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EDITORIAL

A New Incarnation—

Prism: Theory and Modern Chinese Literature

Zong-qi Cai

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AFTER TWENTY-TWO YEARS of publishing since 1997, *Journal of Modern Literature in Chinese* (JMLC) will assume a new incarnation in 2019: *Prism: Theory and Modern Chinese Literature*, a biannual peer-reviewed journal published by Duke University Press for Lingnan University of Hong Kong. This journal is jointly sponsored by the Centre for Humanities Research and the Chinese Department of Lingnan University and the Forum on Chinese Poetic Culture at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Prism presents cutting-edge research on modern literary production, dissemination, and reception in as well as outside China. It also publishes works on the shaping influence of traditional literature and culture on modern and contemporary China. *Prism* actively promotes scholarly investigations from interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspectives and encourages an integration of theoretical inquiry with empirical research. It strives to foster in-depth dialogue between Western and Chinese literary theories in ways that illuminate the unique features of each, as well as their

shared insights into issues of universal interest.

Hong Kong's unique geocultural position, an important element of *JMLC*'s success, continues to be fully exploited by *Prism*. While most major English-language journals of Chinese literature are located far away from their field of study, *Prism* is located within it, connected by a few hours' train or air travel to all other major Chinese metropolises. If we think more broadly of modern literature written in Chinese, *Prism*'s geocultural positioning is even more prominent, as Hong Kong, long known as a bridge between East and West, is the *de facto* hub linking all major areas of modern Chinese literary production.

To maximize this unique geocultural advantage, *Prism* will go further than its predecessor in boundary crossing. While including sinophone works in its purview, it will strive to initiate dialogue with Western literary scholarship. Under the broad framework of theory, we will experiment with different modes of in-depth engagement with Western counterparts, both individual theorists and scholarly journals. For this purpose, a forum called "Theory in Comparative Perspectives" will be established for short essays, interviews, and conversations guiding us to globalize our thinking about literature and culture.

To facilitate face-to-face interaction among scholars of Chinese and Western literature, *Prism* will organize symposiums and conferences on its own and through partnership with other institutions. We also encourage interested scholars to organize panels and forums for Modern Language Association conventions and Association for Asian Studies conferences in conjunction with their proposals for publication in *Prism*. Papers delivered at these events may be peer-reviewed for possible publication in *Prism*, either as a themed cluster in a regular issue or as a special themed issue.

We will also set up a forum titled "Emergent Topics in Modern Chinese Literature" to publish short essays, manifestoes, statements, polemical articles, rejoinders, and so on, that bear upon new developments in the field. All pieces will be solicited by the editors; interested authors should

make a pitch to the editors directly. In addition to the two forums, *Prism* will regularly publish reviews on newly published monographs and edited volumes and will occasionally publish feature reviews on important topics. Book reviews, in principle, are solicited, but we do welcome and consider book review proposals.

Prism strives for the highest scholarly excellence. It publishes research articles that have not previously been published in any language. Articles are expected to provide original analysis of texts and contexts, introduce innovative methodologies and approaches, or present important discoveries of new materials. All research article submissions will go through a rigorous double-blind peer-review. Prior to acceptance, a submission must receive at least two reader reports. If a manuscript is given opposite assessments, a third report will be sought. The review process will be completed and the author informed of the editorial decision within four months of receipt of the submission. Short essays, statements, and other contents for the two forums, as well as book reviews and feature reviews, are solicited and reviewed in house by editors.

Prism adopts a rigorous editorial process. All accepted submissions are first edited and copyedited in house, followed by a second round of copyediting by the press. At the final stage, page proofs are reviewed and corrected by authors and a professional proofreader hired by the press. By implementing this multiple-stage editorial process, we aspire to the highest standards of academic publishing.

This inaugural *Prism* issue, while continuing the *JMLC* issue sequence, marks the beginning of our endeavor to accomplish a grander mission—to deliver truly cutting-edge scholarship and vigorously pursue cross-cultural dialogue, aiming to overcome the divide between modern and premodern studies, empirical research and theoretical inquiry, and Chinese and Western literary scholarship. With the energetic support of our authors, readers, and the publisher, we are confident that we will accomplish this mission.