

Chapter V

Stylistics

The style of the writer is something that defines him/her. The basic definition of style is to use any language in a specific way and stylistics is a branch of linguistics that studies and analyses text written by an author. This chapter focuses on Mo Yan's writing style along with contribution of Howard Goldblatt to the field of translation; stylistic analysis of the author is also discussed.

In his Nobel Prize Presentation speech for Literature in 2012, Per Wästberg described Mo Yan to be "a poet who tears down stereotypical propaganda posters" who won the esteemed prize for his "... hallucinatory realism merging with folktales, history, and the contemporary" (Wästberg 21). Using this definition, the chapter is divided into four divisions, each one providing instances from the novels which elevate the legitimacy of the title. The instances from the novels show the versatility of the author in merging styles of world literature and that of the author's own native tradition. His style contains a mixture of the art of story-telling and involving poly-narration by provoking the senses of vision, olfactory, acoustics and taste in the minds of readers thereby adding freshness.

Addressing the press, Per Wästberg answers a question regarding what makes Mo Yan outstanding among the contemporary Chinese writers? He answers, apart from being influenced by the Western Literary techniques, Mo Yan also inherited the traditional Chinese story-telling techniques so as to make his works narrative; he carried forward the Confucian culture and bandit culture in China's Shandong Province so as to make his

works aggressive and masculine; he highlighted the regional which culture in Shandong's Gaomi County so as to make his works mysterious and magical(Wastberg 21-22).

The first part of the chapter deals with Hallucinatory Realism, its definition, usage by the other authors, and how Mo Yan uses it in his novels. Over the years, the definition has varied from defining Hallucinatory Realism as being a part between Magical Realism and Surrealism. Magical Realism includes unlikely and imaginary courses of events merging into narrative plot, while Surrealism is about things which are beyond reality and reflects the real world as imagined by a subconscious mind.

Placing Hallucinatory Realism as a train of Surrealism, Harold Osborne in his *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Art* writes,- “ a careful and precise delineation of detail, yet a realism which does not depict an external reality since the subjects realistically depicted belong to the realm of dream or fantasy.” (Osborne 529).

Hallucinatory Realism, which is a form of Magical Realism deals with the state of dreams and fantasies. The term was first used or brought into usage in the 1970s by the critics denoting a dream like transition while narrating. The term was first praised as “oxymoronic” while reviewing Annette von Droste- Hülshoff's poetry but later, Elizabeth Krimmer from the University of California praised Hallucinatory Realism as, “the transition to the dream world is even more compelling because it is preceded by a detailed description of the natural environment”(Krimmer 127).

Wen Jing- Zhai shares his views on Hallucinatory Realism in his research work titled “The Inheritance of Loss- Tracing Hallucinatory Realism in Mo Yan's Novels” He says:

“From Mo Yan’s works, we may find that all his works have a close relationship with root-seeking theme by juxtaposing myth and realism. With “love” and “freedom”, Mo Yan puts emphasis on personal and social relations by regional storytelling in civil society against a grand backdrop of national devastation. Undoubtedly, he is a representative of local literature school”. (Zhai 129)

In the novel *Red Sorghum*, Mo Yan amalgamates Chinese history along with the native tales of Shandong district. The narrator, who is the grandson of Commander Yu Zhan’ao and Dai Fenglian visits his ancestral land when his non-linear narration opens up their life story and the events which follow. During the initial stages of the novel, Mo Yan lets the reader connect with the setting and background of the place-Northeast Gaomi Township- which is also the setting of his other novels.

Red Sorghum reflects Chinese culture through following ancient traditions like foot-binding, families following their family trade since generations(so that their trade secret should remain unknown to others) and system of village governance(having one chief to solve the trouble of people). Apart from the traditions, there is also a flicker of gender equivalence dominating in parts of the novel. In one part Commander Yu Zhan’ao is leading the army of forty villagers, in another Dai Fenglian is commanding the women folk to gather necessities for the battle.

The bold characterization of the villagers (from Dai Fenglian to the mute soldiers) is done thoroughly . Even the fields of Red Sorghum are personified to add intensity to the plot as it empathizes with the characters and even stands guard from the Japanese Resistance fighters. During the firing rounds, Mo Yan mentions that along with

the soldiers even the stalks of Sorghum were severed from the roots, and when Grandma gets hit, "...Before Father had a chance to get his bearings, another gale of bullets truncated and smashed countless stalks of sorghum.... Sorghum stalks wailed in concert, their shattered, severed limbs drooping low or arching high into the air." (Yan RS 65).

Mo Yan brings a certain novelty in his narration which comes off in layers in every chapter in the novel; the narrator gives equal space to his characters to present their story and their purpose of it. From reminiscing about the past, he writes about his grandparents "the legendary hero and a trailblazer of the anti-Japanese resistance" (Ibid 01, 13) who valiantly fought against the Japanese, witnessed by Douguan and Beauty (the second generation) they see the ending of the battle, leading on to the narrator (third generation) who finds the present generation lacking courage and pure nerve of people from the past.

The technique of Hallucinatory Realism in the novel is shown from one generation to the other. In the last booklet, "Strange Death", the narrator tries to address the society focusing on how things have changed. Along with people becoming modern, even the native crop of Red Sorghum has become hybrid sorghum with "gray-green eyes.... they pollute the pure air of NGT with their dark, gloomy, ambiguous faces" and makes the narrator instill "a powerful sense of loss" (Ibid 358).

The sense of loss/Hallucinatory Realism is also noticed after the traumatic incident with Passion (Second Grandma), when she loses control over her senses, shrieking and cursing heavily. She makes no progress until a Taoist is called to get rid of

the possessed soul out of her body. Even after the death of Second-Grandma, the villagers lower her rotting body into the coffin, she is still cursing and kicking the box (Ibid 356).

As the narrator brings the story to an end, while staring at the Red Sorghum fields and the gravesite of Second Grandma, he goes into a reverie dreaming about the history of his ancestors and realizes that the voices of previous generations linger still in the sorghum fields and they want him to leave his city-bred life to live in the land of legends who fought for freedom for their upcoming generations. The idea behind wanting them to be grateful enough and to turn away from boundless desire to live in urban life is clearly drawn.

The illusion goes to the next level when the Narrator while thinking about not having a voice of his own and doing only what others have said all his life, sees the apparition of Second Grandma talking directly to him. Quoting from the novel –

“ Second Grandma leaps from her grave holding a golden- hued mirror, the deep lines of a mocking grin tilting the corners of her full lips.
“ You’re no grandson of mine. Look at yourself!”... I look at my reflection in Second Grandma’s brass mirror ...“Grandson!” she says magnanimously. “Come home! You’re lost if you don’t. I know you don’t want to....Quick jump into the Black Water River and soak there for three days and nights- ...stench that washes off your body they won’t grow rabbit ears!” Second Grandma returns swiftly to her grave”. (Ibid 357-358)

The lines from above show the narrator’s inability to maintain peace within his self. The glorious past of his ancestors attracts him towards them but he is unable to

choose them over the life of urban culture. As his narration of his family saga ends, he finds himself before the gravesite paying respect, or it can be understood as asking a way out from this labyrinth.

The hearing of his ancestors' voice to come back and "cleanse yourself, body and soul...as you re-enter a world of...wild predators. It is your talisman, as well as our family's glorious totem and a symbol of the heroic spirit of North East Gaomi Township" (Yan RS 359) is something that affects him. The illusion with a vision of his Second Grandma's soul alongside the description of Red Sorghum fields indicates Mo Yan's use of Hallucinatory technique with a mention of the natural environment.

Wang Xinyan in his paper, "Garcia Marquez's Impact and Mo Yan's Magical Realism" cites the essence of root-seeking literature found in Mo Yan's works which combines with fantasy and history to deliver magical realism to Oriental China. He writes, "Mo proposes a philosophical issue in his novel, opposed with civilizations, which shows the degradation of personal life against the backdrop of social progress"(Xinyan 216). The narrator too, finds his urban life to be weary, searches for new meaning that his ancestors show him. This philosophical thought can be considered for other novels too.

In *The Garlic Ballads*, the garlic riot takes the centre stage, its cause and effects roping in three stories along with a common blind minstrel-Zhang Kou- who recites couplets of the events which are about to take place in the beginning of every chapter. Mo Yan's adoption of this technique of narrating the events beforehand in the form of couplets, is derived from the traditional Chinese writers. The novel is a real depiction of

Cangshan Garlic Incident, where hundreds of peasants revolted against the surging price of garlic crop and the ransacking of government offices by the angry mobs.

The main characters are equally focused on, like in the previous novel. The peasants of Paradise County who are accused of being the perpetrators of the Garlic Riot on 28th of May are given their space to speak. Their suffering comes out through their arrest, torture from police personnel, the court trails and the endless wait in the prison cells. Their endurance and resilience is put to test during the imprisonment.

Gao Yang's only fault is being a spectator of the vandalism of the government office during the riot. In the beginning of the novel, he is seen cooking a meal along with his blind daughter. When he gets arrested, he fights with the police personnel only to get punished further with an electric prod.

Another evident instance of Hallucinatory Realism is when Gao Yang is in prison, where he is oscillating between memory and reality. The oscillation from dream/memory along with a proper description of the environment is seen when he hallucinates about his mother's burial, and few other parts of his childhood which are recreated in the present. First he dreams of his mother in a disfigured form, but he remembers burying her in slurry instead of a dignified cremation as it should have been given. He finds himself in difficulty as the officials capture him for the illegal burial of his mother without their permission. All of this is happening in his dream and along with it, there is also an episodic narration of the jail night.

Mo Yan excellently blends the past incidents in a reverie which has an effect on the present. For instance:

“Mother’s head lolled to the side and she was dead... “Mother” he said loudly, after kowtowing three times, “it’s raining, and water is seeping into the hole. I can’t afford a coffin, so this worn blanket will have to do. Mother, you...you’ll have to make do.”... Wiping his mind clean of all extraneous thoughts, he concentrated on his reveries.... This is the unluckiest time of my life, he mused. Father is dead, Mother has joined him, and my roof leaks”. (Yan GB 154-156)

After burying his mother, Gao Yang returns home only to find the officials waiting to arrest him for the crime of going against the government policy. The charge being that he buried his mother who was of landlord status and therefore supposed to be cremated like any other poor peasant and counter-revolutionary. As a punishment he spends a few days in jail, and is also charged a fine of two-hundred yuan. Coming back to reality, back in prison, Gao Yang has a nightmare about his daughter in danger, along with his mother, waking up from his hallucinations he falls sick. Later he is harassed by his prison mates by making him puke out all the good food he ate.

Gao Ma’s reaction when seeing Fang Jinju (his lover) dead also falls into the category of Hallucinatory Realism. Fang Jinju unable to cope up with her adversities decides to terminate her life when her family is disarranged with the death of Fourth Uncle and Fourth Aunt getting arrested along with Gao Ma. When Gao Ma sees the hanging body, while trying to unknot the rope, he goes into a hallucination seeing Fang Jinju smiling at him and talking about the baby.

Alongside the imagination, there is a description of a fleet of birds flying around him and screeching at their loudest. Having a conversation with Jinju, he regrets not marrying her and providing her only with miseries. Meanwhile, he takes a rusted saber from the beam and cuts the rope, loosening the noose around Jinju's neck. After which he reacts strangely by harming the parakeets. Quoting from the novel:

“It’s all my fault, Jinju...“Jinju, going away with me brought you nothing but misery.” He stroked her head...“Marry me now,” she said. “I can’t live in that house any longer.” Little green dots played on her face, and he wondered if they were parakeet feathers that had stuck to it..., while... swarms of frantic parakeets scattered in the sky, then forms a cloud of living color that whirled above the township compound...He slashed at the contemptible parakeets who’d risen up to circle him; cold blood from their dismembered bodies splashed on his face”. (Yan GB 173-178)

The novel *Big Breasts Wide Hips* stretches the boundaries of realism and historicism with little inspiration from Chinese women or in other words from the matriarchy of the Chinese family system. Though the Shangguan clan's women hold high quotient in beauty, their lives lead to the shackles of social conflicts; where each one bears consequences for their actions. Each daughter of Shangguan Lü, marries against her wish and leave their children under the care of Shangguan Lü.

The elements of Hallucinatory Realism from the novel are shown through Third sister or Lingdi and Shangguan Jintong. Lingdi's transition as a bird fairy for her lost love namely Birdman Han and Jintong's weird imaginations at strange events are perfect as

instances. Just like her other sisters who eloped for love, Lingdi also falls in love with Birdman Han, a local villager who hunts birds for pleasure. Lingdi always bought plump and exquisite birds hunted down by Birdman Han to feed her family. Due to some reasons, he is caught and sent to Japan. Seeing this Lingdi becomes unstable and after shedding countless tears, she transforms herself into a Bird fairy.

The narrator recounts her transformation- Lingdi for two days lay lifeless on the *kang*, the next day she became active by leaping onto the trees out of her courtyard, showing acrobatic skills that her family had never seen. Mother tries everything to make her stop, but ends in vain. After the aviation event, the self declared Bird Fairy is seen healing people of their worries. They bring in offerings for her- seeds and little worms which she eats like a bird pecking with her mouth. Quoting from the novel:

“ From high up in the catalpa tree she jumped down onto the ridge of our thatched roof. Her movements were amazingly nimble, as if she sprouted wings...she began pecking at her shoulder, as if preening feathers...Third Sister had already entered the avian realm...he sneaked up behind Third Sister and drenched her with the blood. She sprang to her feet and spread her arms to soar into the sky... “..Mother, I want you to make an altar for me. I am now a Bird Fairy.” ” (Yan BBWH 147-148)

Being the narrator, Jintong presents an account about his family and himself. His obsession with breasts and breast milk can be considered one of the flaws in him.

Shangguan Jintong is the ninth child of Shangguan Lü and Pastor Malory (a Swedish Missionary), who name him Golden Boy. He is shown as having oedipal tendencies and

suffers due to his obsessive nature. Instead of helping his family, he lives off of them. He goes into hallucinations at tensed situations, worrying about himself and his needs.

Shangguan Jintong addresses the pitiable state of the people who were caught or died in the storm. The tenants of Northeast Gaomi Township evacuate the village fearing the killings that happened in the war, they find refuge for themselves on the highlands of Township but the harsh weather conditions makes their situation worse. Mother prepares necessities for survival but sometimes Jintong hallucinates about his death. Once he imagines himself to be swimming in a sea of milk, then turns on to mention some ghostly apparition cutting through light and spreading darkness. Quoting from the novel:

“ That night I’d been immersed in a warm sea of milk, holding on to a full breast...feeling myself fly up to Paradise. But now the frightful apparition began, like a golden ray of light splitting the darkness...thousands of icy droplets danced in the light... as a woman with long, flowing hair appeared... Her face kept changing first Laidi; then the Bird Fairy...
“ Jintong” Mother was calling me. She brought me out of my
Hallucinations...before I fell into abyss of death”. (Yan BBWH 308)

The elements of Hallucinatory Realism in *Life and Death are Wearing Me Out* are all based on the relation of man and animal. As previously discussed, the plot talks about the rebirth of a soul into animal forms. The evident form of imaginary is when Ximen Nao in the form of Ximen Donkey sees Ximen Bai, Nao’s first wife while wandering the field. Ximen Donkey accounts how Nao’s wife and concubines were left destitute after his death. He hears Ximen Bai talking about Ximen Nao’s loyalty and his

incarnation coming to share his part of suffering. Ximen Donkey is struggling to resist the memories of Ximen Nao saying, "...the more brightly Ximen Nao's memory lit up in my mind, like a series of sparks creating a wildfire, pushing my donkey consciousness into darkness and reasserting my human emotions." (Yan LDWMO 86).

In the novel *Frog*, Mo Yan brings in the element of Hallucinatory Realism through Wan Xin/ Gugu, the village obstetrician who becomes big under the Communist Government as she curbs the illegal pregnancies of the township but has received ill luck. After the end of the Cultural Revolution, she retires from the services and to repent her misdoings, she joins Hao Dashou in making clay dolls with features similar to the unborn children whom she had aborted. As her repentance, she suffers from insomnia and is always in a dream like state.

Wang Gan, the classmate of the narrator, Xiao Pao, and the master are seen discussing about a dream of fertility goddess and the children smearing mud onto them one after the other. Awakening from the dream, the master's eyes glisten with tears and quickly return to his work of kneading, twisting the clay and shaping it into the children he saw in the dream.

In another instance, Wan Xin narrates the episode of how she got married to Hao Dashou. After her retirement from the commune hospital, she swears never to abort a child again. While returning from the retirement party, in a drunken state she walks into the marshes full of frogs and other insects during nesting season. The encounter with frogs attaching to her body in more than hundred numbers is rancid; she tries to free herself from them but the croaking sound of the frogs turns into that of wailing babies.

The babies who she had aborted are crying hoarsely attaching to her garments which she tears off in disgust. That is when Hao Dashou comes to her rescue. When she was fighting alone, it was Hao Dashou who helps her. Quoting from the novel:

“ The croaking of frogs is often described in terms of drumbeats. But that night it sounded to her like human cries, almost as if thousands of newborn infants were crying...infused with a sense of resentment and of grievance...Her greatest fear, she said, came not from the constant pecking and scratching, but from the disgusting, unbearable sensation of their cold, slimy skin brushing against hers”. (Yan FROG 250- 251)

Hallucinatory Realism in *The Republic of Wine* is in the narration and structure of the novel itself, where reality and fiction become intertwined as the writer becomes a character. The novel becomes an epistolary form of lettered conversation between Mo Yan and Li Yidou, the writer aspirant and a research student of Liquor studies, as both write about the fictional world of Liquorland- a mythical province of exotic food and liquor. The letters open little short stories on the exotic gourmandize practiced in Liquorland, of cooking young infant boys in an arduous pattern and feeding the guests. Ding Gou'er, the chief investigator who comes to find about the alleged practice of cannibalism, to his surprise ends up consuming the same gourmet dish which he has been sent to eliminate.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez uses magical realism in his majestic novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* drawing the readers into the home of Columbian culture, tangled plots and supernatural elements which are above understanding. Writing about the rise and fall

of the Buendia clan in Macondo, a city founded by them,, each of its family members are state of the art characters. Ursula Iguaran, the matriarch of the clan wishes to keep her family united but has a fear of the prophecy that if there is any incestuous marriage, the progeny will be born with pigtail denoting the end of the clan. Apart from the prophecy brought in by the gypsies, the Buendias also believe in the use of technology that helps people to levitate, see time and the use of a flying carpet.

The Buendias are the people who brought in civilization along with the plantation of crops for living. Sometimes they had to undergo hardships like incessant rains for almost five years which is not possible practically. From the novel, “It rained for four years, eleven months, and two days. There were periods of drizzle during which everyone put on his full dress and a convalescent look to celebrate the cleaning, but people soon grew accustomed to interpret the pauses as a sign of redoubled rain.” (Marquez OHYS 315).

Mo Yan heavily borrows from the Latin American Writer and Nobel Prize Winner, Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s style of magical realism and the technique of narration. Along with the worldly touch, Mo Yan brings past memories of his childhood through imagination in characters, or simply through descriptions which elevate the level of background. With intricately woven narration, layers of background and plot, the towering characters play puppet at the hands off the author.

Mentioning his days from childhood until he became an accomplished writer, Mo Yan draws on events from his childhood memories that became a part of his writings and sometimes, even his bitter experiences in a Communist led China also find place in his

works. Even a dream about a young country girl running in the field with a white radish held high, gleaming in the sun became a major part of Mo Yan's first novel, *Transparent Radish* (1983).

The literary greatness of Mo Yan is so prolific that he wrote *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* (2006) in just forty-three days measuring about 500,000 Chinese characters with only ink and brush, the English translation measures 540 in pages. His real name, Guan Moye, which means 'do not speak' in traditional Chinese was given to him by his peasant parents in a Communist based China. Contrary to his name, he satirically attacks the governance while presenting his plots in the novels. His working experiences in smelting campaign, cotton units, serving PLA army units are also mentioned in parts of his novels. Mo Yan uses the technique of shifts in most of the novels to make the readers feel the transition between the dream like state and reality which the characters are experiencing in the novel.

The use of Chinese literary elements has a distinct effect on the World Literature Readers. Mo Yan comes from the schools Social Realism, Root Seeking Literature, and Post Mao Era Literature, which allows him to blend the national literariness along with Western influences (books) coming into China through translations. Depictions of Chinese Tradition, Culture, and mention of its history are seen in many Chinese writers, but Mo Yan's writing is a bit satirical and it includes a mix of all, from ancient writers (Confucius) to his contemporary (Lu Xun). This part of the chapter moves from a discussion of Chinese culture, the influence of Chinese Folktales, elements of Black Humor to provide a sense of comic relief in the novels, to a description of horrendous scenes.

Mo Yan's use of nativity of his language and its literary techniques makes his work widely read in China as well as around the world. His influence from Chinese Folktales makes him a master storyteller; he merges the plot with satire, and imaginary elements with narration taking another sphere of explanation. His memories of childhood, when he heard most of the folktales from his elders are reflected in his works, which also provide necessary pauses in the plot.

In the novel, *The Garlic Ballads*, Mo Yan introduces a folktale relating to lice. When Fourth Aunt is in prison and is seen lamenting about the past and thinking about her dead husband, she remembers a story being told to Fang Jinju by her father of a lice going to the city to find a living. The other folktale is about the "Frogs that do not croak in Zhang Bay" narrated by an old man to Gao Ma which technically acts as a comic relief to the readers and the characters before the impending act. The story is about a wife committing adultery, who in order not to get caught, makes the lover grind the grains into the floor whenever the husband is home thereby making him think that the donkey is grinding the mortar.

In the novel *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*, the merging of folktales into the plot is exemplary as Mo Yan uses his own short stories in the intervals of the novel. The exclusive inclusion of short stories from Mo Yan as a character in the novel also provides the presence of the author in the plot not as a narrator but as a character. Due to such involvement the author sometimes intrudes in between the narration and interrupts the flow of the plot. Especially in this novel, the narrative technique is chaotic when the author Mo Yan interrupts the narrator in talking about reality.

Mo Yan is also noted for his narrative technicality having variations in style, though some are influenced and others are derived from nativity. The influence of magical realism, imaginary settings and background, intertextual elements, his use of poly-narration, intrusive narration, flash-forwarding technique, classic case of stream of consciousness, author as the narrator, use of black humor, the subtle way of telling complex matters of state without taking stand are just a few examples of his narrative genius. Mo Yan's own background as a peasant helped him in drawing characters matching the reality. The style of using chapter titles in the form of poetic couplets which reveals the content of the chapter is taken from Chinese native writers of the past.

The novel LDWMO follows poly narration – a technique where there are two or more narrators, in this case of plot; the narrator of each book is an animal form of Ximen Nao reincarnated to seek revenge of his untimely death. The narration starts and ends with the same quote, “My story begins on January 1, 1950.” (Yan LDWMO 03, 540) which indicates that the whole plot is based on transfiguration of a soul, which is born again and again as a Donkey, Ox, Pig, Dog and a Monkey at last being born in human form- Lan Qiansui whose incredibly large head stores the story of his previous births. Here Mo Yan wins on both the sides, technically and as a storyteller.

When the narration of Ximen Ox starts, the narrator from future- the big headed boy, Lan Qiansui- interrupts the narration to make a prediction of transmigration. Lan Qiansui is the last incarnation of Ximen Nao who has been gifted by Lord Yama, an ability to remember all his past incarnations. Seeing the journey of Ximen Nao's soul from future, Lan Qiansui predicts to Ximen Ox, “ – a donkey's natural, unrestrained

dissipation, an ox's innocence and strength, a pig's gluttony and violence, a dog's loyalty and fawning nature, a monkey's alertness and mischievous qualities – "(Ibid 109).

Mo Yan brings his creative narration through writing about the future in the present. In the novel LDWMO, he brings in the narrator from the final chapter book – "An End and a Beginning" to the middle in "Pig Frolics" as Big-Lan Qiansui. He interrupts the narrative flow of Pig Sixteen in order to ask his listeners of the story (readers) if they are interested in the story of pig. If not he wishes to move on to the Ximen Dog's story. As the chapter starts with the conversation between them, it works to alert the listeners (readers) of the narrator, Big-head Lan Qiansui's presence and his originality as the narrator of entire novel. Quoting from the novel:

" Brother, or should I say, Uncle, you seem upset. Your eyes are hooded by puffy lids, and you seem to be snoring, Big-head Lan Qiansui said harshly. If you're not interested in the lives of pigs, let me tell you about dogs. No, no, no. I 'm interested, I really am. ... Don't give another thought to my puffy eyelids, because when my eyes are hooded, that means I'm concentrating." (Ibid 232)

There is also Mo Yan's character (the author in disguise) as an intrusive narrator from the novel is For instance, when Hong Taiyue calls a meeting to discuss about the visit by a delegation from Commune Revolutionary Committee, Mo Yan barges into the meeting and catches Hong Taiyue by ear, saying,

" "I am not crazy," Mo Yan wrote in his infamous "Tales of Pig Raising." "My nerves are as thick and tough as gourd vines, which won't break even when supporting a dozen

gourds that swing back and forth in the wind. The rest of the world can go mad, and I'll keep my sanity.” ” (Ibid 294).

Mo Yan becomes the author character in the novel, gives his view point whenever necessary, and shows his literariness in form of his short stories in between the plot relating to the context. The writer is a character basically who is named Mo Yan and his interference in the novel merges the elements of realism, that is the real world and the fictional world coalescing through a character that is in many ways the writer himself. His short stories titled: “Tales of Pig Raising”, “Revenge” help the readers associate the plot within a plot concept, to critically satirize characters being an outsider of the plot. In addition he claims that “his stories are filled with foggy details and speculation, and should be used for reference only.” (Ibid).

The character, Mo Yan, forms an important part in the narration of the story, making *Life and Death are Wearing Me Out* an excellent example of Poly Narration. As discussed earlier, the novel forms a circular plot mirroring the transmigration of the soul of Ximen Nao. Apart from the chapter narrators who give a tour of their own life experiences to the audience, there is also a visit from the future narrator, Big head Lan Qiansui assessing the situation. Mo Yan's narration appears alongside other narrations in the form of his fictional writings. Shelley Chan in *A Subversive Voice in China*, assesses the character- Mo Yan as he “becomes increasingly important, and his writings either supplement the narrators' story line or are challenged and denied by the narrators. In other words, the two lines form a dialogue as each challenges the other's reliability.” (Yan LDWMO 70).

A moment or situation featuring either characters or events from the distant future is brought upon to the present narration. While narrating, Pig Sixteen talks about intoxication being bad for him, but also talks about his situation as a dog in near future. Assessing the humans, Pig Sixteen's future friend, a German shepherd exclaims that the nature and behaviour of men vary in every decade. Pig Sixteen says, "Some time later, when I was reborn as a dog, a friend of mine,...concluded: People in the 1950s were innocent, in the 1960s they were fanatics,...I'm sorry, I keep getting ahead of myself. It's a trick Mo Yan uses all the time, and I foolishly let it affect the way I talk." (Ibid 266).

Based on this, Mo Yan's skill of being an omnipresent narrator is shown. All of this put together engages the reader into entering the world of Mo Yan's style, which sometimes forces one to read again to follow the plot. Mo Yan's use of Chinese history and politics as satire can be seen discussed in the previous chapters. Citing the elements of Black Humor from the novel, Mo Yan writes about the scene when Chairman Mao passes away.

The news of his passing away comes at a terrible cost to the pig farmers; the pigs at the Ximen Village Production Brigade Apricot Garden Pig Farm in Gaomi County, Shandong Province also begin to die. Due to unknown reasons the pigs had developed purple blotches on the skin the size of coins. The vets attending to the pigs declare them to be dead and to be cremated immediately before the disease could spread, but the incessant rains spoil their plans which force them to toss the infected and dead pigs into the river which in turn spoils the vegetation.

Here, Mo Yan satirically introduces the face of real China when Chairman Mao was on his deathbed; the nation relied only on their leader and after his death, they were left leaderless with no path to follow. In the novel too, the people of Northeast Gaomi Township have no other occupation other than Production Brigade. Ximen Pig exclaims, “The pigs were dead, the farm was in ruins, and I was heartsick as I reflected on the glorious days now a thing of the past.” (Ibid 326).

Following the trend of post-Mao Era featuring “Vulgarity as its favored technique among the Chinese Writer of 1980s” (Chan 201), Mo Yan includes sexuality, grim situations and description of horrendous scenes, vulgar, gory scenes, and scatological instances which may strongly repel the readers but are duly written to give the characters the needed push to intensify the justification of the situation and to carve reality into the plot. In the novels, there are instances which stand out in describing such scenes to reveal hard hitting realities which either happens to the characters or they see them happening.

In *Red Sorghum*, the skinning of Uncle Arhat is a best example of the lot. The Japanese soldiers find the recruiters who rebel against their invasion and had tried to escape; they are caught and are skinned alive for the Japanese soldiers’ sadistic pleasure. The other nauseating scene is when Granddad urinates into the barrel containing Sorghum Wine which is the family business overtaken by Dai Fenglian. This eerie habit of urine enhanced Sorghum Wine becomes a tradition and secret of the brewery henceforth. “...Uncle Arhat hit upon the idea of substituting the alkali from old chamber pots for fresh piss- it was simpler, more efficient, and more controlled.” (Yan RS 86). There is a similar scene from the novel *Pow!*, where the cook from the commune kitchen in a fit of rage urinates in to the cooking pot.

The other instance from the same novel is when Commander Yu Zhan'ao wins a battle against the Japanese; he mutilates the dead soldiers' genitals and places them in the owners' mouth, sending them through the river across the bridge to their own troops. "The Japanese soldiers... carrying the family jewels in their mouths and landed in the river with a splash..." (Ibid 137).

The scenes of disgust continue in *The Garlic Ballads* too, the sense of humility faced by Gao Yang once in childhood reemerges in adulthood also. When he was a student, he drank his own urine for fun with his friends. This incident is reminded to Gao Yang when he does it again out of compulsion by his cellmates who teach him of how to live graciously when facing humiliation. Choosing few lines from the novel:

The old inmate scooped the bun out of Gao Yang's piss and squeezed it with both hands, it made a bubbling sound as the gummy urine dripped through his gnarled, grimly fingers. After he'd squeezed it dry, he wiped his hands on his pants, then tore off a chunk and popped it into his mouth."(Yan GB 96).

The rancid mention of slaying the animal for its meat by the Fang brothers to gain money is equally horrendous. After their father's death they agree to skin the cow and sell it, "Around midnight the brothers finally finished skinning the cow...Number Two made an incision in the abdomen, and the animal's guts tumbled out, along with the unborn calf. A hot, rank odor assailed Fourth Aunt's nostrils."(Ibid 216).

In *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*, as is evident in the title, Mo Yan uses feminine sexuality with delivering Chinese history of five decades through the portrayal of Shanguan clan. An odd practice in the name of tradition is followed; Northeast Gaomi

Township sees a live burial of a family along with the children only to torture them in the name of politics.

The grotesque element present in the novel is when the narrator, Jintong, is surrounded by senior boys at school who are harassing others; he senses the situation to be dangerous to him yet hallucinates saying, "I am in a state of suspended animation." (BBWH 347) when they round him up and hit him. Jintong again goes into hallucination describing the act as if they slit open his stomach and a slimy thing of lengthy coils of intestines gush out. Mother wound them up, takes up needle and thread to stitch it up. But in reality the boys had just kicked him to the ground and Jintong had explained the pain to be guts coiling out.

The element of Intertextuality is also seen in the writings of Mo Yan. As the greatness of texts by famous authors sometimes influence to create similarities in other texts. Intertextuality defines an author's willingness to draw liking towards any specific style or any other characteristics of the text written by another author. Rather than showing similarity between the two texts, the author chooses to draw patterns from his/her influencer and create a separate world of characters.

Mo Yan drew his influence of Magical Realism, ideas of setting, poly narration, and other techniques from the well known Latin-American and American writers of late twentieth century, as China opened up its stiff nation to the world after the end of Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Western Literature was translated into Chinese, paving the way for literary trends. Many Chinese writers caught up to the trend and drew big from these writers on style and techniques. Gabriel Garcia Marquez and William

Faulkner's use of imaginary setting and background was heavily drawn on. The imaginary towns of Macondo and Yoknapatawpha County were the creations from the author's mind and their home towns. Mo Yan's North-east Gaomi Township, Paradise County also draws from his birthplace in Shandong district, China.

The intertextual elements found in the novel *Life and Death are Wearing Me Out* relates to George Orwell's famous political allegory based on Soviet Union's start of Communism. The novella, *Animal Farm* published in 1945 uses fable style to bring in the vital political characters in form of farm animals. The characters namely Snowball, Napoleon, and Old Major have important references to pioneers of Communism- Karl Marx, and Joseph Stalin. The pigs in both the novels are smart, authoritative, and feel superior to humans, considering them to be below their understanding. In the novel *Animal Farm*, after Old Major's death, Napoleon and Snowball are the new leaders revolting against humans and claiming Manor Farm as Animal Farm. They start their rule based on Old Major's ideology of 'All animals are equal' and develop further to 10 other commandments.

Napoleon and Snowball try to talk into changing the way of life for animals. In order to set them free from Mr. Jones' farm management, they lure other domestic animals into causing rebellion and to use their produce for themselves. Before Old Major's death, he addresses the animals giving them a hint of reality saying, "Man is the only creature that consumes without producing... Only get rid of Man, and the produce of our labour would be our own. Almost overnight we could become rich and free...for the overthrow of the human race! That is my message to you, comrade: Rebellion!" (Orwell AF 4-5).

In the novel LDWMO, under the book titled “Pig Frolics”, Pig Sixteen, the third incarnate of Ximen Nao, runs away to the mountains after saving himself from strange contagious disease. He blames humans, especially the commune members of Apricot Garden Farm for not taking care of them properly. After the death of Chairman Mao, pigs of the Commune Farm start developing certain purple blotches to the size of coins mysteriously. A number of 800 pigs die within weeks creating a rancid odor all over the place which becomes inhabitable. Those who survived are either shifted or run away calling it as rebellion begun by Pig Sixteen. In order to live free, not to submit to humans, he says to his followers, ““humans no longer have any control over us, just like our ancestors. We’re free. But starting today, we’ll dine on the wind and drink the dew.”” (Yan LDWMO 338).

Both the novelists, George Orwell and Mo Yan, have layered patterns when it comes to narrating a political point of view. It is similar that an issue of rebellion is addressed in a way to look different at other angles but spun in concentric layers of political allegory, man-animal conflict, and communist propaganda, all studied under Intertextuality. Hence enriching writing as artistic passion.

Further in the novel *Animal Farm*, Man-Animal conflict is played at submissively in the beginning of the novel. After the death of Old Major, Napoleon and Snowball create a rebellion in order to create a society which is topped by animals. They reveal the seven commandments passed on by Old Major, as “1. *Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy.* 2. *Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend.*” (Orwell AF 15). The young heirs of the rebellion manage to drive out Mr. Jones of the farm and rename it as ‘Animal Farm’. Soon differences appear between animals, the maxim of “*All animals are*

equal” (Ibid) is shattered when pigs consider themselves superiors because the rule the farm and protect other animals.

Here in LDWMO, Pig Sixteen also rules over other boars who ran away because of the disease. He is made the king for five years and rules on an uninhabited sandbar. Unlike Napoleon and Snowball, Pig Sixteen plans to develop and implement a system of monogamous relationship between wild boars as followed in human society, to which the audience reacted with strong opposition and disgust. Pig Sixteen with Diao Xiaosan, once a competitor, now the commander of wild boars, both tackle the sudden attack of hunting humans. Though their strategy wins against humans, Pig Sixteen abdicates the throne to a young pig called Split Ear after the death of his dear friend, Diao Xiaosan. He goes back to humans after his advent into ruling.

Another example of Intertextuality in Mo Yan’s works can be seen with the influence of magical realism from Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Apart from the social events mentioned in the novel, the family history of Beundia clan is shown to be wiped out due to an incestuous relationship following the birth of an offspring with pigtail. But the turn of events are wrapped in the world of magical realism. Here, in the novel *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* too, the Shangguan family history is shown to be pushed to the extent of being destitute, having trauma of dislocation, the plot too is wrapped at times with magical realism and fantasies of narrator, Shangguan Jintong.

The novels also share powerful matriarchs- Ursula Iguaran and Shangguan Lu (Mother)- who build up the family and are responsible for the popularity around the place.

Both the mothers seem helpless at one point where the future generation of the clan engage themselves in a pointless war. The sons in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and sons-in-law in *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* fight with each other to claim over land due to which women and children suffer. Ursula Iguaran falls sick for years and is bedridden and Mother and children face dislocation along with the whole NGT village.

Mo Yan derived a lot from his Western influencers including their technicality to his creativity and nativity. Blending West and East, he explores Chinese Folktales and tradition in *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*. As Mother and her brood of children had seen a lot of adversities, Mo Yan brings joy and moments of relief by fulfilling Shangguan Jintong's fetish fantasy. During the Snow Festival, he becomes the snow prince designated by the Taoists of the village, whose duty is to grant wishes to women who want to bear children that following year.

Shangguan Jintong gets his eccentric wish fulfilled by stroking the breasts of all the females living in Northeast Gaomi Township. To his disbelief, he ends up stroking one hundred and twenty pairs of breasts and each time he cleans his hand in the fresh snow, comparing each of them to either a warm bird or a fruit. This peculiar fantasy comes to an end abruptly when the Taoist men gets arrested by police and a while later Shangguan Jintong wakes up from sleep at home, not knowing whether the incident took place or not.

Howard Goldblatt tries to translate the Chinese world to the Western audience and seems it to "be a cross cultural activity" (Yim 49). He was born in California in 1939, while working as a communication officer in Taiwan he found a fascination towards

Chinese Literature and went on to finish his doctoral degree in it. The variety of style and technique Mo Yan uses cannot be studied without the availability of English and other language translations. Howard Goldblatt, Professor of East Asian Studies at Notre-Dame University, has translated eleven major works of Mo Yan and other prominent Chinese writers.

Howard Goldblatt played safe by becoming a neutral person when it came to describing the political arena as written in the Chinese version. The issues leading to political conflicts, their aftereffects are all discussed but the mention of Communist Party or Kuomintang Party's working ways are not mentioned. Mo Yan's use of black humor, strong narration at the hands of Zhang Kou (GB), Mo Yan (LDWMO), and Tadpole (FROG)

According to Dylan Suher's review of the novel *POW!* and *Sandalwood Death*, Howard Goldblatt tends to ease the process of narration of story presented by Mo Yan in his original works to make the intensity of vulgarity look normal. The literary genius of Mo Yan is seen in *POW!* and *The Republic of Wine* noted for their exemplary vividness and out of the world experiences faced by the characters in the novel. Luo Xiaotong, a mere boy of ten living in Shandong District has suffered loss of family members and destruction comes to an abandoned *Wutong* temple. He starts narrating his life's doom before Wise Monk Lan who remains a passive listener throughout the novel with his actions described by Luo Xiaotong. The young narrator talks about his life and events leading to downfall to his future self after ten years- Wise Monk Lan in one frame.

In *POW!*'s Afterword, Mo Yan writes "Narration is Everything" (Yan POW! 385) where he explains the absurdity of the characters, stoppage of time period, and a plot of ongoing rumbling narration about a familial tragedy of Luo Xiaotong. Commenting that narration to be satisfying must be accompanied with splendour and fullness to enrich the blandness of plot and to overshadow the character flaws, this is the writer's tradition. Quoting Mo Yan's derivation of narration as, "A writer's existence is found in narration, which is also the process in which he finds satisfaction and absolution. Throughout the novel, narration is the goal, narration is the theme and narration is its construct of ideas." (Ibid 386).

Mo Yan, known to be a gifted story-teller, received the talent from his grandparent who had a treasure of more than 300 stories by heart. Most of his plots are derived or inspired from parts of his childhood experiences as a peasant, smelting plant worker, and as a soldier in PLA. His plots are written in the traditional method of quill and paper because of which the thought process is continuous, but when it comes to translating the literal meaning is more prominent rather than the thought. Howard Goldblatt tries to take in the complexity of the thoughts and phrases from Chinese to English, yet the due original phrases are left out or conveyed in a similar sense as sometimes target language does not have words and phrases similar to the original text.

Howard Goldblatt also tries to grease the political observations according to the text and related events while Mo Yan openly jibes and brings his thought through connotations wrapped around humor made by strong characters like the blind minstrel-Zhang Kou from the novel *The Garlic Ballads* or Mo Yan- the character from *Life and Death are Wearing Me Out*.

The next chapter – “Summation” deals with the culmination of ideas and thoughts presented in other chapters and helps in resolving the queries raised in the beginning of the thesis through the novels and few case studies done on the topic.