the author of literary history is always concerned with ideas that he finds expression in "the what of narrative," the what and the how makes "the what of narrative," etc. To put in other words, what the author chooses as his starting point for the literary history and what he selects from the social texts, literary works, historical events and happenings that he employs to establish the basics of literary historical facts and the criteria or the theoretical framework that he employs to value the writers and their works and how the author employs to narrate them, join together to express the theme implicitly or explicitly. On the other hand, from the cognitive perspective, the theme that is in-framed in literary historiographical discourse is linked with and reconstructed in the interaction with the reading public. The author needs to consider how the theme he constructs interlocks with the reader's mental state and process and what kind of experiences the reader will have in his reading, since the reader may or may not be able to understand and interpret the theme in a way and in a viewpoint as the author does. The reader may make cross reference to or correlate the new situation or data to understand and interpret the theme the author presented.

As to discourse, it is by definition "the how" or "the expression, the means by which the content is communicated" (Chatman 19). However, discourse in the above-mentioned tri-dimension frame may include more than what it is previously defined. Correlating with frame and story, it deals with a set of relationships between the events it represents and the reader it expects to have. This set of relationships is not an equal one, but the one that has to do with power. As Michel Foucault observes: "Here is the hypothesis which I would like to put forward tonight in order to fix the terrain—or perhaps the very provisional theatre—of the work I am doing: that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality" (Shapiro 109).

For Foucault, discourse is not discursive or the one that its author can freely strike up without being "controlled, selected, organized and canalized." Until here the question is who is the controller, selector, organizer or canalizer. In terms of literary historiography, they might be either one person (the author himself) or a group of people (the authors themselves, or rather, the authority who manages or manipulates the writing). Since literary historiographical discourse has substantive social function, the "powers" that Foucault mentioned refers to not only the author, but also the "public sphere"—either in the sense of Jürgen Habermas' (Habermas, *Strukturwandel* 102-30) or in that of Terry Eagleton's (Eagleton, *The Function* 9-27), including at least the reading public and the authoritarian politics or the repressive regime. These diversified powers with different value orientation that work together to determine and define the discourse the actual author can write about. In other words, as a kind of communicative action, literary historiographical discourse exposes the implications advanced both by the author and the so-called "public sphere."

However, the author of literary history is not passively determined and defined by these powers. On the basis of political consensus with the "public sphere," the author of literary history can discourse all the literary historical facts and literary review or criticism by employing every necessary means of narrative devices, including focalization, setting, embedding, spatial-temporal sequence, etc. The related discoursing action makes up a cognitive frame, taking effect through the mutual communication of internal and external ordering and understanding procedures. The formal, referential, and functional properties of this cognitive frame can be further divided into author-based and reader-based. The literary historical discourse on both bases is thus interplayed between a set of events, happenings, social norms and value orientation, and a set of narrative devices, co-producing cognitive payoff in the course of the author's as well as reader's retrospective inference.

There may be many possible sub-frames deployed in literary historiography, such as structure-based, character-based or event-based narrative levels and embedded narrative, which are linked into higher-order frames and specify the conditions of the literary historiography. Based on the concepts that Menakhem Perry and Manfred Jahn discuss in terms of frame and preference (Perry, "Literary Dynamics" 35-64, 311-361; Jahn, "Frames" 441-468), the principles that govern the linkage and selection of frames are mainly the concepts of relevancy and preference. However, these relevancy and preference have to be redefined in terms of literary historiography, for which these relevancy and preference refer to two parties: the author and the reader. The relevancy is basic for the linkage of various levels of frames and some other literary historical materials and that of the process of reading. Whereas on the basis of "maximum relevancy" (Perry, "Literary Dynamics" 43), the preference is after all value-oriented, processed or constructed and reconstructed by both parts of author and the reader.

In the context of literary historiography, ideology may be defined as the major preference of values informing the literary historical narrative. This preference installs several axiological relationships be-

tween pairs of oppositional terms such as real vs. false, good vs. bad and beautiful vs. ugly, addressing the concept of value in a larger context of social norms and national culture. In this sense, literary historiography serves not only as the vehicle through which to engage esoteric literary knowledge, but also as the vehicle through which to inform the people the aesthetics, the characteristic temper of an age and the national culture. To achieve this, preference plays an important role, because cognitive necessity demands social act of value judgment rather than a simple command of literary knowledge.

Therefore, in terms of literary historiography, the preference rule applies mainly in the area of ideology. Based on Ray Jackendoff, Meir Sternberg and Menakhem Perry (Jackendoff 252; Sternberg 61-62, 95, 226-229, 260; Perry 35-64, 311-61), Jahn advanced his new understanding of preference as the dynamics of reading (Jahn 456-64). For Jahn, preferences are the principles that "specify the condition of frame," "link the subframes into higher-order frames." and "govern the selection of frames" (456). That is, the reason that preferences become a dynamic is chiefly due to their functions of specification and linkage in a sense of formal study. But in terms of literary historiography, these preferences particularly refer to the value-oriented specification and linkage due to their cognitive property, since they are carried out in a value-oriented process of cognition. This happens particularly in the writing and interpreting of Chinese literary history, whose major concerns are the temper of the age, the national culture, the aesthetics, the ethics, in brief, anything that is to do with value judgment. The case in point for this preference rule is literary historiography particularly in a society that is dominated and manipulated by authoritarian-circumscribed politics, which sets up rules for censorship to block or filter out those messages that are not agreeable with the politics. Thus, with its political or ideological baggage and its far-reaching consequence, literary historiography cannot avoid talking about ideology or value orientation in terms of preference. Both ideology and value orientation are navigating apparatus for both the author and the reader of literary history, determining their selection of frame and preference and governing the procedure of their selection.

Yet, in a (quasi) counter-authoritarian age, readers of literary history become socially-minded, ascribing special importance to the social utility of literary history. What they prefer are those that convey strong overtones of freedom, equality and democracy, which in turn becomes the question of response and leads to a reflection on rewriting literary history, for instance, in the mid-1980s in China. Therefore, the two quasi-organic instincts of self-protection and scope-maximization (Jahn 457) play a positive role in the rewriting of Chinese literary history. The Chinese literary historians realized that the old frame for the literary historiography of Chinese literature fails to match the essential conditions and thus they agree to adapt themselves to the new situation so as not to be misunderstood and discarded. They decide to replace it with a new one, which demands less political factors, puts a new focus on the literary texts, attaches more importance to literariness and adds those writers who have been severely criticized and repressed or blocked out yet without losing the basic principles of literary historiography.

In fact, this phenomenon of literary historical rewriting occurred in the mid-1980s China manifests the truth that literary historiography is self-adapted on the basis of preference rule, exposing the interrelationship and interaction between primacy and recency. Meanwhile, it also raises a gut issue of literary historiography, which escalates from the literary level to the social one, from the writing to the cognition. This escalation denotes an association between action of writing and action of interpretation, each of which will make its own choice and decision and thus lead to a certain cognitive gap and in turn affect the writing and interpretation. A case in point is that during the Great Cultural Revolution from the mid-1960s up to late 1970s, some of the Chinese writers who were thought to be bourgeois or reactionary writers such as Zhang Ailing and Xiao Hong were not allowed to appear in any of literary history. Nonetheless, the ironic "recency effect" is that after the Revolution those who disappeared on the China's literary landscape reappeared as a kind of cultural and literary backlash and were sung high praise in most of literary history.

Basically, as Manfred Jahn contends, who based on Jackendoff, Perry and Marvin Minsky that "primacy and recency are cognitive mechanisms that can be profitably explained against the background of frames and preferences" (457). That is, primacy can "retain a frame as long as possible"; whereas recency can "allow a replacement frame to reinterpret previously data" (457). Yet, for Jahn, primacy preference rule is equally important weighted with recency preference rule (457). Nevertheless, from the cognitive perspective, primacy and recency have less to do with importance but more to do with transformation and regulation. As cognitive mechanisms, retainment and replacement work on the basis of cognition. In other words, the mechanisms will transform retainment and replacement with the change of cognition from either side of the author or the reader of a certain literary history. As mechanisms, they are regulated both by their own cognitive level, value orientation as well as the outside forces. For example, in an authoritarian or tyrannical age, the author of literary history has no

choice but to select those writers and literary events in history in consensus with the mainstream value orientation. Yet with the change of time and circumstances, the author tends to expand the initial frame and replace some writers and literary events with what he considers worthwhile in the literary history. On the other hand, no matter what the circumstances are, readers always have their own choice privately or publicly, mostly privately, to deconstruct or reconstruct what the author writes about. In this sense, as a recency preference rule, literary history is always under construction or under deconstruction from the reader's side.

The recency preference rule proves the existence of potential energy in literary historiography, which gives rise to the cognitive gap between the author and the reader. For example, when the author and the reader respectively handle some new literary works or literary events, they realize that they are in a lower cognitive position and therefore, take positive actions to acquire the meanings and understand them; on the other hand, when they deal with some literary works or literary events they are familiar with, they are in a higher cognitive position and are ready to organize their understandings and transmit their ideas. In general, this cognitive gap is the force in the mechanism of recency preference rule, which gives impetus to the cognitive movement and promotes the transmission of ideas.

More specifically, the cognitive gap in terms of literary historiography can be divided into three levels: (1) cognition vs. the literary historical facts including literary events, literary figures, literary and historical documents and social reality; (2) cognition vs. literary texts, chiefly including literary works; (3) cognition vs. literary historian's and critic's critiques, including book reviews, critical essays and some other literary historical works.

The first level indicates that the author of literary history as the subject of cognition is always on the way to acquire meaning through a complex procedure of classification and interpretation. He has to sort out and analyze and interpret piles of the literary historical facts and therefore, to figure out and construct the meanings that are implied, scattered or expressed in the literary historical facts. However, due to the complexity of literary historical facts and diversified cognitive competence and the different social, political, ethical and cultural preferences, the author's blindness may contradict the author's intension. In most cases, the author of literary history may not necessarily be a witness of the literary events and thus may not know the whole processes of the events. To say the least, even though he is a witness, he may not necessarily know the very truth and every detail of the events. That is to say, the author's absence of the events denotes the author's subjectivity and relativity in his representation of literary events, which direct the interpretive emphasis to achieve a conclusion that is consistent with his cognitive competence and value orientation and the above-mentioned preferences and thereof to retain his writing of the literary historiography within the initial frame. Nonetheless, the reader of literary history, no matter whether he is or he is not a witness, may disagree with the author's representation of some significant or orienting events owing to the passage of time or the above-mentioned cognitive competence or preferences. According to Jahn, the reader's disagreement is a kind of recency that helps revise or replace the initial cognition. But I would assert that it can also be understood as a kind of deconstructionist's supplement, which targets at "desedimentation" (Derrida 10), undermining the total initial frame and thereof sets up a complete new preference.

The second level usually entails a critical and inquisitive scrutiny, because the textual construction may include years of literary, cultural, ethical, ethnical, and ideological accretions. The author of literary history has to interpret the inescapable rhythms of life, the dynamic tension of plots, the magnetic pull of narrative, the political and cultural repercussions, etc., and thus to make it adequate for the literarily, culturally, politically, or ideologically planned frames and preferences. Nonetheless, in reality the nexus between literary texts and the interpretation that the author attempts to establish has to be politically correct and the literary world that the author of literary history rebuilds becomes a world that liturgically responds to the conventional and institutionalized frame or the balanced judgment and measured insight. However, some of the readers of literary texts will not follow up what the author of literary history has exposed and the literary texts has displayed. Instead, they would like very much to develop a reading of their own—blinding them to the political dangers and attaching more importance to the tempered soul of the characters and their vision of life and thus failing to reach the plane of history. The cognitive gap thereof arises with the resultant conflict between the author and the reader of literary texts, but supply with an intellectual tension that either transcends the convention that the author of literary history has advanced or complicates the author's effort at literary and cultural synthesis.

The third level refers especially to the cognitive gap between the author of literary history and the critic of literary texts, literary events, literary figures, etc. They may employ the same vernacular to

communicate their ideas and handle their conceptual debates and complex sensibilities. But they concern themselves with different things: the author of literary history is mainly concerned with literary historical facts by using constative language; whereas the critic is concerned with ideas through interrogation and dismantlement of the form of knowledge and mind-narrative nexus ingrained as well as inscribed in his own political and cultural unconsciousness by using performative language, which is likely to create extra productive synergies and multifarious meanings of literary texts.

Taken together, the approach to preference-based literary historiography reveals the mechanism of hermeneutic interplay between primacy and recency and the law of supplement that makes a strong case for literary historiographical cognition.

Memory is attached to importance in frame theory particularly in the literary historiography, since it is believed that "when one encounters a new situation (or makes a substantial change in one's view of a problem), one selects from memory a structure called a frame" (Minsky 1). Literarily memory means an ability to remember the things in the past or "the process or faculty whereby events or impressions from the past are recollected and preserved" (Bell 2), and therefore, memory is "*knowledge from the past*, but not necessarily "*knowledge about the past*" (2, Italics in original). Yet, in terms of literary historiography the term memory has to be redefined as knowledge both "*from the past*" and "*about the past*". That is, memory as a kind of knowledge concerning literature, society and culture in literary historiography in essence is both analytically separable and synthetically combinable. For a knowledge "*from the past*," it gives a factual representation of the past, recalling chronologically the actualities of literary historical events. While for knowledge "*about the past*," it constitutes a person's and a nation's literary and cultural identity. Furthermore, it can also help structure arguments and concepts through selection of literary works, literary events, literary figures and instrumental deployment of cognitive frames and preferences.

However, memory and literary history is not wholly a thing of the past but a thing that is related to the current concerns and a way that can work its will on the present and by which one can employ to determine what of the past we remember and how we remember it. To put it in other words, memory can also be regarded as "a framework to be adapted to fit reality by changing details as necessary" (Minsky 1). In this sense, memory is ahistorical, stressing more of the "presentness" and less of the "pastness" with an awareness of the complexity of the literary historical facts and detachment from the piles of materials and diversified viewpoints. But on the other hand, it is historical in the sense of historicity of events or persons, recording what actually happened in the past but not how it happened in circumstances different from now with focuses on the true value of knowledge claims on the past.

Yet to say that literary historiography is memory-based, one has to answer at least the following two questions. (1) How does memory become a basis for literary historiography? (2) How does memory function as a basis in literary historiography? These two questions are actually interrelated and interplayed with the whole procedure of literary historiography and thus form an interacted deep structure. Thus the answer to these questions should be put together. In other words, memory that becomes a basis for literary historiography relies on the interplay between the memory and literary historiography. Through mental operation, memory stores and interprets the disordered, unsystematic and incoherent literary information and discursive ideas. In the meantime, memory also recalls its structure and qualities in a way that owes to the past experiences of similar information. Moreover, interplaying with the reality, memory provides grounding in the present or ability to imagine the future, endowing past literary events and literary figures with literary and historical significance. It enables us to see selectively, and to alter and save what is deemed important to preserve from the past (Murray 11). For example, the writer of literary history reads novels and poems and knew some literary historical events before he becomes an author of literary history. Later, when he becomes author of literary history, he must remember what he has read before. The author's total experience of reading and studying is "shot through interpretation, inference and opinion" (Harrod 48), and therefore he is enabled to transform his experience into a systematic and coherent one according to the literary and cultural norms that he abides by. In this sense, memory can be further divided into memory processes and memory representation. By definition, "Memory processes are mental operations that enable individuals to transform perceptual input into an elaborated experience of a narrative world. The mental processes give rise to representations, which are the products of understanding that are stored in long-term memory" (Herman, Jahn, and Ryan, *Routledge Encyclopedia* 299). The author of literary history also experiences these processes during their writing of literary history. He transforms what he has perceived or read into his own version of representations, particularly when he attempts to make a coherent account or interpretation of literary historical figures and events.

However, the memory-based literary historiography refers not only the author's personal memory but also the collective memory (*mémoire collective*), a term coined by Maurice Halbwachs in his book



*Les Cadres sociaux de la memoire* (199). It is concerned with the interests of the author and a certain collective or a group of people. Thus, to say memory processes and memory representation also refers to the processes and representation that are based on collective memory. For Halbwachs, the central questions regarding collective memory are (1) who remembers and (2) how that happens. Halbwachs's questions in fact involve two aspects: the one is concerned with the individuals in a collective; the other is the collective; yet both of them are situated in a certain circumstance. Individually, one's social interrelationship and interaction with the members of one's collective determine, to a great degree or in a certain circumstance such as in a collective that is controlled and manipulated by totalitarianism, what kind of experiences from the past one remembers and how one remembers. Whereas, collectively, remembering responds to the claim for political, cultural, ethical, and aesthetic reasons, and therefore, to defend the dominant position and pass it from one generation to another and thus the related collective that finds expression in memory can be immortal.

Nonetheless, in terms of its working mechanism, collective memory is not at all "like a living organism that develops and matures on its own accord in linear time, as the present disappears into past. Instead, it is something that is socially constructed and socially situated— not only incubated in the shared desire to preserve that which is worth remembering but also fashioned in such a way as to connect it to an 'eternal present'" (Murray 11). According to this view, the memories that are "socially constructed and socially situated" become the dynamics for the author of literary history, who revises or transcends his individual temporal memory to be in accord with the cultural and social norms. In other words, the above-mentioned mechanism also demands the author of literary history to make a selection that is shaped and confined by the circumstances that the author lives in and the materials that the author has access to. Thus, animated by the mechanism and motivated by the mission of "immortality", the author of literary history will try his best to pattern the literary landscape of literary history as truthful as in reality, and manifest the truth of his statement of every literary historical detail and therefore, avoid exaggerating any one of his statement into full-blown and misleading interpretation.

On the other hand, collective memory also has a function of a filter that can pass through "the shared remembrance to render scenes, events, persons, and actions that were ambiguous or inconsistent in historical accounts straightforward and clear" (12). Whereas for the reader of literary history, the actual experience is a pile of ambiguous, confusing or conflicting messages, images, ideas, and subjective remembrances. The recognition of literary events for both the author and the reader of literary history is based upon a shared set of culturally and literarily learned rules and hinges upon the presence of a framing device that differentiates literary history from the actual literary figures and events. Based on individual memory, the normal systems of communication such as the recognition and interpretation of a certain literary phenomenon might be thwarted or disrupted by the reader of literary history, who lives in a different age either from the recorded literary figures and events or from the author of the literary history. Thus, there might occur that the literary phenomenon becomes divorced from its culturally accepted significance, or the cumulative effect of the literary phenomenon cannot be understood in any historically or culturally accepted way. In this case, framing devices become vague or unfamiliar, so that the difference between literary representation and literary interpretation of the same literary figure or event is brought into question. A reader of literary history usually tends to know some useful information such as the general comment on a certain literary figure or a literary event, the themes in a literary work, etc. in his reading of literary history and then input this reading experience into memory. This reading experience becomes a kind of ritual that links his cultural, literary and aesthetic experiences to the existing society and literary tradition on the one hand; on the other hand, it initiates him into the secrets and legacy of the literature, culture and aesthetics, which is usually enforced by the author of the literary history. The paradox is that the modernist and postmodernist, particularly avant-gardist often takes an adversarial position within the traditional culture—an ensconced and static culture; while the author of literary history, who has been institutionalized, has to on the one hand take on function of political or ideological representation of the established, dominant culture; on the other hand, he has to "take virtually for granted the adversary intention, the actually subversive intention, that characterizes modern writing—he will perceive its clear purpose of detaching the reader from the habits of thought and feeling that the larger culture impose" (Trilling xii). The differences thereof occur between the reader's and author's understandings of a certain literary phenomenon as well as the aforesaid function and task that the author of literary history has to play and fulfil lead to construction of a dynamical frame.

In addition, the ordering and distribution of the elements in a literary historical text may also exercise considerable influence on the reading process. The reader of literary history may respond to the arrangement of the literary historical components differently, since he may activate alternative poten-

tialities in them and therefore, structure a recognizably different whole (Perry 35). As the primary function of art and thought is "to liberate the individual from the tyranny of his culture in the environmental sense and to permit him to stand beyond it in an autonomy of perception and judgment" (Trilling xiii), and the process of this liberation is usually accompanied by an inward movement, which creates "a conventionalized reality based on an understanding of an inner world of emotion and the subconscious workings of the mind" (Aronson 5), the reader can also obtain the power to construct coherent stories of his own with the help of memory, both as an individual and as a member of a collective. In this sense, the interplay between the reader and the author of literary history will fluctuate around the axis of cognition of the culture and value orientation. The basic driving force at the center of this activity of interplay is the interaction of varied cultural value orientation.

For example, the present authors of the Chinese literary history will disagree with what the literary histories that were published in the past a few decades, in which the some of the authors in the past would term the literature in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century as "Literature Today" while others would term it as "New Literature" (Jiang 143) or "New Culture" (Lu 93), etc. However, it is not a simple issue of nomenclature. Rather, it has to do with politics. From 1950s up to late 1970s, with the change of political atmosphere in China, most Chinese literary historians would not continue to use the term of "Literature Today" or "New Literature"—they substituted it with another term "Modern Literature". Yet, from the mid-1980s up to now, another split appears in terms of the nomenclature: some of the Chinese literary historians, who are also readers of the previously published Chinese literary histories, continue to use the term of "Modern Literature" (Tian and Sun, *A History* 1); while others restore the term of "New Literature" (Feng and Liu 1). The political nature of this nomenclature relies both in the literary historians' personal adaptation to the change of political situation and to the overall situation of political and cultural plurality. Another example is that Guo Moruo, who was an academic of the first session of China Central Academy and one of very important figures in Chinese communist party, reproached those literary figures by categorization in a speech as "pink" (Shen Congwen), "blue" (Zhu Guangqian) and "black" (Xiao Qian) (Hong, *A Selection* 96-100). Since then, those who were reproached had disappeared from the Chinese literary histories until the late 1980s. Putting together, the tensions and contradictions between literary historiography as a collective memory and socially transformative tool and literary history as individual memory and aesthetic exploitation and inheritance, would present an ongoing negotiation between the authors and the readers of literary histories. Since the literary history represents, to a great degree, the collective memory and the mainstream cultural volition, literary historiography often contradicts individual's memory and option.

### Works Cited

- Aronson, Arnold. *American Avant-Garde Theatre: A History*, New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Bell, Duncan. "Introduction: Memory, Trauma and World Politics." *Memory, Trauma and World Politics*. Ed. Duncan Bell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 1-29.
- Chatman, Seymour. *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. London: Cornell UP, 1983.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976.
- Eagleton, Terry. *The Function of Criticism*. London: Verso, 2005.
- Feng, Guanglian and Zengren Liu. 冯光廉、刘增人 *中国新文学发展史 (A Literary History of China's New Literature)*. Beijing: People's Literature P, 1991.
- Foucault, Michel. "The Order of Discourse." *Language and Politics*. Ed. Michael Shapiro. New York: New York UP, 1984. 108-38.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, Neuwied: Luchterhand Verlag, 1962.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire*. Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1935.
- Harrod, R. F. "Memory." *Mind* 51 No. 201 (1942): 47-68.
- Herman, David, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laura Ryan, eds. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Herman, David. "Cognitive Narratology." *Handbook of Narratology*. Ed. Peter Hühn, John Pier, Wolf Schmid, and Jörg Schönert. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2014. 46-64.
- Hong, Zicheng. "A Talk from Zhou Yang's 'Double Faces,' The Contemporary Critics' Moral Issue." *Shanghai Literature*. 7 (2011): 32-8.
- Hong, Zicheng (洪子诚). "从周扬的“两面派”说起——当代批判家的道德问题" ("A Talk from Zhou Yang's 'Double Faces,' The Contemporary Critics' Moral Issue"). *Shanghai Literature*. 7 (2011): 32-38.
- Hong, Zicheng (洪子诚). *中国现代文学史史料选 1945-1999 (A Selection of Chinese Contemporary Literary Historical Materials)*. Wuhan: Changjiang Literature and Art Publishing House, 2002.
- Jackendoff, Ray. *Consciousness and Computational Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge MIT P, 1987.

- Jahn, Manfred. "Frames, Preferences, and the Reading of Third-Person Narrative: Towards a Cognitive Narratology." *Poetics Today* 18.4 (1997): 441-68.
- Jiang, Yuqin (姜玉琴). "关于'新文学'、'现代文学'概念的梳理与考察." ("A Survey of the Concept of 'New Literature' and 'Modern Literature'"). *Literature Review* (2003) :143-50.
- Liang, Qichao (梁启超). "论小说与群治关系, 见《近代文学论文选》" ("On the Relationship Between Fiction and the Mass Management"). *Selection of Modern Literary Essays*. Ed. Wu Shu (舒芜). Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1959.
- Lu, Xun (鲁迅). *摩罗诗力说* (On the Power of the Satanical School of Poetry). Beijing: People's Literary Publishing House, 1980.
- Minsky, Marvin. "A Framework for Representing Knowledge." *Frame Conceptions and Text Understanding*. Ed. Dieter Metzger. New York: de Gruyter, 1979. 1-25.
- Murray, Martin J. *Commemorating and Forgetting*. Minnesota: U of Minnesota P, 2013.
- Perry, Menakhem. "Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings." *Poetics Today* 1, No. 1/2, (1979): 35-64, 311-361.
- Phelan, James. *Reading People, Reading Plots*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989.
- Shapiro, Michael, ed. *Language and Politics*. New York: New York UP, 1984
- Sternberg, Meir. *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978.
- Tian, Zhongji, and Changxi Sun. 田仲齐 孙昌熙. *中国现代文学史* (A History of Chinese Modern Literature). Jinan: Shandong People's Publishing House, 1984.
- Trilling, L. *Beyond Culture: Essays on Literature and Learning*. New York: Viking P, 1965.
- Zhao, Yuan (赵园). "开向沪、港 '洋场社会' 的窗口——读张爱玲小说集《传奇》" ("A Window Open to 'The Foreign Society' of Shanghai and Hong Kong——A Reading of a Collection of Zhang Ailing's Stories Legend"). *China Modern Literature Studies*, Vol. 3 (1983): 211-225

Author's profile: Guoqiang Qiao teaches narratology, literary theory and American literature at Shanghai International Studies University. His interests in scholarship include narratology, literary theory and American literature. Qiao's major publications include "The Past Never Passes Away: The Literary Representation of Jewish Refugees in Shanghai", *Comparative Literature Studies* (2017), "On the Possibilities of Constructing A Chinese Version of Narratology", *Neohelicon* (2015) and *The Jewishness of Isaac Bashevis Singer*, Peter Lang (2003).  
Email: <[qiaoguoqiang@163.com](mailto:qiaoguoqiang@163.com)>