

DEAR READER,

MO YAN IN CONTEXT

The Nobel Prize in Literature has in most cases a very beneficial effect: it brings to the fore authors who otherwise would remain in obscurity. This is especially the case with Mo Yan, the Chinese writer who received the Prize in 2012. Although he enjoyed a great reputation in China and Chinese speaking countries, his global recognition was limited to aficionados. Thanks to the Prize and the work of his translators, first and foremost his English language translator Howard Goldblatt, his oeuvre reached millions of literature loving people all around the globe. If there is a writer who deserved this Prize, it is definitely Mo Yan. Since 2012 I collected and read all of his novels (the latest one *Frog* just published in English translation in November this year) and short stories translated into English and I must confess he became my number one author.

Just recently (in September this year) a collection of essays about his oeuvre, his personality and the controversies around his political stance and ideas has been published by the Purdue University Press, edited by Angelica Duran and Yuhua Huang, titled *Mo Yan in Context – Nobel Laureate and Global Storyteller*. The editors of this book did an outstanding job; they collected and glued together a number of essays on Mo Yan that is and in my view will remain a landmark in the English language world of literary criticism on this author for years to come. The many essays deal with his roots, his sources, the controversies that arose especially in the Western media plus a critical assessment of censorship, his many topics, etc. Equally refreshing was the comparison of his work with that of William Faulkner's *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem*, Fumiko Hayashi's novels and Yan Lianke's *Dream of Ding Village*. All these essays together provide the reader with a deeper understanding and appreciation of Mo Yan's work and ethical stance.

Next to the inherent value of the book is its readability. It is a great pleasure to read it, from cover to cover. I have read a large number of collections of essays in many fields but this volume stands out as one of the very few that is highly enjoyable. I could simply not put it down for a moment! Such a volume does of course not eliminate the need to read the works of the author but it clarifies the context of his literary creation process. It also further stimulates the reading of all of his works. Having already done that myself I can only encourage all of you to do the same. I am almost certain that you will not regret it!

Flórián Farkas

Editor-in-Chief

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