



Research fellowship on “Towards a new critical (ultra-un)realism. The socio-cultural function of counter-narrative in contemporary China” - Università Ca' Foscari Venezia (Italian law 30 December 2010, n. 240, art. 22)

The present document in English is to be considered as merely a summary of the main provisions of the notice of competition, which is available in Italian at the following ([link](#)). The text in Italian is considered to be the official text of the notice of competition for all legal intents and purposes and, therefore, the Italian text is definitive in the event that there is a discrepancy between the Italian and English versions.

Description

The Department of Asian and North African Studies at Università Ca' Foscari Venezia invites applications for a fellowship in:

Title: Towards a new critical (ultra-un)realism. The socio-cultural function of counter-narrative in contemporary China

Scientific sector: L-OR/21

Scientific supervisor and tutor: Prof. Paolo Magagnin

Duration: 12 months

Abstract:

The project carried out by the research fellow will focus on the critical analysis of the literary phenomenon of contemporary Chinese ultra-unrealism and of its socio-cultural implications.

The code of realism has crucially marked the development of Chinese literature since the early twentieth century. Far from being a mere introduction of stylistic features developed in the European context, the socio-critical nature of realism echoed with the creative needs of the revolutionary intellectuals influenced by the tradition of the May Fourth Movement. A similar interest persists in contemporary literature, especially with the cultural ferment and the great political, social, and literary changes following Mao's death. Several writers have adopted realism as an ideological approach, while moving on aesthetic and stylistic paths that transcend it. This is the case, for example, of magical realism or mythorealism. Science fiction itself is sometimes viewed as a form of realism because of its strong social critique. On the one hand, therefore, some consider "classical" realism to be inadequate to represent the contradictory sociocultural ecology of contemporary China and the totality of the human experience of the latter; on the other hand, it still maintains an undisputed symbolic authority as a genre devoted to social criticism, even if literary experiments that cannot be classified as strictly "realistic" adopt this very label.

Ultra-unrealism (*chaohuan*), a literary phenomenon born in the 2010s, is therefore configured as a response to this "crisis of realism" and, at the same time, as an original literary expedient to carry out an artistic critique of today's China, in a time characterized by authoritarian thrusts that increasingly limit the space for expression. Ultra-unrealism mainly consists in the hyperbolic and grotesque – indeed, ultra-unreal – exaggeration of the idiosyncrasies of contemporary Chinese society and politics, conducted with an often non-linear narrative and a style comparable to that of the avantgarde. The mix of stylistic and thematic experimentalism blurs the boundaries between concrete reality and literary exaggeration, producing not a futuristic allegory (as in the case of critical science fiction) but an "ultra-unrealistic reality" (Geng 2015). The latter acts as a counter-discourse to the grand state narrative, overcoming the twofold deadlock of bureaucratic limits to the freedom of artistic expression, and of the complexities of a reality that seems to escape the devices of realism.

For the purposes of this research, a corpus of representative texts will be preliminarily selected. From a methodological point of view, the project will rely on tools allowing to analyze the influence of extra-textual factors on the form and production of the literary text, such as the concept of *literary mode of production* (Eagleton 2006). Ultra-unrealism will further be framed as a rearticulation of the traditional triad of *zhen* (truth), *shan* (moral) and *mei* (aesthetics). In the final analysis, the research project will contribute to the investigation of a recent literary phenomenon hitherto neglected by European scholarly criticism, offering an original contribution to the debates on critical and dissident artistic expressions in today's China, as well as on the functions of the unreal in contemporary Chinese literature.



Who can apply

Candidates are expected to hold at least a master's degree and to have a CV suitable for the requested research activities. They must be proficient in English and Chinese language. Research experiences in Italy or abroad should be, if possible, detectable from CV.

The interview will focus on the following criteria:

- Methodological skills, applicable to the specific themes of the research project;
- Research experience, with particular reference to interdisciplinary fields
- Assessment of knowledge of Chinese and English language;

Ca' Foscari encourages applications from researchers who have received positive evaluation in all the criteria applicable to funding programs, such as Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions - Individual Fellowships/ERC Starting Grants/FIRB (Italian Fund for basic research investments)/SIR (Scientific Young Independence Research) or similar. Researchers having successfully completed Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions - Individual Fellowships/ERC Starting Grants/FIRB (Italian Fund for basic research investments)/SIR (Scientific Young Independence Research) or similar funded projects are warmly encouraged to apply.

Duration of contract: 12 months (approx. start: September, 01st, 2022).

Stipend: The research fellowship amounts to 19,367 Euros per year, including taxes and social charges.

Deadline for submission of applications: June, 24th, 12.00 noon.

How to apply:

Candidates should submit:

1. The application form;
2. A motivation letter (max 1 page) along with their CV in European format, duly dated and signed, both to enclosed as a one single.pdf file. ([link](#))
3. A copy of a valid identity document (either Identity Card or Passport);
4. (If available) Evaluation Summary Reports of Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions - Individual Fellowships/ERC Starting Grants/FIRB (Italian Fund for basic research investments)/SIR (Scientific Young Independence Research) individual proposals having passed all the evaluation thresholds;
5. (If available) Details of Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions - Individual Fellowships, ERC Starting Grants, FIRB (Italian Fund for basic research investments)/ SIR Scientific Young Independence Research funded projects;
6. Declaration on availability to participate in the interview remotely ([link](#)) to be send via email at the following address: ricerca.dsaam@unive.it;
7. For all documents, qualifications and publications relevant for the selection procedure please, see the notice ([link](#)).
8. Publications in electronic format

All the schemes of the quoted documentation are available on the website ([link](#)).

How to submit your application

Applications should be submitted through the online procedure:

<https://apps.unive.it/domandeconcorso-en/accesso/24062022dsaam>

The candidate, after the uploading, will receive a submission number and an e-mail acknowledging receipt of his/her application.

The candidate (if necessary) could access the procedures for updating any data and materials by the link provided by the e-mail, in any case any updates must be made no later than the deadline **June, 24th, 2022, 12 noon.**



Università Ca'Foscari Venezia

Please note that the University can be contacted for any support needs by the candidate until 24 hours prior to the deadline.

Please note the possibility that a high number of applications and / or large file sizes among the documents uploaded by the candidates into the system could result in the slowing of the online procedure. Therefore it is suggested to begin the process as soon as possible and not wait to start the process immediately before the deadline.

NB: the University does not take on responsibility for wrong or late communication of addresses, nor for any communication problem not depending on the University.

Evaluation

Up to 100 points, specifically:

For CV and publications, from 0 to 60;

For interview, from 0 to 40.

Selection procedure

Short-listed candidates will be invited for interview on **July, 18th, 2022 at 10.00 AM** via Zoom video conference.

The short-list of the candidates admitted to the interview, or any postponement, and the link for the interview will be published on the University's webpage within July, 8th, 2022 ([link](#))

Information and contacts

Candidates may find further details about the application process and the research project in the official call published on the following ([link](#)). For further information please email: ricerca.dsaam@unive.it.