

Call for papers

Yan Lianke Studies

Date: April 9, 2020

We are seeking contributions to an edited volume focusing on Yan Lianke studies.

The present edited volume focuses on how Yan Lianke has been received in and beyond mainland China, whilst presenting views of how Yan Lianke has been understood, interpreted, and appreciated in Japan, the US, and Europe.

Contributions are from renowned scholars worldwide. The volume will also include one or two articles written by Yan Lianke himself.

Yan Lianke is an internationally renowned Chinese writer. Born in 1958, he is one of the most prolific writers in the Chinese literary landscape. Often defined, and at times acclaimed, as the most irreverent and censored writer at home, he has won prestigious literary awards in China and abroad, including the Lu Xun Award, the Lao She Award, the *Asia Week Best Ten Books Award*, the Dream of the Red Chamber Award, the Franz Kafka Award and the Huazong Award. It is with the novel *Lenin's Kisses* (*Shou huo* 受活, 2004) that he was consecrated as an internationally renowned writer. *Le Monde* calls him one of the giants of literature and *The Guardian* a master of sarcasm. He has also been shortlisted for an array of prizes including the International Man Booker Prize, the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize and the Prix Femina Etranger.

The Father of Mythorealism

Yan regards himself as a rebel son of mainstream realism and coined the term “mythorealism” (*shenshi zhuyi* 神實主義) to elucidate the influence of Kafkaesque and Márquezan combinations of reality and absurdity in contemporary Chinese literature. As Yan Lianke writes himself in a note in *The Explosion Chronicles*: “mythorealism captures a hidden internal logic within China’s reality”. In his anthology of critical essays, *The Discovery of Fiction* (*Faxian xiaoshuo* 發現小說), Yan writes:

Mythorealism...abandons the seemingly logical relations of real life, and explores a “nonexistent” truth, an invisible truth, and a truth concealed by truth. Mythorealism keeps a distance from any prevailing realism. The mythorealist connection with reality does not lie in straightforward cause-and-effect links, but rather relies on human souls, minds and the authors’ extraordinary fabrications based on reality...Imaginations, metaphors, myths, legends, dreams, fantasy, demonization, and transplantation born from everyday life and social reality can all serve as mythorealist methods and channels.

181–82, translated by Song (2016)

Yan Lianke’s mythorealism challenges accepted conventions of linear cause-and-effect relationship. In *The Discovery of Fiction*, Yan makes distinctions between “complete cause-and-effect” (*quan yinguo* 全因果), “partial cause-and-effect” (*ban yinguo* 半因果), “internal cause-and-effect” (*nei yinguo* 内因果), and “zero cause-and-effect” (*ling yinguo* 零因果) arguing that we should focus on an illogical logic and an irrational rationality beyond conventional cause-and-effect associations (171–73).

Significance of the Volume

Yan Lianke is by far the most prolific writer in present-day China as well as one of its most prominent avant-gardists. He is an author whose literary works have enjoyed an enormous readership and have caught much critical attention not only in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan but also in many other countries around the world.

In 2011, a film adaptation of *Dream of Ding Village* (*Dingzhuang meng* 丁莊夢), one of his most acclaimed novels, was released in China with the title *Love for Life*. However, Yan Lianke’s full name was not even mentioned in the credits, due to the fact that the book had been previously censored.

This volume, focusing on one of the most important figures in contemporary Chinese literary history, will be a landmark resource for scholars in Asian studies, literary criticism, and cultural studies.

During the past decade, an increasing number of international scholars have conducted research on Yan Lianke, introducing and exploring different aspects of his life and works.

Therefore, it is opportune to reflect on the status quo of the existing studies on Yan Lianke's literature creation, writing style and narrative discourse. For this purpose, we especially welcome contributions including, but not limited to, the following aspects:

- Biographical aspects;
- Realism and mythorealism;
- Writing styles;
- Research on Yan Lianke in China;
- Research on Yan Lianke outside of China;
- Narrative discourse;
- Poetics of melancholy and nostalgia;
- Imaginary nostalgia, as defined by David Der-wei Wang (1992);
- The relationship between nature and human beings;
- Religion, with a special emphasis on Yan Lianke's most recent literary achievement *Heart Sutra* (*Xinjing* 心經);
- Symbolism and Censorship; etc.

Once we have a set of confirmed authors (we already have about eight renowned contributors), we will make a formal proposal to our publisher. Please submit your proposals, including a 250-word abstract, to the following address:

yanlianke2020@gmail.com

You will receive notifications of acceptance of abstracts on or before June 01, 2020. If your proposal is accepted, you will be requested to submit a complete essay (between 7,000 and 12,000 words) by the end of September, 2020. Papers must be original and should not be previously published or simultaneously reviewed elsewhere for publication. **All manuscripts will be subject to a peer-review process before they are accepted for publication. More details on the paper submission process will be provided once your proposal has been accepted.**

For any further inquiries, please contact the editorial team at yanlianke2020@gmail.com

Key deadlines are as follows:

- Abstract submission: May 15, 2020
- Initial confirmation with a title/abstract: June 01, 2020
- Proposal to editors: June 15, 2020
- Expected first draft paper due to the editors: September 30, 2020
(between 7,000 and 12,000 words.)
- Expected publication date: December, 2020

Submission language: **English**

(If the paper is written in Chinese and the editorial team deems it particularly valuable, we can help with the translation.)

We look forward to your participation in this book project.

Kind regards,

Riccardo Moratto

Howard Y. F. Choy

Editors

Dr. Riccardo Moratto is Associate Professor of Chinese Studies, Linguistics, Translation and Interpreting Studies at Hunan Normal University, China. He has published widely in the fields of Chinese studies, Chinese language and Chinese literature. In 2013 he obtained his Ph.D. from the National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU). Over the years he has taught at several universities including Fujen Catholic University, Taipei National University of the Arts, Shih Chien University, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, and National Taipei University of Business. He is a professional literary translator. His most recent work focuses on interpreting history in China, translation and cultural identities in China, and Chinese modern and contemporary literature, with a special emphasis on Shen Congwen and Yan Lianke. He is currently writing a dialogic book together with Yan Lianke.

Howard Y. F. Choy, Associate Professor of Chinese at Hong Kong Baptist University, received his Ph.D. in comparative literature and humanities from the University of Colorado in the U.S.A. His research interests focus on Chinese culture and literature, with the most recent project being a study of political jokes in China. Currently editing a volume of Liu Zaifu's selected essays, he is the editor of *Discourses of Disease: Writing Illness, the Mind and Body in Modern China* (2016), the author of *Remapping the Past: Fictions of History in Deng's China, 1979-1997* (2008), and the assistant author of *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Confucianism* (2005). He has also published a number of articles and translations in major scholarly journals, including positions, American Journal of Chinese Studies, and Asian Theatre Journal. Dr. Choy has also taught at Stanford University, the Georgia Institute of Technology, and Wittenberg University.