Research Article

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Borderland Mystery And Tibetan Writing: On Ma Yuan's Non-Linear Spatial Narrative Strategy In Tibetan Novels

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	In the 1980s, Ma Yuan, as a literary explorer, carried out the pioneering art of literature and art with full enthusiasm for the life in Tibet, and devoted himself to creating a series of literary works with Tibet as the background. Currently, Ma Yuan's Tibetan novels depict in depth the invaders and guardians of Tibetan national culture as well as the spread and development of Tibetan national culture, depicting the profound mystery and broad inclusiveness of Tibetan culture. His works are not only unique in form, fully reflecting the innovative qualities of pioneer novels, but also innovative in content, skillfully integrating the avant-garde nature of form and content. This paper mainly discusses how Ma Yuan's non-linear spatial narrative strategy reveals the charm of the secret borderland, and summarizes the cultural implications reflected in Ma Yuan's Tibetan novels' narrative strategy, aiming to promote the dissemination and development of Chinese Tibetan novels.

Keywords: Ma Yuan; Tibetan novel; nonlinear spatial narrative |

Introductory

Tibet is a mysterious world, and for the general public, Tibet is a desirable pure land of Buddha. In the 1980s, Tibet attracted hot-blooded college students from the mainland, who spent their youth and sowed their ideals in this snowy plateau, and spent their years understanding and integrating into this world of human and divine communion. Ma Yuan is an important representative of this group, and Tibet has become a source of inspiration for Ma Yuan's Tibetan novels (Wang, 2023). Through his stories about Tibet, Ma Yuan not only enriches his own artistic life, but also injects a vivid and profound force into the contemporary literary world, so that Tibetan culture can be widely disseminated and deepened in new forms and connotations. For example, *No Sailboat on the Western Sea* and *The Temptation of Gangdisê* are Ma Yuan's classic works written in the border area of Tibet. These works vividly reproduce the real-life conditions of the Tibetan border areas, and construct a complex picture of the humanistic customs, philosophy of life and social phenomena in the Tibetan area at the artistic level. Moreover, these works skillfully integrate the prevailing humanitarianism at that time, echoing the enthusiasm of the times for the re-examination of the concept of "human being" and the significance of life. These works are skillfully integrated into the prevailing humanitarian thinking of the time, echoing the enthusiasm of the era for re-examining the concept of "human" and the meaning of life.

1. Overview of Ma Yuan's Tibetan Novels

Tibet itself is a sacred place formed on the basis of natural geomorphology and magical landscapes, and in the process of long-term development, Tibet has also developed its own local pious religious beliefs, which gives Tibet a certain mysterious atmosphere. Ma Yuan's series of works on Tibet, such as *No Sailboat on the Western Sea* and *The Temptation of Gangdisê*, are based on the exploration of the mysterious border, which profoundly explores and artistically handles the mystery of Tibet, showing the treacherous charm of Tibet. Through his life experience in the Tibetan area, Ma Yuan, as an outsider, observes, experiences and senses Tibet's unique way of life, religious beliefs and natural environment, and integrates these elements into the creation of his novels.

He explores and presents Tibet's inner worldview and philosophy of life with admiration, constructing a vivid and philosophical picture with his words, enabling readers to appreciate Tibet's cultural connotation and the universal inner world of human beings from a new perspective (Gao, 2023). Therefore, Ma Yuan's Tibetan novels have not only enriched the expression of contemporary Chinese literature, but also left a distinctive mark on the international literary stage. For example, in *Cool Illusion*, Ma Yuan depicts the mysterious atmosphere of Tibet, including supernatural phenomena such as yetis, lake monsters, flying saucers, and stopped clocks, adding endless wonder and exploration. In *The Temptation of Gondas*, he breaks the traditional concept of time and space and tells three mysterious stories by reorganizing, intersecting and piecing them together, shaping a mystery story unique to Tibet. It can be said that Ma Yuan created a series of fictional characters full of mystery with Tibet as the background, and the creation of this mystery is closely connected with Ma Yuan's living environment, and the uncertainty and unknown nature of his life are also reflected in his novels, which enhance the mysterious atmosphere (Liu and Qi, 2023).

2. Interpretation of Ma Yuan's Non-linear Spatial Narrative Strategy in Tibetan Novels

Non-linear narrative is a deeply complex and highly innovative narrative construction, which subverts the conventional chronological order and linear structure layout by deconstructing and reconstructing the time, space and causal chain, thus giving the story a more profound, complicated and unpredictable vitality. In the creation of novels, the use of non-linear spatial narrative strategy can break the traditional narrative chains, becoming a creative writing technique. It disassembles the original continuous plot line, character association and time axis, and then reshapes them through jumping forward, cross weaving and loop reappearance, building a three-dimensional and all-round narrative network. This narrative strategy not only makes the spatial dimension of the novel broader and more diversified, but also opens up a brand-new reading perception journey for readers. Ma Yuan skillfully utilizes non-linear spatial narrative techniques in his novels depicting the landscape of the Tibetan region, making the stories unique and charming in terms of time and space. This not only lets readers indulge in the mysterious and unique cultural atmosphere of Tibet, but also lets them deeply experience the unique flavor and profound connotation of non-linear spatial narrative in literary expression.
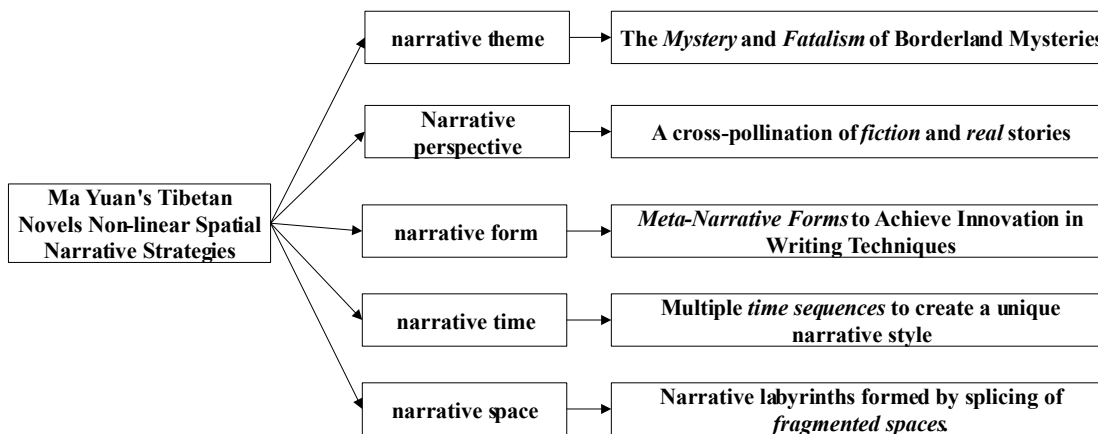
2.1 Narrative Theme: *Mystery* and *Fatalism* of the Borderland Mysteries

The Tibetan people regard Tibetan Buddhism as the supreme spiritual pillar, believing that the real world is the external manifestation of the Buddhist cosmology and that personal destiny is determined by the karma of past lives (Wang and Sui, 2023). They regarded the present world as illusory and the liberation and purification of the soul as the real and eternal truth. Ma Yuan skillfully captures and echoes this spirit of mysticism in his novels depicting Tibetan themes, creating a strong mystical atmosphere, portraying mysterious characters and unusual ways of thinking, and employing techniques such as time and space dislocation to strengthen the sense of mystery. Ma Yuan weaves a web of mysterious plots and intertwines them with the mysterious land of Tibet, adding a thrilling sense of excitement and mysterious attraction, and enhancing the artistic impact and reading interest of his works. With the secret land of Tibet as the background, Ma Yuan skillfully weaves unrelated story fragments to form a network of hidden relationships between events. This mysterious atmosphere stems from the unknown and uncertainty of life itself, which strengthens the overall mysterious quality of the work (Wang, 2023). Ma Yuan's narrative technique and creative stage make his works full of exotic and mysterious colors, and become a self-directed theater in a fictional world.

At the same time, Ma Yuan is also a firm believer in the power of fate and draws inspiration from his own experiences. During a health crisis in 2008, he chose to go back to nature and mingle deeply with it, eventually recovering significantly (Tang, 2022). This lifestyle deepened his belief in fatalism and is reflected in his Tibetan novels. Even when stripped of the Tibetan background, his works are still imprinted with traces of the fatalistic view (Shu, 2022). The Tibetan people adhere to the belief in the immortality of the soul and the cycle

of karma, where the present life is a manifestation of the karmic rewards of the past life and the fate is set by God. Ma Yuan blends the Eastern and Western concepts of predestination in his works and incorporates the deep sense of predestination of the Tibetan people into them, so that the Tibetan novels show a strong theme of predestination. After leaving Tibet, Ma Yuan fell into a creative slump and lost his source of inspiration. Tibet is the key to the success of Ma Yuan's novels and an important turning point in his literary creation, giving his works a unique charm and profound connotation.

2.2 Narrative Perspectives: Cross-fertilization of *Fiction* and *Real* Stories

Ma Yuan is an author who is able to present fictional stories in the form of gamified narratives. In his novels, he is good at weaving mysteries full of mystery to create a complex and mysterious reading experience. Through multiple identity changes and interactions, he highlights the characteristics of a *self-conscious* narrator, uses the first-person point of view to narrate, freely conveys his creative concepts, and disassembles and reconstructs the story at a deeper level. For example, in *The Temptation of Gondas,* he adopts the form of bracketed commentary to directly intervene in the text, instantly interpreting and commenting on it, demonstrating his unique narrative skills. (Zhang and Wang, 2022). Moreover, in The *Temptation of Gangdisê*, Ma Yuan not only relies on the old writer who went to Tibet as the narrator, but also often steps out of the story level by means of the implied author's identity to add, evaluate and reflect on the narrative content. He skillfully employs the concept of implied authorship to implant the image of "Ma Yuan" into the novel, creating a disorienting sense of compulsion that makes it difficult for the reader to get a glimpse of what is going on. This narrative technique reminds the reader of the fictional nature of the story, making the reader realize that he or she is experiencing a world carefully constructed by the author rather than a direct reflection of real life. In this way, Ma Yuan creates a unique reading experience that allows readers to think deeply about the complex relationship between literary creation and real life while deconstructing the story (Li, 2022).

Ma Yuan utilizes different person perspectives in his novels to reveal the narrator's different understanding and control of the story. Take *The Three Times of Life in Lhasa* as an example, through the perspective of the first-person narrator "I", the subjective reconstruction and arbitrary arrangement of the chronological order are shown. The first-person narrator "I" decides to break the conventional chronological order by telling the story from tomorrow, treating the three days as three different temporal experiences. This subversive treatment of the timeline is not only reflected in the free manipulation of the time dimension, but also extends to the storyline, challenging the integrity of the story in the traditional sense. This narrative technique fully demonstrates the unique superiority of the first-person narrative mode, giving the author more creative space, enabling him to flexibly manage the story line and create a more novel, multidimensional and layered literary world (Jing, 2018). Ma Yuan's flexible use of narrative mode, strong self-conscious narrative mode, and the combination of first-person and third-person techniques in his creative work, upholding the right of "I" as the creator of the novel to shape the characters and switch narrative perspectives, treats the novel as a stage for displaying creativity and ideas. He boldly plays the "narrative game" to emphasize his creative concepts and skills. Ma Yuan's pursuit of the fictionality of the story as a whole and the authenticity of the details have formed a unique narrative strategy. This strategy gives his works rich imagination and creativity, as well as profound insight into life and humanistic concern, which shapes Ma's unique style of fiction (Cheng, 2021).

2.3 Narrative form: *meta-narrative form* realizes the innovation of writing skills

The key to Ma Yuan's novels, which have been hailed as a model for Chinese pioneering novels of the 1980s, lies in his subversion and transcendence of traditional narrative norms. He boldly abandoned the traditional linear narrative mode and causal logic, and deeply revolutionized the use of persona, narrative background setting, narrative perspective shift, and overall story structure (Shu, 2019). Ma Yuan constructs a completely new narrative space through non-linear temporal treatment, fragmented plot combinations, self-referential metafictional techniques, and narrative strategies that break the boundaries between reality and fiction. This structural approach gives the text a more open and uncertain space for interpretation, enhances artistic expression and attraction, and opens up new possibilities for the narrative art of contemporary Chinese fiction. Writers such as Ma Yuan adopt the structural art technique of metafiction in their novels, constructing their works through non-linear narrative devices such as collage, repetition, fragmentation, crossover and nesting (Tang, 2021), breaking through the traditional narrative paradigm. Ma Yuan's The *Goddess of the Lhasa River*, a pioneering work in Chinese avant-garde literature, is set in Tibet, and on the one hand, it solemnly tells stories, and on the other hand, it reveals the fictional nature of these stories, and even openly presents the method of storytelling, forming a kind of "intrusive" narrative language. This approach challenges the reader's conventional expectations of storytelling, strengthens the work's in-depth exploration of fictionality and the creative process, and injects new vitality and a dimension of reflection into the development of the narrative art of modern Chinese fiction.

In *The Goddess of the Lhasa River*, Ma Yuan breaks the established pattern of traditional novel writing through such a narrative. Not only does this passage not follow the convention of laying out in detail the story's socio-historical background, depiction of the environment, and the lineage of character and event development, but it instead speaks directly to the reader, revealing the nature of the text's fictionalized nature and stating that it will not be recounted in a linear chronological order, a practice that is extremely rare in traditional novels. Ma Yuan handles the narrative in a playful way; not only does he openly involve the narrator in the story, but he

also unabashedly displays the techniques and strategies used to weave the story, even with a certain amount of flirtation (He, 2020). Such a way of narration makes the narrator seem to come from behind the scenes to the front stage, bluntly announcing to the readers that the story is created by human beings, thus emphasizing that any so-called "reality" is only an effect constructed by the narrative device. This is not only a reflection on the art of narration itself, but also a bold challenge to the boundaries of the novel as a genre, reflecting Ma Yuan's active exploration as a vanguard writer for the innovation of the novel's narrative structure and mode of narration.

2.4　Narrative Time: Multiple *Time Sequences* Creating a Unique Narrative Style

In Ma Yuan's literary world, the element of time plays a crucial role. He frequently employs non-linear narrative techniques such as flashbacks and pre-narratives to deconstruct and reshape time, so that it shows the phenomena of splitting, repetition and dislocation in his works, and the dimension of time is often presented in a disoriented and chaotic state (Geng and Zhang, 2018). Three Times of Life in Lhasa is one of Ma Yuan's most significant works that subvert the linear character of traditional time narratives. This novel vividly reveals the accidental interlacing, non-linear extension, and infinite possibilities of time. At the beginning of the novel, it is announced that the story will be told in three days, but the author ingeniously reconstructs the chronological order of yesterday, today, and tomorrow in a Qiankun Da Shifted manner. The first chapter of the story starts from the "future" tomorrow, describing how "I" encountered a Kamba man in Bajiao Street, and was deeply interested in the silver headdress he wore, and surprisingly, the Kamba man even gave the precious silver headdress to the novel's "I"; the author's first chapter is about the story of a Kamba man in the "future" tomorrow. "I"; then the time flow to the "past" yesterday, recounting the friend afternoon Huangmu home ceiling appeared horrifying sound and a pile of sheep ribs of the mystery; immediately after the switch back to the "present "Today, "I" together with Wu Huangmu and Ziwen went to Little Bengshell Temple to explore the secret of the sheep ribs, and returned to Bajiao Street again, the Kamba man who presented the silver headdress unexpectedly offered to exchange the big black cat with "I" at home. At the end of the story, it is dramatically returned to the "future" tomorrow, when "I" accidentally killed the big black cat Beibei, which was hunting mice on the ceiling. Through this broken and tense time layout, Ma Yuan carefully creates a horrible and mysterious atmosphere, and combines it with the unique and mysterious background of Tibet to put a layer of mysterious veil for the whole novel, making readers feel as if they were in a space-time labyrinth in the process of reading, and doubling their sense of fantasy and inexplicable.

In novel writing, there are three distinct dimensions of time: the author's creative time, the reader's reading time, and the story time within the novel. Together, these three concepts of time construct the chain of time within the novel (Qi, 2020). In the concluding part of Ma Yuan's work Fiction, the use of time completely subverts the sense of reality. In the novel, "I" spent four or five days in Maqu village, but when I left, it was shown to be the 4th of May. This time dislocation brings readers a strong sense of illusion, and makes people think deeply about the boundaries between the real and the fictional. This narrative strategy not only reveals the fictional nature of the novel, but also challenges the traditional concept of time and linear narrative mode, further strengthening the work's in-depth exploration of fictionality and creative process. The use of time in Ma Yuan's The Sopranos is also thought-provoking. The story recounts a murder that "I" witnessed, and according to the linear time sequence, this episode should be clearly in the past tense. However, when I revisit the scene of the crime in the spring, all traces of it have disappeared, giving a sense of long ago history. This treatment of time creates illusion and uncertainty, making the reader confused about the time span of the events. A tragedy that seemed to have happened not long ago becomes instantly untraceable and otherworldly, triggering a profound discussion about the relationship between the passage of time and the authenticity of memory. This temporal dislocation adds to the mystery of the story and challenges the reader's perception of the boundaries between reality and fiction. This narrative strategy further reveals the fictional nature of the novel and challenges the traditional notion of time and linear narrative mode, reinforcing the work's in-depth exploration of fictionality and creative process (Zhang, 2020). Ma Yuan utilizes a unique choreography of time in his Tibetan novels to explore and reveal the deeper meaning of time to human consciousness and perception. He uses the techniques of cutting, reorganization, repetition and dislocation of time to create a confusing and mysterious atmosphere that complements the intermingling of man and god in the Tibetan cultural context. This technique builds a novel context that combines elements of horror, fiction, mystery and the unknown, where time becomes an invisible but crucial character with an ethereal and bizarre personality. The illusory and grotesque nature of time is fully embodied in Ma Yuan's Tibetan novels, giving the works a unique narrative style that allows readers to experience the twists and turns of the story while feeling the philosophical thinking and spiritual shock triggered by the power of time.

2.5　Narrative space: the splicing of *fragmented space* to form a narrative labyrinth

In *The Temptation of Gonzales*, Ma Yuan utilizes a collage structure, cutting and splicing pieces of life at will, breaking the coherence of the plot and the internal logic of the story. He connects three independent and fascinating story threads, and through a fictional setting as a link, he deconstructs and reorganizes the three story spaces, presenting a state of disorientation. This creative approach challenges the traditional narrative boundaries, allowing readers to re-examine the nature of storytelling and the role of time, and to experience a profound exploration of the mysterious atmosphere and the illusory nature of time (Ding, 2020). In *The*

Temptation of Gondas, Ma Yuan abandons the linear logic and tight plot connections in the traditional narrative structure, and interweaves three seemingly independent and unrelated narrative fragments together through a collage-like non-linear narrative approach. The author does not intentionally strengthen the intrinsic connection between the stories, but utilizes multiple narrative perspectives and different persona narrative techniques to make the narrative subject of each story diverse and uncertain. This breaking down of narrative perspectives and spatial boundaries fragments the stories and creates a narrative labyrinth effect. Readers need to pay attention to each individual story clue and narrative mode, experiencing the complexity and multiplicity of narrative art. This narrative strategy breaks the conventional reading expectations, forcing readers to participate more deeply in the interpretation of the text, reflecting the spirit of Ma Yuan's avant-garde literary exploration of formal innovation and content depth.

Another short story by Ma Yuan set in Tibetan land, *The Goddess of the Lhasa River* is divided into seven chapters, each of which paints a vivid picture of the story from the second chapter onwards. Act II focuses on a pig's corpse found on a riverbank, while Act III centers on a unique picnic lunch, exploring anecdotes of food culture; Act IV delicately depicts a scene of laundry by the river; Act V recounts a heart-wrenching hunting story through a fictional character, interspersed with intense encounters with savages and tigers; and Act VI returns to daily life, recounting water-friendly activities such as laundry and swimming. The sixth act returns to everyday life, with tales of laundry, swimming, and other water-friendly activities, while the seventh act centers on the portrayal of a sand sculpture, the goddess of the Lhasa River. These six stories are independent of each other, and there is no inevitable chain of cause and effect linking them together, nor is there any obvious beginning, development, climax and ending, and the order of the scenes in the timeline can be switched at will, as if they were on the same stage, with the same group of characters interpreting their own unique chapters. The structure of Ma Yuan's story is intricate, with multiple clues advancing in parallel, multiple narrative frameworks intertwined, and a lack of traditional logical connections between the clues, demonstrating a non-linear and innovative approach to story building. Overall, Ma Yuan skillfully refines and reshapes fragments of experience from daily life, and uses modular narrative techniques to integrate and reconstruct the fragments of the Tibetan series of novels. He deliberately reveals the discrete, non-causal, and non-logical characteristics of life's story fragments, omits a large number of intermediate transitions, and emphasizes the discontinuity and independence of events. Moreover, Ma Yuan selects bits and pieces of life in Tibet and creates a unique story structure through collage, reorganization, interweaving, or reuse. This narrative collage effect gives the work a unique artistic charm and inspires readers to speculate on the direction of the plot and build their own story labyrinth (Li, 2019).

3. Cultural Implications Reflected in Ma Yuan's Nonlinear Spatial Narrative Strategies in Tibetan Novels

3.1 The Generation of Tibetan Stories and Tibetan Spatial Experience

In his novels, Ma Yuan treats Tibet as a unique "geographic literary symbol", and gives his works an unusual spatial and temporal dimension by digging deep into the spatial narrative potential of this mysterious plateau. He uses space as an important carrier of literary expression, emphasizing the importance of spatial transformations and displacements in perceiving the passage of time, for example, symbolizing the passage of time by depicting the sun's trajectory in the sky, a literary treatment of natural phenomena that transcends the mechanicity of traditional horological timekeeping and instead projects a more primitive and profound philosophy of time (Cong, 2019). On the other hand, in the process of constructing the unique space of the Tibetan area, Ma Yuan skillfully arranges outsider characters, which are sometimes modeled after the author himself, and other times are groups of people representing universal humanity and cultural differences. They stray from the normality of secular life, bringing instability and uncertainty as well as carrying the exploration and challenge of different lifestyles and values. This tense relationship between the travelers and their new environment-antagonistic, wary, yet attracted to and intertwined with each other-constitutes the fundamental conflict inherent in Ma Yuan's novels and serves as the logical cornerstone that drives the story (Lv, 2019). By examining Tibet from an outsider's perspective, Ma Yuan's novels not only reveal the regional characteristics and spiritual connotations of Tibetan life, the so-called "sense of place", but also use it as a bridge to build a platform for readers to dialog with the culture of the distant frontier, so that readers can experience strong exoticism and profound humanistic care in the process of reading.

In his novels, Ma Yuan makes full use of the uniqueness of Tibetan space as the cornerstone of narrative and the carrier of emotional experience. In *The Temptation of Gangdisê*, he depicts the mysterious sky burial ceremony and the life-and-death encounters on the night of the grassland, showing the divinity and miracles of the Tibetan region. Similarly, the episodes in *No Sailboat on the Western Sea* show the challenges of survival and the power of spirituality in the Tibetan region. Ma Yuan's spatial narrative does not only stay on the physical level, but also reveals the changes in the inner world of the characters and the outer social relations through space. In *Three Ways of Folding Paper Harriers,* Bajiao Street becomes the stage of the story, revealing a world full of complex human nature and intertwined social ethics. In The Wall Painted with Wacky Patterns, the patterns on one wall guide Yao Liang's life trajectory and the development of the storyline. The spatial elements in these works transcend the significance of geographical background, serving as both the place where events take place and an important means of characterization and plot development. This spatial narrative approach makes the conflicts in the novels more vivid and three-dimensional, while deepening the

understanding of the interaction between people and the environment, showing the infinite charm of the spatial dimension in literary creation (Wei, 2019).

3.2 *Possible worlds* made of spatial and imaginative collages

Ma Yuan's original use of a non-vertical, non-linear mesh narrative structure in his novel creation subverts the linear time and logical causality of traditional literature, presenting a multifaceted and interwoven network form. Through the skillful fusion of fiction and reality, his works build a world of imagination and possibility within the unique cultural space of Tibet (Zhang, 2023). Ma Yuan expresses his inner feelings when he first entered Tibet in a fragmented language with localized meanings, and assembles these fragmented emotional impressions in various novels, creating a three-dimensional narrative effect similar to that of a jigsaw puzzle. This kind of narrative breaks the traditional linear timeline, making the time dimensions of the past, present and even future interpenetrate and intertwine with each other, forming a chaotic state of space-time. Ma Yuan's Tibet is not an objective reproduction in the sense of reality and geography, but a spiritual territory after artistic processing, carrying philosophical thoughts on the depth of life, existence and human nature. In this "possible world", the narrator is the experiencer and perceiver, leading the reader through the labyrinth of time and space, allowing the emotional experiences, historical memories and time concepts of different characters to collide with each other and mingle, and ultimately converge to form a new literary landscape under the overall view of time and space. Such a narrative technique enriches the level of the text, enhances the exploratory and openness of the reading process, and allows readers to resonate and reflect on the process of participating in the construction of the virtual world.

In Ma Yuan's novels, space presents a multifaceted form of continuous flow and vagaries. His Tibet is not only a geographical entity, but also a parallel dimension that transcends the boundaries of reality, intertwined and symbiotic with the real Tibet, mapping each other. The world of Tibet woven by Ma Yuan is not a simple copy of reality, but needs to be interpreted with the help of a deep understanding of the real world. In the process of reading, the reader's emotional response resonates with the protagonists, and various emotions such as fear, sadness and joy are strong and genuine, subconsciously updating and reconstructing our cognitive map of the real world. Taking Tibet as a stage, Ma Yuan crosses the corridor of time and the boundary of civilization, dismantles the ideal country that is imagined to be far away from the modern process, and constructs a system of possible worlds full of dynamic changes. He explores the infinite possibilities of different cultural exchanges and interactions by portraying a group of protagonists with the backgrounds of Chinese, Tibetan and other cultures. As Kripke argues, the possible world has nothing to do with our physical distance, but is an abstract existence defined by descriptive features. Through the artistic practice of the novel, Ma Yuan reveals how these inaccessible spaces are vividly presented in the text through language and imagination.

3.3 Shaping a distinctive mystical culture and borderland writing

Deeply interested in mystical culture and the transcendental world, Ma Yuan's Tibetan literary creations show unique and innovative thinking in the mysterious land of Tibet. He not only explored Tibetan culture in depth, but also filmed the feature film *City Tibet* reflecting the cultural life of Tibetans and experienced the daily life of Tibetans. Ma Yuan said he firmly believes that the charm of Tibet lies in the uniqueness of its conceptual forms, thought systems and behavioral patterns. In his view, Tibet is not just a mystery, but a magical reality. The daily life of ordinary people there is a real world full of magical charm (Yin, 2017). The unique nature of Tibet's geographical space is brought to vivid life in Ma Yuan's novels. These creatures, such as tigers, brown bears, vultures, yellow sheep, roe deer and even poisonous scorpions, become an important element that attracts readers to read in depth. Rare treasures, pure and mysterious Tibetan maidens, wizard-like Kamba men, and evocative scenes of sky burials, all of which appear frequently in the novels, are key pieces of the mysterious cultural puzzle. For example, in The Temptation of Gondis, Ma Yuan discovers a huge stone sculpture of a goat's head from the perspective of "I", and even though the horns of the giant goat's head have been broken off, the five-power binoculars still show that it is more than twenty meters high and its surface is badly weathered. This unknown being could be either a creature or an image of a deity, leaving the reader to interpret and fantasize. In Three Times of Life in Lhasa, "I", as an outsider, encountered a series of strange events when I entered the Barkhor Street of the Da Zhao Temple - for several consecutive days, I always felt that there were people walking inside the ceiling, and whenever the lights went out, I could hear the clear sound of footsteps; footsteps left on the wall were not human beings; and the footsteps left behind were not human beings. The footprints left on the wall are not made by human beings, but more like traces of bear's paws. This kind of non-linear narrative of physical objects greatly enhances the spatial shaping of the borderland and gives it a unique flavor.

Ma Yuan has a strong interest in the mystical elements of Tibetan culture, integrating them into realistic narratives to present a unique Tibetan reality. In Ma Yuan's novels, mystical culture is not only the cornerstone of mythological narratives, but also an important means of deconstructing the traditional novel form. Ma Yuan skillfully draws on and transforms the mysterious cultures of distant and exotic places, inherits the spiritual core of ancient Chinese novels, and satisfies the psychological needs of modern readers in pursuit of novel and strange reading experiences. At the same time, he has taken into account the aesthetic characteristics of Shen Congwen's novels, which reflect the brutal living conditions in the border areas intertwined with the glory of human nature, and absorbed the unique techniques of Borges and other Western novelists in creating the

atmosphere of metaphysical space. The "real" mysterious situations portrayed by Ma Yuan inspire readers with strong emotional resonance and deep thinking. These mysterious episodes are profound insights and philosophical reflections on the human environment and ultimate destiny.

Concluding remarks

To summarize, Ma Yuan has established his irreplaceable position in the literary world through his unique creation of Tibetan novels, and at the same time revealed a sublime and mysterious world of the snowy plateau for the readers. As the first person who is brave to innovate and breakthrough in the new period, Ma Yuan's pioneering spirit in narrative art and writing techniques has an important reference value for contemporary literature, which is facing a bottleneck in its development. Ma Yuan's Tibetan novels not only represent the peak of his personal creativity, but also benefit from the source of inspiration given to him by the magical land of Tibet, making his works full of mysterious and spiritual light. In these novels, Ma Yuan skillfully employs non-linear spatial narrative techniques, successfully integrating the profound and mysterious elements of Tibetan culture with the writing tradition of frontier subjects in modern literature, thus realizing the inheritance and development of traditional culture and the charm of novels about monsters. This kind of docking and expansion makes Ma Yuan's works echo the era's in-depth exploration and reexamination of the nature of man, the meaning of life and the state of existence, further enriching the pluralistic expression and profound connotation of Chinese literature.

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