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# **Reconstruction through Omission: A Case Study of Omissions in the English**

## **Translation of Mo Yan's *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out***

**Jiahao Guo**

### **Abstract**

This thesis examines omissions in the English translation of Mo Yan's *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*. A textual comparison reveals 128 omissions at the macro level, meaning that 13% of the original text is absent from the translation. Since the English version reshapes the original work for an English context and a Western audience, it is worthwhile to examine the consequences of the omissions. In particular, are there any patterns among the omitted sections, and is the version with omissions received more favourably by a Western audience?

The issues surrounding omission are addressed by the theoretical framework of rewriting theory, focusing on the understanding of rewriting in literary work and the factors that restrict translation, a special form of rewriting. The adopted methodology comprises textual analysis, narrative analysis, interviews and questionnaires. The thesis explores omissions from six categories: descriptive text, embedded text, narrative text (story), narrators' comments, characters' monologues and lengthy passages containing multiple omission types. Through textual and narrative analysis, the discussion identifies discrepancies between the source text and the target text, including character alterations, plot reorganisations, simplifications of narrative structure, reworkings of language style, mitigations of political criticism and stereotyping of Chinese culture. Through questionnaires and interviews, I investigate these consequences for English-speaking readers. Interestingly, significant omissions of cultural and political messages do not impede Western readers' perceptions of either the book's political criticisms or its insight into Chinese culture. Instead, they facilitate and add to the entertainment aspect of the reading. I, therefore, argue that the novel has been

rewritten to accommodate a Western audience's reading habits and Western poetological systems, and to attract a mass audience.

**Key words:** Rewriting theory, Omission, *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*

**RECONSTRUCTION THROUGH OMISSION:**  
**A CASE STUDY OF OMISSIONS IN THE ENGLISH**  
**TRANSLATION OF MO YAN'S *LIFE AND DEATH ARE***  
***WEARING ME OUT***

**Submitted by**

**Jiahao Guo**

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

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For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## Table of Contents

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHTS</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 RESEARCH CONTEXT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.4 RESEARCH METHODS</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>1.5 CHAPTER LAYOUTS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.1 REWRITING THEORY</b>	<b>19</b>
<i>2.1.1 Literature as a system</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>2.1.2 Literary rewriting</i>	<i>22</i>
<b>2.2 TRANSLATION AS REWRITING</b>	<b>24</b>
<i>2.2.1 Ideological constraints</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>2.2.2 Poetical constraints</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>2.2.3 Universe of discourse as the constraint</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>2.2.4 Other scholars' discussion of constraints</i>	<i>35</i>
<b>2.3 SHIFT AS THE MANIFESTATION OF REWRITING</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>2.4 THE APPLICATION OF REWRITING THEORY IN TRANSLATION STUDIES</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>2.5 PREVIOUS STUDIES OF OMISSION</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>2.6 PREVIOUS STUDIES OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF <i>L&amp;D</i></b>	<b>51</b>
<i>2.6.1 Discussion of translation strategies for cultural contents</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>2.6.2 Studies on the translation of political discourse</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>2.6.3 Omission as a focus</i>	<i>56</i>
<b>CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>3.1 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>3.2 NARRATIVE ANALYSIS</b>	<b>62</b>
<i>3.2.1 'Tense'</i>	<i>63</i>
<i>3.2.2 'Voice'</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>3.2.3 'Mood'</i>	<i>67</i>
<b>3.3 METHODS</b>	<b>70</b>
<i>3.3.1 Procedures</i>	<i>70</i>

3.3.2 <i>Ethical considerations</i>	72
3.3.3 <i>Questionnaire design</i>	73
3.3.4 <i>Interview design</i>	77
3.3.5 <i>Data analysis</i>	81
<b>CHAPTER FOUR – CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND</b>	<b>83</b>
4.1 <b>INTRODUCING MO YAN</b>	83
4.1.1 <i>The idiosyncrasies of Mo Yan’s writing</i>	87
4.1.2 <i>The reception of Mo Yan’s works by English-speaking audiences</i>	91
4.1.3 <i>The reception of Mo Yan’s works by literary critics</i>	93
4.2 <b>INTRODUCING HOWARD GOLDBLATT</b>	100
4.2.1 <i>Goldblatt’s viewpoints on translating Chinese novels</i>	103
<b>CHAPTER FIVE – OVERVIEW OF THE NOVEL, CATEGORISATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE CASES</b>	<b>109</b>
5.1 <b>AN OVERVIEW OF THE NOVEL</b>	109
5.1.1 <i>Criticism of politics through reincarnation</i>	112
5.1.2 <i>Multi-layered narrative structure</i>	113
5.1.3 <i>Hybrid language style</i>	115
5.1.3.2 <i>Parody of authoritative language</i>	117
5.1.3.3 <i>Other language forms</i>	118
5.2 <b>THE EXPLANATION OF THE OMISSIONS</b>	120
5.2.1 <i>Enforcing the storyline: the omission of descriptive text</i>	120
5.2.1.1 <i>Item descriptions</i>	120
5.2.1.2 <i>Social environment descriptions</i>	121
5.2.1.3 <i>Landscape descriptions</i>	124
5.2.2 <i>Unifying the language style: the omission of embedded other literary forms</i>	125
5.2.3 <i>Flattening characterisation: the omission of monologues</i>	127
5.2.3.1 <i>Animals’ monologues</i>	128
5.2.3.2 <i>Human character’s monologue</i>	131
5.2.3.3 <i>The monologue of ‘Mo Yan’</i>	134
5.2.4 <i>Simplifying narratives: omission of the narrators’ voices</i>	137
<b>CHAPTER SIX – OMISSION, CHARACTER RESHAPING AND RECONSTRUCTION</b>	<b>145</b>
6.1 <b>RESHAPING CHARACTERISATION: OMISSION OF MAIN CHARACTERS</b>	145
6.2 <b>STREAMLINING THE MAIN STORYLINE: OMISSION OF MINOR CHARACTERS</b>	154
6.3 <b>EMPHASISING THE HUMAN STORYLINE: THE OMISSION OF ALLEGORICAL ANIMAL STORIES</b>	159
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN – OMISSION, DISTORTION, RECONSTRUCTION, AND KEY FEATURES OF THE OMITTED TEXTS</b>	<b>166</b>
7.1 <b>DISTORTION AND RECREATION: LENGTHY OMISSIONS</b>	166

<b>7.2 EXPLORATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE OMISSIONS</b>	<b>174</b>
7.2.1 <i>Enhancement of the main plots</i>	175
7.2.2 <i>The simplification of the narrative structure</i>	177
7.2.3 <i>The emphasis on the main characters</i>	178
7.2.4 <i>The softening of political criticism</i>	179
7.2.5 <i>The filtering of Chinese cultural elements</i>	182
7.2.6 <i>Reworking of the language style</i>	183
<b>CHAPTER EIGHT – RECEPTION STUDY: PERSPECTIVES FROM ENGLISH–SPEAKING READERS</b>	<b>186</b>
<b>8.1 INTERVIEWEES’ BACKGROUND</b>	<b>188</b>
<b>8.2 ENHANCING READING AND ENTERTAINMENT: THE OMISSION OF CULTURAL REFERENCES</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>8.3 ENHANCING READING COHERENCE: THE OMISSION OF POLITICAL MESSAGES</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>8.4 STREAMLINING THE STORYLINE: THE OMISSION OF MINOR AND ANIMAL CHARACTERS</b>	<b>199</b>
8.4.1 <i>Reinforcing the main storyline: the omission of minor characters</i>	199
8.4.2 <i>Conforming to the English poetics: the omission of animal characters</i>	203
<b>8.5 UNIFYING LANGUAGE STYLE: THE OMISSION OF EROTIC AND DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE</b>	<b>206</b>
8.5.1 <i>Refining the language: the omission of erotic language</i>	206
8.5.2 <i>Controversial attitudes: the omission of scenery descriptions</i>	209
<b>8.6 SIMPLIFYING THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE: OMITTING A SECOND NARRATOR AND FLASHBACKS</b>	<b>211</b>
8.6.1 <i>Enhancing fluency of reading: the omission of a second narrator</i>	212
8.6.2 <i>Loss of writing characteristics: the omission of flashbacks and interpolations</i>	214
8.6.3 <i>Streamlining the narration: the omission of the embedded text</i>	216
<b>8.7 IS THE OMITTED TEXT RECEIVED MORE FAVOURABLY THAN THE FULL TRANSLATION?</b>	<b>218</b>
8.7.1 <i>Does the omitted version read as a complete story?</i>	219
8.7.2 <i>The interviewees' critique of the omitted text</i>	220
8.7.3 <i>The justification of the omissions from the readers’ perspective</i>	222
8.7.3.1 <i>Reducing contingent difficulties through omission</i>	224
8.7.3.2 <i>Adjusting to English–language poetic standards through omission</i>	225
8.7.4 <i>Interviewees’ preferences between the sample texts</i>	227
<b>CHAPTER NINE – CONCLUSION</b>	<b>234</b>
<b>9.1 L&amp;D IN ENGLISH: DISCREPANCIES AND RECONSTRUCTION</b>	<b>234</b>
<b>9.2 PATTERNS OF OMISSION</b>	<b>236</b>
9.2.1 <i>Political and cultural omissions: removing potential barriers to comprehension</i>	237
9.2.2 <i>Poetic omissions: adapting to English political literature</i>	238
<b>9.3 EFFECTS OF THE OMISSIONS ON ENGLISH READERS</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>9.4 REFLECTIONS ON THE CASE OF L&amp;D FOR LITERARY TRANSLATION</b>	<b>244</b>
<b>9.5 LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>APPENDIX ONE – CASE CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>251</b>

APPENDIX TWO – OMITTED CHINESE TEXTS IN EACH EXAMPLE	256
APPENDIX THREE – EXAMPLES IN CHAPTER SIX AND SEVEN	276
APPENDIX FOUR – QUESTIONNAIRE FOR A STUDY OF THE TRANSLATION OF MO YAN’S <i>LIFE AND DEATH ARE WEARING ME OUT</i>	294
BIBLIOGRAPHY	299



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JIAHAO GUO

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## CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research context

Translation enables individuals to read text from languages and cultures that they do not know or with which they are unfamiliar. Reading literature from other cultures yields insight into cultural conventions and history, as well as writers' reflections on these topics. Damrosch (2003, p. 6) suggests that 'world literature is writing that gains in translation' and 'an elliptical refraction of national literature', which emphasises the role of translation in delivering a piece of national work to a global readership and acknowledges the recreation of national literature through translation. Compared to non-literary works, literary works enjoy canonicity, fulfil an affective or aesthetic function rather than a transactional or informational one, provoke emotions or entertain rather than influence or inform and can have ambiguous or indeterminable meanings (Francis, 2009, p. 152). Consequently, in comparison with technical translations, in which the translator can make choices based principally on the function of the text, literary translation is more complex. Bourdieu (1996, p. 143) suggests that:

the literary field is a force-field as well as a field of struggle which aim at transforming or maintaining the established relation of forces: each of the agents commits the force (the capital) that he has acquired through previous struggles to the strategies that depend for their general direction on his position in the power struggle, that is, on his specific capital.

Related to the translation of literary works, influential forces encompass the original writer, translator, literary agent, editor and publisher. Venuti (1998, p. 43) considered literary translation to be a form of authorship (i.e. derivative), not self-originating. Gentzler (2001, p. 184) explains that 'the translation of literature means the translation of a literary work's interpretation, one which is subject to the literary tradition in the target culture'. Venuti and Gentzler's arguments both recognise literary translation as a recreation of the original work.

According to Lefevere (1992a, p. 2), translation is associated with authority, legitimacy and, ultimately, power; it is not just a ‘window opened on another world’, but rather a channel through which foreign influences can penetrate the native culture. Álvarez and Vidal (1996, p. 4) agree with this idea and argue that translation is a complex process of rewriting that runs parallel to the overall view of language, the perception of the ‘other’ that people have held throughout history and to the influences and balance of power that exist between one culture and another. Bassnett and Lefevere (1990, p. 11) maintain that (re)writing is never innocent. Translations always have context, and there is always a history from which a text emerges and into which a text is transposed. It is, therefore, worthwhile to discuss the relationship between the translated work and the original, as well as the interaction between the translation and extra-textual factors.

There are many powers at work in the production of a translated work, and Venuti (1998, p. 124) observes that the publisher’s choice is a ‘primarily commercial, even imperialistic, exploitation governed by an estimate of the market at home’. Translation choices driven by economics (re)produce conservative aesthetics, which form a ‘realism typical of the popular aesthetic’ that might produce ‘the illusory effect of transparency’ (1998, p. 126), i.e. the sense that the work was not translated at all. This argument is supported by Michelle Woods (2019, p. 518), who coins the term ‘market censorship’ to best describe American and English publishing companies’ emphasis on the market share when publishing translated works. Thus, the target readership is likely to exert influence on the production of translated works. Tymoczko (2007, p. 230) points out that in cases where there is a disparity of cultural context between the subject matter and the audience, it is rarely sufficient for an author to simply transpose cultural material while implicitly presupposing, alluding to or sketching the cultural background: the audience is likely to be ignorant of the cultural assumptions within the resulting text and will be unable to make necessary and relevant inferences about its meaning.

Translation, in most situations, must contend with these issues. They are of particular import for English translations of Chinese works due to the significant cultural divergences.

Sabina Knight (2011) observes that English translators of Chinese literature tend to rewrite and shorten the source text (ST) to a greater extent than translators of other languages. Knight discussed this issue with American sinologist and translator Howard Goldblatt, who is considered the ‘midwife of American translation of contemporary Chinese fiction’ (Updike, 2005) and the ‘foremost translator of Chinese literature’ (Xia Zhiqing, 2004, p. 64). Goldblatt (Knight, 2011, p. 122) claims that Chinese novels have not always sold well in the United States and that the English translations that rewrite some of the ST’s contents can be more easily promoted to major American publishers. As early as 2004, Goldblatt (2004, pp. 26–27) professes that literary translation is difficult to sell, with the exception of the work of Nobel Prize winners and selected Japanese authors (such as Murakami Haruki); American publishers, therefore, recommend deletions and reorganisations in order to appeal to a wider market. John Balcom (2006, p. 119) explains that to make a work of literature in Chinese come to life in English is a complex process that calls upon a scholar’s knowledge of Chinese language and culture, as well as a profound knowledge and creative flair in English, since translations of literary works are generally evaluated solely on their merits of readability, or the extent to which the text reads as if it were originally written in English. However, as translation and creativity are mentioned simultaneously, it is worth examining the relationships between the ST and the target text (TT). What is the target language (TL) audience reading: the words of the original author or those of the translator? Does the translated work belong to the scope of national literature or to that of the foreign literature of the receiving culture? Does the target readership need to understand every aspect of the original?

The English translations of Mo Yan’s works exemplify the effort required to reshape, rewrite or manipulate a work in a target culture, as well as the complicated interactions and

power struggles involved in text production. Mo Yan is the pen name of Guan Moye (管谟业). Although writers are usually denoted by surname only, customarily a Chinese writer's pen name should not be reduced, so the full identifier of Mo Yan is used to refer to the author throughout this thesis. Meanwhile, other Chinese names are provided following the order of surname and given name. Mo Yan's works provide reflections and satirical criticism on Chinese political movements and policies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by describing the suffering of characters living in the fictional town of Northeast Gaomi Township. Mo Yan combines sources from traditional Chinese literary works and folk adages with avant-garde methods of modern Western literature. Thus, his works are described as 'hallucinatory realism merging fantasy and reality, history and contemporary' (Nobel Prize, 2012b).

Mo Yan first entered the English-speaking markets with *Red Sorghum* (1993), translated by Howard Goldblatt. As of 2020, Mo Yan has published eleven novels, eight of which have been translated into English by Goldblatt. Mo Yan is the Chinese writer whose work has been most widely translated into English over the past twenty years (Zhang Xudong and Mo Yan, 2013, p. 225). Goldblatt considers it his mission to translate for his English-language readers, rather than for the original writer (Lingenfelter, 2007; Sparks, 2013; Stalling, 2014) and places emphasis on the fluency of the English as a priority when translating. Goldblatt himself says 'anyone who is reading Mo Yan in English is reading Goldblatt' (Goldblatt and Efthimiadou, 2012), emphasising the extent to which he feels ownership over the work once he begins the translation process.

In 2012, Mo Yan was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, which brought him and his works further international recognition. It has been suggested that, in addition to Mo Yan's own literary merit, the skill of his translators (and Goldblatt in particular) has played a vital role in introducing him onto the world's literary stage (Sun Anna, 2012; China News, 2013b; Liu Yunhong and Xu Jun, 2014; Sun Huijun, 2014; Bao Xiaoying, 2015). Chinese translation

studies Professor Wang Ning (2013, p. 7) propounds that if it had not been for the hard work of Mo Yan's English translator, Goldblatt, and his Swedish translator, Anna Chen, his award may have been postponed by a further ten years at least or perhaps not even awarded at all. German sinologist Wolfgang Kubin (Wolfgang, 2012; Gu Bin and Feng Haiyin, 2012; China News, 2013b) suggests that Goldblatt translates Mo Yan's works by summarising what he believes Mo Yan intended to say in his own English; Goldblatt edits the original text, sometimes eliminating entire paragraphs or deleting culturally specific references to make the text more accessible to Western readers. As a result, the end product differs significantly from the original.

*Sheng Si Pi Lao* (《生死疲劳》) (Mo Yan, 2006) and its English translation *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* (L&D) (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008) is a representative example of rewriting and manipulation. The original text is rich in Chinese cultural references and political messages, and its structure builds on the metaphorical framework of the Buddhist belief in the six paths of reincarnation. Historical and political events of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are unveiled from the perspective of folklore as the reader follows the protagonist Ximen Nao through a series of reincarnations, and the ownership of land emerges as a core theme. Ximen Nao's final reincarnation is as a big-headed boy named Lan Qiansui, who is also the primary narrator of the novel. The second narrator is Lan Jiefang, Lan Qiansui's grandfather and the son of Ximen Nao's previous farmhand. The two narrators also serve as each other's narratees, creating a dialogue. The storyline is written in the past tense, but the two narrators make comments throughout the storytelling, which occur in the present tense. Consequently, the narrative tenses switch continuously back and forth, forming a 'most complicated narrative structure' (Knight, 2014, p. 101). A textual comparison of the English translation and the ST reveals that the translation contains the radical omission of around 50,000 Chinese characters, totalling nearly 13% of the original text. At the macro level, I identified 128 omissions, ranging



in length from around seven to eight lines to then around three to four pages. The omissions are concentrated in the second half of the novel and the contents of these erased passages include political critique, cultural references, erotic descriptions, minor and animal characters, amongst other themes. As a result of these translation choices, the Anglophone audience is presented with a radically edited version of the original story. The magnitude of these changes raises some pertinent questions: the reasons for the omission of certain elements; whether any patterns emerge between the omissions; whether the omissions facilitate the reception of the novel in the target culture; and whether the omitted text would have read naturally in the TL.

The omissions have attracted the attention of scholars throughout translation studies. Existing studies on the topic focus on messages related to Chinese culture and politics and provide the following explanations for the omissions: Western ideological manipulation, Western disinterest in Chinese political and cultural messages (Wang Lu, 2012; Huang Xin, 2014; Jia Yanqin, 2016) and potential barriers to the Western readership (Huang Xin, 2014). However, most English-speaking readers only have access to the English version of the text and may even be unaware that they are reading a specially edited version, which makes it difficult to determine whether the omissions facilitate their reading. Reviews of *L&D* in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* both explain that the novel focuses on the official Chinese communist ideology (Moore, 2008; Spence, 2008). Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that the political messages are still evident to Western readers, even after the omissions, and that Western readers may not reject these messages, as suggested in previous studies.

Shao Lu (2011) observes that Goldblatt's strategies for translating sexual descriptions in Mo Yan's work have changed over time. Shao included several sexual descriptions in his early translations of Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 1993), *The Garlic Ballads* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 1995) and *The Republic of Wine* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2000); in *L&D*, however, he omitted them. Mo Yan's sexual writing has been recognised as a

response to the rigid, formulaic and ideology-based discourse (known as socialist realism) that has monopolised Chinese literary production for decades (Lu Tonglin, 1993; Hu Peiping, 2014; Goldblatt, 2014). In Goldblatt's eyes, this implicates certain benefits, as he believes that American consumers prefer to read works that contain politics and sex (Shu Jinyu, 2005; Ji Jin, 2009), which makes his omission of sexual descriptions from the translation of *L&D* particularly noteworthy. Is this decision due to the content itself or the manner in which the sexual content is narrated in the original text?

Most existing studies view Goldblatt as the sole producer of the English translation of *L&D*. In fact, Goldblatt has clarified that most of the omissions were requested by the English editors with the approval of Mo Yan (Goldblatt, 2011a; Sparks, 2013; Goldblatt, 2014; Stalling, 2014). Mo Yan holds a tolerant attitude towards the rewriting, as he regards the translation as 'not my novel anymore, it's yours. It's got my names and my copyright, but it belongs to you' (Lingenfelter, 2007, p. 8). The English editors had minimal knowledge of Chinese language and culture, so their only point of reference for editing the novel was that it should read fluently in English (Goldblatt, 2011a). Therefore, I hypothesise that although the political criticism has been significantly reduced, the omissions are made on account of poetological rather than ideological concerns, and that the rewriting aims to align the translation more closely with Western reading habits and poetological systems. To establish the veracity of this claim, it is necessary to identify the key features of the omitted text, to examine how the ST has been manipulated or rewritten, and to consider the effects of these omissions on Anglophone readers. While conducting this study, I examined *Sheng Si Pi Lao* (Mo Yan, 2006) as the ST, published by Writers Publishing House, and *L&D* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008) as the TT.

## **1.2 Research questions**

- (1) What are the discrepancies between the original Chinese and the translated English text?  
How does the translated English text differ from the original Chinese?
- (2) What are the omission patterns, particularly those regarding features and consequences?
- (3) What are the effects of the omissions on English-speaking readers?

### **1.3 Theoretical background**

Theories on translation began to be formulated during the latter half of the 20th century, leading to the emergence of several approaches to translation. From a scholastic point of view, translation can follow philosophical, linguistic, psychological, historical, functional or descriptive approaches, each of which concentrates on certain aspects of translation. Since the mid-1970s, a loose-knit group of scholars from the field of comparative literature has attempted to establish a new paradigm pertaining to the study of literary translation. This group, which includes Itamar Even-Zohar, Gideon Toury, Theo Hermans, André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett, has been referred to by many names, including the Low Countries Group; the Tel Aviv-Leuven Axis; the Descriptive, Empirical or Systematic School and the Manipulation School. Though each of these names emphasises a particular aspect of the group's composition or views, these scholars are most commonly referred to by their field of interest, descriptive translation studies, as this most precisely describes the essence of their school of thought and its distinction from previous prescriptive translation studies. The aim of the group's approach is not to provide guidelines for translating or evaluating translations, but rather to study translations based on observations of cultural backgrounds.

The name Manipulation School first arose from a wordplay, deriving from the collection of essays called *The Manipulation of Literature*, edited by Theo Hermans (1985). The term 'manipulation group' gained particular popularity after Mary Snell-Hornby employed it to refer to this approach to translation in her book, *Translation Studies: An Integrated*

*Approach* (1995). The name ‘Manipulation School’ highlights one of the group’s most provocative statements: namely that, from the target culture’s perspective, ‘all translation implies a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose’ (Hermans, 1999, p. 11). Levy’s claim that translation is ‘a hybrid product, a conglomerate, part of which refers back to the original text while other parts reveal the translator’s input’ (1969, cited in Hermans, 1999, p. 21) concerns both the nature of and constraints on the production of translation, offering a starting point for the development of this school. David Katan’s (1999) definition of ‘distortion’ in literature can also explain manipulation or rewriting. He suggests that:

... distortion in itself is neither good nor bad. It is a way of directing the addressee to what the speaker or writer considers is important. Distortion does not give us an objective picture of reality, but functions like a zoom lens allowing the reader to focus on certain aspects, leaving other aspects in the background.

(Katan, 1999, p. 138)

It is through manipulation and rewriting that a translator and editor influence target readers’ reading of a text. Lefevere (2000, p. 247) comments that both literature in general and individual works can, in their final analysis, be contemplated, commented on, identified with and applied to life in a number of essentially subjective ways and that these activities are all refractions designed to influence how a reader receives the works. Therefore, considering translation as a form of manipulation could imply that translation is no longer regarded as a neutral process of linguistic decoding and recoding; rather, it portrays the power relationship between the contexts of the ST and TT and aims to produce a likeness of the ST in the TT culture.

The Manipulation School approaches translation as manipulation, or, more precisely, as the rewriting of texts for a specific target audience in conformity with TL norms and constraining factors. The scholars of the Manipulation School each have their own distinctive perceptions of translation; however, they share:

... a view of literature as a complex dynamic system; a conviction that there should be a continual interplay between the theoretical models and practical case studies; an approach to literary translation which is descriptive, target oriented, functional and systemic, and an interest in the norms and constraints that govern the production and reception of translations, in the relation between translation and other types of text processing, and in the place and role of translation both within a given literature and in the interaction between literatures.

(Hermans, 1985, pp. 10–11)

This group of scholars view literature as a contrived system consisting of objects (texts) and the people who write, refract, distribute and read them. As a system, literature is embedded in the environment of a culture or society and subsumes other subsystems, such as translated literature. Meanwhile, literary and societal systems are connected and influence each other. In this sense, translations are regarded as the texts produced on the borderline between ST and TT systems, reflecting the balance of power between the two. In an attempt to pinpoint the specific nature of translation, Popovič (1976) places it into the context of other similar texts, employing the terms ‘metatexts’ and ‘prototexts’ instead of the more common ‘TT’ and ‘ST’. The word ‘metatexts’ refers to ‘all types of processing (manipulation) of the original literary text, whether it is done by other authors, readers, critics, translators, etc’ (Popovič, 1976, p. 226). Popovič’s claim reflects the Manipulation School’s perception of the relationship between ST and TT: the TT is no longer secondary, derivative or inferior to the ST; it is instead one of the primary tools used by larger social institutions, art councils, publishing houses and even governments to ‘manipulate’ a given society and ‘construct’ the desired image. Thus, translation is an image-making process.

Translation strategies are regarded as either domesticating or foreignising: the former refers to an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to TL values, or ‘bringing the author back home’; the latter refers to translations that honour the ethno-deviant pressures on TL values to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, thus sending the reader ‘abroad’ (Venuti, 1995, pp. 19–20). Traditionally, the domestication strategy is regarded as a

method that rewrites the ST to naturalise the reading, while foreignisation is deemed more faithful to the ST. However, Lane-Mercier (1997, p. 63) argues that ‘all translations are manipulative rewritings based on imperative procedures’. In this sense, all translations are recreations of the ST, and no translation strategy can claim to be entirely objective, since each strategy serves certain interests. Lane-Mercier’s concept is similar to Lawrence Venuti’s (1995) perception of translation as a ‘cultural political practice’ (p. 19): a translation not only reflects a different culture but also engages in the literary and ideological conflicts of the target culture. Together, these social conditions make translation a cultural, political practice, constructing or critiquing ideology-stamped identities for foreign cultures and affirming or transgressing institutional limits in target cultures.

Translation is unique because it is the voice of the ‘other’: a space for different values and beliefs that may contradict and, therefore, challenge those of the target culture. In this context, foreignisation becomes a key concern, as it leans towards retaining ST information, even when such preservation deliberately breaks the conventions of the TL. Lane-Mercier (1997, p. 63) argues that foreignising strategies are no more legitimate or objective than domesticating translation strategies. Arrojo (1997, p. 29) suggests that transparent translation strategies are also biased since they reveal ‘a certain conception of what the text is about and a theoretical, ideological perspective of what should be done in order to make it available in another language and culture’. The manipulative nature of translation has also been discussed by Venuti (1995), who labels ‘transparency’ an ‘illusionistic effect’ that ‘depends on the translator’s work with language’ and ‘hides this work, even the very presence of language, by suggesting that the author can be seen in the translation, that in it the author speaks in his or her own voice’ (p. 287). The invisible translator is no longer the one who resorts to fluent strategies, but the one who refuses to take responsibility for their manipulations and ‘believes’ that they are merely conveying the information contained in the ST (Lane-Mercier, 1997, p.

64). Although a translated text might be close to the ST in its meaning and structure, it is inherently affected by the translator's understanding and interpretation of the ST and how it should be rendered to the TT readership. Consequently, translation is inevitably partial, the meaning of a text is always overdetermined and the information in the ST is always more extensive than can be conveyed by a translation (Gentzler and Tymoczko, 2002, p. viii).

To summarise, according to the determinations of the Manipulation School, all translations are rewritings of the ST, and focus should be placed not on the discussion of translation strategies or whether a translation has adequately rendered the ST's meaning, but on what cultural images have been recreated, the consequences of these recreations and the possible factors leading to the rewriting. Even-Zohar (1980) proposes the polysystem theory, which regards the position of the translated literature within the target system, or the power relation between the ST and the TT, as the decisive factor influencing translation strategies, while Gideon Toury (1985) proposes that 'norms' in the target system may be the decisive factor. Lefevere (1985; 2000) is additionally interested in how this system operates. He explores the mechanisms that exert control and guide the processes taking place within the system, and has published a series of papers discussing the interactive relationship between translated literature and other sociocultural systems, as well as the reproduction of the text in light of these interactions. The current thesis refers to Lefevere's rewriting theory as its primary theoretical framework, as this approach is best suited to explaining the rewritings in the case studies.

According to Venuti (1995, p. 308), every stage of the translation process, including the selection of foreign texts, the implementation of translation strategies and editing, reviewing and reading translations, is mediated by the diverse cultural values circulating the target language and is always carried out in some hierarchical order. Since literature is a system that interacts with other systems, the manipulation of a translation occurs throughout the

process, from textual selection to the final production; that is, through the pre-production, production and post-production stages (Dukāte, 2009, pp. 45–46). The first stage relates to the selection of a text for translation; texts to be translated are not selected at random. There are certain agents and powers in the source or target context that decide which works need to be translated for certain purposes. For example, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Chinese educator Liang Qichao set out to translate works by famous foreign writers that had some bearing on the contemporary political situation in China, with the overall purpose of enlightening Chinese readers. In the production stage, the translator works under various constraints and is demarcated certain guidelines, indications and hints about how the text should be translated. Various objective (language-related) and subjective (ideological) factors also come into play. However, in the absence of solid evidence, it is difficult to ascertain how specific constraints contribute to the rewriting of a work. Even Lefevere expresses how pointless it is to speculate who made certain changes (1992a, p. 61). The post-production stage refers to the manner in which the text is presented and reflected in metatexts and discourse; in other words, the product of the manipulation. The work's reception by the target pole and its positioning in the target literary system largely depend on factors of presentation.

The post-production stage is the focus of the thesis. First, in terms of the selection of the ST, Yan Jia (2013, p. 187) interviewed Goldblatt about the initiators of his translations, and *L&D* was selected by the translator. Goldblatt holds the view that his translations of Mo Yan primarily reflect his taste (Ji Jin, 2009), and he observes that American readers want to read works that reveal the dark side of society or criticise the Chinese government. Therefore, the pre-production stage for this case is made clear and there is little scope for further exploration. Second, regarding the production stage, even though it is widely agreed that the translations were produced under certain constraints, for instance, Arcade Publishing proposed shortening the texts (Goldblatt, 2011a; Goldblatt and Efthimiadou, 2012), it is challenging to identify how



publisher guidelines interfered with each specific rewriting phenomenon. Goldblatt (Yan Jia, 2013, p. 187) refused to share the details of his co-operation with the editors. However, in the post-production stage, based on a textual comparison between the original work and the translation, the divergences are observable and relatively objective. Comparisons between original and translated texts can provide valuable insights into the constraints under which works of literature are produced and how they are accepted, screened out or rejected by the target culture. Through such divergences, the consequences of the rewriting and its interaction with other systems can be explored.

An omission can be regarded as ‘a translation error where the translator fails to render a necessary element of information from the source text in the target text’ (Delisle *et al*, 1999, p. 165). In this sense, an omission is the negative result of translation failure, which should be minimised. Chesterman (1997) and Baker (2000) highlight the usefulness of omissions when addressing linguistic, cultural and pragmatic issues, and Sager (1997, p. 33) contends that omitting parts of a ST can improve the quality of a document for the reader. Rewriting theory views the purpose of rewriting to be creating the image that the ST desired to produce in translation; therefore, this theory considers omission as a unique method of reconstructing the ST that is neither positive nor negative. The analysis of omissions in this thesis examines how omissions reconstruct the image of the ST.

#### **1.4 Research methods**

To study the key features and consequences of omissions through the lens of rewriting theory, I collected and analysed both textual and extratextual materials, examining both the text and reader responses. I adopted textual and narrative analyses to examine the text and utilised interviews and questionnaires in order to explore the effect of omissions on the target readership, and to discuss the omissions in a sociocultural context.

The textual analysis comprises the selection and categorisation of the examples, as well as content analysis. This thesis focuses on omissions at the macro level, so the examples in the paragraph units were selected from a comparison of the ST and the TT, which revealed 128 omissions. These omissions were then grouped into six categories, organised by the functions and type of each text example: descriptive text, the embedding of other literary forms, narrators' commentary, characters' monologues, plots and lengthy passages containing multiple omission types. These first five categories are subcategorised as follows: item descriptions, social environment descriptions, landscape descriptions, jingles, Lan Jiefang's comments, Lan Qiansui's comments, animals' monologues, human characters' monologues, the monologue of 'Mo Yan', main characters' stories, minor characters' stories, and animal characters' stories. Since the research objects are excerpts from a novel, the primary focus of the analysis was the effect of omissions on characterisation and plotlines. In addition, I addressed the linguistic significance of individual expressions in the ST, including both their meaning and artistic value. When reviewing how the omissions reconstruct the original text, it is important to note that they also influence the text's structure and function. Consequently, narrative analysis, which concerns the ways in which the stories are organised and presented, was adopted to explain discrepancies between the ST and the TT.

This thesis aims to explore the translation and editing of Chinese novels intended for the English-speaking market. For this reason, I solicited feedback from English readers about translations of *L&D*. I used interviews and questionnaires to investigate how a sample of ten native English speakers raised in the West responded to the omissions. Chapter 33 of *L&D* was selected as the sample chapter to investigate reader responses for three reasons. First, the use of a complete chapter presented the respondents with a relatively complete story, which may have helped them understand the omissions within a specific context. Second, Chapter 33 contains the most obvious omissions in the novel, as 41% of the original text is lost. Third, the

chapter's omissions include all six of the primary omission categories and six of the twelve subcategories identified in this study. The respondents were asked to read two texts: Text A was the published translation, while Text B was the researcher's literal translation of the original text (proofread and edited by a native English speaker), produced with the aim of minimising the linguistic divergence from Text A.

The questionnaire and the semi-structured interview were both based on the omission patterns identified by the textual analysis. They were used to investigate native-speaker responses to both specific issues and the omissions as a whole. I determined both the questions and the range of available answers, with the intention that the interviewees answered the same questions. As a result, the responses could be meaningfully compared and any resultant variability was reduced, making analysis of the answers easier. Questionnaires are a cost-effective and convenient method of data collection, and the use of emails can overcome spatial constraints. Overall, 90% of the questions required close reading of the material. A comment line was included under each question, allowing the interviewees to add extra information about the topic and ensure that they felt their opinions were valued. However, questionnaires are not without their disadvantages. Respondents tend to move through questions quickly, providing the first responses that come to mind. Moreover, a questionnaire provides only a snapshot of a research subject, not a rich, in-depth picture. Therefore, a semi-structured interview was also adopted to further investigate respondents' attitudes towards omissions.

As Babbie (2013, pp. 353–355) suggests, prolonged, intensive and direct engagement with a research subject can further a researcher's understanding more than research based on secondary resources alone. In this research, each of the semi-structured interviews followed a common set of topics or questions, and the researcher varied the methods and orders in which topics were introduced as appropriate for each interviewee. Furthermore, while the topics and specific goals of the research were evident, participants could answer questions or discuss

topics in their own ways, using their own words. The specific questions for each interviewee were based on responses to the questionnaire, and the aim of the interviews was to further explore readers' attitudes towards the different aspects of omission.

## **1.5 Chapter layouts**

This thesis consists of nine chapters. Chapter One outlines the research context, aims and questions. It also briefly states the theoretical framework and methods adopted by the researcher.

Chapter Two offers a literature review of the definitions of rewriting, rewriting theory, and translation as a specific form of rewriting. The concept of shift as the manifestation of rewriting is explored. This chapter also investigates the application of rewriting theory in translation studies, previous studies of omissions and English translation of *L&D*.

Chapter Three details the methodology, which explains the methods used to conduct the textual and narrative analyses. It also presents the rationale and specific methods for conducting the questionnaires and the interviews.

Chapter Four explores the contextual background. This chapter begins with a review and analysis of Mo Yan's childhood and educational background, which influence his writing technique and style. Secondly, the chapter explores Mo Yan's reception in the English market, including academic discussion, sales condition, awards and media reports. The chapter then reviews Goldblatt's connection to Chinese culture and language, as well as his history of translating Chinese literature, and his translation and promotion of Mo Yan is additionally investigated. The final section explores Goldblatt's views on translation.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven contain textual analyses of the omissions. Chapter Five critically introduces the novel's plotline, thematic significance, narrative structure and language style, as well as the protagonists and primary characters, with the aim of setting the

contextual background for the analysis of the omissions. This chapter also explores the consequences of omitting the descriptive passages, references to other literary forms, characters' monologues and the narrators' comments and dialogue.

Chapter Six focuses on omissions within stories that are being narrated. The first section explores the omission of main character stories, the second analyses the omissions of minor characters and the third investigates the omission of animal characters.

Chapter Seven studies lengthy passages containing multiple types of omissions. The patterns of the texts omitted are also explored and the ST is reconstructed.

In Chapter Eight, the consequences of omissions from the receiver's perspective are examined in detail. It investigates native English speakers' responses to the omissions, both as a whole and of specific types of omission. Receivers' justifications for omissions are also explored.

Finally, Chapter Nine discusses the research findings and answers the research questions, critically evaluating discrepancies between the original text and the English translation, the effects the omissions have for English-speaking readers and the omission patterns. The wider implications for rewriting theory that the *L&D* case exemplifies are discussed. The thesis concludes with a review of the limitations of the present research and considerations for further research, inviting other researchers to explore rewriting at the micro level, and to examine translation from a sociocultural perspective.

## CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the literature review in six sections. The first section critically reviews rewriting theory, including how literature is viewed, the definition of rewriting and how translation can be understood as a specific form of rewriting. The second section investigates the constraining factors in translation that have caused the shift to rewriting. The third section explores the concept of shift as the manifestation of rewriting in translation. The fourth section examines the application of rewriting theory in translation studies. The final two sections review previous studies on omissions and previous studies on the English translation of *L&D*.

### 2.1 Rewriting theory

Lefevere, as a representative of the Manipulation School, supports the idea of literature as a system embedded in the environment of a culture or society. He, therefore, views translations as the product of interactions between multiple systems. In this section, I explore Lefevere's explanation of the system and his definition of the concept of rewriting.

#### 2.1.1 Literature as a system

To understand Lefevere's rewriting theory, one must first look at his explanation of what literature is. According to Lefevere (1985, p. 216), society can be viewed as a conglomerate of systems, of which literature is one notable example. Based on the concept of systems, Lefevere (1985, p. 217) suggests that works of literature exist to be utilised in one way or another and that there is no correct or incorrect way to use them. Both the writing and rewriting of a text are not purely objective and cannot be regarded as merely a linguistic coding process; rather, they are intertwined with the sociocultural, ideological and literary constraints imposed on the texts. Lefevere (1985) views literature as a contrived system, which consists of both the coding of the texts within the system and people external to the system who write,

refract, distribute and read those texts. These two components are referred to as ‘poetics’ and ‘patronage’, respectively. Both poetics and patronage rarely intervene directly in the literary system; instead, control of the literary field is delegated to groups that operate within it. These groups consist of ‘experts’, such as critics, reviewers, teachers, anthologists and translators (Lefevere, 1985, p. 226).

Poetics is the coding of the text, which refers to the aesthetic precepts that dominate a literary system at a certain point in time and thus make the potential communication between author and reader possible. Poetics consists of two components: one is an inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations, and symbols; the other is a concept about the role literature plays, or should play, in the social system as a whole (Lefevere, 1992a, p. 26). Therefore, poetical constraints acting on a translation consist of (1) its literary style and (2) its perceived social purpose, such as recreation or education. In other words, the standards and expectations of the ‘experts’ in the literature field influence the reconstruction of the ST. In most cases, the codification of the poetics according to the TT culture could facilitate the process of a work entering the target market and being accepted by the target audience, although this is not guaranteed. In contrast, those works whose poetic codification deviates significantly from the prevailing poetics of the target culture may prove problematic during publication or may even be rejected.

Patronage refers to the regulatory body of the system, which can consist of a person, multiple persons and/or institutions. Lefevere (2000) explains that patronage comprises of at least three components: economics (which ensures a writer’s livelihood), status (the writer’s position in society) and ideology. However, Lefevere’s tripartite internal structure of patronage is questioned by Dimitris (2009, p. 243), who argues that even though Lefevere explains that the three components can ‘enter various combinations’ (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 16), this view does not explain how these components can be distinguished from one other. For example, the

economic factor is inextricably linked to the status of the texts and the ideology of the patrons.

The primary interest of patronage lies in ideology, which is a term with multiple potential definitions. In his earlier work, Lefevere defines ideology simply as a ‘world view’ (1985, p. 226); later, he refers favourably to Fredric Jameson’s concept of ideology as ‘that grillwork of form, convention and belief which orders our actions’ (1992b, p. 16). One of Lefevere’s last essays describes ideology as ‘the conceptual grid that consists of opinions and attitudes deemed acceptable in a certain society at a certain time, and through which readers and translators approach texts’ (1998, p. 48). In this thesis, ideology is understood to be a system of ideas developed by societies, nations and civilisations under the influence of beliefs, culture, politics, conventions and historical events. These influences guide people to develop individual and collective worldviews, which in turn determine appropriate communication and behaviour within societies. Ideology is an abstract concept and also a subjective one – that is, it is not based on absolute good or bad. Ideology is, however, evident in prevailing attitudes and beliefs regarding social, historical and cultural phenomena. Due to the diverse range of beliefs and cultures across the world, the ideologies of different nations and civilisations are often varied and may conflict with each other. For this reason, people from different communities and societal groups may interpret the same idea in a myriad of ways. The works that adhere to the general values of a community are more likely to be published and accepted without impediment, whereas works whose ideologies challenge, differ from or even contradict these values might be resisted.

It can be argued that the primary goal of patronage is to ensure that the worldviews or general ideas of an original text will not clash with those of the target culture. This approach is the most common, but it is not an absolute condition: at times, the intention of patronage is to invite new ideas and literary forms into the existing system. Poetics and patronage work together to ensure the works rendered to the target system are in accordance with the



appropriate perspectives and principles and meet the standards or expectations to which the relevant form of literature is held. The aim of rewriting is to create a designed image and to adapt or reconstruct a work from its original system to the new system.

### 2.1.2 Literary rewriting

Rewriting is a form of text handling or manipulation and a process of image-making. Lefevere (1986, p. 4) claims that ‘rewritings, in the widest sense of the term, adapts works of literature to a given audience and/or influences the ways in which readers read a work of literature’. He adds that rewriting can be ‘the channel through which the new, both formally and thematically, enters another literature’ or ‘a weapon in the conflict between opposing ideologies, opposing poetics’ (1984, p. 140). Therefore, rewriting can take place in either the original language, medium or literary form, or in an entirely new one. Rewriting processes include such operations as translation, auto-editing, summary, adaptation for children, anthologising, adapting a book into a comic strip or TV film, dubbing, criticism and reviewing. Consequently, a translator is not the only rewriter of a text: editors, literary critics and even authors themselves can be rewriters if they rewrite or manipulate the original text to reconstruct its image. For example, the children’s version of Daniel Defoe’s *Gulliver’s Travels* is a rewriting of the original work, even though both versions are written in English. Auto-editing is also a form of rewriting: *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1947) was originally Anne Frank’s personal record of her time spent hiding with her family during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands. After hearing Gerrit Bolkestein’s broadcast about ‘making a collection of diaries and letters after the war’ (cited in Lefevere, 1992b, p. 59), Anne auto-edited parts of her diary, including an early statement about her mother and her opinion on a first date, to make her words and behaviour conform to the expected image of a well-educated and elegant girl of the time.

Literary criticism constitutes another type of rewriting. Critics can influence readers' or audiences' approach to the original text without physically changing the text itself; instead, critics guide or even 'mislead' the readers to focus on certain aspects of a work, while diminishing or neglecting other elements of the original text. Lefevere (1998; 2000) gives a detailed account of the acculturation of German playwright Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage's Cucumber* (1939) in the Anglo-Saxon market, which provides a typical example of literary critics reconstructing an original text. In the play, Brecht expresses his opposition to the national socialist and fascist movements through irony. The eponymous Mother Courage decides to make her living from the war; however, she loses all three of her children in the very conflict from which she is trying to profit. Brecht's status as a cultural hero of Communist East Germany further enhanced his appeal to the left and correspondingly diminished his chances of pleasing the artistic and political right-wing.

When introducing Brecht to an Anglo-Saxon audience, several literary critics have actively attempted to weaken his political stance. For example, Robert W. Corrigan (1973, cited in Lefevere, 2000, p. 258) commented that 'if Brecht was a Marxist, he at least kept his integrity as an artist, he never genuflected to communism and as long as he lived, he never allowed his threat to become a shrine'. This comment intended to induce readers to focus on the aesthetic value of Brecht's works while ignoring his politics. Furthermore, Heinz Politzer (1982, cited in Lefevere, 2000, p. 243) commented that '[i]t is the West, which has welcomed this writer, discussed him, learned from him, and performed his plays'. This comment intended to induce readers to focus on the aesthetic value of Brecht's works while ignoring his politics. They downplays the opposing political stances of the writer and target system, paving an easier route to an acceptance of his works in the target culture. Literary criticism also contribute to the re-imaging of a literay work. Through their comments, literary critics exemplify highlight ceratin aspect of the literay work which might be eye-catching to the target readership, or which

is wanted to be stressed out, and purposefully neglect or beautify the aspect of work which might offend the potential audience, or might confronted to the ideology in the target culture.

Although rewriting takes many forms, translation is the most clearly recognisable and potentially the most influential of these, as it is able to project the image of an author and/or a work into another culture (Lefevere, 1985, p. 234; 1992b, p. 9). Translation is also regarded as a primary method of conveying meaning while also concealing the power relations that lie behind the production of that meaning (Bassnett, 1998, p. 136). The result of the translation process is the manifestation of negotiations between the two systems. This thesis focuses primarily on rewriting in relation to translation and what follows will be a review of this connection.

## **2.2 Translation as rewriting**

Lefevere regards translation as a particular mode of a broader practice, one which he at first terms ‘refracted text’ (1982, p. 16) and subsequently ‘rewriting’ (1985, p. 219). Lefevere published a series of articles and monographs expressing his ideas on translation as rewriting and discussing the extra-textual factors that influence the production of a translated work. Later, his discussions came to be known as ‘rewriting theory’ in the field of translation studies.

Lefevere (1982) proposes the metaphor of ‘refraction’ in his essay ‘Mother’s Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature’, stating that the original writer’s work gains exposure and achieves influence mainly through ‘misunderstandings and misconceptions’ or, to use a more neutral term, ‘refractions’ (Lefevere, 2000, p. 234). In this context, refraction refers to the adaptation of a work of literature for a different audience with the intention of influencing how the audience reads that work. This statement reveals Lefevere’s view of the relationship between an ST and the resulting TT: the ST might not be suitable for TT readers; thus, rather than being a mirror of the original text, the TT is produced

through a translator's interpretation of the ST under constraints determined by other factors. Therefore, the TT cannot be exactly the same as the ST. Since it is impossible for the TT to be an exact replica of the ST, refractions are inevitable and should be embraced. Lefevere (2000) analyses how the German playwright Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage's Cucumber* (1939) was introduced to the Anglo-Saxon market through refraction. Through refraction, both Brecht's political standing and his writing style have been reconstructed. Otherwise, Brecht's political standing as a cultural hero in communist East Germany, as well as his episodic style of writing (which will be discussed respectively in the section investigating constraints), would be difficult for Anglo-Saxon readers. Inevitably, the original contents and literary values are both 'distorted' or, as Lefevere suggests, 'misunderstood', and it is through this refraction that the original work is assimilated into a new culture.

The first full presentation of the term 'rewriting' appears in 'Why Waste Our Time on Rewrites' (Lefevere, 1985). Lefevere (1985, p. 219) proposes that the rewriting that occurs in translation is often specifically designed to push a piece of literature in a certain direction. As such, a translation no longer takes an inferior position in relation to the ST; rather, it becomes a work that is independent of but has close connections to the ST. A translation is thus a creative reproduction of the ST with a new purpose, one that is different from that of the original. This has breached the traditional evaluation standard that translation should be faithful to the original. In this sense, the role of a scholar of translation studies is not to criticise a translation or to analyse the extent to which the translation has faithfully rendered the aesthetic value or the writer's intention, but rather to explore how the translation has been recreated in the TT culture. Rewriting theory developed and matured gradually. Furthermore, Lefevere sums up his position presented in his book, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (1992b), and demonstrates its potential to guide research.

In most cases, rewriting is regarded as the adaptation of a work for a given audience or set of readers. However, Lefevere suggests that rewriting not only stabilises systems but also destabilises them (1986, p. 6); moreover, refractions introduce new poetological devices into a literary system (Lefevere, 1982, p. 19). The interactions between translation and other systems are mutual: translation does not passively accept the target cultural repertoire as a strategy for reconstructing a new image. Rewriting can work as a formative power in the target culture as well as a channel through which new forms and themes can enter another culture's literature (Lefevere, 1984, p. 140). The formative power of rewriting manifests in different manners, such as through the introduction of new concepts and literary genres.

As for the formative power of rewriting in the target culture, I refer to Evan-Zohar's polysystem theory on how the position of the translated literature in the target system influences translation strategies, despite the fact that his theory has been regarded as somewhat crude by later scholars (Bassnett, 1998, p. 126). According to Evan-Zohar (2000, p. 194), in most cases, when translated literature occupies a peripheral position in the literary system, the translator is mainly concentrating their efforts on finding the best ready-made, secondary models for the foreign text, and the result often portrays a greater discrepancy between postulated adequacy and achieved equivalence. By contrast, when a translated text assumes a central position in the process of creating new, primary models, the translator's main concern is not simply to call upon ready-made models in their native repertoire into which the STs could be transferred; instead, translators should be prepared to violate these conventions. Under such conditions, the chance that the translation will be close to the original in terms of adequacy (in other words, that it will represent a reproduction of the dominant textual relations of the original) is greater than in other cases.

Lin Kenan (2002) explores the role of Chinese translator Lin Shu in introducing foreign literature to China in Late Qing dynasty, which changed the patterns of narrative writing in

China. Before Lin Shu, all Chinese literary narratives invariably began each chapter with a couplet that revealed the contents of that chapter. It was Lin Shu who changed all this by introducing the foreign custom of chapter headings, and now most Chinese novels begin a chapter simply with a number. Furthermore, noticing the differences between the titles of literary works in the West and in China, Lin attempted to make Western titles more attractive to his Chinese audience by translating them in Chinese fashion. Thus, Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* became *Wu Du Gu Er (An Orphan in the Foggy Capital)*. Through Lin Shu's translation, China gained invaluable insights into Western customs, social problems, literary currents, ethical concepts and family relations. As Lin Kenan (2002, p. 166) argues, Lin Shu's translation served as an eye-opener in China and played a key role in the ideological preparation for the 1911 bourgeois revolutions. The example of Lin Shu's translation explains that rewriting is not merely constrained by the poetics of the target culture, as it can also contribute new genres to the established poetological system.

Even though Lefevere justifies the necessity of rewriting in translation, it should be noted that rewriters do not freely reconstruct or edit the ST; rather, they do so under certain constraints or control factors. However, Lefevere admits that the reasons leading to the rewriting may not be fathomable (1984, p. 4) and that it is pointless to speculate as to who changed what (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 61). This thesis argues that although a translation is produced with interactions from extra-textual factors, it would be subjective and arbitrary to attribute the rewriting of a specific expression to certain constraints in the absence of solid evidence. Lefevere also states that 'rewriters adapt, manipulate the original they work with to some extent, usually to make them fit in with the dominant, or one of the dominant ideological and poetological currents of their time' (1992b, p. 8). On this basis, we can view the constraints from another perspective: instead of being seen as the control factors, they can be regarded as the purpose or consequence of the rewriting.

Lefevere (1982/2000) argues that these and other constraints act as poetics and patronage while also noting the influence of ST culture. Lefevere (1985) re-categorises his original constraints to include the ‘universe of discourse’ and the source language (SL). The original text, where ideology, poetics, the universe of discourse and language come together, mingle and clash (1985, p. 233), is also regarded as a constraint. However, claiming that the ST is a constraint leading to rewriting is a generalising statement. In these two publications, the discussion of patronage has focused on ideological components. Lefevere (1992b, p. 41) argues that two factors determine the image of a work projected by a translation: in order of importance, these two factors are the translator’s ideology and the poetics. Since Lefevere does not provide a definite discussion of constraints, I review three of the constraints mentioned by Lefevere: ideology, poetics and the universe of discourse.

### 2.2.1 Ideological constraints

The concept of ideology has been investigated in the discussion of literature as a system. In relation to translation, ideology is a series of ideas through which the translator and potential readers accept and appreciate literature from a certain culture as ‘other’. The ideological purposes of rewriting in Lefevere’s analysis encompass two primary goals: the political standing and the general values of the target context.

To explain how ideology functions as a constraint on the translation, Lefevere (2000, pp. 243–244) analyses the attempts by which Bentley tried to integrate Brecht’s works, who supported communism and was regarded as a cultural hero in communist East Germany, into American value systems in 1967 during the Cold War. Although it is generally agreed that Brecht favoured a socialist or communist society, his work maintains a neutral stance in Bentley’s English translations. His ironic commentary on the war has been softened, and the obvious connection between war and commerce in the original play has become weakened

through abridgement. Lefevere (2000, p. 244) analyses that certain war-related words and phrases are presented in a nobler register in the translated version. For example, ‘Wir zwei gehn dort ins Feld und tragen die Sach aus unter Männern’ [‘The two of us will go out into that field and settle this business like men’] becomes: ‘The two of us will now go and settle the affair on the field of honor’ (Lefevere, 2000, p. 245). Therefore, Lefevere concludes that the purpose of this rewriting is to avoid arousing opposition from or offending the target readership.

Besides politics, ideological manipulation also serves to adjust a text for the widely recognised values of a society, such as the attitudes and images of the actors. This is not an absolute requirement; however, foreign works that comply with the values of the receiving culture are more likely to be well received. The example is the translation of ‘führt seine Leute in die Scheissgass’ (‘leads his people up shit creek’) as ‘leads his people into the smoke of battle’, which Lefevere (2000, p. 245) analyses as submitting to the code of the US entertainment industry. Lefevere highlights another example related to ideological manipulation in *Anne Frank’s Diary*. The first edition of the diary, edited by her father Otto Frank and published in 1947, contained a number of omissions, most of which were references to Anne’s awakening sexuality, such as a sentence in which she asks a girlfriend ‘whether, as a token of friendship, we should feel each other’s breasts’, as well as all references to masturbation. These references were excluded because they contradicted the image that an upper middle-class girl was supposed to present at the time of publication (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 63). Ideological manipulation regarding social values can also ensure the acceptance of a work. Anne Frank’s description of her parents’ marriage was removed from the first edition, and her comment that she would never be satisfied with ‘zo’n bekrompen leventje’ [‘such a limited life’] as her mother and her elder sister Margot seemed to have been willing to settle for was amended to ‘so ein einfaches Leben’ [‘such a simple life’]. Through these omissions, Anne Frank, who was curious about sex and bored enough to talk about it, was presented instead as



a cultural stereotype of the ‘proper’ young adolescent girl of the time who behaved ‘properly’ for a child of her age. She was presented as conforming to what was considered the proper cultural behaviour for an upper middle-class girl. Moreover, in her original diary, she described the flowers she received for her birthday as ‘de kinderen van Flora’ [‘the children of Flora’], which indicates that she had a knowledge of mythology; however, this is not something that a young girl of Anne’s age and social status would have been supposed to know, and so the translation rewrote this to say she received ‘Blumengrausse’ [‘flower greetings’].

Ideology is a decisive factor that consists of the opinions and ideas deemed acceptable in a certain society at a certain time. It is also a filter through which translators and readers of a TT approach the text. However, Lefevere describes the literary system in which translation functions as being controlled by two main factors: the translator’s ideology and the dominant poetics of the recipient culture (1992b, p. 41). This statement indicates the decisive influence of a translator’s own ideology in the translation process. Consequently, his rewriting theory emphasises the mediation of the translator in the process – that is, how the translator believes the translation should be viewed. This suggests that although ideologies may be imposed upon a translator by some form of patronage, the translator is ultimately the person who directly manipulates the text. However, this statement is somewhat questionable.

As an indispensable agent in the mediation between different languages and cultures, a translator ‘is in a position to evaluate the original text, to prepare sample translations, and to provide background information about the author’s importance as a literary innovator and cross-cultural communicator’ (Schulte, 1992, p. 1). As a result of this, translators have attracted more attention from researchers than literary agents, editors and publishers, all of whom also influence the production of a translation. However, focusing exclusively on the translator’s role may place translators in the awkward position of having all possible problems and errors in a translated text attributed to them. In reality, the final product is always the

outcome of ‘multiple translatorship’ (Alvstad *et al.*, 2017, p. 1) or the ‘agential network’ (Qi Lintao, 2016, p. 42). Both of these terms refer to the multiplicity of agents involved in the production and reception of a translation. A translator is not the sole decision-maker in the translation process: their agency is inextricably intertwined with that of other agents. Although Lefevere stresses that the ideology of the translator can be personal or imposed by some form of patronage, he neglects the fact that other ideologies can be introduced through the editing process even after the translators have completed their works.

### 2.2.2 Poetical constraints

Poetical manipulation is another notable feature of the translating process, one that acts as an effective strategy to help the translated work enter the target market smoothly. Poetics refers to the genre, style and literary devices of a work, as well as to its function in the literary system. The evaluation of a piece of literary work differs in different cultures, and different literary genres each have their own unique standards for an acceptable work. Not all texts that are favoured in one culture will be accepted in another. The aim of poetical manipulation is thus to mediate a piece of literary work for another culture or adapt it to another literary form.

As analysed by Lefevere (2000, p. 239), Brecht uses an episodic structure to force the audience to focus on the issues rather than to become involved with the characters and their emotions. Epic plays are a distinct genre typical of Brecht, emphasising the audience’s perspective and reaction to the piece through a variety of techniques that deliberately cause them to individually engage in a specific manner. However, the episodic structure of Brecht’s play and its stage directions are not suitable for the translation process. H. R. Hay’s translation, for instance, was rejected by the Broadway show actors: after the first readthrough, they felt alienated and bored. The play was regarded as too static. In other words, even though the episodic technique is a feature of Brecht’s writing, it was not suitable for the Broadway style, which impeded its acceptance. Lefevere (2000, pp. 239–243) explains how Bentley (1967)

rewrote Brecht to make his works more suitable to the Broadway market. Bentley (1967) turns a stage direction like ‘Wenn der Koch kommt, sieht er verdutzt sein Zeug’ [‘when the cook enters, he starts as he sees his things’] into ‘Then the Cook returns, still eating. He stares in astonishment at his belongings’ and ‘A gust of wind. Enter the Cook, still chewing. He sees his things’ (Lefevere, 2000, p. 242) as Lefevere analyses, this rewriting is more elaborate and more familiar to an American theatre.

Considering that this thesis explores the omissions made in the process of translation from Chinese to English, the comparison between Chinese and English poetics is explored. However, there are substantial differences between Chinese and English regarding poetics, and this thesis reviews only the issues most relevant to the research material. Plaks (1977, p. 309) regards the classification and categorisation of Chinese narratives as one of the challenges for Western scholars. This is perhaps because the narrative in Chinese unfolded in a manner opposite to its counterpart in the West from epic to romance and from romance to the novel (Herman *et al*, 2005, p. 116). In contrast, the Chinese narrative began as a product of a very dominant literary culture to account for history before taking on oral characteristics (Plaks, 1977, p. 311), and the orality provided a certain leavening to the written narratives. Literacy (wenyan) and orality co-exist in the Chinese narrative. An example is the *Shi Ji* (《史记》, *Records of the Grand Historian*) (Sima Qian, ca. 145 – ca. 85 BCE). Herman *et al*. (2005, p. 117) analysed that the *Shi Ji* invigorates its serious moral concerns with genuine passion and overcomes the naturally laconic terseness of its language with dramatic detail and an eye for the sensationalised fact, legend and sustained influence of the Chinese narrative culture. Plaks (1977, p. 312) observed that unlike the strict categorisation in a Western narrative, history and fiction are engaged in the mimesis of action in Chinese. Thus, the classification of a book might be ambiguous from the viewpoint of the English standard.

This reverence for written historical narrative also helps account for the traditional

relegation of oral storytelling narrative tradition of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The storytelling narratives are mainly for entertainment; however, a small number of these texts inevitably espoused the serious social and philosophical concerns of the day and infused these concerns into the presentation of extraordinary facts or events to heighten the interest of the reader (Herman *et al.*, 2005, p. 117). According to Shen Dan (1987, p. 238), Chinese fictions have a storytelling tradition, wherein there is invariably linguistic evidence of the presence of the narrating voice. The writers generally move back and forth quite freely in the narrative time. Even though the influence of the storytelling tradition waned as the novel developed from 1919 (the New Cultural Movement) onwards into a more modern form where there is seldom a direct address to the reader or an explicit reference to the narrating voice, the narrator's presence is still reflected in the form of fairly frequent narratorial commentary. By contrast, in English literature, since around the 1960s, there has been a gradual decrease in the narrator's interference and a progressive increase in immediacy (Shen Dan, 1987, p. 239).

Another difference is the organisation of the events and the speed of the narrative. Plaks (1977, pp. 314–315) argues that literary civilization in the West has tended to conceive of human existence in terms of a continuous succession of events in time, with the resulting sense of the event as a quasi-substantive entity, the substance of which existence is made. In contrast to this general reification of the event as a narrative unit, the Chinese tradition has tended to place nearly equal emphasis on the overlapping of events, the interstitial spaces between events, in terms of effect on non-events alongside of events in conceiving of human experience in time. Furthermore, Plaks (1977, p. 338) observes that given the motion of flux does not proceed simultaneously, at times the narrative speed leaps over years in an instant, while at others it 'slows down to the ponderous crawl of quotidian non-events, such as the interspersed verse, citation of documentary evidence, stereotyped speeches, etc.'. Thus, from the views of the Western standard, Chinese works lack dimension in temporal movement.

This different narrative tradition and style might indicate that the structure and writing style might not be appreciated in English poetics. Thus, to smooth the path of Chinese novels to an English-speaking audience, there might be a necessity to adapt the Chinese narrative according to the English standard. Mo Yan's works share these commonalities in poetics; in addition, Mo Yan also has his own individual idiosyncrasies. The analysis of Mo Yan's characteristics in writing and the reception and critique of his work in the West is presented in 4.1.

### 2.2.3 Universe of discourse as the constraint

The term 'universe of discourse' refers to the knowledge, learning, objects and customs to which a writer alludes in their text (Lefevere, 1985, p. 233). The features of the universe of discourse are particular to a given culture: they can include specific objects that exist or have special symbolic meanings in the relevant culture, as well as unique expressions or values and conventions shared by groups with the same cultural identities. These features are important components of the ST; however, not all features of the 'universe of discourse' would be accepted or understood by the TT readers in a manner similar to that of the ST readers. As Damrosch (2009, p. 46) suggests, the writer may assume a familiarity with dynasties and divinities about which the audience from another culture knows nothing; additionally, the work is probably in dialogue with a range of previously written works that the audience from another culture has not read. In the actual translation, the universe of discourse could form a cultural barrier for the readers from another culture. The example given by Lefevere in his analysis is a note by Catullus at the end of his 64th poem, which celebrates the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, that the bride's collar now no longer fits her neck: the reader needs to be told that the Romans believed that the successful consummation of marriage made the bride's neck swell slightly; otherwise, they would not understand the connotations of the text (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 87).

Due to cultural differences, not everything that is taken for granted in the ST culture will be understood, appreciated or even accepted by the target culture. A similar dilemma occurs in the SL, since language is the carrier of the culture. Idioms, proverbs and dialectal expressions could lead to confusion or misunderstanding in the target culture. This means that such unique expressions or conventions must be rewritten by, for example, adding an explanation or omitting material with the aim of facilitating understanding. This new category recognises the influence of the original culture on a text and its effects on translation: Readers from different cultures may have differing or even opposite interpretations of such items. Therefore, rewriting can be understood as a presentation of conflict and negotiations between the ST and TT cultures.

#### 2.2.4 Other scholars' discussion of constraints

The above exploration of constraints reveals that Lefevere's discussion of constraining factors is not fixed. Dimitris (2009, p. 243) observes that Lefevere's list of constraints varies across publications and sometimes even within the same publication. Aside from the constraints listed, Lefevere (2000, p. 237) mentions that 'the degree of compromise in a refraction will depend on the reputation of the writer being translated within the system from which the translation is made' and 'the degree to which the foreign writer is accepted into the native system will, on the other hand, be determined by the need that [the] native system has of him in a certain phase of its evolution'. However, Lefevere does not delve deeper into the discussion of the reputation of the writer. Lefevere's fluidity in terms of constraints allows other translation scholars to discuss these constraints. Chesterman (1997, p. 78) suggests five constraints: patronage, poetics, the universe of discourse, the SL and the translator's ideology. Gentzler (2001, pp. 136–138) refers to two constraints: ideology and poetic. Munday (2001, pp. 128–128) suggests three factors controlling the literary translation: the professionals within the literary system, patronage outside the literary system and the dominant poetics. Hatim

(2001, pp. 63–64) analyses seven controlling factors: the status of the original, the image that the target culture has of itself, the types of texts considered worthy, the levels of diction deemed acceptable, the intended audience, the cultural scripts with which the audience identifies or about which it is willing to learn and the translator's ideology in the sense of loyalty to particular modes of text reproduction. This classification is more detailed and specific and provides a clear understanding of the translator's ideology. Hatim's analysis of controlling factors is referenced later in the current work.

The nature of rewriting theory and even the entire cultural school approach is descriptive rather than prescriptive. Researchers need to investigate specific cases and discuss the patterns of constraints that apply to them, which may be a different approach from that identified by Lefevere. Based on textual analysis, we can observe the pattern of the rewritten text and further analyse the kind of image that the rewriters intended to construct, as well as whether the rewriting was carried out to conform to a particular ideology or adjust to the poetics, to filter out culturally specific expressions or to act as a shaping power that introduces new concepts or literary devices.

### **2.3 Shift as the manifestation of rewriting**

The focus of this thesis is to explore how rewriting is manifested in the post-production process or in the translated product. As Nord (1991, p. 122) suggests, when readers read a translated text, they are actually reading the translator's interpretation of the ST. Although the translated text might closely resemble the ST in terms of meaning and structure, it is nevertheless an amalgamation of the translator's understanding and interpretation of the ST and how it has been rendered to the TT readership. In this sense, all translation can be regarded as a rewriting of the ST. Thus, the concept of shift is used to define and identify rewriting in the current work.

‘Shift’ is a term used to denote the changes that are seen in a translation in comparison to the original text (Bakker et al., 2009, p. 269). These changes can be viewed as manifestations of manipulation. A shift in itself is neutral — neither good nor bad. However, it provides an entry point for detecting how the ST is being addressed, admitted and reconstructed in the TT culture. In the post-production stage, the manipulation (or the rewriting) is manifested through shifts: in other words, the deviations between the ST and the TT. Dukāte (2009, p. 49) offers insights into four shift models: J. P. Vinay and J. Darbelnet’s (1958/2000) model, J. C. Carford’s (1965) model, Kitty Van Lenven-Zwart’s (1989) model, and Gideon Toury’s (1995) model.

Vinay and Darbelnet’s (1958/2000) model includes an inventory of translation strategies and procedures, which can be labelled as ‘shifts’ (this term is not used in their own writings). They distinguish between two types of translation: direct and oblique. Direct translation may be compared to overt translation, and oblique translation may be compared to covert (changed in form) translation. According to Vinay and Darbelnet (2000, pp. 85–88), there are three main strategies associated with the former type of translation: borrowing, calque and literal translation. Borrowing is the direct transfer of SL words to the TL, such as the transfer of the Russian word *rouble* or *datcha* to English. Calque is a strategy in which SL expressions and structures are transferred to the TL, such as the transfer of the French *complements de la saison* to the English *compliments of the season*. Literal translation is the strategy of translating word for word, whereby every word in the ST is replaced with a word in the TT. Oblique translation can be achieved by applying the following procedures: transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation. Transposition is a structural change whereby a part of speech is translated into another part of speech, without changing the sense of the SL element. Modulation is a change that affects the semantics of the text, and modulation can be obligatory or optional. Equivalence is a strategy in which the same idea is expressed



using different words. The translation of idioms serves as a good example of this. Adaptation is the changing of a cultural reference because of cultural considerations. According to Vinay and Darbelnet (2000, p. 90), these procedures can be applied at three levels of the text: lexicon, syntax and message. Vinay and Darbelnet (2000, pp. 90–92) distinguish between obligatory and optional changes within two categories: servitude and optional. They consider that obligatory changes are made to address linguistic differences and that optional changes are made because of subjective factors.

The term ‘shift’ was formally introduced by Catford in *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*. Catford was the first scholar to define ‘shifts’ as ‘departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL to the TL’ (1965, p. 73). He explains that shifts are caused by the structural differences between the two languages involved. Catford singles out two major types of shifts: shift of level and shift of category. A shift of level occurs when a certain notion is expressed using grammar in one language and using its lexis in another; for example, the Russian *igrat* is shifted to the English *to play*, and the Russian *sigrat* is shifted to the English *to finish playing*. There are four sub-types of category shifts: structural shifts, class shifts, unit or rank shifts and intra-system shifts. A structural shift is a shift in the grammatical structure of the text segment, such as the word-order differences between languages. For example, the English *I love you* becomes *je t’aime* in French. A class shift denotes cases in which one part of speech has to be translated into another. Unit or rank shifts are cases in which translation equivalents are placed at different ranks in the language in question. For example, a word may be translated into a morpheme, as in the French *vieillard* and the English *old man*. In this case, a word is transformed into a word group. It is obvious that Catford sees shifts as linguistic phenomena of a grammatical or lexical nature. He also believes that they are normally unavoidable in translation, except in literal translation. However, as indicated by Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997, p. 75), besides deviations that are linguistic in

character, there are also deviations that cannot be attributed to language. These deviations have often been labelled as mistakes or errors in translation.

Anton Popovič (1971, p. 79) defines a translational shift as ‘all that appears as new with respect to the original or fails to appear where it might have been expected’. The expression ‘where it might have been expected’ makes this definition more flexible than that presented by Catford and enables researchers to specify their own definition in each study. Popovič notes that almost all translations contain this other type of deviation and assumes that they cannot be mistakes, thus broadening the notion of shifts. He deals mainly with literary translations and views shifts as a stylistic category, labelling them ‘shifts of expression’. Popovič includes in this notion linguistic phenomena as well as deviations resulting from literary, textual and cultural considerations. Popovic explains that these deviations are not really mistakes because they are not the result of the translator’s ignorance or incompetence. Rather, they are signs of the translator’s attempt to produce a translation that would correspond to the target reader’s expectations and to the norms in place in the target culture. Popovič distinguishes between constitutive and individual shifts, viewing the former as system bound. These shifts are termed ‘constitutive’ because they are constitutive of the style of the translation. Individual shifts occur as a result of individual considerations of the translator. Popovič defines one more type of shift: the generic shift. This type of shift is used to denote a phenomenon in which the literary genre of the original and that of the translation do not match. As examples of shifts, Popovič also mentions such phenomena as concretisation, a tendency towards archaisms, explication and intensification of meaning.

Van Leuven-Zwart (1989) explores the similarities and dissimilarities between the ST and TT and categorises shifts into obligatory and optional shifts. The former is dictated by the differences between linguistic systems, such as the lack of correspondence between related lexical items in the SL and TL; in other words, obligatory shifts are applied with the aim of

rendering the information as close to the ST as possible. As a result, it has been noted that not all shifts necessarily lead to the reconstruction of the ST. In contrast, it is often overlooked that literary (word-for-word) translation can lead to a distortion of the ST. Attempting to render meaning exactly at the surface level might lead to a distortion of the text's connotations and implications, as seen in the example above regarding how rewriting acts as a cultural filter. Optional shifts are those applied by the translator for stylistic or ideological reasons. These include lexical and semantic additions, omissions and substitutions at the micro level, as well as additions to, omissions from and rearrangements of the text at the macro level. However, in translated literary works, it is often difficult to determine whether lexical and semantic shifts at the micro level are obligatory or optional. Said (1983, p. 39) suggests that all reading is misreading and that no one reading is better than any other; hence, all readings, potentially infinite in number, are equally misinterpretive in the final analysis. Therefore, shifts at the micro level could even be due to differences in the understanding of the ST between the translator and the researcher. Compared to the complexity of identifying shifts at the micro level, additions and omissions of several lines, paragraphs or pages are easier to identify as contrived rewriting with the aim of reconstructing the text.

Toury (2012, p. 80) distinguishes between two types of shifts: obligatory shifts, which he describes as linguistically motivated, and non-obligatory shifts, which he considers as resulting from literary or cultural considerations. This classification is similar to the one by Van Leuven-Zwart (1989). However, Toury relates shifts to norms. Thus, if the translation contains more non-obligatory than obligatory shifts, the initial norm is that of acceptability; if, on the other hand, the obligatory shift prevails, then the initial norm is that of adequacy.

In relation to shifts, Levý (1969, cited in Hermans, 1999, p. 21) claims that translation is 'a hybrid product, a conglomerate, part of which refers back to the original text while other parts reveal the translator's input'. Levý's claim concerns both the nature of and the constraints

placed on the production of the translation. Because of this feature, it can always be said that a translation contains shifts. In this context, Bakker, Koster and Van Leuven-Zwart (2009) explain that even when nothing new appears in the translation compared to the TT, it can still be claimed that a translation contains shifts with respect to the target culture, as it might then violate the expected norm and, as a result, acquire a different function from the one the ST fulfilled in the source system. On the one hand, it might be claimed that shifts are the manifestations of manipulation, particularly if considered from the perspective of Levý's observation regarding the translation's double bind. However, it seems that not all shifts can be regarded as manipulations or rewritings. For example, grammar-related shifts can hardly be considered manipulations in the conventional sense of the word. Shifts that result from cultural or ideological considerations can be labelled as instances of conventional manipulation. Conventionally, the word 'manipulation' has a negative connotation: that of distortion. However, Dukāte (2009) suggests that there are three types of manipulation: manipulation as improvement, manipulation as handling and manipulation as distortion. The inevitable changes resulting from the linguistic differences between the languages in question are examples of manipulation as handling. Unannounced optional changes, depending on their effect in the text, may be labelled as improvement or distortion.

The understanding of literary works is open to interpretation and it is, therefore, difficult to determine whether a shift is due to the translator's purposeful manipulation of the ST, their different understanding of the ST, or a mistranslation caused by linguistic (in)competence. In the case of Chinese to English translation, due to their different grammatical structures and lexical natures, for example, the phrase units, word order, use of active and passive voice, as well as the lack of equivalences, level shifts and category shifts suggested by Catford are substantial. Therefore, shifts such as transposition and modulation at the micro level are regarded as obligatory procedures for transferring the Chinese text into fluent English.

Therefore, when rewriting is discussed in this thesis, emphasis is placed on the changes made at the textual level. More precisely, the focus is on the omissions and abridgements at the textual level because it is apparent that these discrepancies are contrived by the translator or other agents, such as editors and publishing houses. This thesis aims to discuss the consequences of such omissions and abridgements and to investigate their key features.

## **2.4 The application of rewriting theory in translation studies**

Rewriting theory is instrumental in situating a translation within a broader sociocultural context. Researchers use rewriting theory to analyse the influence of sociocultural factors on the production of a translation work.

From the perspective of rewriting theory, Chang Nam Fung (1998) takes a descriptive approach to explore the contradictions between the emphasis on faithfulness in Chinese translation theory and the ideological manipulation in translation practice. Chang first examines how the selection of texts reflects ideological manipulation by analysing Chinese educator Liang Qi Chao's (1873–1929) standard of selection. Liang observes that at the inception of reforms in European countries, 'people of great learning and lofty ideals' often wrote novels to express their political views, and these works changed public opinions of the whole country' (cited in Chang, 1998, p. 237). Thus, he selected works by famous foreign writers that were of relevance to the current political situation in China and translated them (Chang, 1998, p. 238). In subsequent decades, literary translators purposefully utilised translation as a strategy to enlighten people with regard to reforms or even as a weapon in political struggles.

Chang analyses the contradiction from the sociocultural context. A possible reason for this is that the translator's theoretical discussion is influenced by the concept of loyalty, which has always been valued in traditional Chinese society. This ideal pursuit of faithfulness is

‘inspired by a conservative ideology’ (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 51). The contradiction also reflects the following analysis by Lefevere (1992b, p. 31): ‘if linguistic consideration enters into conflict with considerations of an ideological ... nature, the latter tend out to win’. Therefore, Chang observes that the contradiction in Chinese translation theory and practice presents ideological manipulation in translation.

Fang Kairui (2005) discusses the original English version of ‘A Voyage to Lilliput’ in *Gulliver’s Travels* and in the Chinese translation, *Tanying Xiaolu* (《谈瀛小录》), and highlights instances of character distortion due to ideological manipulation. In the translation, the position of Gulliver’s father is strengthened, and Gulliver’s independent adventure is changed to a trading activity with his father. These changes were made because the values of the Chinese feudal system stress the superior position of the father in the family and require sons to be loyal. Furthermore, a description is added about the Emperor being worshipped by Gulliver. This addition conforms to the feudal system, in which the Emperor enjoys absolute power and is worshipped by the whole society. Through these strategies, the original English adventure novel was rewritten to ensure that the content of the story was more acceptable within Chinese cultural and social systems.

Zhao Wenjing (2009) studies ideological manipulation in the reconstruction of the image of a literary work by taking the construction of Ibsen in China as an example. First, Zhao examines the sociocultural context of the period in which Ibsen was translated to Chinese, as well as Hu Shi’s capital as a literary critic and translator. Zhao explores the social context of 1911, a time when the feudal regime retained its ethics code, arguing that Hu Shi and other cultural reformers intended to undermine the feudal tradition and forge a new cultural space by introducing foreign works. At the time, the status of Chinese women in the family and society could not have been lower. Ibsen’s plays and their iconoclastic spirit supplied Hu Shi and other

reformers with the necessary elements for political stimulus. Ibsen did not become well known to the Chinese reading public until 1918 when Hu Shi published his critical essay, 'Ibsenism', in the special issue of *Ibsen on New Youth*, which was an extremely popular journal among advanced intellectuals. At the time, Hu Shi was a prestigious professor who held discourse power. Hu's works quickly gained a large readership and became cultural capital in Chinese academia, which further promoted Ibsen's popularity among educated Chinese people.

Zhao analyses Hu's reconstruction of Ibsen primarily in two ways: Hu's critical introduction of Ibsen, and Hu's translation strategy. In his essay, 'My Credo and Its Evolution', Hu Shi asserted that 'I read all of Ibsen's plays and was particularly pleased by *An Enemy of the People*' (1931, p. 245, cited in Zhao Wenjing, 2009, p. 146). This suggests that Hu Shi's essay was based on an extensive reading of Ibsen. However, in Hu Shi's paper in *New Youth*, only nine of Ibsen's 26 plays were introduced: *When We Dead Awaken*, *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, *Rosmersholm*, *Pillars of Society*, *John Gabriel Borkman*, *An Enemy of the People*, *The Wild Duck* and *The Lady from the Dead*. Hu introduces Ibsen merely as a realistic writer and is mainly interested in his ability to diagnose social problems.

In the specific translation strategies, Hu applies descriptions of the plays to parallel situations in China and explicitly interpolates his own criticism of Chinese social evils. Hu attempts to insert 'Hu-shi-ism' into Ibsenism by injecting the latter with his interpretations and assumptions. Through Hu's filtering in introducing Ibsen and the additions of Hu-Shi-ism (which refers to Hu Shi's own ideas) in his translation, Ibsen came to symbolise a revolutionary fighter and a social reformer rather than an artist. In critical works, very little attention is devoted to the aesthetic qualities of his plays, as if Ibsen had become famous only because of his ideological significance.

The appeal of rewriting theory is that it identifies important contextual factors that impinge on translation. The above studies demonstrate the manner in which these extra-textual factors operate in producing translated work and take into account the interplay between textual variables and power or patronage in the broader sociocultural context in which the translation occurs.

## **2.5 Previous studies of omission**

This section discusses previous studies on omission, providing insight into the analysis of omissions by approaching the subject from multiple perspectives. This discussion aims to explore omissions in relation to the translation of literary text, the aspects used to probe this issue, and the methodology adopted to conduct research.

In the field of translation studies, according to Delisle *et al.* (1999, p. 165), an omission is regarded as ‘a translation error where the translator fails to render a necessary element of information from the source text in the target text’. Here, the omission is a negative result of translation failure, which should be minimised. This statement clearly emphasises the superior position of the ST and indicates that the translation should be as close as possible to the ST, which contradicts the understanding of translation in the current study. There are also positive views on omission. Chesterman (1997, p. 68; pp. 116–117) suggests that omission is a pragmatic strategy that can be used to present information in a more concise manner or to present essential information, such as a summary. Baker (2018, pp. 43–45) indicates that omission is one of the translation strategies that can be adopted to address non-equivalence problems at the word level and above. Accordingly, Chesterman and Baker thus highlight the pragmatic aspect of omissions in dealing with linguistic, cultural and pragmatic issues. Lefevere acknowledges the function of purposeful omission in reconstructing the original text. In his study of rewriting, omission is used as a method to reconstruct the desired character



image of Anne Frank (1992b, pp. 60–68), as well as a strategy to smooth Brecht’s reception in Broadway (1982, pp. 237–241).

Omissions have been studied by other scholars in different aspects. Rodica Dimitriu (2004, p. 165) examines omissions in translations, defining them as ‘a strategy by means of which professional translators delete words, phrases, sentences, sometimes even more consistent parts of the source texts in order to adjust – linguistically, pragmatically, culturally, or ideologically – the translated text for their target audiences’. This definition acknowledges the positive aspects of omission in solving pragmatic issues and reconstructing the desired image for the target readership. In his paper, Dimitriu explores the purpose of omissions from nine categories: ensuring linguistic accuracy and stylistic acceptability; presenting all information in a more concise manner; presenting only essential information; avoiding unnecessary bumps in terms of culture, time and space; observing text type and genre-related norms; observing editorial norms; avoiding cultural taboos; supporting the ideology of a political system; and translating for a particular social group or audience. The first three categories observe the linguistic or pragmatic functions of omission in translation, whereas the last six categories reflect the interaction between translation and extra-textual factors as well as multiple constraining factors, such as editor and target audience, in the reshaping of a literary work.

A notable point in Dimitriu’s paper is that omissions can support the ideology of a political system since people may be inclined to think that additions and expansions may enhance or support the ideology. An example given by Dimitriu (2004) to demonstrate translations supporting the ideology of a political system is the Romanian translation of Thomas H. Huxley’s *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936, translated by Huxley and Eliabde, 1974). Some characters in the original novel express the idea of pacifism, which suited the communist ideology of The Socialist Republic of Romania (1965–1989). However, through the

protagonist's diary, Huxley expresses his dislike of any totalitarian system, including fascist and communist regimes. In the translation, comments related to his dislike of communism have been omitted at all levels of the text, from individual words and sentences to paragraphs and chapters. One radical omission is the whole of Chapter 35, in which the protagonist voices scepticism about the revolution, the planned economy, and the industrialisation and concentration of power, as he believes only in individual development and self-awareness. By omitting the ideology that contradicts that of the receiving culture, the ideology or values in the receiving system are reinforced and emphasised.

Whereas Dimitriu's paper explores the different purposes of omission, Julie Parker (2013) focuses on the reconstruction of character image through the omission of the word **המע** (with her) in Genesis 3:6b and discusses the possible factors leading to this omission. Even people who do not read the Bible are aware of Eve's pivotal role in Adam sinning. Parker refers to the biblical text, Hebrew grammar, commentaries, ancient sources and 50 English translations of Genesis 3:6b published between 1382 and 2011. Parker (2013, p. 729) disagrees with the traditional criticism of Eve succumbing to temptation in the Garden of Eden, arguing that the English translation of the Hebrew word **המע** (with her) is a misinterpretation. Adam is never directly mentioned, addressed, consulted or acknowledged in any way in Genesis 3:6b until Eve gives him the fruit. However, Parker explains the significance of **המע** (with her): the repeated use of this phrase creates the impression that Adam is beside Eve when the serpent talks to her.

Parker (2013) observes that one-third of the English translations do not contain 'with her', and she consequently focuses on analysing the omission of 'with her' in the revised standard version (RSV) commissioned by the Standard Bible Committee (1952) and the 1985 Jewish Publication Society *New Tanakh* (NJPS). The RSV is a revision of the American standard version (ASV), which is itself a revision of the King James version (KJV). Likewise,

NJPS is a revision of the 1917 Jewish Publications Society *Tanakh* (JPS). However, in the ASV, KJV and JPS, the equivalent of ‘with her’ can be found. Parker examines the unpublished agenda notes of the Standard Bible Committee and reveals that in the RSV, the omission of ‘with her’ is not an oversight; instead, it is excluded on purpose. Parker contacted Robert Alter, who wrote *Genesis: Translation and Contemporary* (1996), via email for his justifications. In Alter’s translation, he leaves out ‘with her’, which he attributes to his policy as a translator to represent every Hebrew word unless it sounds absolutely bizarre; additionally, Alter explains that he did not realise that he had skipped the phrase ‘with her’. Parker also notices that Jerome’s Latin translation, the *Vulgate*, dating from the late 4th to the early 5th century CE, is the first source to refrain from stating that Adam was ‘with her’. Parker refers to the literary sources by Jane Barr (1979, cited in Parker, 2013, p. 737), who suggests that Jerome’s strong feelings about women (often antipathetic) influenced his translation and observes that whenever Jerome approaches a passage in which women are involved, his usual objectivity deserts him, which is to say his translation is biased.

Parker does not provide an absolute reason for the omissions in the RSV and NJPS, but she does provide reasonable analysis based on her contact with Alter and the resources in Jerome’s *Vulgate*. The omission of ‘with her’ can be either inadvertent or intentionally used to emphasise Eve’s culpability. Some translators may have viewed the expression ‘with her’ as unimportant. Even though the reason for the omission is speculative, its consequence is evident. The myth of ‘the fall’ has become so firmly embedded in the collective conscience, with Eve as the culpable character, that translators may convey the story without realising that they are contradicting the Hebrew text. Blaming Eve alone has considerable consequences not only for understanding Gen 3:6b but also for generating ideas about women.

Parker notes the reconstruction of character image through the omission of phrases, whereas Wang Xiaoli explores omissions at the textual level. Wang Xiaoli (2019) explores

omissions and their impact on character reshaping in the literary translation of *Wolf Totem* (Jiang Rong, 2004; Jiang Rong and Goldblatt, 2008). Wang Xiaoli (2019) explains how omissions reconstruct the original text in the English context by considering the sociocultural constraints in the translation process, and, in doing so, he analyses the side effects of omissions and explores the possible factors leading to them.

The original novel is semi-autobiographical, based on the author's experience of being sent away from Beijing as a young intellectual to nomadic Inner Mongolia. The novel relates the protagonist Chen Zhen's changing attitudes towards wolves, his reflections on Han Chinese culture, the relationship between the wolf and the Inner Mongolian people, and ecological deterioration as a consequence of agriculture. The English version of *Wolf Totem* contains significant omissions: approximately 90,000 of the 510,000 Chinese characters from the original are left untranslated. Wang Xiaoli (2019) explores the omitted texts from three categories: protagonist mental processes, protagonist thoughts when observing the wolf cubs, and cultural 'bumps'.

In the original novel, the protagonist Chen Zhen is depicted as a critical and curious young intellectual who is expelled from the city to live and work with the nomadic people of Inner Mongolia. As a member of Han Chinese society, Chen views wolves as hated predators. During his time in Inner Mongolia, however, he is impressed by the local wolf-centric spirituality, which compels him to doubt whether the Han Chinese people's ideas about wolves are justifiable. He becomes fascinated with the wolf, the totem of the nomadic people, and he even raises a wolf himself. This provides him with insight into the key role of wolves in the life cycle of the grasslands, as well as in that of the Han people. In the translation, there are substantial omissions of material related to Chen Zhen's monologue about accepting and appreciating wolves, as well as his association of wolves with important Chinese historical figures and idioms. The omissions primarily serve as a recoding of poetics. However, as a side

effect, English readers are presented with a thinly characterised Chinese young man who, at first, is shocked to see the wolves but eventually calms down due to the villagers' displeasure at his reaction. The emotional turmoil is thus toned down, but Chen's character is only partially presented in the English version. In the English version, Chen's critical-thinking monologue about Han Chinese culture was omitted at the request of the English editors due to their belief that the fascinating descriptions of the exotic Mongolian culture and the universal concern for humans, animals, nature and culture would be more attractive to a Western readership. Through omission, the characters are thinly described, flat, rationalised and less complex, as they are of secondary importance when compared to the wolves and the plots. Due to omission, the structure of the prototext was changed not for linguistic reasons but rather to provide a different emphasis. The genre and function of the original text have been altered. The semi-autobiographical novel has been converted to one that appeals to the spirit of environmentalism.

Besides the reshaping of characters, the omissions from *Wolf Totem* also serve as an effective strategy to remove cultural barriers. According to Wang Xiaoli (2019), a three-page-long description was deleted that describes how Chen seeks to determine whether the idiom '狼烟四起' (the warning 'wolf smoke', which signals the approach of enemy forces from all sides) has something to do with wolves. The omitted message depicts in detail the origin and interpretation of this idiom from different literary sources. Although the passage contributes to Chen's identity as an intellectual, a thinker and a person who loves to search for answers to his questions, the cultural knowledge embedded in the text could require additional explanation for target readers, which, in turn, would significantly increase the text length and possibly bore readers. Thus, the omission can be regarded as a strategy to remap a cultural gap and facilitate the reading process.

This review of the previous omission-related studies has provided insights in terms of

the consequences of omissions. Indeed, the consequences of omissions are not singular; rather, they can start a chain effect. For example, the omission of ideological or poetical components, as well as the remapping of cultural gaps, can further influence the reconstruction of certain characters. Although ‘we can never arrive at all the causes or effect of something as complex as translation’ (Chesterman and Williams, 2002, p. 57), the analysis of the consequences should be comprehensive and not limited to immediate effects. The goal of analysing omissions is not to criticise what has been lost but rather to explore how the ST has been ‘manipulated’ to create a ‘desired’ or ‘expected’ image.

## **2.6 Previous studies of the English translation of *L&D***

This section will review previous studies of the English translation of *L&D* with the purpose of identifying the perspectives from which the issue is probed, the theoretical framework that is employed, and the methodologies adopted to conduct the study. I have divided my exploration of these studies into three sections: a discussion of translation strategies for cultural items, an investigation of the translation of political rhetoric, and an analysis of the omitted passages lacking from the TT.

### **2.6.1 Discussion of translation strategies for cultural contents**

The largest proportion of articles about the *L&D* English translation fall into this category. The primary concern of this group of studies is exploring Goldblatt’s translation strategies and whether the translation is faithful to the original. Most of the examples in this category are concerned with Chinese cultural information.

In Sun Huijun’s (2014) study of Goldblatt’s mediation of *L&D*, Sun suggests that Goldblatt adjusts details in the translation process and that these adjustments are due to his consideration of the target readership. Sun provides the example of the translation of ‘民国三十五年’ (Mo Yan, 2006, p. 13), which is not rendered in English as ‘the 35<sup>th</sup> year of the

Republic’ but instead as ‘[year] 1946’ (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 14). Sun (2014, p. 82) indicates that the word-for-word translation may confuse English readers who lack the relevant cultural background knowledge, whereas the adjustment to ‘1946’ is clearer and more accessible. It is worth noting that Sun discusses the translation under the subtitle of ‘葛浩文是否重新讲述了莫言的故事’ (‘Does Goldblatt retell Mo Yan’s story?’) (Sun, 2014, p. 82). It cannot be denied that the translator takes steps to clarify the messages of the ST that require cultural and historical background knowledge to understand, but does this constitute a retelling of the story? It is worth considering how rewriting, retelling or reconstructing are defined in the translation of literary texts, especially in light of the significant variances in grammar and syntax between English and Chinese.

Many studies within this category focus on an evaluation of Goldblatt’s translation strategies, which is an inevitably subjective process due to the individual scholars’ differing perspectives. For example, taking *L&D* as an example, Shao Lu (2013) discusses the issue of being *faithful* and *pseudo-faithful* in translation. One of the examples provided is Goldblatt’s translation of ‘天津卫十八街的大麻花’ (Mo Yan, 2006, p. 5), which is rendered literally as ‘fried fritters on Tianjin’s Eighteenth Street’ (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 5). Shao (2013, p. 63) argues that using the literal translation without adding a note or explanation about the particular import of Tianjin’s Eighteenth Street filters out important cultural messages and is therefore not a faithful translation. However, the translation is fluent, and this may reduce the reading difficulty for the target audience. The same example is discussed by Cui Weisong (2016), who holds an opposing view, arguing that literal translation increases the reading difficulty, as the TT readers may wonder why fried fritters on this street are of such great interest. Thus, Cui suggests that providing some brief background could facilitate understanding. These analyses and criticisms are worthy of note, but it should be remarked that

their primary focus is on the degree of faithfulness to the ST, and their assumptions are based upon what is acceptable in the eyes of the TT readers. Therefore, a change of focus may provide a different perspective regarding the effectiveness of Goldblatt's strategies.

Other examples of similar studies are available. For example, Liu Geng and Lu Weizhong (2016) study the translation of idioms, Yang Shasha (2016) investigates the translation of cultural load words, and Chen Qiansa (2019) explores the translation of proverbs. However, these will not be examined in detail here, as their analyses are similar. These articles have enriched the body of studies relating to Goldblatt's translation; however, their focus is on the various strategies adopted by the translator. These studies tend to analyse whether Goldblatt's translation is faithful to the original from a linguistic perspective and regard linguistic unfaithfulness as a strategy to facilitate reading.

However, in the field of literary translation, the concept of faithfulness to a text has multiple meanings. Even the title of Shao's article, 'Faithfulness or Unfaithfulness?' reflects a multi-layered understanding of faithfulness in literary translation. There is very little linguistic correspondence between Chinese and English, and when producing a literary translation in a target language so distant from the language and culture of the source language, it is rare to find absolute, direct correspondences. A literal translation is therefore difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. This suggests that modulations and transpositions are necessary within the translation process, but these procedures do not necessarily reconstruct ST in the target culture, which this thesis attempts to explore.

#### 2.6.2 Studies on the translation of political discourse

A substantial amount of analysis of the translation of culturally related messages in *L&D* is available, but analysis of the translation of political messages is underdeveloped. Jia Yanqin (2016) examines Goldblatt's translation of political discourse in *L&D* by categorising



the presentations of political discourse in the novel into political terms and analysing the political rhetorical structure and the omissions of political messages. Jia separates the translation of political terms into two groups: concepts and vocabularies that already have a standard translation in English (or lexical items that originate from English), and concepts and vocabularies without a standard translation in English. The former includes ‘文化大革命’ (‘Cultural Revolution’), ‘土地改革’ (‘Land Reform’) and ‘大跃进’ (‘Great Leap Forward’). For this group, the standard translation has been adopted. For Chinese words that appear frequently in the novel and whose literal translations in English are lengthy, Goldblatt simplifies them. For example, ‘高级公社’ (‘advanced cooperative commune’) becomes ‘advanced co-ops’, ‘农村合作社’ (‘agricultural cooperative’) becomes ‘co-ops’, and ‘人民公社’ (‘People’s Commune’) is simply translated as ‘Commune’. Meanwhile, the latter group consists of Chinese expressions (often with a special historical context) that do not yet have standard English translations. Goldblatt translates these expressions literally: for example, ‘走资派’ (translated as ‘capitalist-roader’) and ‘反革命’ (translated as ‘counter-revolutionaries’). Focus is also placed on the various strategies Goldblatt adopts to render these terms, but the discussion of the wider impacts is limited.

In the second category, Jia studies the translation of political rhetoric, especially the specific structure of political discourse during the Cultural Revolution. In one example, the ST text ‘我代表党，代表政府，代表西门屯的穷爷们儿...’ (Mo Yan, 2006, p. 25) is not translated literally as ‘I represent the Party, represent the government, and represent the impoverished residents of Ximen Village’; instead, it is rendered as ‘I represent the Party, the government, and the impoverished residents of Ximen Village’ (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 21). Jia suggests that the repeated use of verbs is a characteristic of the political rhetoric in the Cultural Revolution and is intended to create emphasis. However, this repetition in the

literal translation might be viewed as a redundant feature, as the English translation has more concern for conciseness in its language.

The concentration of Jia's study are the strategies for translating political terms and discourse, but she does also note the omission of political messages at a macro level. Jia highlights the list of omissions in Chapter 33 but does not provide an extended analysis. She does, however, attribute these omissions to the manipulation of Chinese political messages based on Western ideology but there is further capacity for elaboration on this notion. It is arguable that Jia's interpretations of the reasoning behind Goldblatt's strategies do not seem entirely balanced. Mo Yan's quotations of political rhetoric carry political messages much more explicitly than his political satire. Thus, it would seem to be contradictory for Goldblatt to adopt various strategies to introduce direct political rhetoric into the English version but at the same time omit political satire due to Western ideology. Moreover, even though the contents of the omitted text are related to politics, their narrative function is either discussing minor characters who only appear once or twice in the novel, or as flashbacks and flashforwards, which interrupt the consistent and complete narration of one story. It is potentially arbitrary to judge whether these omissions were made due to the text's content or its form.

Bonnie S. McDougall (2014) studies the acceptance of contemporary Chinese literature in translation, observing that works critiquing China, written by Chinese authors and published outside China, sell more copies than works of fiction by Chinese authors published in China. One such example is *Wild Swans* by Jung Chang (1991), which narrates the suffering of three generations of females in a single Chinese family against the backdrop of political events and movements in the 20th century. The book was published in the UK in 1991 and sold 10 million copies worldwide. Its success indicates that English language readers do not reject books that are critical of contemporary China. McDougall's observation provides a contradiction to Jia's

suggestion that the omission of political messages is attributable to Western readers' reluctance to read Chinese politics.

### 2.6.3 Omission as a focus

The omissions in *L&D* are first identified and discussed by Wang Lu (2012). Wang adopts creative treason as the theoretical framework and textual analysis for the method. Wang's thesis discusses Goldblatt's use of linguistic rewriting, cultural rewriting and omissions at a textual level. Wang looks at four types of omission: indigestible cultural elements, similar plots, minor characters and complex descriptions. Indigestible cultural elements are defined by Wang as Chinese legends that cannot be fully understood without knowledge of the contextual background. Similar plots are defined as those that have been narrated more than once by different narrators. The examples Wang provides show how complex descriptions are related to the multi-layered narrative structure. Their omission from the novel is attributable to the translator's creative manipulation of the ST in an effort to adapt it to the target culture. In this regard, the omissions are understood as a method of simplifying and clarifying the text for an English-speaking readership.

Wang evaluates the omissions as a translator's creative treason, from which it is reasonable to deduce that Wang regards the translator as the most decisive factor in these omissions. However, Goldblatt explicitly stated that some omissions were not made by him but, instead, by the publisher, as these editors did not have a background in Chinese language or culture. Therefore, the only standard they could have used for their editorial decisions would have been making Mo Yan's stories read fluently in English (Goldblatt, 2011a; Sparks, 2013; Shi Jianfeng, 2014). Therefore, when approaching the systematic omission of paragraphs or continuous pages, it is difficult to determine whether the translator or the editor made the omission. Attributing omissions as a translator's creative treason might simplify the multiple

factors that contribute to the final translated product.

Huang Xin (2014) studies omissions as they relate to characters' voices, cultural memories of political movements and aesthetic descriptions, such as those of the moon and flowers. Huang contends that the characters' voices have been omitted to the greatest degree and highlights how political criticism is primarily covertly presented through the voices of animals and the character 'Mo Yan'. In this way, these omissions obscure a full understanding of Mo Yan's political views and avoid readers having to deal with unfamiliar issues, such as memory and the significance of reincarnation. Moreover, Huang links the omissions to criticisms of Mo Yan after he became a Nobel laureate, such as those made by the Chinese writer, Ai Weiwei (Aw, 2012), or the internationally renowned author, Salman Rushdie (Daley, 2012), that Mo Yan is a 'patsy to the regime'. Huang further claims that the translator's simplified version reduces Mo Yan's criticism of the government and the Communist Party, which is likely to have contributed to the above writers' criticism of Mo Yan.

I agree with Huang's analysis that the omissions reduce Mo Yan's political criticism, as much of the criticism is expressed through the animals' perspectives and voices. It is evident that the omissions result in a weaker conveyance of meaning and only a partial representation of the political concerns in the eyes of Chinese readers. However, as the political satire and criticism are presented covertly, it is also possible that the English editors simply regarded such content as stories that were not directly linked to the primary storyline. Besides, both Ai and Rushdie expected Mo Yan to be sympathetic to dissidents protesting against the Chinese government, but, in the end, they were disappointed by his silence on political issues. However, it might be questioned whether it was the translation that influenced their comments.

Both Wang Lu (2012) and Huang Xin (2014) suggest that consideration of the English-speaking readership is an important factor. However, these two studies were conducted by

Chinese scholars, who may lack a comprehensive understanding of the preferences of an English-speaking readership. Their assertions that the translation is more suitable for an English-speaking readership or that the political content of Mo Yan's novel would be difficult for English-speaking readers to understand need more evidential grounding to counteract any potential bias or assumptions on the scholars' part.

Yan Jia (2013) uses Amazon book reviews as evidence to assess the habitus of Goldblatt's translation. Yan's thesis is the first to study Goldblatt's translations from the reception end; however, the shortcomings of this approach are obvious. First, the reviewers' backgrounds are unknown, so the validation and representation of the approach are unreliable. Second, the comments lack focus, and the reviewers attribute their appreciation of the novel to a range of aspects. Most of the comments are general and neglect to specify which part of the novel they are referring to, and they are primarily concerned with the plots, structure and characterisation of the novel. The third problem with this approach is that most English-speaking readers only have access to the English version and may even be unaware that they are reading a specially edited version of the original text. Thus, it cannot be determined whether the rewriting impedes or facilitates English-speaking readers' appreciation of the text. However, Yan's exploration of readers' responses can provide inspiration for a new perspective on the study of the consequences of omissions.

Some studies of the English translation of *L&D* concentrate on Goldblatt's strategies, while others provide analyses based on the empirical studies of specific research objects. The perspectives chosen by these researchers vary according to their study purposes. The observations of previous researchers attempting to explain the rewritings of *L&D* shed light on the analysis of rewritings for further studies, as these observations approach the subject from multiple perspectives. Although the classifications in Wang Lu's (2012) and Huang Xin's (2014) studies cover only some of the omissions in the novel, their classifications are inspiring.

With reference to their classifications, this thesis classifies the omissions based on the text type and exhaustively explores the different types of omissions. Jia Yanqin's (2016) study on the translation of political terms inspires this thesis to further investigate the pattern of omitting political messages by examining why certain political messages are omitted while others are retained. In addition, Yan Jia's (2013) reception study encourages this thesis to further investigate the effects of omissions on English-speaking readers through responses to a questionnaire and an interview.

## **CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY**

This chapter explores the methodologies used in this project. Textual and narrative analysis are utilised to systematically explore and analyse how the novel has been rewritten through omission. The textual analysis involves the selection and categorisation of the examples and content analysis, while the narrative analysis focuses on how the stories are arranged in the novel. The project employs questionnaire and interview methods to collect native English-speakers' reactions to the given texts.

The chapter opens by reviewing the textual and narrative analysis methodology. It then proceeds to discuss the merits of questionnaire and interview methods regarding this project, and delineates the participants' characteristics, the procedures to be followed and data analysis.

### **3.1 Textual analysis**

Studying the text enables researchers to understand how members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are and how they fit into their world (McKee, 2003, p. 1). Textual analysis includes examining the process of selecting samples, providing an explanation of each example, analysis of omission patterns, and discussion of how the omissions may influence the reception of the novel in the target market. McKee (2003, p. 25) argues that textual analysis is not a standardised procedure, but rather a methodology with a 'recipe' that anyone can follow. Its flexibility permits the development of individual analytical frameworks.

This project applies textual analysis to text and extra-textual materials to study the patterns and consequences of omissions from a rewriting theory perspective. Three major textual analysis frameworks are employed in this project: case selection and categorisation; explanations of specific examples, and exploration and analysis of the patterns and consequences of the omissions. Since this project focuses on omissions at the macro level

concerning paragraph units, the examples are selected from a comparison between the ST and TT. The initial textual comparison aims to identify points of interest and narrow the research focus. Specifically, the textual comparison uncovers notable discrepancies between the original text and the translation. These omissions far exceed what strategic translation solutions would typically warrant, and so they require further investigation. In total, there are 128 omissions at the macro level through the comparison between the ST and TT. The exact categorisation is provided in Appendix One.

Since the research objects in this project are excerpts from a novel, the primary discrepancy analysis is directed at characterisation and plotlines. Additionally, the linguistic significance of individual expressions in the ST (including both meaning and artistic value) is addressed. However, when reviewing how the omissions reconstruct the original text, it is essential to note that they also influence text structure and function. Consequently, narrative analysis, which concerns how the stories are organised and presented, is adopted to explain the discrepancies between the ST and TT.

McKee (2003, p. 1) suggests that the nature of textual analysis makes educated guesses at the most likely interpretations of the text in question. Thus, subjectivity is almost inevitable in the textual analysis process. However, researchers should aim to make their interpretations less disputable by referring to relevant paratexts. Paratexts are the extra materials around a book that have been supplied by the authors, editors, printers and publishers. By referring to paratexts, a researcher can firmly link a translation to the social and cultural environment that generated it. Genette (1997, pp. 2–3) classifies paratext into two categories: peritext (elements such as titles; chapter titles; prefaces, and notes), and epitext (elements like interviews; publicity announcements; critics' reviews; private letters, and other authorial/editorial discussions; essentially, elements 'outside' the text in question). The epitexts referred to in this



project include critics' reviews; authorial and editorial discussions, and interviews with Goldblatt that were conducted by other researchers. Goldblatt's (1980; 2001) reviews of other translators' works are also referenced. The next section discusses the use of narrative analysis in the project.

### **3.2 Narrative analysis**

Since the research object of this project is the novel, narrative analysis, or the explanation of the relationship between narrative and story (Genette, 1983, p. 29) is referenced to analyse the characterisation, structure, and plot, among others, in the original novel. It reviews how these elements are rewritten in the translated version. Before exploring the strategies used in narrative analysis, the working definition of 'narrative' is discussed. Scholars from various perspectives have defined the term 'narrative'. Indeed, literary theorist, Gérard Genette (1983, pp. 25–26) proposed that the term has three distinct connotations. The first refers to the narrative statement – the oral or written discourse that is undertaken to relate an event or a series of events. The second is assigned to the succession of events, real or fictitious, that are the subjects of this discourse, and to related links, opposition and repetition. The third meaning refers not to the event that is recounted, but to the act of narrating itself. Gerald Prince (1987, p. 58) suggested narrative involves 'recounting [...] of one or more real or fictitious events communicated by one, two, or several (more or less overt) narrators to one, two or several (more or less) narrates' (Prince, 1987, p. 58). This definition is similar to the second connotation in Genette's definition. In this project, 'narrative' refers to the recounting of a series of fictitious events.

Even though the object of the narrative analysis is the narrative, Bal (2017, p. 31) claims that not every sentence in a narrative text can be called 'narrative'. The narrative text also includes non-narrative comments from which ideological statements are often made (Bal,

2017, p. 31), together with descriptions. According to Bal (2017, p. 36), a description is ‘a privileged site of focalization, and as such it has great impact on the ideological and aesthetic effect of the text’. Indeed, Bal (2017, p. 36) further contends that a description is ‘a particular textual form, indispensable, indeed, omni-present in narrative.’

The narrative can comprise multiple layers and levels. Any event recounted by a narrative is at a diegetic level immediately higher than the level at which the narrating act producing this narrative is placed (Genette, 1983, p. 228). The extreme narrative level is termed the ‘extradiegetic’ (extra-story) level. It is at this level that the extradiegetic narrator recounts the entire narrative. Narrative acts depicted within the narrative are intradiegetic; narrating acts embedded within those are metadiegetic, and then the tetradiegetic and pentadiegetic levels follow (Genette, 1983, pp. 229–230). Bal (2017, p. 57) explores the embedded text in the narrative and suggests that the majority of embedded texts are non-narrative. The content could vary and embrace general assertions about things, discussions between actors, and descriptions, among others. The functions of the embedded text diverge accordingly (Bal, 2017, p. 57).

Further, Genette (1983, p. 29) indicates three key elements within a narrative analysis, termed ‘tense’, ‘voice’ and ‘mood’. ‘Tense’ concerns the possibilities of temporal arrangements and presentation (order, duration, and frequency); ‘voice’ deals with narrators and narrative level, and ‘mood’ analyses the regulation of narrative information (1983, p. 29). These concepts are explored in the following sections.

### 3.2.1 ‘Tense’

‘Tense’ refers to the set of temporal relations between the situations and events recounted and their recounting (Prince, 1987, p. 96). As proposed by the German theoretician Gunther Müller (cited in Genette, 1983, p. 33), ‘tense’ can be viewed as the opposition between ‘erzählte Zeit’ [‘story time’] and ‘Erzählzeit’ [‘narrative time’]. Here, it is necessary to

distinguish between events, story and narrative concepts. Events are conceived as the time- and space- specific transitions from a source state to a target state and they are a necessary but insufficient condition for stories (Herman, 2007, p. 151). As Prince (1987, p. 91) contends, a narrative of events with an emphasis on chronology or a causal sequence of events pertinent to a character or characters seeking to solve a problem or reach a goal, forms a story. The object of this study is the novel that involves chronological and interrelated events as well as causal events related to the character(s). Hence, the term 'story' will be used instead of 'events'. According to the narrative definition disclosed above, the narrative is distinct from the story here. The narrative concerns how the story or stories are organised and recounted. Consequently, the 'story time' refers to the time represented on the story level, while the 'narrative time' refers to the time at which the act of narrating occurs.

The concept of 'tense' applies to this relationship between story time and narrative time and is subcategorised into order, duration and frequency. Herman and Vervaeck (2001, pp. 86–87) distinguish four types of narrations based on the relationship between story time and narrative time. The most traditional type is subsequent narration (narration after events); the second type is prediction, in which one character can narrate the fate of another person; the third one is simultaneous narration, and the last type is interpolated narration. Interpolated narration always contains more than one narrative level. 'Duration' involves the comparison of the story time and the narrative time lengths. The former can be longer, equal to or shorter than the latter (Herman and Vervaeck, 2001, p. 89). However, the notion of duration is problematic, particularly in the case of written narrative. Even if the story time is specified, the narrative time is challenging to measure. Therefore, many narratologies prefer to use the terms 'speed' or 'tempo' (Prince, 1987).

The speed or tempo concept comprises ellipsis, summary, scene, pause and stretch.

Ellipsis is when no part of the narrative corresponds to the pertinent events or stories; the story is absent in the narration. Herman (2007, p. 57) provides the instance of crime novels to illustrate this notion. More suspense can be evoked when the execution of a planned murder or assault does not appear in the narrative. ‘Summary’ involves narrative time being shorter than story time. ‘Scene’ refers to narrative time equating with story time, while ‘stretch’ occurs when narrative time is longer than story time. ‘Pause’ refers to some parts of the narrative text corresponding to no elapse in story time, as seen in the description or commentarial excursus by the narrator. The last concept related to tense is ‘frequency’, namely, the relationship between the number of times an event happens and the number of recounted occurrences (Genette, 1983, p. 112). Genette (1983, p. 113) argues that there are three fundamental possibilities: singulative narrative (recounting once what happened once), iterative narrative (recounting once what happened multiple times), and repetitive narrative (recounting several times what only happened once). Herman and Vervaeck (2001, p. 67) comment that repetitions can embody various standpoints; that is, various characters can consider the same event. Their narrations are repetitive; however, the perspective from which they perceive the questioned story varies. Eventually, their narrations form a comprehensive presentation of the story.

### 3.2.2 ‘Voice’

‘Voice’ concerns ‘who speaks’. Genette (1983, p. 213) addresses this as a typology of narrators and extends the question to consider ‘where’ and ‘when’ the narrator speaks (‘narrative level’ and ‘order’, respectively). Here, the term ‘voice’ is explained in connection with ‘who speaks’, or the ‘narrator’.

In a given narrative, there may be several different narrators, each addressing either the same or different narratee(s). Genette (1983, pp. 227–229) points out that narrators can be categorised into homodiegetic (the first-person) and heterodiegetic narrators depending on the

involvement of the narrator in the story. Heterodiegetic narrators function merely as the producer of the narrative text. The most common example of this type of narrator is presented in the third-person narrative, but you-narratives (the second person), they- and one-narratives (also the third person) are similarly counted in this category. Homodiegetic narrators are those who are characters in the story they present (diegesis).

Meanwhile, based on the relationship between narrator and narration, narrators can be classed as 'extradiegetic' or 'intradiegetic'. If the narrator hovers over the narrated world, they are extradiegetic; by contrast, if a narrator belongs to the narrated world, and is therefore narrated by an agency above themselves, then they are intradiegetic. Because the intradiegetic narrator is a character in the fictional world, the distance between the narrator and the fictional world is relatively small. The extent of the extradiegetic narrator's visibility or presence relies upon their proximity to the fictional world or the reader. If the narrator is revealed as detached from the fictional world, and, in telling the story, they do not refer to their own opinions or emotions, then they are invisible and absent. In this case, the distance between the narrator and the reader is relatively small. Regarding the fictional world, both narrator and reader are outsiders, looking from a distance at the events taking place in that world. If the extradiegetic narrator becomes involved to a greater or lesser extent in the fictional world, comments on the events, characters and action, and does not conceal their feelings and emotions, then they will, to a certain extent, be visible and present for the reader. In this case, there is only a small gap between the narrator and the fictional world.

Opposite to the concept of the narrator is the 'narratee'. There is always at least one narratee, located at the same diegetic level as the narrator who is addressing them (Fludernik, 2009, p. 157). Like the narrator, the narratee may be represented as a character, in which case they are an 'intradiegetic narratee'. In contrast, an 'extradiegetic narratee' is a reader persona

who is addressed by the narrator (Fludernik, 2009, p. 159). A discussion of ‘mood’ now follows.

### 3.2.3 ‘Mood’

The term ‘mood’ comprises the modes of presenting action, speech and thought, either by showing or telling, and the selection and restriction modes conveyed by a narrative, or ‘focalisation’ (Genette, 1983, p. 161). Explaining the mood, Genette (1983, p. 186) discusses focalisation. It refers to the perspective from which the narrated situations and events are presented and the perceptual or conceptual position in which they are rendered (Genette, 1983, p. 186). Focalisation concerns through whose eyes the narrated event is observed or perceived. Thus, it determines what is presented to the reader. The person from whose perspective focalisation is carried out is termed ‘the focaliser’ (Bal, 2017, p. 147).

There are various focalisation classifications. The focalisation can be fixed if a single focaliser perceives the story; if the event is perceived by two characters who regularly alternate, Genette (1983, p. 190) speaks of ‘variable focalisation’. In the case where there are more than two perception centres, Genette (1983, p. 190) categorises these as ‘multiple focalisations. Moreover, Herman and Vervaeck (2001, p. 74) subcategorise focalisation into ‘zero focalisation’, ‘external focalisation’ and ‘internal focalisation’, depending on the focaliser’s involvement with the story.

‘External focalisation’ describes a view of the characters and the fictional world from the outside. The focaliser is located on the extradiegetic level and concentrates only on visible focalised objects, whereas the protagonists’ inner monologues remain a mystery. ‘Internal focalisation’ represents a view through the eyes of a character. It is a view from within. The focaliser is positioned on the diegetic level and can see their thoughts, but they cannot perceive the thought content of other characters. In the third type, ‘zero focalisation’, events are narrated from a wholly unrestricted, omniscient viewpoint. Herman and Vervaeck (2001, pp. 75–76)

categorise the focalisation according to Spatio-temporal perception. In terms of space, the focaliser can impose a panoramic, simultaneous or restricted reader view. With a panoramic view, the focaliser controls the entire space of the narrative. There is ‘simultaneous focalisation’ when the reader perceives what happened in different locations simultaneously. A character has a limited perception of a situation since their perceptions frequently couple with the constricted space wherein they move.

Likewise, ‘temporal perception’ can be divided into three categories. A panchronic focaliser surveys all time periods and can look back and look forward. If the narrative only looks back, focalisation is retrospective. Where perception takes place simultaneously with the events, ‘synchronic focalisation’ is formed (Herman and Vervaeck, 2001, p. 79). Psychological properties (cognitive; emotional; ideological) play a critical role in the further description of focalisation. For example, some focalisers are fully knowledgeable of all matters, and there are those whose knowledge is limited. On the emotional level, focalisation can be detached or empathic. If only the outside of the focaliser object is perceived, focalisation is detached. Further, Herman and Vervaeck (2001, p. 80) point out that if there is constant speculation about the thoughts and feelings of the focalised object, then perception is empathic.

The emotional classification of focalisation is close to Genette’s (1983, p. 162) distinction between telling and showing. It also unites the concept of distance. ‘Distance’ can refer to the metaphoric space between the narrators, characters, situations or event narrated and the narratee, and it can be intellectual, moral and/or emotional. Moreover, distance is a significant factor in regulating narrative information. The more covert the narratorial mediation, and the more numerous the details provided about the narrated situations and events, the smaller the distance said to pertain between the narrator and their narration (Genette, 1983, p. 164). ‘Showing’ is a relatively unmediated enactment or dramatisation of events (Rabinowitz,

2005, p. 530). It portrays a detailed, scenic rendering of the situation and events with minimal narratorial mediation, and the distance between the narration and the narrated event is narrow. A typical example of ‘showing’ is the development of the story through the characters’ dialogue. In contrast, ‘telling’ is a mode characterised by more narratorial mediation and a less tailored rendering of situation and events, that is, the distance between the narration and the narrated event is broad. An example is when characters’ utterances are mediated or paraphrased by the narrator (Rabinowitz, 2005, p. 531).

For the purpose of this project, exploring crucial narrative components provides an analytical framework for categorising the omissions and explaining the rewriting in each selected example. According to the text types, the 128 omissions are initially categorised as ‘narrative text’; ‘commentary text’; ‘descriptive text’, and ‘embedded text’. The commentary text includes the characters’ monologue and the narrators’ comments. There are also lengthy omitted texts covering two or more of the above types. Thus, the 128 omissions are herein investigated within six categories: the ‘stories’ (narrative text); the ‘characters’ monologue’; the ‘narrators’ comments’; the ‘descriptive text’; the ‘embedded text’, and the ‘lengthy text’.

Following this, the pattern of the omission is explored and analysed in a socio-cultural context, to investigate how these omissions may have influenced the reception of the novel in the English context. Further, the project examines the consequences of omission in the English-speaking context through the responses of English-speaking readers. Such readers are valuable sources for investigation and analysis. It is an effective strategy for combining the analysis of textual facts and a broader socio-cultural context. Consequently, questionnaire and interview methods are employed in this project to investigate the socio-cultural contextual influence on the pattern of omission. Chapter Three now details the methods used in this project.



### 3.3 Methods

To explore the translation and editing of Chinese novels intended for the English-speaking market in this project, feedback from English readers of translations of a representative chapter of *L&D*, is obtained via a questionnaire and interviews. The overall objective of these methods is to examine the consequences of omissions from the reception perspective. As Hatim (2001, pp. 63–64) suggested, the intended audience forms a controlling factor that affects the translation. Through these methods, the perceptions of the full translation and the version with omissions; participants' attitudes towards the omissions; their understanding of the Chinese cultural and political features embedded in the text, their attitudes towards the multiple narrators, and the language style are examined. The questionnaire and interview design is constructed on the pattern of the omissions, as identified through prior textual analysis. Further details of the design are given at a later juncture.

The following paragraphs detail the project procedures. First, the sampling and recruitment of the project participants are discussed. Second, the issue of reading material selection to obtain questionnaire and interview responses is addressed and the use of a pilot study is introduced. Third, the questionnaire and interview procedures adopted in the project are provided, together with procedures for the protection, use and storage of the participants' data.

#### 3.3.1 Procedures

Native English-speaking students from Durham University are targeted for sampling. These students represent general English-speaking readers who can read and express their ideas clearly, and the data also becomes more accessible. The call for volunteers is delivered to potential student participants at lectures and the researcher has enlisted the assistance of the School Secretary and College Academic Officer. Potential participants are asked to contact the

researcher's university email address to confirm their acceptance of their involvement in the project. A sample size of ten participants taking the questionnaire and interview is considered manageable. This sample size is quite limited when applied to general questionnaire principles; however, the questionnaire utilised in this project is reading-related and does not seek general opinions. Due to the insufficient number of participants recruited, the researcher's native English-speaking contacts are also invited to participate in the project.

Chapter 33 of the novel is where the most radical omissions in the entire novel occur. The full translation of Chapter 33 is 10,942 words, while the published English version is 6,516; nearly 41% of the original text is absent from the translation. Moreover, the omissions cover four of the six identified categories. As a result, Chapter 33 is selected as the reading material sample. Reading a whole chapter may be demanding, but it has the advantage that interviewees will have the opportunity to read a relatively complete story, which might ease reading and understanding, thus further enhancing the credibility of their responses.

The participants are asked to read two texts: Text A is from the published English translation (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008), while Text B is from a full translation of the original text provided by the researcher. The reading is estimated to take 25–35 minutes. The participants are requested to complete a questionnaire (20 questions) related to the texts immediately after reading them, and they are asked to return the questionnaire and take the interview within two weeks. Each interview is expected to take 20–30 minutes, and the interviews comprise detailed questions about the participants' reading experiences and perceptions of the two texts. Thus, a substantial amount of 'raw' data is produced, and the transcribing also demands a substantial amount of work and time; hence, the participant sample is kept small.

Piloting questions on a small sample of respondents drawn from the target population is useful to produce precise and reliable questionnaire and interview structures. As Foddy (1993, p. 86) suggests, a pilot study can help to uncover aspects that may cause difficulty for participants by discovering whether the pilot respondents interpret the questions as intended. In this case, two English native-speakers are invited to take the pilot study to determine if the questionnaire questions are precise; the length of the questionnaire is acceptable; if there are any redundant questions, and if the tone of the questions is suitable. In particular, they are invited to consider the appropriateness of reading both Text A and Text B for the project according to the length of time required to read two texts. Such an assessment evolves from their reading experience and the proposal that maintaining the two texts would be easier for textual comparison. The two pilot study respondents are also requested to repeat the questions in their own words. This strategy establishes whether the questions have been interpreted as intended. Adjustments are made according to their responses. Since the omitted messages are supplemented by the researcher and proofread by an English native-speaker, the pilot study respondents are further asked whether Text B reads clearly, fluently and consistently. It ensures the language quality does not influence their approach to the text. Due to the critical coronavirus situation, the questionnaire is distributed through the university email service, and the interviews conducted via Skype, WhatsApp or WeChat.

### 3.3.2 Ethical considerations

Both the questionnaire and the interview utilised in this project involve participants' sharing their opinions and experiences. Therefore, researchers are obliged to ensure the participants' anonymity and confidentiality at all stages of the project, and particularly during interview interactions with the participants (Heggen and Cuillemin, 2012; Kaiser, 2012; Marzano, 2012). Hence, Privacy Notices and Debriefing Sheets, covering the protection, use and storage of personal data, and explaining the project objective, its purpose and participants'

rights during the whole process are distributed. The project participants are informed of their right to withdraw from the project at any stage, and informed consent is received via signed consent forms. Further, personal data collected through the questionnaire and interviews include age, gender, native language and data obtained from the audio-recorded transcripts. Once each completed questionnaire is received, an unspecified number is allocated to it for data collection and analysis purposes. Information that identifies the participant (in this case, the consent form) is kept separate from the anonymised data. All personal data in electronic form is stored on One Drive, and will not be available to anyone outside the research team. The interview is recorded, and the audio-recording is stored on an encrypted device until the researcher has transcribed it. Only the researcher has access to the recording, and it is erased once the transcript has been completed. For further validation, the anonymised data is archived in the Durham Research DATA base.

### 3.3.3 Questionnaire design

Questionnaires provide an effective way to collect data. They yield responses that are usually easy to tabulate or score, and the resulting data facilitate analysis, especially if they mainly contain multiple-choice items. The researcher determines the questions and the range of available answers (Gillham, 2000, p. 3). As such, all the project participants will answer the same questions; thus, the responses can be meaningfully compared and produce less variable results. Consequently, the answers are simple to computerise and then analyse. Moreover, such questions are simplified for participants. Questionnaires also represent an economic and convenient method of data collection, and the use of emails can overcome spatial constraints (Gillham, 2000, p. 4). Matthews and Ross (2010, p. 203) propose that questionnaires can be used as the foundation for an interview, permitting some interaction between the respondent and the researcher.

Questionnaire design contains two aspects. First, the questions must reflect how the researcher measures the existence of the phenomenon under review. Second, the questions must produce relevant and meaningful responses from the respondents (Foddy, 1993, p. 22). Matthews and Ross (2010, p. 207) suggest that questionnaires are usually designed to collect different types of data including facts, descriptions, knowledge (what people know about something), opinions and attitudes. Additionally, background information about the respondent is obtained that may be linked to the research background. In this project, the data includes the knowledge about the novel (Mo Yan, 2006; Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008), opinions and background knowledge. A brief, separate section is included in the questionnaire to request some personal information from the participants to aid in placing the responses in context. In this project, the respondents' native language, gender and age are collected to make sure their answers are valid (English native speakers) and to receive some background information on the participant sample. The types of question include open questions; 'yes/no' questions; 'choose from a list'; 'agree or disagree with a statement', and a rating scale. The questionnaire design for this project involves all these question types, excluding the rating scale. A questionnaire design also specifies how questions are answered, for example, the respondents' answers should include the quantity; category; answers chosen from a list of possible answers; positions on a scale; rank positions, and open data (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p. 207). Established by the questions, the types of answers in this project covers open data (respondents' background data), the position on a scale, and the answers chosen from a list of possible answers.

Moreover, the Likert Scale (Babbie, 2013, p. 217) is adopted in this project questionnaire to elicit scaled responses. It is a type of composite measure developed by Rensis Likert in the 1930s to improve the levels of measurement in social research through the use of standardised response categories in survey questionnaires, and to determine the relative

intensity of different items. Creating a Likert-type item involves writing a simple declarative statement and asking for the respondent's level of agreement. Likert items are those using such response categories as 'strongly agree'; 'agree'; 'neutral or undecided'; 'disagree', and 'strongly disagree' (Babbie, 2013, p. 218).

While facilitating respondents' response procedures, the Likert-Scale approach adds validity to the data, makes it more comparable between candidates, and allows the researcher to use bar charts or other devices to present the data. Foddy (1993, p. 109) indicates that the presence of a 'neutral' or 'undecided' option may encourage some interviewees to select the most straightforward option rather than considering their responses to each item. This choice may also be attractive to respondents who do not wish to reveal their position on a controversial topic. Conversely, the absence of a middle position may be frustrating to truly neutral respondents. Thus, whether to include this option is a matter for the researcher's judgement (Foddy, 1993, p. 110). Within this project, the 'neutral' choice is maintained to avoid compelling the respondents to decide whether to 'agree' or 'disagree'.

The Likert Scale is insufficient for this questionnaire since the study is concerned with respondents' perceptions of the consequences of omissions. These could involve multiple perspectives, so merely answering 'agree' or 'disagree' would leave some aspects unexplored. The project questionnaire is designed according to the prior textual analysis, where some patterns of omissions have been identified. Therefore, most of the questions in the project questionnaire require responses selected from a list of possible answers that emerge from the patterns identified through the textual analysis. Providing a range of choices requires less response selection effort from the respondents and might facilitate their responses. Supplying strict choices is also a strategy for regulating responses. For example, when asked 'how do you feel?', many respondents are unlikely to have this information readily at hand, making the responses rather diverse, but a choice variety allows the respondents to make rough

approximations. A comment line is included under each question, permitting the respondents to add additional information about the topic and thus ensuring that they feel that their opinions are valued. However, the project questionnaire clarifies that such comments are optional to avoid burdening and therefore discouraging the respondents. Further, the categories are as standardised as possible within the question design, with exhaustive choices for each question. To ensure credible results, 'leading' questions are avoided and, instead, the questions are neutrally presented.

Significantly, the order of the questions in the questionnaire should make sense to the respondents (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p. 212; Babbie, 2013, pp. 240–241). Consequently, each question leads to the next, or there is an introduction to a new set of questions on a different topic or issue. A typical design includes a general question followed by several more detailed sub-questions. Respondents should answer descriptive and factual topic questions before being asked for their opinion, as these assist events and personal experience recall. An extra line is provided under each question in the project questionnaire to encourage respondents to leave any comments that are not included in the choices.

The questionnaire method has some disadvantages. A significant issue with questionnaires stems from the fact they usually work best when they contain objective items, that is, items to which the responses can be scored objectively, such as those with multiple-choice answers, and short-answer items that require minimal responses. Respondents tend to move through them quickly, giving the responses that come to mind first (Matthew and Ross, 2010, p. 216). Thus, questionnaires usually provide only a snapshot rather than a rich, in-depth picture of the research topic. Another limitation is that some respondents cannot provide in-depth answers. Indeed, Foddy (1993, p. 120) warns that many people tend to give answers that they consider socially acceptable, even if they are not entirely accurate. Although anonymous responses reduce the effects of social desirability and a need for approval, it is still strong

enough in some respondents for them to lean towards socially desirable answers. When all the questions and all the possible answers are determined in advance, the element of discovery is much reduced (Gillham, 2000, p. 2). Even though the participants make the same choice, the reasons might be different. Also, it is a lack of control over the order and context of answering questions that might influence the respondents' choices. As pointed out by Gillham (2000, p. 8), it is impossible to check the seriousness or honesty of respondents' answers.

The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire responses form the basis of the interview questions in this project. Therefore, to introduce some interaction between the respondents and the researcher and to gain more insight into the English-speaking readers' attitudes towards the omissions, this project also utilises semi-structured interviews. The interview design is detailed in the next section.

#### 3.3.4 Interview design

For qualitative research, an interview is defined as 'an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry' (Babbie, 2013, p. 346). It is most typically associated with the collection of qualitative social data when the researcher is interested in people's experiences, behaviour and understandings, and how and why they experience and comprehend the social world in a certain way. Interviews are helpful for data collection as they ensure the maximum validity of the data collected, since the questions can be explicitly designed for the particular project and aim to retrieve information that cannot be obtained through other channels (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p. 218). The interview also enables the interviewer to elicit information, feelings, and opinions from the interviewee using questions and interactive dialogue (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p. 219). The prolonged, intensive and direct engagement with the subject of the case study can deepen the researcher's understanding to the extent that is difficult to achieve through research into



secondary sources alone (Babbie, 2013, pp. 353–355). The interviewees can talk about the questions in their personal way; thus, the data are raw. Through careful analysis, the researcher may be able to explore information that has been neglected in previous research.

There are three forms of the interview: standardised structured interviews; semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews. Standardised structured interviews follow a typical set of questions for each interviewee (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p. 222). The questions are asked in the same way, using the same words, and each participant is presented with the same set of answer choices. The unstructured interview approach is often used in focus groups, encouraging a broad discussion of a topic. Semi-structured interviews follow a common set of topics or questions for each interview, and the researcher may give instructions or introduce the topics in different ways that are unique to each interviewee (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p. 224). While there is a topic and a specific goal, the interviewees can answer the questions or discuss the topic in their personal manner using their own words.

Semi-structured interviews are employed in this project. The themes and questions are identified for the project interviews in collaboration with the native English-speakers during the pilot study. The researcher aims to extend the questionnaire questions into the interviews according to the interviewees' response in the questionnaire. Therefore, although the general themes of inquiry are established in advance, with the preliminary questions carefully designed, the approach used to ask each question may vary. The semi-structured interview format is flexible and adaptable to the needs of the interviewees, and it can enable people to talk about relevant issues and encourage interviewees to express their opinions and feelings. The researcher can change the question order and the question wording depending on each interviewee's responses. However, during each interview, if the researcher observes that the interviewee interprets the question differently, refuses a particular line of questioning, or

reveals specific unknown facts, the conversation could diverge from the original plan to ensure the most effective retrieval of relevant information.

Even though it is an effective method of data collection, semi-structured interviews also present challenges. Surprises or issues might arise even if the interview has been well-planned. The researcher should be prepared for disturbances, or technical issues with the recorder, among others (Mathews and Ross, 2010, p. 234). Since an interview is a goal- or task-oriented talk to gather information, the interviewer is obliged to make the interviewees feel comfortable and encourage them to speak their opinions. The interview is recorded for further analysis. Matthews and Ross (2010, p. 197) suggest that recording is acceptable to many people, but their permission to record must be given. It is good practice to show the interviewee how to pause the recorder if they do not wish the recording to continue. The interviews are conducted online in this project; hence, the recording will be turned off immediately at the interviewee's request. If some interviewees do not wish to be recorded, note-taking could be substituted to collect information; however, all the interviewees involved in this project consented to the recording. Nevertheless, transcribing the interview presents another challenge. Seidman (2006, p. 115) proposes that transcribing is time-consuming, and this is supported by Matthews and Ross (2010, p. 198). Even though transcribing computer applications save labour, the researcher has to proofread the transcription in case there are any mistranscriptions. Also, the researcher must decide punctuation positioning since the interviewees do not speak in paragraphs or indicate the end of a sentence consistently and clearly (Seidman, 2006, p. 116).

Another issue is the interviewer's communication skills. A semi-structured interview is a conversation form where the researcher focuses on the interviewee (Seidman, 2006, p. 84). It has been suggested that the interviewer should limit their interaction, speak less and listen more (Seidman, 2006, p. 89; Matthews and Ross, 2010, p. 231). The interviewees require encouragement to talk and help them perceive that their opinions contribute to the interview.

However, interviewees may focus on issues that disinterest the researcher. In this case, Seidman (2006, p. 85) suggested that interviewers should avoid interrupting an interviewee's line of thought. The interviewer must be flexible and adaptable to each participant, rather than expecting them to conform to the intended agenda. Seidman (2010, p. 84) further suggested that although the interviewer is leading the interview, the interview should avoid leading questions that would influence the response direction. Babbie (2013, p. 255) pointed out that sometimes interviewees in an interview will give an inappropriate or incomplete answer. In such cases, a probe, or request for elaboration, can be useful to persuade the interviewees to express more.

In the semi-structured interview, the researcher is usually concerned with gathering detailed and in-depth data and exploring issues with the participants; therefore, the researcher's organising and communication skills are vital (Seidman, 2006, p. 85). Besides being familiar with the questions, Matthews and Ross (2010, p. 227) suggest researchers should interview the interviewees while following an interview guide, which acts as an agenda for the interview with additional notes and features to aid the researcher. The interview guide contains questions to be asked during the interview and includes an interview introduction and a conclusion (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p. 228). The guide additionally assists the interviewer to recall pertinent points, suggests ways of approaching the topic, and helps the researcher to enable people to talk at ease and as fully as possible. There is general guidance for the topics and aspects to explore; however, the specific questions for each interview vary and the question order may differ as it is based on the communication between the interviewer and interviewee.

The interview questions designed for this project are follow-up questions to those given in the questionnaire. The questions are designed to examine the selection rationale and determine interviewees' attitudes towards the different types of omissions and the reading of the two texts, together with their expectations towards the translated Chinese literature.

### 3.3.5 Data analysis

As Gillham (2000, pp. 49–50) suggests, the first stage of data analysis in this project is ‘subjective descriptors’. This comprises a description of the respondents’ characteristics like gender, age and educational background, that explains the respondents’ relevance to the project. The second stage involves statistics and thematic analysis to assess the emergent questionnaire and interview data. Statistics apply to the data through the questionnaire since it ‘describes the features of the data in ways that helps the researcher to identify aspects that are relevant to the research questions’ (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p. 345). Statistics analysis is used in this project to reflect the likelihood of the observed result. All the questions asked in this project are multiple-choice questions, that is, closed questions. As such, the researcher only needs to count the number of times each choice has been selected, and then present them on graphical representations like a pie chart and bar charts. As there are only ten respondents in the interview, the Excel programme is used to handle the data.

The core part of this research is to analyse the qualitative data collected through interview materials. Working with qualitative data primarily interprets and achieves a comprehensive understanding of the words, stories, accounts and explanations of the research respondents (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p. 373). The thematic analysis process works with raw data, including ‘segmentation, categorisation and relinking of aspects of the data prior to final interpretation’ (Grbich, 2007, p. 16) forms the third and final data analysis stage in this project. Matthews and Ross (2010, p. 322) suggest that the data collected from semi-structured interviews contains several characteristics: the questions may not always be worked in the same way; the answers to questions are often in the words of the participants; and the overall structure of the data may vary from case to case. Thus, Seidman (2006, p. 115) argues that the researcher must read through all transcripts to become familiar with the data, and write memos covering

the comments, answers and points that are interesting to the researcher. Also, the completeness and accuracy of the data is checked during the re-reading phase of thematic analysis.

Data organisation is a key feature of thematic analysis. Matthews and Ross (2010, p. 333) recommend the creation of an indexing system that can be applied to the raw data. The indexing system lists all the different topics and types of data that may be found in each interview, and assigns a symbol or 'flag' to words, phrases, sentences or sequences in the data where a particular type of data is found. Thus, the indexing system used in this project gave rise to themes that included: 1) background knowledge of Chinese language and culture; 2) interests in reading Chinese novels; 3) the purpose of reading Chinese novels (entertaining, studying literature, to know another culture, among others); 4) attitudes towards the position of translated literature in the English literary system; 5) response to the physical details and erotic descriptions in the novel; 6) attitudes towards ethics of translation; 7) perception of the scenery descriptions in the sample texts; 8) perception of the minor characters in the sample texts; 9) perception of the multi-layered narrative structure in the novel; 10) perception of the swiftness of narrators; 11) preference of the two sample texts, and 12) justification of the omission. Then, following data indexing, the researcher's interpretation of each 'flag' is noted; each 'flag' interpretation is reviewed and categorised, and any links between different categorisations are explored (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p. 337). The researcher uses this procedure in this project to determine how the omitted text is perceived by the project respondents, and to investigate whether there are any interlinks between their background knowledge of the Chinese culture and their reception of the translated Chinese novel.

## **CHAPTER FOUR – CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND**

This chapter explores the contextual background of Mo Yan and his translator, Howard Goldblatt. Lefevere (2000, p. 237) suggests that ‘the degree of compromise in a refraction will depend on the reputation of the writer being translated within the system from which the translation is made’ and ‘the degree to which the foreign writer is accepted into the native system will, on the other hand, be determined by the need that native system has of him in a certain phase of its evolution’ (Lefevere, 2000, p. 237), in other words, the capital of the author in TT culture. Thus, this chapter explores how Mo Yan’s work is received by an English-speaking audience and literary critics; the latter is included because, as Lefevere (1985, p. 227) suggests, they are the personnel who regulate what literature comprises, and their comments are likely to influence the production of the translated product. Hatim (2001, p. 64) suggests that the translator’s ideology, in the sense of loyalty, contributes to a particular mode of text reproduction. Consequently, Goldblatt’s viewpoint on translation is considered in this thesis.

The first section of the chapter begins by introducing Mo Yan through a discussion of his experience of Chinese political movements and his educational background. The discussion evaluates the extent to which his background influenced his writing in terms of thematic significance and language style, identifies the point at which he received literary recognition, evaluates his unique narrative devices and provides a critique of his work in Western academia and the media. The second section introduces Goldblatt. In exploring Goldblatt’s translation strategies, this section examines his achievements regarding the translation of Chinese works, the works of Mo Yan in particular, as well as Goldblatt’s perspective on translation.

### **4.1 Introducing Mo Yan**

As stated in the Introduction, Mo Yan is the pen name of the author Guan Moye. Mo Yan literally means ‘do not speak’ and the author has given several reasons for choosing this

pen name (Leach, 2011; Mo Yan, 2012a, p. 365; Mo Yan, 2012b, p. 245), explaining that it originated from his parents' warnings to avoid openly speaking his mind. Mo Yan's talkative nature frequently brought trouble to his family during China's revolutionary political period in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was partly the reason the writer chose 'Mo Yan' as his pseudonym, an admonition against his talkative nature and a self-mockery of his inability to heed such a warning. Furthermore, the character '谰' in his name Guan Moye (管谰业) is written as '谰' in classical Chinese, which is composed of the characters for 'Mo' (莫) and 'Yan' (言), thereby giving birth to the pseudonym he is known by today (Mo Yan and Lin, 2009; China News, 2013a). Mo Yan has also explained his belief that when someone speaks too much, one loses one's energy in writing and that as he has now made writing his career, he will write down all that he would like to say (Liu Zhonghua, 2012).

Mo Yan was born in February 1955 to a peasant family in Gaomi, an impoverished rural area in the Shandong Province of China. Gaomi later became the prototype of the fictional Northeast Gaomi Township, which is the location of most of his novels. Tao Dongfeng (2016, p. 99) compares Mo Yan's Northeast Gaomi Township to William Faulkner's 'Yoknapatawpha County' and Márquez's 'Macondo'. Mo Yan's writings are mainly an artistic creation about the reality of rural life in Gaomi. In Mo Yan's acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize, he expressed his wish to make the tiny Northeast Gaomi Township a microcosm of China and even of the whole world (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2012b). According to Mo Yan's brother Guan Moxian (Zhang Shuqun, 2014, p. 324), more than 50 local stories from Gaomi Township have been referenced by Mo Yan in his works, which allude frequently to Gaomi conventions, folk culture and beliefs. Mo Yan is also regarded as a representative of 'root-seeking' (xun gen) writers, who adopt a rational and critical attitude towards tradition and culture (Duke, 1993; Wang Der-wei, 2000; Leenhouts, 2003; Chen Xiaoming, 2013). Chan (2011) explains the root-seeking in Mo Yan's work is presented through the paradoxical nostalgia described by Wang

Der-wei as the ‘contrast values of Gaomi’ (2000, p. 2). Chan analyses that on the one hand, Mo Yan is nostalgic about the glorious past of his ancestors and the traditional cultural spirit; yet, on the other, he remorselessly criticises the inherent weakness of the Chinese people. As Mo Yan himself comments in *Red Sorghum* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 1993, p. 2), Northeast Gaomi Township is the ‘most beautiful and most repulsive, most unusual and most common, most sacred and most corrupt, most heroic and most bastardly, hardest-drinking and hardest-loving place in the world’. By narrating stories from Gaomi, Mo Yan voices his critiques of Chinese society.

Growing up, Mo Yan witnessed a series of political movements in China, including the Great Leap Forward (1958–1960), the resulting three consecutive years of the Great Chinese Famine (1959–1961), the People’s Commune (1958–1983) and the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). From the Land Reform Movement (1947) until the late 1970s, the division of class status was an essential indicator of Chinese social status. People in the countryside were sub-categorised into landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants, lower-middle peasants and poor peasants. While the first two categories were labelled as class enemies, the latter two were regarded as the revolutionary masses with superior moral value due to their sufferings. Mo Yan’s family was classed as middle peasants, who were marginalised and subjected to political discrimination. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), Mo Yan was expelled from school at the age of 12 because he assisted in editing a newspaper that criticised the school authorities (Mo Yan, 2012a, p. 312). His childhood memories were thus filled with experiences of hunger and loneliness, which he later considered the primary sources of his literary imagination (Mo Yan, 2007, pp. 91–95; 2012c, pp. 35–40). Mo Yan also credited most of his creative talent to his early life experiences as a peasant and his extensive first-hand knowledge of crops and farm animals in northern China (2012c, pp. 124–127; Zhang Xudong and Mo Yan,



2013, pp. 175–176). This experience provided Mo Yan with a specific perspective from which to discuss political movements and history.

Literary critics and scholars of Chinese studies observed that unlike other Chinese historical and war novels, which usually develop the story in grandiosely nationalistic or revolutionary terms, Mo Yan set his stories from an individual perspective (Lu Tonglin, 1993, p. 193; Hockx, cited in Flood, 2012). The works of Mo Yan concern ordinary people's struggles for survival and life in the countryside and his critiques of society are presented through the sufferings of ordinary people. Moreover, the boundaries of good and bad are blurred in Mo Yan's novels. Wang Der-wei (2000, p. 7) argues that the protagonists in his novels are almost on the opposite spectrum of the 'good' standard of society and the glimmers of good nature in the 'bad' characters are presented along with their weaknesses in Mo Yan's works. Mo Yan presents a reflection and satirical criticism of the political movements he witnessed, their implementation and associated policies through the description of the suffering of characters living in the fictional town of Northeast Gaomi Township. As a primary school dropout, Mo Yan claims that his education was mainly acquired through his ears, as he eagerly listened to folk tales and, at times, improvised stories narrated by the village elderly (Mo Yan, 2012b, pp. 55–59). As he was familiar with rural conventions and customs, as well as local residential opinions and daily expressions, Mo Yan retained the discourse of traditional rural China and the colloquial style of the people in his work.

Mo Yan applied to join the army in 1973. However, due to his political identity as a middle peasant, his application was rejected for three consecutive years from 1973 to 1975. In 1976, Mo Yan was finally admitted into the army, which marked a turning point in his life (Mo Yan, 2012a, pp. 314–315). He left Gaomi and no longer suffered from hunger and, more importantly, he had the opportunity to continue reading. Mo Yan served as a squad leader, confidential clerk and librarian. During his time as a librarian, Mo Yan read many books, which

not only enriched his knowledge but also sparked his interest in writing. In 1981, Mo Yan published his first short story ‘Chun ye yu fei fei’ (《春夜雨霏霏》, ‘Loves falls in the spring’) in *Lian Chi* (莲池) magazine (Mo Yan, 2019).

In 1986, Mo Yan published his first novel *Red Sorghum*, which brought him a reputation in both China and abroad. As of 2020, Mo Yan has published 11 novels, 27 novellas and one collection of short stories. To date, Mo Yan’s novels have been translated into over 40 languages, of which the most popular have been English, French, German, Italian, Dutch, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese (Ning Ming, 2013, p. 2). In addition to the Nobel Prize in 2012, Mo Yan has been critically acclaimed both in China and abroad. *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* was awarded the Kiriya Prize for books in 2005 and the Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize XVII in 2006. *L&D* was awarded the Dream of the Red Chamber Award in 2008 and the 2009 Newman Prize for Chinese Literature, while his novel *Frog* won the 2011 Mao Dun Literature Award. Mo Yan was awarded an honorary doctorate by Hong Kong Baptism University in 2017 due to his literary merit and in June 2019, Mo Yan was awarded an honorary fellowship by The University of Oxford in recognition of his contribution to Chinese and world literature. Since this thesis concerns the English translation of Mo Yan’s novels, the following section focuses on the reception of his English works.

#### 4.1.1 The idiosyncrasies of Mo Yan’s writing

Literary scholars often compare Mo Yan to William Faulkner, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Franz Kafka (Inge, 1990; Du Lanlan, 2014; Wang Xinyan, 2014) in terms of his tendency to voice critique and portray magical realism. The latter refers to a literary genre or style that is a:

...mingling and juxtaposition of the realistic and the fantastic or bizarre, skilful time shifts, convoluted and even labyrinthine narratives and plots, miscellaneous use of dreams, myths and fairy stories, expressionistic and even surrealistic description, arcane erudition, the element of surprise or abrupt shock, the horrific and the inexplicable.

(Cuddon, 1998, p. 488)

However, Peter Englund (Nobel Prize, 2012b), the permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, argues that the term magical realism belittles Mo Yan's works, as his writing is something very much his own. The works of Mo Yan are described as 'hallucinatory realism merging fantasy and reality, history and contemporary' (Nobel Prize, 2012b), referring to a writing technique that attempts to present the bygone era with documentary factuality and an aesthetic of enhanced reality (Lindner *et al.*, 1981, p. 138). Through this technique, the historical and the contemporary, as well as fantasy and reality, are merged. Mo Yan uses historical events and fantasy to allude to and satirise contemporary society and reality, which extends the scope of the narration. Tao Dongfeng (2016, p. 102) argues that Mo Yan's stories combine avant-garde experimentation with strong Chinese nativism and they are alive with ghosts, myths and legends from rural folk culture. Knight (2014, p. 101) observes that the combination of traditional Chinese and modernist elements makes Mo Yan's narratives among the most multi-layered in world literature.

Since Mao Zedong's speech at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Arts in 1942 to the early 1980s, the guiding principle of literature and the arts was that 'literature and arts serve politics' (Lu Tonglin, 1993, p. 193). Chinese writers were required to write literature that toed the party line. As analysed by literary critics and scholars of Chinese studies (Lu Tonglin, 1993; Knight, 2013), social-realist fiction demanded portrayals of heroic workers, soldiers and peasants overcoming corrupt landlords and capitalists. Fictional communist characters were usually stereotypically and unambiguously good or bad, and Chinese readers were accustomed to revolutionary heroes being depicted as flat, stylised characters (Duke, 1985; Hu Peiping, 2014). As a witness to many Chinese political movements and as someone who had been discriminated against and marginalised in these movements, Mo Yan had no idea what to write and how to organise his stories.

Mo Yan's education taught him that absurdities are not worth writing about as they have no educational value and do not convey 'goodness' (Mo Yan, 2007, p. 409). However, through reading the translated works of William Faulkner and Gabriel García Márquez, Mo Yan recognised that the novel could tell ridiculous and absurd stories (Mo Yan, 2007, p. 37). Tao Dongfeng (2016, pp. 99–100) claims that Chinese literature entered a new era of avant-garde fiction in the 1980s, with the influence of Western modernists such as Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel García Márquez. Avant-garde writers employed experimental methods and explored various kinds of narrative possibilities in their fiction. These writers made narrative into a mystery so opaque that 'I can't understand' became the most common reaction from readers, and the narratives themselves were viewed as objects of aesthetic beauty (Tao Dongfeng, 2016, p. 101). Mo Yan is regarded as an avant-garde writer as his writing purposefully unsettles readers by constantly moving forwards and backwards and using multiple focalisations and narrators (Knight, 2014, p. 101).

In establishing a fantasy world of ghosts and animals, Mo Yan draws on China's rich and enduring tradition of supernatural and fantastic tales, such as the *Zhiguai* (records of supernatural events or weird things) and the *Chuanqi* (serial dramas of the Ming and Qing dynasties). Mo Yan is also strongly influenced by the Chinese classic *Liao Zhai zhi yi* (《聊斋志异》, *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*, abbreviated as *Liao Zhai*), a collection of over 490 supernatural stories compiled by the Qing scholar Pu Songling, who once resided in the nearby city of Zibo in Shandong province. In these stories, the boundaries between reality and fantasy are often blurred. The characters include magical foxes, roosters and ghosts, references to which can be detected in almost all of Mo Yan's novels. Wang Der-wei (2000, p. 6) comments that Mo Yan's work contains the spirit of Pu Songling in its creation of parallel worlds of humans and ghosts. Mo Yan (2010b; 2012c, pp. 259–263) explained that there is a direct connection between *L&D* and 'Xi Fangping' in *Liao Zhai*.

It is a ghost story about Xi's father, who was framed and tortured by a powerful man in the underworld and in essence, *L&D* is a story about a wrongly executed man who reincarnated six times to claim his innocence. The influence of *Liao Zhai* can also be traced from Mo Yan's other novels; for example, the second grandma in *Red Sorghum* is possessed by a weasel, while, in *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*, the third girl Ling Di of the family is granted a fortune-telling ability after losing her lover. The professor of Chinese Studies, Ma Ruifang (2013) argues that Mo Yan's writing, especially the construction and contents of *L&D* has been significantly influenced by Pu Songling and *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*, and this reference to Chinese literary resources plays an essential role in his writing.

Mo Yan's comments on various political movements are presented by depicting the reality of life in China's rural areas with a unique blend of realism and fantasy. Tao Dongfeng (2016, p. 103) analyses that Mo Yan's characters often have an empty stomach and are craving sex, but against all odds they manage to make the best of it: eating, drinking, fighting, humiliating each other, sleeping around, giving birth, and burying their dead. Such scenes, along with those of ordinary people's daily lives, are inextricably interwoven with a fantastical imagination. The line between fantasy and reality is indistinguishable in Mo Yan's works. The aim of merging fantasy with reality is to express his criticism of reality, which may otherwise be censored (Goldblatt, 2014; Knight, 2014; Wang Jinghui, 2014). Hence, political criticism is a thematic characteristic that can be found in almost all of his works. However, Mo Yan insists that literature should 'not just show concern for politics but be greater than politics' (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2012b). Michael S. Duke (1993), an American sinologist and scholar of Chinese studies, argues that Mo Yan inherited the May Fourth writers' viewpoint that literature should reflect and reveal society. Mo Yan's concern with social and political issues can be explored from two perspectives. Firstly, most of his published works concern Chinese political movements over the last century or the implementation of policies, such as the Opening-Up

Policy and the One–Child Policy. Secondly, rather than taking the CCP’s line of praising these movements and policies, Mo Yan illustrates the negative influence they had on individuals.

Occasionally, Mo Yan directly addresses political issues in his novels, such as in *Tian Tang Suan Tai Zhi Ge* (Mo Yan, 1988b), *Ming Ding Guo* (1995) and *Feng Ru Fei Tun* (1996). However, after the publication of *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* in 1996, he was required to leave the army due to his failure to adhere to the CCP’s political stance and after this, political criticism became implicit throughout most of his works. Literary critic Wang Der-wei (Fairbank, 2015) commented that Mo Yan adopts a euphuistic and humorous approach to the misery of Chinese people. Mo Yan mocked and criticised political movements and government officials by creating characters with different politically symbolic meanings, as well as by alluding to similar stories in history or a fantasy world.

#### 4.1.2 The reception of Mo Yan’s works by English-speaking audiences

Beginning in 1993, Mo Yan’s novels began to enter the English-speaking market with the publication of the English version of *Red Sorghum*, translated by Howard Goldblatt and published by Penguin Publishing. *Red Sorghum* remained a best-seller among Mo Yan’s works in the English-speaking market (Ji Jin, 2009) and in 1993 *World Literature Today* considered it to be ‘the finest novel in the world’ (Wangyi Net, 2013). The film of the same title, which was adapted based on the first two chapters of the book, won the Golden Bear Award at the 1988 Berlin International Film Festival, which generated interest in the novel from general readers. After the publication of *Red Sorghum*, Penguin Publishing House also published *The Garlic Ballads* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 1995); however, the sales condition was unpromising, so Penguin Publishing terminated its cooperation with Mo Yan.

Mo Yan’s literary agent in the US, Sandra Dijkstra, introduced him to the founder of Arcade Publishing, Richard Seaver, who played a significant role in introducing Mo Yan to the

global market. The translated books published by Arcade Publishing include the following: *Republic of Wine* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2000), *Shi Fu, You'll Do Anything for a Laugh* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2001), *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2004), *The Garlic Ballads* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2006) and *L&D* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008). Besides publishing Mo Yan's works, Richard Seaver played a significant role in introducing and promoting him to the English-speaking market. According to Richard's wife Jeanette (Goldblatt and Efthimiadou, 2012), at annual sales meetings, Richard would always promote Mo Yan's work and introduce Mo Yan as 'one of the best writers today' in front of several sales representatives from all over the world. Richard's introduction of Mo Yan to the global market improved his reputation as a writer but the sales conditions of his novels remained a challenge and in 2009 Arcade Publishing went bankrupt shortly after Richard's death.

The same year, Seagull Publishing planned to publish a series of books about communism and Mo Yan was invited to join their project (Doordarshan *National*, 2012). The autobiographical fiction *Change* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2010) was published by Seagull Publishing and they later published *POW!* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2012a). However, the editor-in-chief, Naveen Kishore, claimed that Seagull Publishing was reluctant to publish Mo Yan's works since the political criticism in Mo Yan's works is not evident (Doordarshan *National*, 2012). University of Oklahoma Press published *Sandalwood Death* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2013) and Penguin published *Frog* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2015), which was translated after Mo Yan received the Nobel Prize.

Before Mo Yan won the Nobel Prize, the sales of his novels in the English-speaking market were unpromising with the exception of *Red Sorghum*. However, for the other translated novels of Mo Yan, his bestselling novel *L&D* only sold 4,175 copies prior to Mo Yan winning the Nobel Prize (Bao Xiaoying, 2015, p. 225). It would appear that based on the sales of his work, Mo Yan was not particularly popular and that the cultural capital of the works was

relatively low. The translated works are likely to be adapted according to the English-speaking readers' reading habits with the aim to attract a particular audience.

#### 4.1.3 The reception of Mo Yan's works by literary critics

Although there are book reviews of Mo Yan's novels in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, his work only began to attract academic attention in 2000. In 2000, four journal articles on Mo Yan's novels were published in *World Literature Today* summer edition. These articles introduced Mo Yan and his translated works, emphasising the thematic significance of his work and his writing style. One article, written by M. Thomas Inge (2000), focused on *Red Sorghum*, *The Garlic Ballads* and *The Republic of Wine*, comparing Mo Yan to other writers that are more familiar to English-speaking readers, including Faulkner, Márquez and Borges. Inge's article drew a comparison between the previously mentioned authors and Mo Yan with regards to the use of sarcasm and non-linear narratives to criticise society.

Shelly W. Chan (2000) analyses Mo Yan's criticism of the Communist Party through the setting of his characters and protagonists. In *Red Sorghum*, the hero in the battle against the Japanese invaders is a bandit, instead of the CCP army leader. In *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*, Mo Yan holds a bitterly cynical attitude toward men and the protagonist Jintong, a man who grows up in the context of Chinese political movements (1950–1970s), obsessed with milk and breasts, living with his mother and eight sisters. Chan (2000) argues that the setting of Jintong examines and questions the ethos of Chinese people and culture and Jintong can be considered a typical product of his time: a deformity produced by a totalitarian society and long-term political pressure.

Goldblatt (2000c) examines Mo Yan's revolt against Chinese literary tradition in the work *The Republic of Wine* where Mo Yan employs the theme of cannibalism. Goldblatt compares Mo Yan to Lu Xun (1881–1936), who used cannibalism as a metaphor for Chinese



self-destruction. David Der-Wei Wang (2000) reviews five of Mo Yan's novels: *Red Sorghum*, *The Garlic Ballads*, *The Republic of Wine*, *Thirteen Steps* and *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*. Wang examines three dominant themes of these novels: the possibility of imaging historical space; an unofficial account of history; the redefining of politics and erotic subjectivity. The imagination of historical space refers to how Mo Yan three-dimensionalises a linear historical narrative and imagination and how he locates concrete people, events and places into historical coordinates; for instance, he reflects on historical events within his ontological hometown (Yuan Xiang) 'Northeast Gaomi Township' and uses the family saga to reflect great historical events. Mo Yan's unofficial account of history, unlike the official history or novels that taking the official line, has a critical voice towards the historical events and these historical events are viewed from a folk perspective.

The characters in Mo Yan's novels are no longer only the 'Red' glorious model citizens of moral superiority from Mao Zedong's time; rather, they possess mortal desires and emotions, which leads to the third characteristic as reviewed by Wang, the redefining of politics and erotic subjectivity. Wang argues that although in the West, academic discussion regarding subjectivity is no longer a hot topic, in post-Maoist China it remains a central issue of debate. Wang analysed that Mo Yan often links sexual desires with eating, drinking, urination and defecation, arguing that through the depiction of the erotic subjectivity of ordinary or weak characters Mo Yan's characters challenge the big, strong characters of Mao Zedong's period.

John Updike reviews Mo Yan's *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* (Mo Yan, 1996; Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2004) in *The New Yorker*. This was regarded by Goldblatt as unprecedented as 'Chinese literature never makes it into *The New Yorker*, a magazine that is often considered the elitist writing and Chinese literature has never been in the hands of someone like Updike' (Wangyi Net, 2013). Updike (2005) observes Mo Yan's sarcasm regarding communism, however, unlike the previous studies (Chan, 2000; Goldblatt, 2000c; Inge, 2000, Wang Der-

wei, 2000), which concentrate on Mo Yan's social and political critique, Updike puts more emphasis on Mo Yan's language, arguing that Mo Yan 'set a groaning table of brutal incident, magic realism, woman-worship, nature description and far-flung metaphor'. Updike (2005) observes that Mo Yan 'is cheerfully free with the physical details that accompany sex, birth, illness, and violent death'; and regards Mo Yan's novel as lacking Victorian decorum. Updike also observes that the use of metaphor in the novel is 'abundant and hyperactive'. However, in interviews with Shu Jinyu (2005), Ji Jin (2009) and with himself (Goldblatt, 2011a), Goldblatt refutes Updike's comments. Goldblatt states that Updike evaluated Chinese literature according to the standard of English literature, and thus missed an opportunity to expand his horizons and to enter an unfamiliar literary realm as his narrow and rigid view of what 'good' literature ought to be closed too many avenues of artistic appreciation. However, Updike's review of Mo Yan's work reveals that Mo Yan's language and his structuring of the stories may not be welcomed according to the English standard.

The publication of *L&D* also attracted the attention of literary critics in the media. The reviews of this novel marked the emergence and participation of academic discourse in the press. Academic discourse appeared in the U.S. as a strong force, since the press had started to invite scholars who were considered experts on China and Chinese literature. For instance, Jonathan Spence, the reviewer for *The New York Times*, specialised in Chinese history and Steven Moore, the American writer, was a literary critic for *The Washington Post*, indicative that academic discourse had started to gain recognition and authority in the public sphere. Although political concerns are still essential factors for evaluation and interpretation, their more academic reviews highlight the novel's relationship to local trends in the Chinese literary context, which prior to this point, had been neglected. Both critics abandon the perception that Mo Yan's work only functions as a realistic representation of Chinese society. Although they

recognise the representational elements in the novel, they stress Mo Yan's literary innovation as a successful achievement in relation to the Chinese literary context.

For Spence, although one can say that the political dramas narrated by Mo Yan are historically faithful to the currently known record, '[L&D] remains a wildly visionary and creative novel, constantly mocking and rearranging itself and jolting the reader with its own internal commentary' (Spence, 2008). This is similar to Moore (2008), who states that 'Mo Yan has been writing brutally vibrant stories about rural life in China that flout official Party ideology ... He also flouts literary conformity, spiking his earthy realism with fantasy, hallucination and metafiction'. Their comments not only stress the literary and fictional aspects of the novel, but they also recognise Mo Yan's literary achievements insofar as they break away from national constraints. In terms of literary evaluation, by identifying with other major writers, the two reviewers abandon the conventional practice of associating Mo Yan with major western writers; instead, they situate him back into a Chinese literary context. *L&D* is associated with Jiang Rong's *Wolf Totem* (2004) due to the similarity of using animal allegories to perform social critiques (Spence, 2008). The novel has also been compared with Yan Lianke's *Serve the People!* (2008) due to the use of their employment of 'antipolitical passion' through satire and perverted sex in their literary works (Moore, 2008). From the above six reviews, it is evident that Mo Yan's social critique and the narration of official history through a different voice is valued.

Robert Con Davis-Undiano (2011), the executive editor of *Chinese Literature Today*, explores the nature of western criticism, reception and interpretation of Mo Yan's work with particular focus on the western response to *Red Sorghum*. Davis-Undiano (2011) discusses four challenges for the western audience: the cultural knowledge, the literary forms, the techniques to shape and probe historical material and the 'ontological difficulty' concerning the overall vision and worldview. Although Davis-Undiano takes the translation of *Red Sorghum* as a

special case, this argument can be generalised to the translations of almost all the works of Mo Yan. Firstly, substantial Chinese cultural and historical contexts are contained in his works, which require the target readership to have a high level of cultural knowledge to unpack the information. The second issue concerns the literary form – in other words, the writing style in Mo Yan’s work. These first two difficulties, concerning both the cultural content and the writing style, make the novels difficult to follow. Moreover, the topic of narrative technique leads to a ‘tactical difficulty’ (Davis-Undiano, 2011, p. 25), which refers to the methods Mo Yan uses to shape and explore historical material. Mo Yan consistently cites folklore and the Chinese storytelling traditions – the most conventional of sources – as his primary influences. This is the most difficult area of Mo Yan’s work to discuss, as it is not an issue that can be resolved with more cultural information about China, nor how Mo Yan uses the novel or deploys narrative technique.

In 2012, Mo Yan was the first Chinese citizen to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature (Gao Xingjian held French citizenship at the time he won the prize in 2000). Immediately after the news broke, Mo Yan became a major international media figure. Important international media outlets, such as *The New York Times*, *BBC News*, *Reuters* and *Associated Press*, followed up on Mo Yan’s award by providing detailed introductions to Mo Yan’s life and works, as well as reporting and commenting on the reaction of the Chinese government, general readers and the media to the award. Reviews were published by western media introducing Mo Yan and commenting on his novels; however, instead of focusing on literary merit, these reviews took a political approach to introduce Mo Yan and his works.

Mo Yan has been criticised by Salman Rushdie ‘as a patsy of China’s communist government’ (cited in Daley, 2012; Tobar, 2012), while dissident Chinese artist Ai Weiwei views his winning as an ‘insult to humanity and to literature’ (cited in Clark, 2012). The 2009 Nobel laureate Herta Müller regards Mo Yan’s winning as ‘a slap in the face for all those

working for democracy and human rights’ (cited in Haq, 2012), and Perry Link (2012) questions whether Mo Yan deserved a Nobel Prize. Such scepticism against Mo Yan’s claim to the prize was rarely directed at his actual writings; rather, it was primarily based on his status as the vice–chairman of the Chinese Writers Association and his refusal to speak for the release of Liu Xiaobo, a Chinese dissident and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate arrested and sentenced to 11 years in prison for inciting subversion of State power in 2009.

Mo Yan’s social satire has been acknowledged by some critics (Link, 2012; Khong, 2012; Sun, 2012), however, they argue that the sarcasm and black humour ubiquitous in Mo Yan’s writings signals the compromises he made as a writer within the regime. Link (2012) describes Mo Yan’s style as ‘daft hilarity’ in treating ‘sensitive events’, which he believes serves as a ‘safety valve’ for the Chinese government and a ‘spiritual message’ for Chinese readers, allowing them dismissive laughs at the otherwise gruesome events in Chinese history. Khong (2012) shares a similar view that ‘Mo [Yan] seeks refuge in a manic, ironic voice, that dances round open dissent’. Anna Sun (2012), a writer and an assistant professor in Asian Studies at Kenyon College argues that Mo Yan’s novels lack the ‘aesthetic conviction’ of important English writers who have documented hard times. Sun describes his language as ‘diseased’ because of the damage Mao Zedong did to the Chinese language in the course of the revolution by cutting it off from the grand Chinese literary tradition, which results in a ‘diseased’ quality of language that is manifested in its mixture of disparate language registers (old, new, crude, elegant, revolutionary). Sun goes so far as to say that Mo Yan’s main translator, Howard Goldblatt, creates translations of Mo Yan’s work that are artistically superior to the originals. Sun further argues that as Mo Yan was born and raised in the time of Mao’s rule, his language is profoundly influenced by Maoist style (or ‘Mao Wenti’, ‘毛文体’, a term proposed by literary critic Li Tuo, referring to the political rhetoric used during the

Cultural Revolution). This style amplifies the pompous parts of the Chinese language in the extreme.

Laughlin (2012) defends Mo Yan, regarding both his language style and political criticism. Laughlin argues that Mo Yan's fiction is a resounding satire of the absurd banality of Mao-style from a much broader historical and cultural perspective than that of socialist culture before the policies of reform and opening and this is why one would expect his fiction to manifest a variety of linguistic registers. Furthermore, Laughlin argues that Mo Yan is writing primarily for a Chinese audience, not to instruct foreign readers about the tragedies of Chinese history. Mo Yan's intended readers, therefore, know that the Great Leap Forward led to a catastrophic famine and that any artistic approach to historical trauma is inflected or refracted. Thus, Laughlin holds the view that his fiction satirises the inhumanity of self-serving and hypocritical government officials, as well as the style and narrative conventions of the orthodox socialist literature of the past. Laughlin (2012) also defended Mo Yan's participation in the handwriting of the '1942 Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art', arguing that the writing is part of the People's Republic's cultural iconography — a mild gesture of patriotism—and questioning whether such an act implies an affirmation of Mao's worst atrocities. Laughlin's defence of Mo Yan is supported by Peter Englund. Englund (BBC News, 2012), speaking for Mo Yan, stated, 'you can open almost any one of his books and see it's very critical about many things to do with Chinese history and also contemporary China. But he is not a political dissident. He is more a critic of the system sitting within the system'. Englund further emphasised, 'We are awarding a literary prize, and it's on literary merit'. The latter idea is upheld by Goldblatt and Chan (2012), Knight (2013, p. 69) and by Hockx (cited in Flood, 2012), a professor of Chinese studies from School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), who holds the view that 'I don't like the idea that Chinese writers are only good if they challenge the government – a good writer is a good writer'.

The task of making Mo Yan's work come to life in English requires the translator not only to understand the work but also to be able to retell it to readers who lack the requisite cultural background and who are unfamiliar with the style. As Mo Yan is the most prominent contemporary Chinese novelist in the West, Mo Yan's English translator, Howard Goldblatt, has played an indispensable role in introducing the author's work to a western readership. The following section reviews Goldblatt, including his connections to the Chinese language and culture, his views on translation and existing studies of him and his translations.

#### **4.2 Introducing Howard Goldblatt**

Howard Goldblatt, whose Chinese name is 葛浩文 (Ge Haowen), is an American translator, sinologist and professor of Chinese studies at the University of Notre Dame, the founder of *Modern Chinese Literature* and was the editor-in-chief from 1984 to 1994. The journal is one of the most important journals in the field of Chinese studies in the West. Goldblatt has also edited several influential anthologies of modern Chinese literature, the most famous being *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature* (Lau and Goldblatt, 1995)

Goldblatt was born in 1939 in Long Beach in the US. After he graduated with a bachelor's degree from Long Beach State College in 1961, he served in the navy and was dispatched to Taipei as a communications officer. During his service in Taipei, Goldblatt began learning Chinese from a man who had come to Taiwan from northeast China who gave him the Chinese name of '葛浩文'. Goldblatt later trained at the Mandarin Centre of Taiwan Normal University where he would have stayed much longer had he not been called back by the emergency of his father's impending death in 1968 (Stalling, 2014, p. 2). In 1971, Goldblatt gained his master's in Chinese studies from San Francisco State University and taught Chinese for a year or so. Later that same year, Goldblatt enrolled at Indiana University to begin his PhD in Chinese literature under the supervision of the Chinese poet and essayist Liu Wuji (柳无忌,

1907–2002). Goldblatt’s research focused on the Chinese female novelist Xiao Hong (萧红, 1911–1942) and Goldblatt received his PhD in 1974, with a doctorate thesis entitled ‘A Literary Biography of Hsiao Hung’. In 1976, this thesis was adapted into a monograph, *A Critical Biography of Xiao Hong*, which was published by Twayne Publishers, Boston.

Goldblatt began his translating work in the late 1970s. Goldblatt’s research on Xiao Hong’s literary creations and his love for her work led him to translate a few of her short stories. In 1979, two Goldblatt translations of Xiao Hong’s works were published: a co-translated work with Ellen Young, *Sheng Si Chang* (《生死场》, *The Field of Life and Death*) and Goldblatt’s independent translation of *Hu Lan He Zhuan* (《呼兰河传》, *Tales of the Hulan River*). To date, Goldblatt has been translating modern and contemporary Chinese literature for more than 40 years. His translation achievements are significant in both Chinese and western literary circles. He has translated (into English) more than 50 novels and collections of short stories by over 30 writers from mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, with Mo Yan and Xiao Hong being the most prevalent. John Updike, American novelist, poet, short-story writer, art and literary critic described the American translation of contemporary Chinese fiction as ‘the lonely province’ of Goldblatt (2005). Goldblatt’s translation of Mo Yan’s *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* (2008) won the inaugural Newman Prize for Chinese Literature in 2009. In the same year, Goldblatt was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship for translating Mo Yan’s *Sandalwood Death*. In 2012, Mo Yan won the Nobel Prize in Literature and it can be said that aside from Mo Yan’s literary merit, his translators undoubtedly contributed to his success. Except for the sinologist Goran Malmqvist, none of the 18 members of the committee in the Swedish Academy could read Chinese, therefore, the other members could only resort to different translated versions to read Mo Yan’s works and justifiably, the Nobel Prize, to a certain extent, depends on translated versions in English, French, German, Spanish and Swedish (Nobel Prize, 2012b). Ten of the 11 selected English works were



contributed by Goldblatt, including eight novels and two collections of short stories. Marín–Lacarta (2012) observes that six of the seven Spanish translations are indirect translations from Howard Goldblatt’s English versions.

Goldblatt not only translated Mo Yan but promoted him to the field of translation studies and Chinese studies in the West. Goldblatt has contributed essays and articles for many different media outlets, such as *The Washington Post*, *TIME Magazine* and *World Literature Today*, as well as scholarly books and journals. Mo Yan and his novels are often mentioned in Goldblatt’s articles, which has contributed to the promotion of the works as well as the development of Mo Yan’s reputation in the West. As a reputable translator, Goldblatt has been invited to nominate candidates and even serve as a juror for several international literary awards. Goldblatt was the judge for the Neustadt International Prize for Literature and the Newman Prize for Chinese Literature, among others, which are organised by the University of Oklahoma, the home of *World Literature Today* and *Chinese Literature Today*. The Neustadt International Prize for Literature is often referred to as the ‘American Nobel’; it is one of the few international prizes for poets, novelists and playwrights, and each juror can nominate one author for the prize. Invited to be one of the jurors, Goldblatt proposed Mo Yan as a candidate for the Neustadt Prize in 1998 and although Mo Yan did not win the prize, the nomination brought him more global attention. Similar to the Neustadt Prize, the Newman Prize is also sponsored by the University of Oklahoma, however, the prize is only for Chinese literature. As a juror in 2009, Goldblatt nominated Mo Yan’s novel *L&D* and he praised Mo Yan’s writing saying that:

Each of his novels has been universally praised, and each demonstrated the depth and breadth of his exceptional talent. He is a master of diverse styles and forms ... His imagery is striking, his tales often bewitching, and his characters richly appealing.

(Goldblatt, 2009)

Goldblatt's promotion of Mo Yan has improved Mo Yan's popularity in the related area of translation and Chinese studies. Bao Xiaoying (2015, pp. 135–140) conducted questionnaire research to explore Mo Yan's popularity among professional translators of the American Translation Association (ATA) and American Literature Translation Association (ALTA), students of literature studies and general readers. Overall, 14 of the 447 general readers had heard of Mo Yan, 13 of whom from his Nobel Prize win; meanwhile, 12 of 182 students had heard of Mo Yan, 11 of whom from his Nobel Prize win. In total, 23 members from the ATA and 28 from the ALTA took the questionnaire. Among them, 19 members from the ATA and 25 from the ALTA had heard of Mo Yan before his Nobel Prize win through Goldblatt, book reviews or academic conferences. Therefore, Goldblatt's cultural capital as the foremost translator of Chinese literature (Updike, 2005) promoted Mo Yan's reputation in the field of translation studies and Chinese studies.

#### 4.2.1 Goldblatt's viewpoints on translating Chinese novels

This section will explore Goldblatt's views on the relationship between the translation and the original work, the primary concerns for the translation, the methodology he applies for selecting text for translation and which aspects of the novels require re-writing. Although Goldblatt has not written any essays on his translation strategies and theories, his view and style can be generally concluded from his interviews, his articles and his reviews of other people's translations.

The readership is of great concern to Goldblatt, and therefore influences his selection of ST as well as the translation strategy. Yan Jia (2013, pp. 187–189) interviewed Goldblatt via email for the agents who select the ST. Regarding the translation of Mo Yan's work, *Shi Fu, you will do anything for a laugh* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2001), it was the translator and publisher's joint choice, *Change* (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2010) was translated at the request of the publisher (Seagull Publishing), and the author and the other translations of Mo Yan's

works were initiated by the translator, Goldblatt. In 1988, when a Hong Kong friend sent him a literary magazine that published *The Garlic Ballads* by Mo Yan, he was ‘stunned’ and ‘knocked out’ by the novel and immediately contacted the writer to seek permission for translation (Ji Jin, 2009; Goldblatt and Efthimiadou, 2012; Goldblatt, 2014, p. 25). However, shortly after Goldblatt started to work on the translation of *The Garlic Ballads*, he travelled to Taipei and found the book *Red Sorghum* and decided to translated *Red Sorghum* first, since ‘this is absolutely the book to open up Chinese literature to the West’ (Ji Jin, 2009; Goldblatt and Efthimiadou, 2012). From this statement, it is obvious that the reception of the target reader is a vital concern for Goldblatt. Having grown up in an anglophone culture, Goldblatt has a thorough understanding of English-speaking readers’ reading habits and preferences. Goldblatt assumes that, in general, American readers like to read works involving criticising government (Luo Yu, 2008), politics and sex, as well as detective novels (Ji Jin, 2009). Goldblatt’s selection of Mo Yan’s works is evidence of this idea since political sarcasm and criticism has been a topic in all of Mo Yan’s works. The changing of the translation order of *Red Sorghum* and *The Garlic Ballads* further illustrates Goldblatt’s understanding of American readership.

Goldblatt’s consideration for readership is also manifested in his review of others’ translation. In his review of Jean Mulligan’s translation of Gao Ming’s (高明) *The Lute* (琵琶记), a 14<sup>th</sup>-century play translated in 1980, Goldblatt (1980, p. 695) expresses the following concerns: ‘differences in form, sentiment, expression, world view and techniques, to name just a few, can conspire to intrigue, repel, excite or bore readers who are culturally and temporally removed from the original’. From this statement, it can be speculated that Goldblatt examines the degree of the cultural crossing and attaches great importance to the reception of the readership. Goldblatt’s attitudes towards the balancing between ST and TT can also be traced from his discussion of Authur Waley’s translation of Wu Cheng’en’s *Xi You Ji* (《西游记》); the translation is called the *Monkey*. Goldblatt agrees with Yu’s comments on Waley’s

translation that ‘Waley elected to ignore the many poems – some 750 of them – that are structured in the narrative. Not only is the fundamental literary form of the work thereby distorted, but also much of the narrative vigour and descriptive power of its language which have attracted generations of Chinese is lost’ (cited in Goldblatt, 2001, p. 355). However, Goldblatt questions Yu’s long and illuminating introduction and extensive notes that range from etymology and variant interpretations of phrases to religious allusions, puns and a variety of stylistic features questioning if this introduction and notes will reach out to readers who only want a ‘sense’ of the 16<sup>th</sup>–century classic. Interestingly, Goldblatt (2001 p. 360) commented that:

maybe someday a Chinese writer or poet will win the coveted Nobel Prize for Literature, based primarily upon the work of a cadre of translators who, like Arthur Waley, have been excited by the work they translate, are haunted day and night by the feeling that they must put it into their own language.

From this statement, it is reasonable to speculate that Goldblatt emphasises the fluent reading of the potential readership.

Goldblatt sees it as his mission to translate for his English-language readers, rather than for the original writer (Lingenfelter, 2007; Sparks, 2013; Stalling, 2014). Goldblatt (Wangyi Net, 2013) praises Mo Yan as a natural storyteller, however, Goldblatt claims that the structure of Mo Yan’s work is not tight and sometimes his novels lose their shape (Berry, 2002, p. 20; Goldblatt, 2004, p. 25), moreover, Goldblatt considers Mo Yan’s novels (400,000–500,000 Chinese characters) to be too long for English readers. In an interview with Efthimiadou, Goldblatt regarded Mo Yan as a very Dickensian writer with long sentences and asides; things that most editors would cut (Goldblatt and Efthimiadou, 2012). Goldblatt acknowledges Mo Yan’s love of animal imagery and farm imagery in particular but, as the way Mo Yan writes about these things often requires a lot of explanation for English-speaking audiences (Goldblatt and Efthimiadou, 2012), these themes are likely to be edited by Goldblatt. Goldblatt also

laments over the literary scene in China for the lack of respect paid to secondary language experts, such as editors and translators, who are suffocating in the publishing industry because writers still retain a romantic idea of their untouchable genius and refuse any interference with their works (Lingenfelter, 2007; Goldblatt, 2011a; Stalling, 2014). This situation is exacerbated by the unusually tolerant Chinese-language readers, who have sufficient patience to wade through bad writing for the sake of a few brilliant ideas (Lingenfelter, 2007). Fortunately for Goldblatt, most of the writers he translates adopt a different attitude when it comes to their English translations, giving Goldblatt considerable freedom in rendering their works.

Goldblatt's emphasis on fluent reading can be gleaned from his comments on the main issues in translating Chinese work into English. Goldblatt believes that 'literalism' is one of the reasons for translations suffering in America (Lingenfelter, 2007; Goldblatt and Lin Sylvia, 2019, p. 3). He emphasises the importance of extensive reading in one's own language – English in the case of translators introducing Chinese literature into the US market. Goldblatt regards the problem of language style as particularly poignant in the case of working in Chinese–English translations because the two languages are significantly dissimilar. Goldblatt (2000a; 2002; Lingenfelter, 2007; Goldblatt and Lin, 2019, p. 3) insists that translating Chinese literature requires creativity and, consequently, he believes that whatever the style of the translated product is, 'lovely, grotesque, or something in between, it is that of the translator, not the author' (Goldblatt, 2011a, p. 99–100), and 'anyone who reads Mo Yan in English is reading Goldblatt' (Goldblatt and Efthimiadou, 2012). Therefore, Goldblatt re-tells Chinese stories in a way that is easier to read for English-speaking readers.

Goldblatt (2002, p. 10) expresses the idea that 'the satisfaction of knowing I've faithfully served two constituencies keeps me happily turning good, bad, and indifferent Chinese prose into readable, accessible, and even marketable English books'. To explain the balance between ST and TT, Goldblatt uses his experience in translating *Red Sorghum* as an

example, discussing the linguistic issues in translating Chinese works into English (Goldblatt, 2000a; 2000b; Lingenfelter; 2007; Goldblatt and Efthimiadou, 2012; Sparks 2013). Due to the linguistic and cultural distance, rhymes, humour, jokes and puns are often almost untranslatable consequently, in the translation process, it is almost impossible to replicate the ST in terms of language. The reason for the rewriting is due to its otherwise untranslatable nature, rather than the translator's approach to translation.

Goldblatt's viewpoint can be interpreted and understood as being faithful to the writer's intentions but expressing the intended meanings in a natural English way, rather than translating the original expressions word for word. In his article 'Mo Yan Through Western Eyes', Inge (2000, p. 501) discusses creativity and fidelity in the translation of Mo Yan's work, arguing that certain features are lost in the translation process, such as the specific stylistic rhythms, denotations and connotations that cannot be carried over into the TL. Due to linguistic differences, not every expression in the Chinese language has a counterpart in English and based on the translator's understanding of the original text, they reconstruct the ideas and personal images into natural and fluent English versions. Goldblatt's 'betrayal' can also be understood in terms of his target-readership-oriented translation views. Such 'betrayal' could be regarded as highlighting a translator's obligation to revise or edit the original novel to make it suitable to the target culture and more accessible to the target reader. Goldblatt's insistence on faithfulness to the original can be interpreted as being faithful to the original story's plot as well as the author's intentions. This idea has been confirmed by Mo Yan (2003b, p. 179), who stated that, during Goldblatt's translation process, they were in frequent contact with each other. Whenever Goldblatt encountered phrases or objects he was unfamiliar with, he consulted with Mo Yan until the problem was resolved. Thus, it can be inferred that Goldblatt respects and has a good understanding of the original novel, and that he reconstructs it in an English context accordingly by filtering cultural knowledge and adjusting the text to what is more familiar to

English-speaking readers.

## **CHAPTER FIVE – OVERVIEW OF THE NOVEL, CATEGORISATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE CASES**

The analysis of the omissions will be presented across three chapters. Chapter Five sets out the context for the analysis, giving an overview of the novel's plotline, thematic significance, narrative structure and language style, as well as the primary characters. The omissions of descriptive passages, the embedding of other literary forms, characters' monologues, and narrators' comments and dialogue are also explored. Chapter Six focuses on the relationship between the omissions and the narrative text, considering characters' stories and the effect of omissions on main characters, minor characters and animal characters, respectively. Chapter Seven analyses longer omitted passages that contain examples of various types of omission and examines, in particular, the consequences they have for characterisation, language style, narrative structure and thematic significance. The patterns and consequences of the omissions are also explored.

### **5.1 An overview of the novel**

The overview of the novel covers the thematic significance and narrative structure. The hybrid language style, as a distinguishing characteristic of the novel, is also reviewed. *L&D* is structured around the metaphorical framework of the Buddhist belief in the six-path reincarnation. Through the successive reincarnations of the protagonist Ximen Nao, viewed through the lens of folklore, the historical and political events of the second half of the twentieth century are unveiled and the ownership of land emerges as a core theme. One narrator, Lan Qiansui, is the sixth reincarnation of the protagonist Ximen Nao. Ximen is a landowner who is wrongly executed by the communist militiamen during the land reform. Insisting on his innocence, Ximen demands that Lord Yama, ruler of the Underworld, should send him back to the mortal world to seek justice. Ximen is deprived of his human form and linguistic capacity and is consecutively reborn as a donkey, ox, pig, dog and monkey on the same land where he



used to live, before finally returning to the human world as a precocious baby boy, Lan Qiansui. Ximen is blessed with superior physical strength and mental capacity, which enables him to become a leader of each species. Each of his forms is given the family name of Ximen, for example, Ximen Donkey. In addition, each form is given a numerical nickname based on the order in which they were born, for example, Dog Four and Pig Sixteen. The social life of the animals forms a storyline parallel to that of human beings. Ximen's reincarnation as several domestic animals ensures that he is consistently in contact with his family and village, and so events do not escape his notice. Thus, he is a witness, participant and eventually a narrator of these events.

Ximen Nao's first four reincarnations roughly coincide with the major historical events in China between 1950 and 2000. The donkey reincarnation corresponds to the Great Leap Forward and the early stages of the People's Commune, and the donkey is beaten to death and eaten by the hungry commune members. The era of the People's Commune surrounds his reincarnation as an ox, which is eventually burned to death because it insists on working on the private land with its owner, refusing to work for the commune. The pig reincarnation falls within the decade of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), which lasted until Chairman Mao's death. The pig observes the overthrowing of the People's Commune and the repossession of land by peasants. The dog witnesses events taking place a decade after the implementation of the reform and opening-up programme, including the transformation from a planned economy to a market economy and the establishment and prosperity of individual businesses. Issues surrounding the collusion between business and government, and official corruption are brought to light, as well as problems related to extramarital affairs. According to Mo Yan (2006), although the novel covers political movements and events that occurred between the 1950s and the year 2000, the core issue is the relationship between farmers and the land, especially the farmers' deep love for and strong desire to farm their own lands.

Ximen's observations of political movements are all presented through the lens of the daily lives of people living in Ximen Village, particularly three generations of the Lan and Huang families, who both have close relationships with Ximen Nao. The representative of the first generation is Lan Lian, head of the Lan family. The literal translation of his name is 'blue face'; he is so-called because of a blue birthmark on his face. At the beginning of the story, he is Ximen Nao's hired hand. Following Ximen's execution, Lan Lian marries Ximen Nao's first concubine, Yingchun. They raise Ximen Nao's twin babies – a son, Jinlong ('golden dragon'), and a daughter, Baofeng ('precious phoenix') – and have a child of their own, Lan Jiefang ('liberation'). Ximen Nao's second concubine, Qiuxiang, marries Huang Tong, who executed Ximen Nao. Together they raise twin daughters, Huzhu ('mutual help') and Hezuo ('collaboration'). These five children form the second generation. Ximen Jinlong and Lan Jiefang each marry one of the twin sisters from the Huang family. Jinlong and Huzhu adopt a boy, and Ximen Jinlong has an unlawful daughter, Pang Fenghuang, whose mother is Pang Kangmei ('resist against the US'), a CCP branch leader. Huang Hezuo gives birth to Lan Kaifang ('opening up'). These three children comprise the third generation. Pang Fenghuang and Lan Kaifang are blood relations from the same grandmother, Yingchun, but unaware of this, they fall in love and a big-headed baby is born, Lan Qiansui ('millennium'), who finishes the cycle of reincarnations. The names of some characters have symbolic meanings that reflect the times in which they are born; for example, the name 'Jiefang' symbolises the liberation of China; 'Kangmei' alludes to the Korean War (1950–1953); 'Huzhu' and 'Hezuo' reflect the People's Commune, and Kaifang refers to the reform and opening-up policy. Through describing their experiences, the writer's reflections on the influence of these political movements are presented mildly, without sharp criticism. As Goldblatt (2014) and Knight (2014) observe, Mo Yan writes in a 'grey zone', where he voices political criticism that would risk reprisal if presented overtly.

In his Nobel interview, Mo Yan (Nobel Prize, 2012a) explained *L&D* with three of its most important facets: its reflections on key Chinese historical events; its addressing of social change through the perspectives of animals; and its bold innovations in language style. These aspects will be the focus of the introduction and analysis here.

#### 5.1.1 Criticism of politics through reincarnation

As stated in Chapter Four, a major characteristic of Mo Yan's work is the use of hallucinatory realism (Nobel Prize, 2012b), a writing technique that attempts to present bygone eras with documentary factuality and aesthetic enhancement of reality (Lindner et al., 1983, p. 183). Through this technique, the historical and contemporary, as well as the fantastical and real, can be merged. The writer can use historical events and fantasy to allude to and satirise contemporary society and reality. In the case of *L&D*, hallucinatory realism is achieved by its engagement with the Buddhist concept of reincarnation, which asserts that a living being starts a new life in a different physical body with each biological birth. Reincarnation is used to covertly express Mo Yan's criticism of the political system. *L&D* is concerned with political issues that are sensitive topics in Chinese culture; the author would run into problems if he were to criticise the government from his own perspective (He Chengzhou, 2014; Knight, 2014), and so he needed to create a character with an omniscient perspective who could both witness history and safely express criticism of the political movements. In this sense, through his multiple reincarnations, Ximen Nao can witness many aspects of different political movements from the animals' perspectives. The primary narrator of the novel is a five-year-old boy, whose non-contentious status is exemplified by the common Chinese saying, 'please take no offence at children's babble'.

The parallel worlds of the animals and how they coincide with social critique are most evident in the sections 'Pig Frolics' and 'Dog Spirits', where political satire and criticism take two forms, one of which is political satire stemming from the animals' (seemingly) objective

descriptions of human activities, while the other is based on events in the animals' own lives. All the animals in the novel are endowed with the ability to experience complex feelings; in this regard, the human pursuit of power through unscrupulous methods, corruption, the concept of a money-driven society and a lack of morality are all mirrored in the animal world. The stories of the human world and those of the animals are interwoven and reality and fantasy are merged in this way. Thus, by describing events through the lens of fantasy, Mo Yan expresses his criticisms of reality.

#### 5.1.2 Multi-layered narrative structure

The novel consists of the stories that five-year-old Lan Qiansui told his grandfather Lan Jiefang, with Jiefang occasionally taking on the role of narrator. They are both witnesses to these stories. In other words, there are two intradiegetic narrators, who concurrently serve as the other's intradiegetic narratee.

The novel's plots move quickly and comedically at the start, which Goldblatt (2014, p. 30) attributes to the parallel narratives. There are five internal focalisers, which in order of appearance are: Ximen Donkey; teenaged Lan Jiefang; Ximen Pig; Ximen Dog; and middle-aged Lan Jiefang. Lan Qiansui is the primary narrator of 'Donkey Miseries' and 'Pig Frolics', while Lan Jiefang is the primary narrator of 'Ox Strength'. The 'Dog Spirits' section is co-narrated by the two narrators Lan Qiansui and Lan Jiefang, and dialogue is formed through their narration. They supplement each other's narration, each contributing their unique perspective; consequently, the boundaries between animals and human beings are blurred. In 'Donkey Miseries' and especially in 'Ox Strength', the narrative focus is on the human world, with less attention paid to the stories of the animal world and the animals' feelings.

In contrast, 'Pig Frolics' and 'Dog Spirits' give equal focus to the stories happening in the animal world and animal characters. In these sections, two parallel storylines run in tandem, one focusing on the Ximen village and the other on the animal world. Ximen Pig and Ximen

Dog, being both witnesses of the human world and participants in the animal world, are the links between the two intertwined storylines. As he is the witness of all the events, and as he has an excellent memory, Qiansui frequently goes back to the scene of the narrated event with details of the characters' dialogue. Therefore, a multi-layered narrative structure is formed: while Qiansui's narration is on the extradiegetic level, the characters in his narration are also the narrators of the stories at the intradiegetic level. Narrations on the latter level supplement details and support Qiansui's opinions. Jiefang and Kaifang are both intradiegetic narrators, so when they recount stories they are often interrupted by feelings, comments and even imagery related to the tale they are telling. For example, whenever Ximen Pig sees the moon, he imagines a lady, or even Mao Zedong. As intradiegetic narrators, they can also add their comments from a modern perspective; consequently, the tense in their narration switches between story time and narrative time. Knight (2014, p. 101) states that many of Mo Yan's works unsettle readers by switching between narrators and moving back and forth in time. As evidenced in *L&D*, this technique requires some effort on the reader's part to complete the story.

Aside from the two alternating narrative voices, the novel also features a third narrator, Mo Yan, who takes charge of the final section with an omniscient point of view. To distinguish the character from the writer of the novel, hereafter, the character will be presented as 'Mo Yan'. In the words of (five-year-old) Lan Qiansui and (second generation) Lan Jiefang, this character is a 'lowborn' man who 'dreamed of becoming rich and famous'. They also say that he is 'ugly as sin' and 'generally ill-formed', but that he 'passed himself off as a knowledgeable academic' (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 323). Such self-mockery is highly reminiscent of the writer's own statements in interviews and lectures. 'Mo Yan' regards Ximen Village as the source of his writing and produces substantial novels about it.

The depiction of this character has two functions. First, ‘Mo Yan’ supplements the narrations. Lan Qiansui has no memory of the monkey reincarnation, and Lan Jiefang is away from Ximen Village during that chapter, so also knows nothing about the events of that time. ‘Mo Yan’ bridges this narrative gap as an extradiegetic narrator and external focaliser. The reason for regarding ‘Mo Yan’ as an extradiegetic narrator is that, while he is merely a character in the first four sections of the novel, he begins narrating towards the end of the novel, at which point he is no longer simply a character, but also an observer. The second function of ‘Mo Yan’ is that the novels written by the character are called upon as evidence by Lan Jiefang and Lan Qiansui to support their ideas or replace their narrations. In other words, these novels are stories within the stories; thus, another level of the multi-layered narrative is formed. In summary, *L&D* contains five internal focalisers and one external focaliser, three narrative voices and two narrative structures, which are combined to form a complicated narrative.

### 5.1.3 Hybrid language style

In a dialogue with literary critic Zhang Xudong, Mo Yan labels his language style as a ‘hybrid’ (杂糅) and *L&D* is a prime example of this mixed style (China News, 2009; Zhang Xudong and Mo Yan, 2013, p. 174). This hybridity has been acknowledged by some scholars (Laughlin, 2012; Sun, 2012; Hu Peiping, 2014; Tao Dongfeng, 2016), although their perspectives on the individual characteristics vary. The hybrid language is presented through the adoption of a vernacular, the references to classical Chinese, the mimicking of Maoist style and even the mimicking of the ‘translationese’ seen in the Chinese translations of foreign literature (Zhang Xudong and Mo Yan, 2013, p. 174). With the exception of the imitation of ‘translationese’, all these forms of language are utilised in the case of *L&D* and the vernacular and political discourse are the most prevalent.

#### *5.1.3.1 Vulgarly*

*L&D* is a novel comprised of storytelling (Mo Yan and Li Jingze, 2007, p. 357), in keeping with a style of vernacular narrative. Chinese literary critic Li Jingze (Mo Yan and Li Jingze, 2007, p. 357) explains that in a vernacular narrative, the author assumes he is the storyteller and presupposes an audience, meaning that the readers are present. The language and its dominant oral residues become the medium for the story. In *L&D*, vernacular is frequently adopted by the characters' conversations. Mo Yan portrays the folklife of the countryside and his depictions are usually of non-elite villagers with a low-level educational background; because of his characters' backgrounds, he focuses on the use of everyday colloquialisms and vernacular.

Furthermore, the novel contains elements of vulgarity and nastiness, such as depictions of nudity and genitalia (see example 2; example 10; example 11; example 16 in this thesis; Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 487–488; pp. 498–499; p. 501; p. 506). Mo Yan customarily presents the folklife of the countryside in an original way, which allows him to focus on the daily life of his characters. Hu Peiping (2014, p. 91) suggests that Mo Yan's linguistic style is unavoidably inevitably vulgar and nasty due to the nature of the characters in his novel. Hu further suggested that crude language might correspond to the aesthetic tendencies of Chinese literature in the 1980s and 1990s, which Tao Dongfeng agrees with (2016, p. 101). Tao (2016, p. 104) argues that due to decreased political participation, the rise of the marketplace, the spread of popular culture and consumer values, along with the introduction of new forms of mass media, especially the internet, a strong tendency of de-elitisation emerged in China's literary world. With the advent of de-elitisation, literature is no longer measured solely by its mission to address solemn socio-political issues or by its experiment with labyrinthine literary forms (Tao Dongfeng, 2016, p. 106). Since the mid-1980s, both Chinese poetry and fiction have moved away from elegance and towards the mundane.

As it reflects the trivial experiences of people's lives, realistic fiction tends to use more lifelike language to describe them. In this sense, the characters' language in *L&D* vividly reflects their social status and rustic style, and some of these expressions contain vulgarity. However, it is worth noting that the overall language in this novel is not vulgar: according to Zhang Xudong (Zhang Xudong and Mo Yan, 2013, p. 174), the language is neat, well-written and literary; it is the characters' conversation that is vulgar, which is a vivid representation of their personalities; on the other hand, the vulgarity could represent a form of resistance to the established elite register.

#### *5.1.3.2 Parody of authoritative language*

Another notable language feature is the parody of authoritative language, especially the Maoist style (Sun, 2012; Hu Peiping, 2014, p. 56). Maoist style refers to a type of discourse found in China that has its origins in Mao's writing, which is a unified system of language style that has taken a solid hold throughout all realms of Chinese discourse (Li Tuo, 1993, p. 273). The key characteristic of this style is the frequent use of parallels: while the language is imposing and powerful, the contents are empty and false. It has been suggested that Mo Yan quotes political rhetoric in order to resist or deconstruct the rigid, formulaic and ideology-bound discourse that has monopolised Chinese literature for decades (He Chengzhou, 2014; Jia Yanqin, 2016, p. 78). In this sense, Mo Yan's quotations are not intended for governmental approval or to promote political discourse; rather, they are included to mock and deconstruct such manifestos. When conducting a close reading, one can identify a certain irony in the novel that is achieved by combining certain situations with the particular style of these discourses. In *L&D*, 'serious' political discourse is quoted exaggeratedly and woven together with everyday issues and the inner contemplations of animals, in an approach which both questions and deconstructs the authority of political rhetoric. Expressions such as '地主阶级' ('landlord'), '人民公社' ('people's commune'), '单干' ('individual farming'), '红卫兵' ('red guard') and



‘摘帽子’ (‘remove the label’) can be found in the characters’ conversations, reflecting roots of influence from the Cultural Revolution.

In addition, the special textual formula of the Maoist style is mimicked and used in combination with daily conversations and vernacular speech to produce a sarcastic effect. The content might sound irrational. For example, in ‘猪的地位从来没有如此高贵，猪的意义从来没有如此重大，猪的影响从来没有如此深远’ (Mo Yan, 2006, p. 219), the three instances of ‘从来没有’ mimic the emphasis of Maoist style on parallel sentences. However, this political discourse is applied to the pig’s monologue, which gives it a sarcastic tone. In this regard, the extensive quotation of political rhetoric in the novel vividly presents both the absurdity of these political movements and their profound influence on the lives of Chinese citizens. While Mo Yan’s language is influenced by Maoist style, his adoption of it is not mere imitation, but an attempt at deconstructing it. Mo Yan’s novels are set during the period of Mao’s reign; therefore, the use of this language style is customary and almost inevitable. Literary critic Lu Tonglin (1993, p. 193) believes that Mo Yan’s ‘manipulation of complicated narrative perspective’ is a calculated choice to break from past practices by violating ‘the convention of a seemingly objective and objectifying narrative framework of social realism’. Political discourse itself is the subject of Mo Yan’s novels and he writes long passages that represent it through local farmers’ voices, thus subverting and reconstructing the history of these events.

#### *5.1.3.3 Other language forms*

Mo Yan introduces poetry, prose, essays, drama, literary language, technical language and expository writing in his novels. Thus, Mo Yan’s fictional language is versatile. Besides the obvious features of vernacular terms and Maoist style, *L&D* also incorporates other literary forms such as jingles (shun kou liu) and novels by the character ‘Mo Yan’.

The novel includes examples of the style of classical Chinese (文言文, wen yan wen) literature. Mo Yan has said that writing *L&D* was in homage to Chinese classical novels (Mo Yan and Li Jingze, 2007, pp. 360–361). A 14-word couplet title that aptly summarises the contents is provided for each of the first 53 chapters of the novel. This mimics the style of Chinese classical novels such as *Xi You Ji* (*Journey to the West*) and *Shui Hu Zhuan* (*Water Margin*). Characters' monologues and the narrators' dialogues both contain idioms and references to classical Chinese. Zhang Qiuqi and Liu Xiaoli (2013, p. 704) observe that Mo Yan frequently employs classical Chinese expressions such as '常言道' ('as the saying goes') and '古人曰' ('as the ancients said'), which are characteristic of Chinese classical novels and folk literature. Idioms also appear frequently in the conversation between the two narrators, Lan Jiefang and 'Mo Yan'. They are an example of elegant and refined written words, which Goldblatt (2000b, p. 23) recognises as a means to imply erudition and good education, and they are therefore appropriate to the narrators, since they are both portrayed as loving reading and writing; for example, they use the expressions '自吹自擂' ('brag about oneself'), '恃才傲物' ('be inordinately proud of one's ability') and '狂放不羁' ('unrestrained and wild') (Mo Yan, 2006, p. 414). Alongside the formal use of idioms, the characters also use partial idioms to display their knowledge; for example, '一见钟' is used instead of '一见钟情' ('love at first sight') (Mo Yan, 2006, p. 403). Furthermore, colloquialisms are widely used, such as the expression '骑驴看唱本, 走着瞧' (read from a songbook while riding on a donkey (idiom); we shall see). The use of different styles of language not only makes the characters more lifelike but also gives the language of the novel versatility.

When describing something new or the characters' environment, the novel adopts the style of an instructional text. For example, the writer describes the battery and power amplifier of the new radio in the village as follows: '红灯牌收音机有四块电容量 1.5 伏的干电池作为

电源，喇叭功率是 15W’ (‘The red lantern radio has four 1.5 volt dry batteries for power, and the speaker power is 15W’) (Mo Yan, 2006, p. 308). This dry information is at odds with the colloquial style of the novel. Furthermore, the fictive novel by ‘Mo Yan’, the jingles and the descriptions of scenery enrich the novel stylistically. All of these elements combine to create a hybrid approach to writing.

## **5.2 The explanation of the omissions**

As explained in Chapter Three, 128 omissions can be identified at the macro level when comparing the ST and TT. With consideration given to the functions and types of text involved, the omissions are classed into six categories: pure descriptive texts; monologues; narrators’ comments and dialogue; the embedded text; the stories of the characters; and lengthy passages containing several types of omission. In this chapter, the analysis includes the first four forms of omissions. Due to the length of the omitted passages, the original Chinese text is provided in Appendix Two.

### **5.2.1 Enforcing the storyline: the omission of descriptive text**

Prince (1987, p. 19) defines description as involving the representation of objects, situations or (non-purposeful, non-volitional) happenings in their spatial rather than temporal existence; their topological rather than chronological functioning; their simultaneity rather than succession. The subject of a description could be an object, being, situation or happening. Descriptive text supplements the contextual background of the novel. Three types of descriptive text in *L&D* are analysed: item descriptions, social environment descriptions and scenery descriptions.

#### ***5.2.1.1 Item descriptions***

The novel contains several examples where detailed descriptions are given to introduce an item or a situation. The language used in this category is identified as more formal and instructional. Omission in these sections affects both the narrative tempo and the language style.

Example 1:

For the wedding banquet, Jinlong had placed it on a table with a lit lantern. It was turned to the loudest and clearest station he could find. Farm personnel – boys and girls, men and women – gathered round to listen excitedly. [This thing is a big rectangular thing that is fifty cm long, thirty cm wide and thirty-five cm high. The front is a layer of golden flannel with a red-light logo on the flannel and the shell looks like a kind of brown hardwood. The workmanship is exquisite, and the shape is so beautiful that anyone who sees it will want to go up and touch it.] Everyone felt like touching the obviously expensive object, but no one could get up the nerve to do it.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 350)

The context of this example is that Jinlong receives a radio as a wedding gift, which is quite unusual in a rural area in the 1970s. The omitted text is a detailed description of the radio from the perspective of the pig. The comprehensive description reflects the pig's curiosity about seeing this new item as well as the rarity of the item. The language mimics the style of an instructional text, including the external details of the radio, its exact size and battery. However, for contemporary English-speaking readers, for whom radios are either common or even outdated, a detailed description might be redundant and even cause confusion. By omitting this description, the English version becomes more focused on the villagers' reactions to this new object.

As illustrated above in the discussion of language style, one of the characteristics of the novel is the hybrid nature of the language used, comprising a range of different genres, of which the mimicking of instruction text is a prime example. Description of several such items has been omitted, which reduces the richness of the original language.

#### *5.2.1.2 Social environment descriptions*

Descriptions of the social environment concern the background to the time period and the living environment of the characters. They can serve as the setting for the stories' narration and reflect the characteristics of a certain time. The omission of social environment descriptions diminishes the depiction of the broader social context.

#### Example 2:

First I aimed my binoculars at the entrance to Tianhua Lane. On Tianhua Lane was my house. The gate was closed. My son's enemies had drawn a picture and written slogans in chalk on the gate: a fanged little boy, half of whose face was filled in with chalk, the other not. He was holding his sticklike hands in the air, a sign of surrender. Down between his sticklike legs hung an enormous penis from which a single line ran all the way down to the bottom of the gate. [It must be urine. On the door panel to the right was a girl with eyes as big as bells, a mouth like a crescent moon, and two small braids at the corners of her head. She had also two thin arms raised above her shoulders, two thin legs spread apart, with a white line drawn straight down the middle to the bottom of the door. On the left side of the boy's pattern are written three crooked big words: Lan Kaifang; on the right side of the girl's pattern are written three crooked big words: Pang Fenghuang. I can see the point of the illustrator. My son was in the same class as Pang Kangmei's daughter, and Pang Fenghuang was his class president. One by one, the faces of Chunmiao, Pang Hu, Wang Leyun, Pang Kangmei, Chang Tianhong, Ximen Jinlong, and others flashed through my mind, my mind a mess of garbage.

I raised the lens slightly, the Tianhua Lane shortened violently, the ceiling square income under the eyes. The fountain rested and a flock of crows scrabbled around for food. It was something mutilated and hammy-like. I couldn't hear the crows' noise, but I knew they were noisy. Whenever a crow flies up with food in its mouth, a dozen or so of them will rush up bravely. They bunched together in the air, their pecked off feathers fluttering in the air like burnt paper dust from a sacrifice to the dead. There were large beer bottles scattered on the floor, and a sanitation woman in a white hat, large muzzle, and a large broom in hand was arguing with an old man dragging a snakeskin bag to pick up rags over them. I am in charge of the health department, and I know that picking up and selling scrap is a big source of income for the women workers, and among the scrap, the most profitable is beer bottles. For every beer bottle the old rag-picker put into the snakeskin bag, the sanitation woman pounced on him with a broom. Head-butting. With each pounce, the old trash picker stood up and carried a bottle of wine to the woman worker, who dragged the broom and ran. The old man didn't really chase either, went back, crouched down and hurriedly filled the bag with bottles of wine, and the woman worker rushed up again with her broom. This scene reminds me of the "animal world" I see on TV, where the old man picking up trash looks like a lion and the lady sanitation worker looks like a hyena.

I once read in one of Mo Yan's novels titled 'The Full Moon' that the dogs of Gaomi County would gather in the smallpox square every full moon night for a general meeting.]

I lowered my binoculars, which spat out Tianhua square and Tianhua Lane.

The context of this omission is Jiefang's observation through a telescope. He refuses to go home and meet Chunmiao personally after he has decided to divorce Hezuo. Jiefang uses a telescope to observe Chunmiao's workplace and their home. Looking through the telescope, he views not only the scenery, but also elements of society. The detailed descriptions of the lower body are removed. The storyline tightened and emphasised, and accordingly, the tempo of the narration has been accelerated.

Omissions speed up the narrative and give it a tighter structure, concentrating the narration on the main characters. In the ST, through detailed and scenic descriptions, Jiefang attempts to recount all the things he observed in the morning, including both the picture on the door and the daily life on the square. These details give insight into various people's lives and social environments in the 1990s. When this is omitted, the focus of the TT is not on what Jiefang has observed in a general sense, but on the morning life of Chunmiao and Jiefang. This analysis is supported by another omission of a description of the social environment (case 111, see Appendix One). In case 110, Jiefang is observing Kaifang going to school, when he accidentally notices several boys riding bicycles. By omitting case 111, Jiefang's observations are focused on Kaifang without interruption. Furthermore, a key discrepancy between the ST and TT is that Jiefang attempts to present everything he has observed to Qiansui, while in the TT, he selects from what he has seen and presents only the most relevant information. Through the omissions, his observations are streamlined. The description of the naked body and private parts are removed. The primary story is made more concise and coherent by removing the extraneous stories and details. The main storyline is enhanced.

Tong Dongfeng (2016, p.112) observes that images of excrement appear frequently in Mo Yan's stories, along with other descriptions of the lower half of the body, and Tong argues that in Mo Yan's fiction the body is a regenerative force inseparable from production and

reproduction. *L&D* is no exception: in the ST, Lan Kaifang's enemies draw ugly caricatures of Kaifang and Fenghuang on the wall, including their genitalia and their names, which is an act of bullying and an insult to the characters. In the TT, the picture of the girl and Kaifang and Fenghuang's names have been removed; thus, the picture has been adjusted to appear as merely a children's prank, and its vulgarity has been filtered out.

As observed by many scholars and literary critics (Wang Der-wei, 2000; Updike, 2005; Sun Anna, 2012; Knight, 2014; Tong Dongfeng, 2016), the novel contains recurrent scenes of defecation and urination. Although scholars with a Chinese studies background (Wang Der-wei, Knight, Tong Dongfeng) suggest the descriptions are characteristic of Mo Yan's language and are an act of rebellion against the grandiose discourse common to social realism literature. As reviewed in Mo Yan's language style section, starting from the 1990s, there is a strong tendency of de-elitization in Chinese literaray, which resistance against the established register and the elite class.

However, other scholars without this background such as Updike and Sun Anna regard the language as lacking in literary prowess, or even diseased. When viewed from this perspective, the text with omissions is more suitable to the standard of what 'good' literature is supposed to be in English. In the questionnaire and interview, the western readers' response to the description of human bodies is explored.

#### *5.2.1.3 Landscape descriptions*

The last form of descriptive text to be analysed is the landscape description, which allows the readers to imagine the atmosphere of an event. In describing the scenery, there are vivid metaphors, which are a representation of Mo Yan's imagination and language style. The effect of omission will be analysed in the following example.

Example 3:

So I struck out, walking along the narrow but comfortably smooth bank of the river, heading west. Uncultivated fields stretched out south of me, nothing but scrubland to the north. [On the slopes on both sides of the riverbank there were withered purple-ear acacia trees, with wild white melon vines crawling over them. On the vines white flowers bloomed, giving off a dull fragrance similar to lilac.

Of course, the moon was also very good, but compared with the two moons that I previously described to you in rich and colorful detail, the moon this particular evening was high in the sky and a little absent-minded. It no longer lowered its position, or changed color to accompany me or chase me, but was like a lady who sits in a sedan chair wearing a hat full of feathers on her head and a white veil over her face, hurrying on her way.]

When I reached the one-point-six-acre plot belonging to Lan Lian, I planted my hooves in the ground, having chased the moon westward to my destination.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 345)

This omitted excerpt contains observations of the scenery by Ximen Pig. In the ST, Lan Qiansui tries to reconstruct every detail for Jiefang, including the surrounding landscape and environment. With the omission in play, the narrative moves more quickly. The scenic and detailed description are absent from the TT, which instead focuses on the story of Ximen Pig returning to Ximen Village, which aids the development of the plot. However, as a result of the omission, some fantastical elements of the language, such as the personification of the moon as a lady, are lost. The language in the translated version is, therefore, less colourful compared to the ST.

### 5.2.2 Unifying the language style: the omission of embedded other literary forms

As explained in the ‘Overview of the novel’ of this chapter, the novel contains the embedded other literary forms. These, on the one hand, enrich the language style through hybridising it; on the other hand, the contents of the literary form supplement the narration. There are primarily two other literary forms: jingles and the fictive novel by ‘Mo Yan’, which will be analysed in the discussion of longer omissions (Chapter Seven). Here, the omission of jingles will be discussed. A jingle refers to a short song or tune employed for a certain purpose, usually for propaganda or advertising. Its main characteristics are short words and a specific



rhythm, with simple, easy-to-understand content. Here, the rhythm has been underlined to facilitate the explanation. To explain the rhythm, the ST is presented.

Example 4:

ST:

单干是座独木桥(qiao), 走一步来摇三摇(yao), 摇到桥下淹没了(liao)。  
人民公社通天道(dao), 社会主义是金桥(qiao), 拔掉穷根栽富苗(miao)。  
蓝脸老顽固(gu), 单干走绝路(lu)。一粒老鼠屎(shi), 坏了一缸醋(cu)。  
金龙宝凤蓝解放(fang), 手摸胸口想一想(xiang)。跟着你爹老顽固(gu),  
落后保守难进步(bu)。

(Mo Yan, 2006, p. 107)

TT:

[Farming individually is a one-way bridge, you move one step further, it shakes three times, eventually it will be submerged by the flood.

The People's Commune is the road to heaven, socialism is the golden bridge, and the poor roots are uprooted, and the seedlings are planted.]

Stubborn old Lan Lian is not our friend; independent farming is a true dead end. A single mouse dropping ruins a vat of vinegar.

Jinlong, Baofeng, Lan Jiefang, put your hands over your heart and think hard. Stay with your dad and you're as good as dead; you'll keep falling behind and can't get ahead.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 119)

The omission gives the story a more efficient structure and avoids distracting readers. Although the omitted text includes propaganda about the People's Commune and giving up individual farming, the omission of this passage does not significantly reduce the political content. The latter half, which is retained, contains similar political exhortations and the characters are addressed by name. The language of a jingle has a certain rhythm. In the ST, the last syllable of the omitted jingle is 'ao'. The jingles are adapted from slogans, and it is the rhythm that makes them easy to remember. However, the full translations of these jingles are long, and it is difficult to maintain the rhymes in English. The latter half of the jingle has been translated into English and re-rhymed. The meaning has been rendered clearly; however, it is

evident that the rhyme is weakened. In the ST, four of the eight last syllables are rhymed based on ‘u’, three are rhymed with ‘ang’ and only one in the middle has not been rhymed: in the Chinese lyrics, the last syllables of the third, fifth and seventh lines do not need to be rhymed.

In the English version, two of the eight last syllables are rhymed as ‘-end’, and another two are rhymed as ‘-ead’. Due to the difference between the languages, it is impractical and almost impossible to require the English version to rhyme in the same way as the Chinese version. Goldblatt (Goldblatt and Efthimiadou, 2012) has explained that the musicality of Chinese is untranslatable since it is impossible to communicate how the words sound in Chinese. However, when the rhyme is lost in these jingles, the artistic value is significantly reduced. In this sense, the contents of the jingles are simply repeating previously presented content; therefore, this omission tightens the structure by removing content that might distract readers.

### 5.2.3 Flattening characterisation: the omission of monologues

A monologue is a literary device through which narrators externalise their thoughts. Characters may not speak out about their true thoughts; however, through monologues, their most hidden inner world, including their emotions and opinions, can be made transparent. Their joys and sorrows, contradictions, melancholy, worries and hopes can be presented to the narratees and readers. Monologues can also help to flesh out characterisation. Consequently, the immediate effect of omitting a monologue is re-characterisation. Some of the character’s traits will inevitably be removed or diminished. There is also the possibility that, by weakening certain aspects of a character, other features of the character may be strengthened. In addition, the inner thoughts of characters can serve as a supplement to the social context; thus, the omission of characters’ inner worlds may also reduce the extent to which social and political situations are examined in the translated work in comparison to the original. The omission of

monologues may also have an impact on the structure of the text, such as accelerating the narrative tempo or strengthening the primary storyline. The consequences of omission will be analysed in three categories: the reincarnated animal's monologue, Lan Jiefang's monologue and the monologue of the extradiegetic narrator 'Mo Yan'.

#### *5.2.3.1 Animals' monologues*

The animals' monologues can be viewed in two types. The first is the pure narration of feelings, which contributes to the overall characterisation. In the second type, the monologue mimics the Mao-style structure, which reflects the influence of a political movement and the absurdity at its root.

Example 5:

There were few cars on the highway, so my driver drove at speeds that seemed close to flying. [The car flew up like a wing inserted. I felt that instead of the car sticking its wings up and flying, I gave birth to two wings and flew. I saw the flowers and trees along the road fall backwards and downwards, and I felt the road slowly erected like a black wall, and the big river along the road also erected. We then followed the black road that led straight up to the sky, while the waters of the great river around us cascaded down like a great waterfall...]

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 440)

The context of this example is Dog Four's feelings about being in a car for the first time, while the focus of this chapter is Hezuo returning home to save her marriage. Due to the omission here, the dog's excitement about being in the car is absent in the TT, with the narration focusing instead on the process of Hezuo returning home. The narration is thus more consistent. There are a substantial number of omission examples in this category (see Appendix 1, pp. 266–267) and most of them relate to the animals' feelings when they see a thing or acquaintance. Their monologues are inserted around the narration about an item or the people they meet or encounter. Removing these monologues allows the story's progress to be the main point of focus and limits the potential distraction of digressions.

Example 6 represents a different type of monologue, which satirises the contemporary political situation in a subtle and comedic manner. Through omissions, the sarcastic effect is weakened, and the language style is reworked.

Example 6:

The sorghum stalks in the wall surrounding my quarters were also fresh, the fluid secretions still wet, still fragrant, and, I bet, still tasty. But these were my living quarters, and I wasn't about to tear them down just to satisfy my appetite. That's not to say I couldn't take a bite just to see how they tasted. I could stand on my hind legs and walk like humans, but I wanted to keep that a secret as long as possible. [I had the feeling that I was in a time of unprecedented prosperity for pigs. In human history, never before have pigs been so noble, never before have pigs been so significant, never before have the influence of pigs been so far-reaching. Responding to their leader's call, thousands of people prostrate themselves to worship our pigs. I am alive during the greatest time of prosperity for pigs. I guess many people would like to be reincarnated as pigs, as many people think that pigs have a better life than human beings. I am alive at a great time. All things considered, Yama is not that mean to me. I've made up my mind to achieve miracles in these exceptional times; of course, the opportunity for such miracles is not yet ripe, so I have to pretend to be stupid. I need to be low-key: hide my talents, strengthen my muscles, steel my will, and wait for the right moment.]

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 234)

In this excerpt, Ximen Pig is being moved to a new pigsty. He is quite excited about the prospect and believes that he is living in the best time for pigs. However, when combined with the historical background, Mo Yan's writing appears to be a criticism of political events expressed through Ximen Pig's thoughts, thus creating a distinctly absurdist tone. The effects of this type of omission can be analysed in four sections: the re-characterisation of the pig; the weakening of the political sarcasm; the reworking of the language style; and the tightening of the structure.

Firstly, the omission makes a clear re-characterisation of Ximen Pig's image. In the ST, the pig's excitement about moving to a new pigsty and his psychological activities are vividly represented. Through the omission, these internal activities have all been removed, so the image of the pig is less rounded.

Secondly, the omission weakens the political sarcasm. The ‘grand’ historical background that this excerpt refers to concerns pig-rearing activities during the period of the People’s Commune. These activities aimed to rapidly transform China from an agrarian economy into a socialist society through industrialisation and collectivisation. In the novel, the villagers of Northeast Gaomi still lead miserable lives and lack sufficient sources of food; however, they pay particular care to the feeding of their pigs since they believe that ‘[r]aising pigs is a political act, and by doing a good job at it you’re showing your loyalty to Chairman Mao’ (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 223). Young people are encouraged to view pigs as they would their mothers and fathers (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 225). As a pig would be in this environment, Ximen Pig is offered a new, modern pigsty. The pig has previously stood up on his hind legs during one of Hong Taiyue’s inspections and is afterwards regarded as a talented, unique pig that should be treated as such. The omitted text contains the inner reflections of the pig during his first visit to his new pigsty, and through this omission, the novel loses some of its satirical bite.

Mimicry of the prevailing political rhetoric, the Maoist style, can be observed through this description of Ximen Pig’s thoughts. One of the characteristics of this style is the repetitive use of verbs to create emphasis. During the Cultural Revolution, due to intensive propaganda, this repetitive and redundant style came to influence the daily lives of citizens. In this example, Ximen Pig’s thoughts are depicted in an intentionally repetitive manner. Jia Yanqin (2016, p. 77) argues that Mo Yan chose this repetitive style to mock the prevailing political discourse of the 1970s. The following sentence appears in the ST: ‘猪的地位从来没有如此高贵，猪的意义从来没有如此重大，猪的影响从来没有如此深远’. This is translated as: ‘Never before have pigs been so noble, never before have pigs been so significant, never before have the influence of pigs been so far-reaching.’ Using these words to describe a pig is sardonic. The phrase ‘从来没有’ (‘never ever’) is repeated three times to highlight the importance of such

animals. This structure is not common in Chinese literature; rather, it mimics the structure of the Maoist style. Hu Peiping (2014, pp. 56–66) suggests that the combination of serious political discourse with a bright, comedic narrative tone creates a sense of irony that deconstructs the very discourse it seems to endorse. The omissions in the TT thus reduce these reflections on Chinese political movements and their influence, as well as affecting the ‘hybrid’ language style.

Knowledge of the cultural and historical background is necessary to fully understand this sarcasm in the ST. As Davis-Undiano (2011) suggests, a substantial level of cultural knowledge is required for a reader to unpack the Chinese cultural and historical contexts contained in Mo Yan’s works. Without this, the ironic tone may not be delivered effectively. The excerpt may simply be regarded by the reader as the pig’s thoughts, which might be seen as a distraction from the events that are being narrated. Therefore, through the omission, the narrative focuses on the event of the pig moving to a new pigsty, while the other details have been removed. Consequently, the tempo of the narration has been accelerated.

Notably, there are nine other omissions related to the pig’s monologues in Chapter 23, as represented in the omission categorisation list. Due to the similarities between these examples, the other three will not be analysed. However, it is reasonable to conclude that the English version aims to reduce the pigs’ internal thoughts and focus instead on the progression of the story. In this sense, by removing redundant information, the omission strengthens the representation of the primary storyline by giving it more continuity and makes the narrative structure more concise. However, the image of Ximen Pig is radically changed and the gap between the narrator Lan Qiansui and the stories he is narrating has been widened.

#### *5.2.3.2 Human character’s monologue*

Lan Jiefang leads the narration of ‘Ox Strength’ and co-narrates ‘Dog Spirits’. Compared to those of the animals, his monologue is quite limited, and it focuses on his relationship with Chunmiao.

Example 7:

Then I studied my reflection in the mirror, half red, half blue — truly ugly. I gently tapped the blue side and cursed: ugly shit! My self-confidence was on the verge of crumbling. [I couldn’t help thinking of ‘Mo Yan’s’ description of my face: “Buddy, look at your face: half Guan Yunchang and half Dou Erdun. It looks so manly and must be attractive to the beauties.” I knew he was talking nonsense, but my self-confidence recovered.] Several times I heard light footsteps coming my way, and I rushed to open the door to meet her. But the hall was always empty.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 412)

The effects of the omission will be analysed from three perspectives: the tightening of the plot development, re-characterisation, and the filtering of cultural messages.

This excerpt indicates Lan Jiefang’s psychological state while waiting for Chunmiao. By eliminating the lines about ‘Mo Yan’, Lan Jiefang’s inner turmoil has been modified. While the TT presents a version that focuses more simply on linear story development, it neglects the deeper psychological aspects of the story. Lan Jiefang has a big blue birthmark on his face and is not confident about his appearance, especially when anticipating going on a date with Chunmiao. In the original text, the stream-of-consciousness narration vividly represents Jiefang’s anxious condition. His recollection of ‘Mo Yan’ comparing him to two classical characters in Peking opera indicates his chaotic state of mind, as well as demonstrating the character’s ability to recover his confidence. However, these subtleties are lost through the omission of the underlined text.

It is not only Lan Jiefang’s character that is flattened in this section of the TT. ‘Mo Yan’ makes this comparison of Lan Jiefang to Guan Yunchang and Dou Erdun, and this omission influences the way he is portrayed in the TT. In *L&D*, ‘Mo Yan’ is depicted as a form of

everyman: he is a positive character, albeit one that is a little vulgar and crafty and likes to show off his knowledge. For example, Jiefang regards his big blue birthmark as humiliating; however, ‘Mo Yan’ compares Jiefang to two famous historical figures that happen to share similar facial features in their depictions in Peking opera. This comparison shows us more of how the mind of ‘Mo Yan’ works: mentally flexible and witty, he is also capable of successfully flattering people in high positions. Through this omission, the richness of ‘Mo Yan’s’ character is stifled. The TT simply presents a chronological narration of the story and the anxiety of the moment and the portrayal of Jiefang’s rekindled inner confidence are weakened. The focus on the chronological story development consolidates the structure.

The example above is taken from the earlier part of Chapter 42. Jiefang recalls his first meeting with Chunmiao, before they develop a romantic relationship, and the story time is in the past. Then, Jiefang tells Qiansui that his love for Chunmiao was alluded to by ‘Mo Yan’ and jokes about the risk of being friends with writers. This comment is in the present tense in the narration. Thus, through the omission, the narrative time is re-ordered chronologically, without further switching between tenses and time periods.

In the English version of the novel, the romantic relationship is only uncovered in the latter part of Chapter 42. However, in the Chinese version, this information is foreshadowed by Lan Jiefang’s comments. The readers thus approach the love story from a somewhat ‘omniscient’ perspective with a feeling of suspense, and they may prepare themselves to read and explore the stories. Due to the omission, the relationship is not revealed to English-speaking readers until it develops. Consequently, these readers are led to approach their stories in a simple chronological order.

The omission of this excerpt indicates a loss of cultural symbolism. Both Guan Yunchang and Dou Erdun are famous historical figures in China, as well as famous characters in Peking



opera. In the Peking opera representation, Guan Yunchang is traditionally portrayed as a red-faced warrior and Dou Erdun as a blue-faced hero. Therefore, the allusion here reflects Jiefang's outlook in his moment of anxiety. However, without this cultural knowledge about both of these figures and their representation, this message is likely to cause confusion and distract the reader. Through the omission, a potential cultural barrier is filtered out, which could ease the understanding of the text.

### 5.2.3.3 *The monologue of 'Mo Yan'*

As introduced at the beginning of this chapter, besides the two intradiegetic narrators, there is one extradiegetic narrator, 'Mo Yan', who takes charge of the narration in the last section of the novel. The style of his monologue differs from the monologues of Jiefang and Lan Qiansui. His sections of the novel follow a traditional story-telling style, in which the writer has the desire to communicate with his potential readers. Unlike the intradiegetic narrators, the monologue of 'Mo Yan' is expressed in the manner of addressing the extradiegetic narratee, in this case, the imaginary readers of his account.

#### Example 8:

"Enough of crazy talk. You can't throw away your future over a woman like me." Feeling a need to dampen his enthusiasm and lighten the atmosphere, she said, "Tell you what; I'll marry you if you can turn your blue face white".

As they say, 'casual words have powerful effects'. Making jokes to a man as deeply in love as he was is a dangerous business.

[Dear readers, you must remember the scholar Sun Zichu in *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi*, who cut off his extra finger just because of Miss A Bao's joke. Later, he was reincarnated as a parrot and fled to A Bao's bedside. After several reincarnations, the scholar Sun finally married A Bao. Sun's story has a happy ending. However, Lan Kaifang is not that lucky. It's his fate.]

Lan Kaifang took sick leave, not caring if his superiors approved or not, and went to Qingdao, where he underwent painful skin graft surgery.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 534)

The effects of this omission are primarily observable in four ways: the flattering of ‘Mo Yan’, the reconstruction of the plots, the filtering of cultural contents, and the reworking of the language style.

Firstly, ‘Mo Yan’ is depicted as a talkative writer who likes to show off his knowledge whenever possible in the ST. The omitted information in the above excerpt is a reference to *Liao Zhai* which occurs during the narration of Kaifang’s skin graft surgery. The story of Kaifang parallels the story of A Bao from *Liao Zhai*. By telling the story from *Liao Zhai*, the character ‘Mo Yan’ shows off his literary knowledge. It is noteworthy that ‘Mo Yan’ addresses his narratees in the form of a monologue three times in his narration, and that two of these instances are removed in the English translation (case 79 in Appendix One). Only the first instance (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 515), in which ‘Mo Yan’ explains the switching of the narrator at the beginning, is retained. In the English version, the boastful and talkative characteristics of ‘Mo Yan’ have been significantly reduced; ‘Mo Yan’ has also been distanced from his narratee emotionally.

Secondly, the omission causes a restructuring of the plot. Kaifang is compared to a scholar named Sun: both men have physical defects that make them uneasy in their affection for their heroines. Sun’s story can be regarded as a foreshadowing of Kaifang’s own life. In this regard, Kaifang’s story has a tragic ending, which is indicated by the statement, ‘A Bao’s story has a happy ending. However, Lan Kaifang is not that lucky. It’s his fate.’ The readers of the original version can therefore foresee the eventual outcomes for the characters. When this information is omitted, the outcome of Kaifang and Fenghuang’s love is not disclosed until the final moments.

Thirdly, this omission filters cultural content. This excerpt is a citation from a famous Chinese novel by Pu Songling. Most Chinese readers would be aware of the relevant cultural

background and be familiar with this novel, or at least have heard of it. However, without this background, the reference to *Liao Zhai* could be a cultural barrier for the English-speaking readership. The sudden appearance of the characters A Bao and Scholar Sun could potentially confuse the readers. The omission, therefore, aids English readers' understanding while also giving the development of the story more acuity.

Fourthly, this omission affects the style of the language. In this excerpt, the narration of 'Mo Yan' contains the expressions '读者诸君' and '亲爱的读者', literally translated as 'dear readers'. By speaking directly to the readers, the writer invites them to take part in the narration. The excerpt quoted above appears in the last chapter, which is narrated by 'Mo Yan' from a third-person perspective. His acknowledgement of his readers turns this passage into a conversation, as it compares Kaifang's story with a classical example that most Chinese readers would be familiar with. Inviting readers to identify with the writer of the stories follows a traditional storytelling style common to Chinese classics like *Liao Zhai*. In these works, expressions such as '列位看官' ('dear readers') and '欲知后事如何，且看下回分解' ('if you want to know how the story develops, please read on to the next chapter') are commonly seen at the beginning and end of each chapter. Through the omission, this stylistic feature is lost.

Goldblatt (2004) commented that Mo Yan litters his works with irrelevant and obtrusive asides that spring to the characters' minds in the moment. As explored in Chapter Four, Mo Yan (China News, 2009; Mo Yan, 2010b) regards *Liao Zhai* as a literary resource that has a great influence on his writing, and he attempts to pay homage to *Liao Zhai* (Mo Yan and Ling Jingze, 2007, Mo Yan, 2010b). The reference to the novel at this point might be regarded as irrelevant to the main storyline. For English readers, the reference might be more confusing than interesting, due to a lack of cultural and historical background. The omission inevitably

results in a loss of the nuance provided by Mo Yan's reference to the classics but the primary storyline is enhanced.

The consequences of omitting monologues vary, but there are some common characteristics. The removal of the narrators' monologues makes the narrative structure concise and compact, as well as remodelling it to focus on the development of the stories being narrated. As a result, the tempo of the narration is accelerated. However, the omission also leads to characterisation being diminished, as the narrators' voices and emotions are significantly reduced, and the events are made more distant from the storytelling.

#### 5.2.4 Simplifying narratives: omission of the narrators' voices

I will now discuss the omission of the narrators' comments and dialogue, presented in the form of interpolation. Temporally speaking, the comments and dialogue take place in the present time from the perspective of the narration, while the narrated stories take place in the past tense. Consequently, time switches occur between the narrated stories and the narrators' comments and dialogue. Since Jiefang and Qiansui are intradiegetic narrators and narratees for each other, it is feasible for them to explain and supplement their narrations, add comments and address each other. Their comments and dialogue supplement the background information. Moreover, their attitudes and personalities are reflected in their voices. Two examples have been analysed below. Example 9 is the omission from Lan Jiefang, while Example 10 is the comments from Lan Qiansui.

##### Example 9:

Once the nose ring was in place, they led you out into the field, where springtime, the season of rebirth, was making itself felt everywhere. [Your stubbornness, your ability to endure physical pain, and your spirit of willingness to die were amazing at the time, and your story is still being told by the people of Ximen village to this day. Those of us who felt that you were unbelievable at that time, and to this day, they still feel that you are a legend, and even I, who know your peculiar life, also feel that your actions are beyond my comprehension. You could have fought back, with your great body, with the strength that you possess in the

muscles and muscles of the whole body, like you did in the Ximen compound, like you did in the river land, like you did in the bazaar, like you did in the massacre, to lift up one by one those who tried to enslave you, those members of the people's commune, so that they flew up lightly and fell down heavily, smashing out one deep pit after another in the land that is so warm and soothing in spring. Even if the Jinlong is your son, but that was before you were a donkey and a cow, how many of you have eaten your father and raped your mother in the six reincarnations? Even if he doesn't know that you were his father, he can't be blamed, but he can't be that cruel to an ox! Oh, Ximen Ox, I can't bear to describe to you the atrocities he inflicted on you. You have been reincarnated four times since the time of the ox, and you may have forgotten many of the details of your journey through life and death. Ximen Ox, you listen to me, I must say, because this is what has happened, what has happened is history, and it is my duty to recount history to the parties who have forgotten the details.] But as soon as you reached the plot of land to be plowed, you lay down on the ground.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 210)

The context of this excerpt is that Ximen Ox is forced to wear a nose ring and is later beaten to death by Jinlong and then burned. The teenager Jiefang is the focaliser. The omitted text is the narrator Jiefang's questioning of Qiansui, in which he regards Qiansui and Ximen Ox as the same person. The omission has the potential to weaken the effect of Jiefang's criticism towards Jinlong and the commune and impact the distance between narrator and narratee and the adjustment of the narrative order.

Firstly, as a result of this omission, Jiefang's attitudes are missing from the English version. His questions convey his criticism of the brutality shown by Jinlong and the other commune members towards the innocent animal. Through Jiefang's words, criticism is expressed towards the commune members' madness and their extreme behaviour in the highly pressurised political environment. Consequently, the omission results in the English version concentrating on narrating the process of Ximen Ox being tortured and the criticism has been lost. Moreover, the emotional distance between narrator and narratee is enlarged. In the ST, through the emphasis of 'You could have fought back' and 'he cannot be that cruel to an ox', Jiefang's sorrow and pity for the ox are evident. He is talking to Qiansui with an abundance of emotion. Due to the omission, his emotional responses are missing, and he does not appear as engaged as in the ST. The image of Jiefang has been altered to one of a seemingly objective

narrator, merely recounting what he has witnessed without feeling. The emotional interaction between Jiefang and Qiansui is also reduced.

Another consequence of this omission is the readjustment of the narrative order. In the ST, the time switches between the present moment and an analeptic. The nose ring event happens in the past tense, Jiefang's questioning and comments are in the present and the subsequent story reverts to the past tense. Through the omission, the narrative order has been readjusted chronologically to achieve a consistent use of the past tense. The story of Ximen Ox is presented succinctly without interruption. The narrative is given greater clarity and moves more quickly.

Example 10:

“You and I are not finished,” Diao said through clenched teeth. “One of these days you’ll feel the might of a Mount Yimen pig. I will teach you that a tiger does not survive by eating corn cakes, and that the Earth God’s pecker is made of stone.”

[The answer to the question of Earth God’s pecker can be found in Mo Yan’s novel *New Stone Book*, in which he describes a childless stonemason who, in order to do good deeds, carved a statue of Earth God with a hard lapis lazuli and placed it in the Tugu Shrine at the village head. Earth God was carved out of stone, and Earth God’s cock, was naturally also of stone. The next year, the stonemason’s wife gave birth to a fat-headed baby boy. People in the village say that stonemason is rewarded for his kindness. The stonemason’s son grows up to be a rambunctious bandit who beats his father and curses his mother and acts like an animal. When the stonemason’s leg was broken by his son, thus he crawled through the streets, people could not help but feel a great deal of emotion in their hearts, the world is unpredictable, the so-called good and evil retribution is also a muddled account that is difficult to explain.]

I laughed off his threats and told him I accepted his challenge, that I’d be waiting.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 246)

The contextual background of this chapter is a confrontation between Diao Xiaosan (a pig) and Ximen Pig. Diao uses two folk adages, that ‘tiger does not eat corn cakes’ and ‘Earth God’s pecker is made of stone’, to indicate it is tough and aggressive, and to threaten Ximen Pig. The omitted text is Lan Qiansui’s digression when thinking about the Earth God’s pecker.

This omission raises several potential issues, including: enhancing the completeness of the story; filtering potential cultural barriers; and reworking the language style.

Firstly, the continuity of the narrated story is enhanced. In the ST, there is a shift of focalisation. While recounting the conversation between Diao and Ximen Pig, the focaliser is the pig, and when the novel by ‘Mo Yan’ is mentioned, the focaliser is Lan Qiansui. After the mention of the novel, the focaliser changes back to the pig again. The time period is constantly switching. Furthermore, the conversation between the pigs is often interrupted by Lan Qiansui’s commentary in the present tense. Due to the omission, the conversation in the English version is complete, and the timeline is uniform. This is intended to facilitate readers’ understanding of the novel.

Another result of the omission is that it filters out potential cultural barriers. In the ST, Lan Qiansui tries to explain to Jiefang where Diao’s words come from, referring to the novel written by ‘Mo Yan’. Although readers are unaware of the source of Diao’s words, the meaning is clear: ‘do not think I can be easily bullied’. Lan Qiansui’s explanation leads the narration to divert to another story; however, the story is not closely linked to the event currently being narrated. To English speakers without the relevant cultural background, these other stories might be a burdensome distraction. Therefore, through the omission, the consistency of the narration has been enhanced and a potential reading barrier has been removed.

Moreover, this omission also reduces the vulgarity of the language. In Chinese, the word ‘鸡巴’ (pecker) is a coarse and uneducated term. In the ST, as a pig, Diao’s use of this word could be regarded as suitable for the pig’s character and background. In the English version, through the omission of the entire paragraph, the vulgarity of the language has been reduced.

There are also cases where comments from a modern perspective foreshadow and indicate the related plots. Omissions of this type could influence readers' approaches to the stories.

Example 11:

Fenghuang was the daughter of Pang Kangmei and Chang Tianhong, and I knew that her biological father was Ximen Jinlong, conceived beneath the renowned lovers' tree in Apricot Garden. [The apricot blossomed in full bloom and the moon was bright, Ximen Jinlong pinned Pang Kangmei, who was then secretary of the Commune Party Committee, on the trunk of the apricot tree and sowed the genetically excellent seeds of our Ximen family into the womb of the first beauty in Gaomi County. According to the novel by "Mo Yan", when Jinlong lifted Pang Kangmei's skirt, Pang Kangmei pulled her hands on the Jinlong's ears and said in a low but stern voice: I'm the party secretary! Jinlong squeezed her body hard against the trunk and said: you're the secretary who did it, others bribe you with money, I bribe you with my dick! Then Pang Kangmei went limp. The apricot blossoms fell on them like snow. Twenty years later, it was uncontroversial for Pang Fenghuang to become an absolute beauty: the land was well planted, the environment was poetic and picturesque when she was sown, it is impossible if she is not pretty.]

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008 p. 377)

The context of this excerpt is Ximen Pig observing the third generation of the families in Ximen Village. The pig knows the secret that Fenghuang is the illegitimate daughter of Jinlong and Kangmei, but is unaware of the full details. Lan Qiansui mentions again the novel by 'Mo Yan', which tells the tale of the extramarital relations between Jinlong and Kangmei. However, Lan Qiansui's supplementary details have been omitted in the translation. As a result of this omission, the story focuses on the interdiction of the children, without being interrupted by Qiansui's supplementary details, and the narrative time has been reordered chronologically. With the omission, the details of making love are glossed over. The vulgarity has been removed with the omission of Jinlong's speaking of private part in a coarse manner.

Examples 9, 10 and 11 are the narrators' comments on an individual issue; Example 12, however, uncovers the issue of political corruption through the mouth of Lan Qiansui.



### Example 12:

If you want to know the truth, when you came home that evening you had a new smell, one that could make man and dog happy. It was nothing like the one you brought home after shaking a woman's hand or sharing a meal or dancing with a woman. It wasn't even the way you smelled after sex. Nothing got past that nose of mine. Big-Head Lan Qiansui's eyes lit up when he said this.

His expression and the look in his eyes made me realise that at the moment it wasn't Pang Fenghuang's exceptional child, with whom I had such an unbelievably complicated relationship, talking to me; no, it was my long-dead dog. Nothing got past that nose of mine, he'd said.

[“In the summer of 1989, you went to Donkey Township, ostensibly to inspect the work of that area. In reality, you went there to eat and play cards with your best friends, including the Secretary of Lyu Township Jin Douhuan, the Mayor of Lyu Township Lu Taiyu, and the Head of Lyu Township Supply and Marketing Cooperative Ke Lidun. On weekends, half of the government officials of Gaomi Town would go to Lyu Town for fun under the name of inspecting the work. I smelled Jin, Lu, and Ke on you. All of them have come to our home before, so I am quite familiar with their smell. By their lingering smell, I recalled their appearance and voices. You may hide the truth from your wife and son, but you cannot deceive me. I know that you enjoyed the turtle from Yunliang River and other famous local foods — braised chicken as well as cicada nymphs and silkworm chrysalises — and a lot of other food that I have no interest in mentioning. The most significant thing that I smelled was your sperm and condom, so you must have been whoring. Lyu Town is on the riverbank. There are abundant natural resources in this town. The scenery is beautiful. Near the river, there are dozens of hotels and hair salons where women take up that kind of job. You know all this tacitly.”]

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 405)

The following effects of this omission will be examined: the streamlining of the narrative order; the acceleration of the tempo; the weakening of satirical content regarding governmental officers; and the re-characterisation of Lan Qiansui.

The contextual background of this chapter is that Lan Jiefang is trying to explain his passion for Chunmiao to Qiansui; however, Qiansui interrupts and replies that he already knew about this when he was in the dog reincarnation. As dogs have a perfect sense of smell, he could sense the different scent Jiefang had after he fell in love with Chunmiao. To make his point more persuasive (and to show off), Qiansui adds details of other events that he was able to discern simply by smell, at which point he brings up Jiefang's past trip to Lü Town and

reveals the corruption that is common among Chinese government officials. Sarcasm is embedded cunningly throughout Lan Qiansui's boasting about his sense of smell as a dog.

Firstly, the narrative is made more linear through the omission, with fewer distractions. Evidently, Jiefang's trip to Lü Town is an interpolation of previous stories within the current narration. In the ST, Jiefang and Qiansui are discussing stories that happened in the past; however, these are memories from a past even more remote than the others being narrated, which constitutes a flashback. This interpolation interrupts the chronological order of the current narration. Through the omission of this flashback, the narrative order has been adjusted to a chronological one and the stories not directly related to the ongoing plot, i.e. the dog's detection of other governmental officers' corruption, are trimmed. The reconstructed story focuses on the dog's detection of Chunmiao's feelings. The story time in the TT is shorter than that in the ST; thus, the tempo is also accelerated as a result of the omission. The structure is tighter and more logical in its progression.

Secondly, the omission alters the development of the story. One of the characteristics of the original version of *L&D* is its presentation of critical and satirical commentary on politics from the animals' perspective (He Chengzhou, 2014; Knight, 2014). In this excerpt, the story ostensibly shows Qiansui boastfully describing some of the things he smelled during his time as a dog. However, a closer reading reveals a story in which government officials enjoy recreational activities while spending public funds. Due to their status as civil servants, the activities of these officials goes against the tenets of Chinese law. Mo Yan's use of this flashback can be seen as a reflection on the perceptions and realities of such corruption during that decade. Through the omission of this content, the author's critique of this issue is removed completely.

The omission also influences the characterisation of Lan Qiansui. The language Qiansui uses in his recollections reflects his personality. He is a five-year-old boy who is impatient and likes to show off; he narrates in an innocent tone and his language is vivid and lively. Due to the omission, these aspects of Lan Qiansui's personality are not adequately portrayed. It is still observable that he likes bragging, as he makes claims such as, '[n]othing got past that nose of mine'. However, the expression is not as vivid as the original and the language loses much of its acerbity. Furthermore, the image of Lan Jiefang is slightly reconstructed. In most parts of the novel, Lan Jiefang is depicted as an upright official, diligently serving the people. Through this excerpt, it can be seen that he also contributes to the problem of corruption and indulges in spending time with prostitutes; thus, we see the other side of his character. Through the omission, the depiction of this negative aspect of Jiefang's personality is removed.

Although the effects of omissions vary, there are some common characteristics. The narrators' presence in the story has been reduced, as their comments in the narrative time have been removed. Accordingly, the order of the narrative has been chronologised, and the narrative structure has been streamlined. The English version attaches greater importance to narrating an event in its entirety than accurately rendering Mo Yan's original writing.

## **CHAPTER SIX – OMISSION, CHARACTER RESHAPING AND RECONSTRUCTION**

This chapter will examine the characters' stories in more detail, analysing the narrative elements of the novel. A story comprises: the setting (when and where the story occurs); the characters (a human being or a participant who has been endowed with certain human physical attributes); the initiating event (an action or occurrence that establishes a problem and/or goal); the conflicts/goal (the focal point around which the whole story is organised); and other events (one or more attempts by the main character[s] to achieve the goal or solve the problem). Prince (1987, p. 72) explains that characters will be defined by their actions, words, feelings and similar attributes. Consequently, omitting stories narrated by characters is likely to influence their characterisation, the causal sequence of the story, and even the focaliser. It may also have effects on the lexical level, editing language style and narrative structures. By looking at each example in depth, it will be established whether there is a pattern linking the omitted passages and which aspects of the stories have been reconstructed, thus demonstrating how the English version approaches its readers. The examples are subcategorised according to the subjects of the narrated stories: omissions related to main characters, minor characters, and animal characters. Because of the length of the examples, the English translations of all the examples in this chapter (except example 22) are presented in Appendix Three.

### **6.1 Reshaping characterisation: omission of main characters**

The main characters are the centre of the story's development. In the introduction, a brief summary of the main characters is provided by Mo Yan: they are those people who have close relationships with the protagonist Ximen Nao, including his concubines Yingchun and Qiuxiang, their respective re-organised families, the Lan and Huang families and two generations of their offspring. Hong Taiyue, who has a close relationship with Ximen Nao, Lan

Lian and their offspring, is also regarded as a main character. However, the stories of the Lan family take up the larger part of the novel, as all the reincarnations of Ximen Nao live with or accompany members of this family. In the English version, the third generations of the Huang and Lan families have been removed from the main character list, as has the character Hong Taiyue. This editing may indicate a different reading and understanding of the novel. In this study's classification, I follow the main character list as it is presented in the English version, since the aim is to explore how the main characters are reconstructed in the translation.

Refer to Example 13 (p. 259; pp. 275–276):

In the original text, this excerpt takes place against the backdrop of Lan Jiefang's insistence upon being a self-employed farmer and supporting Lan Lian, which results in him being deprived of the opportunity to participate in a model opera. He pleads with his half-brother Jinlong, who takes the opportunity to educate Jiefang about the revolutionary rationale and to intimidate him with stories about the suffering of other individual farmer families. Jiefang becomes frightened and decides to try to persuade his father to give up individual farming. In the English version, Lan Lian convinces his father to give up individual farming in order to join a model opera. The disparities caused by this omission will be analysed from four perspectives: the minimisation of the stressful and tense political circumstances; the change in the causal sequence of the stories; re-characterisation; and the acceleration of the tempo.

An evident result of this omission is the minimisation of the tense political circumstances. In the ST, a substantial number of political terms, slogans and elements of rhetoric are quoted in the conversation, which highlights Jinlong's nature as a political fanatic. More importantly, they reflect the contentious circumstances and the deep-rooted influence of the Cultural Revolution, as political slogans seep into people's daily conversations. Expressions like 'to oppose the People's Commune is to oppose socialism, to fight against

socialism is to fight against the Communist Party, to fight against the Communist Party is to fight against Chairman Mao, to fight against Chairman Mao is to die!’ mimic the parallel structure of the Maoist style. The insistence on individual farming is elevated to the level of confronting Chairman Mao. This reflects the chaotic and senseless political attitudes held by the revolutionary fanatics, who value their political standing over blood ties. Due to this omission, the tense political circumstances in this excerpt are played down, and the political atmosphere of the chapter as a whole is diminished.

Omission also alters the causal sequence, as the event that is initiated due to varying political standings in the original is instead prompted by a teenager’s desire to perform in a model opera. This change in the causal sequence results in a re-characterisation of Jiefang and Jinlong. In the ST, Jiefang is depicted as the only one to support his father Lan Lian in his stance on individual farming, even though he has been isolated and beaten by the villagers. While he does wish to play a role in the model opera, his primary reason for persuading Lan Lian to stop his efforts is Jinlong’s threat that they will eventually be hanged. Hence, in the ST, Jiefang is a character who stands by his principles but also supports and cares about his father, and personal concerns are not the most important factor when changing his mind. However, the omission portrays Jiefang persuading his father to give up simply for his own benefit, which re-characterises his decision as a selfish and arbitrary one. This is a significant contrast to his previous behaviour, which leads to some inconsistency in the character’s depiction. As well as Jiefang, Jinlong is also re-characterised. In the ST, Jinlong is depicted as a fanatical revolutionary, who puts his political leanings above family loyalties and likes to quote grandiose political slogans in daily conversation. Due to omission, Jinlong is completely absent from Jiefang’s decision to change his mind.

Another result of the omission is the acceleration of the tempo. It can be difficult to compare the length of the story time and the narrative time by analysing a single text. However,

through the textual comparison, it is evident that the story time has been significantly reduced in the TT. In the ST, the narrative time approximately equals the story time. The TT, however, has adjusted the tempo through the use of ellipsis, since the story is absent from the narration. The ST focuses on relating the details, while the TT focuses on the development of the events, with the effect of increasing the speed of the narration.

The political slogans that appear in this section of the ST, would probably not be understood by an English-speaking readership to the same degree as Chinese readers would interpret the original text, due to the former's lack of cultural and historical background knowledge. From this perspective, the omission filters out potential cultural barriers.

Refer to Example 14 (p. 260; p. 276):

The context of this example is that Jinlong is preparing to retrieve the pigs from underneath the trucks, since the other commune members are all helpless. The omitted text depicts Jinlong's exhaustion immediately after his return to Ximen Village. The omission speeds the story up and places more emphasis on the process of extracting the pigs. It also has the effect of re-characterising Jinlong. In most parts of the novel, Jinlong is depicted as an imposing CCP branch leader who enjoys commanding others but takes little action himself. This omitted excerpt is one of the few descriptions of Jinlong working for the commune. Through the omission, this aspect of Jinlong's character formation is absent. There are also narrations of Jinlong working and making mistakes in cases 4 and 5 (see Appendix One, p. 265). As these examples are very similar, these two instances will be not analysed here: the original text and the researcher's translation are provided in Appendix Three. Through the omissions in these examples, as well as that analysed in Example 1, the image of Jinlong has been reconstructed. By the omission of certain parts of his personality and behaviour, his characteristics of chasing power by any means and being a political fanatic are reinforced.

Refer to Example 15 (pp. 260–261; pp. 276–277):

In this example, the narrator is Lan Qiansui, while the focaliser is Ximen Dog. The chapter in which this excerpt occurs is about Ximen Dog's observation of Hezuo, as well as the dogs' gatherings. The context of this passage is that Lan Jiefang has an extramarital affair with Chunmiao and decides to divorce Hezuo. There are five effects of the omission that will be examined here: re-characterisation; the change of the causal sequence; the growing emotional distance between the narrator and the character; the acceleration of the tempo; and the restructuring of the contents.

For Hezuo, making flatbread after dinner is a way to release her feelings of desperation, helplessness and anger. In front of Jiefang, Chunmiao and even her son Kaifang, Hezuo is tough, strong and arbitrary. Due to traditional attitudes towards marriage, even though there is no love between Hezuo and Jiefang, and even though Jiefang refuses to come home, Hezuo still rejects the idea of getting divorced. Her behaviour in this excerpt allows the readers to observe her true distress, and this description of her malaise presents a softer side to her personality. Only a few lines describing Hezuo falling and crying are retained in the translation; hence, while Hezuo's feelings are not entirely removed, they have been significantly weakened. The English translation curtails most of the description of Hezuo's pain, turning the moment into one that simply describes a distressed woman making flatbread. Through the omission, her reaction has been downplayed. Hezuo's character is converted into a more passive woman who desperately accepts Jiefang's proposal of divorce without much reaction or emotion. Omitting Hezuo's true reactions to her predicament thus distorts the development of her character. It is worth noting that this example is an abridgement of the material in the original novel, rather than a deletion of the entire passage. In the ST, through the detailed narration of Hezuo's emotional breakdown, it is clear that the activity of breadmaking is Hezuo's way of dealing



with the sudden news. Through the omission, her motivation has been altered to preparing food for her son: the causal sequence has been changed.

Moreover, the emotional distance between the narrator and narratee, as well as the narrator and the character, is widened. As explained in the literature review, distance is the metaphorical space between narrators, characters, events and situations, which can be intellectual, moral or emotional. The more details a narrator provides about the narrated events, the smaller the distance becomes between the narrator and both the event being narrated and the characters involved. In the ST, the narrator tries to present the narratee with a detailed and descriptive rendering of the situation through minimal narratorial mediation; therefore, the distance between the narrator and both the narrated event and the narratee is small. Through the omission, the narration becomes an object retelling of an event's progression and the distance between the narrator and both the narratee and the narrated event is, therefore, extended. In the ST, Lan Qiansui's compassion and understanding towards Hezuo are conveyed through the detailed description of the scene. In the context of the omission, Lan Qiansui gives a summary of the situation, removing the dog's observation of Hezuo. Consequently, the narrator's emotional distance from the character is enlarged.

Another consequence of this omission is the acceleration of the tempo of the narration. The story time has been significantly reduced from a detailed narration of the scene in the ST to a summary in the TT. The links between the events are thus broken. In the ST, making flatbread is a way for Hezuo to release her sadness and frustration, while in the TT, the narration focuses on the complete process of making the bread, while Hezuo's emotions are only interspersed in amongst the main narration.

Furthermore, this omission reconstructs the contents of the chapter and gives the animal storyline more prominence. As stated above, the alternating narration between humans and

animals is the most obvious in ‘Dog Spirits’. In the ST, this chapter centres on two key features – Hezuo making flatbread and Ximen Dog’s gatherings – and the narrations of the two are roughly comparable in length. Through the omission, this balance is broken. Hezuo’s story serves as an interpolation in the narration of the dogs’ gatherings: the structure has been reorganised. The description of the dogs’ activities has been placed in the dominant position, and the interaction between the two storylines has been reduced.

Refer to Example 16 (p. 261; p. 277):

This example is also related to the character Hezuo. The omitted text is about her taking a shower in the rain. The context is that, after Hezuo cleans the yard, she decides to take a shower in the rain. This is observed by both her son and Ximen Dog. The behaviour is abnormal. The omitted text also contains a description of the appearance of Hezuo’s body. Through the omission, the contents have been modified, and the description of her body has been removed. This alters the causal sequence. In the ST, Hezuo dries her hair and body after taking her shower in the rain, while in the English version, she dries herself after getting wet in the rain. Hezuo’s behaviour in the translation seems less abnormal.

The consequences of Examples 15 and 16 differ; however, the common feature is that Hezuo’s behaviour has been moderated and adjusted to reflect a less abnormal approach. Besides the omission describing Hezuo’s body, the descriptions of Jiefang’s and Chunmiao’s naked bodies are also omitted (cases 10 and 11, see Appendix One). Due to the highly similar nature of the omitted content, the latter will not be discussed in detail. These omissions also refine the language by removing the descriptions of the bodies. Such descriptions are not necessarily always coarse; however, in this case, some of the vocabulary used by the characters contains elements of vulgarity, such as in the depictions of nudity and genitalia. Therefore, the omissions raise the tone of the language.

Refer to Example 17 (p. 262; p. 278):

Example 17 is an excerpt from Chapter 52, which is co-narrated by Lan Jiefang and Lan Qiansui. To avoid his family's attempts to interfere with his love affair with Chunmiao, Jiefang has been hiding in Xi'an for five years, working as a part-time actor. Jiefang happens to have an opportunity to play the role of a fugitive bandit who comes down from his hideout in the mountains to attend his mother's funeral, even at the risk of being captured. However, at that moment, Jiefang is unaware that his mother, Yingchun, has died in the real world. The details of Yingchun's funeral are related by Lan Qiansui, with Ximen Dog acting as the focaliser. The effects of this omission can be identified as follows: the weakening of the connections between the two narrations, and the acceleration of the narrative tempo.

There are two parallel storylines in this chapter; together, they form both a polyphonic narration and an ironic contradiction. These stories, although they occur in different locations, are connected through timing and the event of a funeral. The dramatic irony of this passage is expressed through the comparison between Jiefang's filial grief in his acting role and Yingchun's funeral in Gaomi. Through the omission, the stories in Jiefang's narration are limited to simply describing him making a living in Xi'an; as a result, the symbolic meaning has been lost, and the connections between the two storylines have been weakened.

The omission also leads to re-organisation of the structure, and acceleration of the narrative tempo. In the ST, the narrations by the two narrators take up roughly the same proportion of the text. By omitting some of Lan Jiefang's narration, the English version has become merely an interpolation to Lan Qiansui's narration, with the latter becoming the primary focus. The original structure is thus re-organised.

Refer to Example 18 (p. 262; p. 278):

The context of this example is Hezuo bringing Dog Four back to the village, and Yingchun and Huang Tong making comments on the dogs' reunion. As a result of the omission here, Huang Tong is absent from the English translation. Huang Tong is a main character in the novel, but he primarily participates in the 'Donkey Miseries' chapter as Ximen Nao's executioner. In addition, he is the father of Huzhu and Hezuo, who have romantic relationships with Jinlong and Jiefang, respectively. In 'Dog Spirit', the status of Huang Tong has been gradually marginalised. The same kind of omission occurs as in case 3 (see Appendix One), which also affects Huang Tong. Another similar example is the omission of Pang Hu in case 8 (see Appendix One). Like Huang, Pang's participation is most evident in 'Donkey Miseries'. Pang and Huang are both main characters, but they are not dominant characters throughout the entire novel and they do not have roles as leading characters in these three examples. Through the omission of their stories, the stories of the leading characters for that particular time are reinforced, and the narration is made more consistent and streamlined.

Six examples of omission related to main characters have been discussed above. Although the consequences vary in each example, some patterns can be observed. Firstly, the description of the naked body and private parts have been removed. Moreover, through the omissions, emphasis has been placed on continuity and streamlining of the plot development: in cases where the main characters' words or behaviours interrupt the narration of a story, they have been omitted. As discussed in the literature review, omissions do not necessarily equate to loss: they can reinforce other aspects of the text. By omitting details of Jinlong's work, the English version reinforces his image as a political fanatic. The images of Jiefang and Hezuo are also changed through the omissions. However, the one or two omissions concerning the substantial narrations related to the main characters do not subvert the reader's perception of the main characters significantly. The overall characterisation of the main characters thus remains consistent with the ST.

## 6.2 Streamlining the main storyline: omission of minor characters

Minor characters refer to those who are not the focus of the work and appear less frequently. Some of them may appear only once or twice, and some are not even given a name. Although they are minor characters, this does not indicate that their roles are insignificant. Their stories contribute to the background setting and reflect social changes.

The minor characters in this novel can be divided into four categories. The first category has no specific function and mention of them is limited to one or two lines, primarily as an element of detail when the narrators are describing a situation or event. Typical examples of this category include cases 13, 14, 29, 30 and 34 (see Appendix One). The omission of minor characters of this type primarily simplifies the plot. The second category is those with connections to the main characters, whose dialogue and activities reflect social changes (Example 19). The third group are those with no connection to the main characters and who appear in the narrators' dialogue only once or twice but whose experience is evidence of the social environment (Example 20). A special minor character is 'Mo Yan' (Example 21), who appears very little in the first four chapters, but gains prominence later in the novel.

Refer to Example 19 (pp. 262–264; pp. 278–281):

The focaliser of this excerpt is Ximen Pig, who travels back to Ximen Village after several years away. The changes in the village are related through Ximen Pig's observations. The contextual background of this chapter is that the Cultural Revolution has ended, and society is being transformed from a planned economy to a market economy. The individualistic economy that was banned during the Cultural Revolution is recovering gradually. Class and political status are no longer as important as they were and people who were marginalised, discriminated against or overthrown due to their political status have been vindicated. Most of the characters involved in this excerpt, with the exceptions of Qiuxiang and Huzhu, are minor

characters who only appear in the novel to a limited degree. The changes in the political environment and the improvement of the economic conditions are reflected through these minor characters' conversations.

This excerpt is from Chapter 33, in which the narration is carried out on both the extradiegetic and intradiegetic levels. The extradiegetic stories focus on Ximen Pig's return to Ximen Village and Hong Taiyue's drunken state. The intradiegetic stories concern the minor characters' conversations and activities in the tavern that Ximen Pig passes. The omission in this section will be explored in relation to its enhancement of the extradiegetic storyline, the alteration of the events, the acceleration of the narrative tempo and the partial presentation of the social conditions. The crowds in the tavern form the story at the intradiegetic level, which details and supplements the extradiegetic story. Through the radical omission of the story at the intradiegetic level, the extradiegetic narrative has been given greater clarity.

In the ST, Qiansui tries to reconstruct every detail in the tavern and presents the scene in a rich and detailed manner, which results in the story's pace slowing. However, the English translation presents an abridged version, with various characters and details omitted. The narrative time in the TT has been significantly reduced, and the pace is much faster.

As a result of this omission, the presentation of the changes in the political and social environment is not as evident as in the ST. Both the writer 'Mo Yan' and the narrator Lan Qiansui are invisible: it is through the minor characters' conversation that the significant changes are revealed. However, in the TT, a substantial proportion of the minor characters' conversations have been removed. The omission alters the events that are being narrated. The plots that describe the situations of different villagers in the tavern are changed to Ximen Pig seeing Yang Qi go to the tavern. However, from another perspective, this omission filters out a substantial number of political terms that cannot be understood without knowledge of the

cultural and historical background, probably not known to most English-speaking readers. Moreover, the omission of minor characters also reduces the number of Chinese names: the sudden presentation of several minor characters could be difficult for non-Chinese speakers. From this perspective, this omission could facilitate understanding of the novel.

Refer to Example 20 (pp. 264–265; p. 281):

The contextual background of this excerpt is that Kaifang (Jiefang's son) wants to go to school by himself, but his mother Hezuo is concerned for his safety. She speaks about the terrible public conditions, with the omitted text giving a specific example. This omission will be analysed from two perspectives: the loss of political sarcasm, and the emphasis on story continuity.

The fact that the son of the governor of a state-owned bank was kidnapped is given as evidence that 'public safety was bad'. In order to save his son, the governor (Hu) had to pay a tremendous amount of money, and when looking at the size of the ransom demand, it seems that the kidnappers were sure that he could access such an amount. The average annual salary in the Chinese financial industry at that time was around 2,000 RMB; it should therefore have been impossible for Hu to pay the RMB 1,800,000 ransom. The use of the Hu family as an example can be regarded as a strategy to satirise official embezzlement, using black humour to create an extreme case through which to express the author's opinion about this political phenomenon. Consequently, the effect of sarcasm is lost through the omission. However, from another perspective, it is questionable whether the implicit sarcasm would have been understood by English-speaking readers without knowledge of Chinese salary levels in the 1990s. Without this understanding, the reference to Hu Lanqing and his son, who appear only once in the novel as minor characters, could entail confusion for readers, and omitting them removes this possibility. At the same time, through the omission, the TT places a spotlight on

the conversation between Hezuo and Kaifang's discussion of public safety. Their conversation is also written more efficiently, without extraneous detail.

The stories of this type of minor character are often embedded in the narration of other stories or events; consequently, their omission enhances the continuous flow of the narration. However, this reworks the original narrative structure. With the omission of such minor characters, and the concentration the TT has on changes in the main characters' lives, the political concerns of the original are diluted.

The omission also re-image 'Mo Yan', who appears as a special minor character in the first four books of the ST before serving as the narrator in the last book of the novel. 'Mo Yan' does not appear a great deal in the novel and he is the only character whose presence has no association with political movements. He is depicted as a knowledgeable and talkative man, who likes to show off his knowledge. It has been suggested that the novel's serious subject matter of political criticism and historical narrative is dissipated by this showy, verbose, scandalous character and that his presence has a contradictory effect (Liu et al., 2013, p. 693). Therefore, the omission of 'Mo Yan' weakens the contradictory and comedic effect of the novel as well as the characterisation of 'Mo Yan'.

Refer to Example 21(p. 265; p. 281):

The contextual background of this excerpt is Lan Qiansui's recollection of the first meeting between Chunmiao (Jiefang's lover) and Kaifang (Jiefang's son), who are introduced by 'Mo Yan'. Four effects of this omission will be observed: re-characterisation; acceleration of the tempo; the growing distance between the narrator and the narratee; and the loss of richness of idiom.

The omitted information is a description of 'Mo Yan' joking with bookstore staff. The character of 'Mo Yan' is flattened in the English translation of this excerpt. The idioms he



quotes in the ST help the reader to understand his nature better. ‘Mo Yan’ is a character with a humorous personality. He left school quite early and gained most of his knowledge through teaching himself, but he likes to show off his knowledge in every possible situation. As such, he tends to half-quote idioms, as he thinks that this has a humorous effect while also displaying his intelligence. This habit is an integral part of his personality and, when omitted, the humorous parts of his character are not as obvious. The tempo of the narration is also accelerated. In the English version, ‘Mo Yan’s introduction of Kaifang to Chunmiao immediately follows the basic information about the employees in the book store. In the ST, the narrator attempts to recount every detail he observes, while the TT instead emphasises the plot development.

Moreover, this omission affects the language style of the text. As explained in Chapter Five, Mo Yan’s language style is a ‘hybrid’, with idioms and other literary language sporadically interspersed among the vernacular and political rhetoric. Removing the idioms slightly reduces the hybridity of the language. In addition, some of the idioms mentioned by ‘Mo Yan’ have special meanings. The second idiom used here – *Yi Jian Zhong Qing* – means to fall in love at first sight: ‘Chunmiao causes a stirring in Jiefang’s heart at their first meeting’ (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 400) and ‘he feels good just looking at her’ (p. 402). The idiom is intended to indicate the relationship between Jiefang and Chunmiao. The third idiom – *Gou Zhang Ren Shi* – means ‘like a dog, to threaten other people on the strength of its master’s power’, i.e. to be a bully with the support of a powerful person. As stated at the beginning of the passage quoted above, dogs are not allowed inside the bookstore; however, Chunmiao makes an exception for Kaifang’s dog, apparently on account of Kaifang and his father, Jiefang. The other two saleswomen do their best to make a good impression on Chunmiao, even though all three are clerks at the same level. They do so because her sister, Kangmei, is the powerful Secretary of the Gaomi County Communist Party Committee. In this regard, both the dog and

Chunmiao receive priority treatment because of the person or the power they are associated with. The fourth idiom – *Can Bu Ren Du* – describes something so horrible that one can hardly bear to look at it, which can be understood to represent ‘Mo Yan’s mockery of his own appearance. The omission of these idioms in the English version detracts from the richness of the text, since all of the allusions behind the idioms have been lost. However, to adequately understand these phrases, their implications and their intended humour, a high level of contextual knowledge would be required. They may therefore be a stumbling block for English-speaking readers; in this way, the omission facilitates their understanding of the novel.

In addition to this example, there are two other omissions related to ‘Mo Yan’ (cases 18 and 33, see Appendix One), in which the knowledgeable and talkative parts of his personality are absent. Consequently, the participation of ‘Mo Yan’ in the first four sections has been significantly reduced. He is regarded more as the narrator.

### **6.3 Emphasising the human storyline: the omission of allegorical animal stories**

One characteristic of this novel is the merging of animals’ and humans’ lives, with the boundaries between them made unclear by the reincarnations of Ximen Nao. The stories about animals in the novel can be classed into three categories. The first is the pure description of different kinds of animals’ conversations and activities. These are not limited to Ximen Nao’s animal reincarnations but include other species. The stories in this category are often short and do not include much interaction with humans. They merely introduce different animals’ lives and have no special functions in the ST (Example 22).

The second category consists of stories that take place around Ximen Nao’s animal reincarnations; this is most evident in ‘Pig Frolics’ and ‘Dog Spirits’. These animal activities metaphorically allude to human stories (Example 23). The third category is the criticism of human behaviours from animals’ seemingly objective perspective (Example 24). The

descriptions of animals in the latter two categories could be regarded as Mo Yan's strategy for criticising political movements.

Example 22:

English version:

Now, though I hadn't formally been anointed Pig King, my authority among the pigs was well established. So I rushed up to the rows of pens.

"Don't be frightened", I announced to the first pen in each row. "The good times are on their way".

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 244)

Full translation:

Now, though I hadn't formally been anointed Pig King, my authority among the pigs was well established. So I rushed up to the rows of pens.

"Tell everyone, don't be afraid, this is our lucky day!"

I said to the most sinister of the six castrated pigs in the first barn in the second row, Coyote Howl,

"Tell everyone, don't be afraid, this is our lucky day!"

I said to the most beautiful little sow Butterfly of the five pigs in the first barn in the third row,

"Tell everyone, don't be afraid, this is our lucky day!"

The chapter to which this excerpt belongs focuses primarily on the commune members preparing for and celebrating the pig-production conference. Ximen Pig hears the news that the pig-production conference will be held in Ximen Village, which is of benefit to the pigs. He is so excited that he tries to share this news to every pig. By omitting this section, the translator has produced two effects that will be examined: a slight reconstruction of the character's image, and a re-balancing of the storyline.

The story of Ximen Pig delivering his message is an intradiegetic story on the extradiegetic level. At the extradiegetic level, Ximen Pig is the focaliser, presenting the stories

in Ximen Village through his observations, while at the intradiegetic level, the pig is the character involved in the story. In the ST, Ximen Pig's excitement can be traced through his personal delivery of the messages to many pigs and the repeated language. Through using the pigs' nicknames, the close relationships between Ximen Pig and the others are made evident. In the ST, this passage is a descriptive and detailed reconstruction of the situation. In the TT, Ximen Pig's excitement is mildly reduced. The sharing of the good news becomes the announcing of the good news. Since all the other pigs are absent, Ximen Pig's relationship does not appear so close.

Omitting these details also gives the narrative greater impetus, pushing it forward. The stories occurring at the intradiegetic level are summarised, with the result that the storyline at the extradiegetic level is presented more clearly. More examples in this category have been identified, but they will not be explored here, since the function of the ST and the effects of the omission are fairly similar to this case. The focus will instead be on explaining the omissions in the second category, which occur in the stories that take place around Ximen Nao's animal reincarnations. They differ from the above examples in their implications. In this category, the animals are anthropomorphised. Some social problems are reflected through their activities, and criticism of social phenomena expressed through their animal viewpoints.

Refer to Example 23 (pp. 265–266; pp. 281–282):

The contextual background of this excerpt is the dogs' monthly gathering, with Ximen Dog as the 'chairdog'. Two effects of this omission will be analysed: the weakening of the political sarcasm, and the re-balancing of the structure.

The ironic effect of the passage is weakened through omission. In the ST, this passage satirises the problems of the contemporary government. The description of the animal gathering is a satire on the realities of life in China in the 1990s. The conversation between the dogs

reveals two societal problems: regional discrimination and influential backers. When introducing Mary to Ximen Dog, the deputy chairman emphasises that Mary is from Beijing, and Mary later shows her contempt for the local Gaomi dogs' parties and manners. Due to the unequal development within different regions, opportunities and experiences for citizens in different areas differed significantly, which led to regional discrimination. The description of Mary's contempt here towards the Gaomi dogs can be seen as representing Mo Yan's acerbic criticism of this phenomenon and a critique of the imbalanced development that was occurring around him.

This conversation also reveals the existence of behind-the-scenes scheming and manipulation between government officials. The first question that Dog Four (the chairman of the dogs) asks in this passage is about Mary's master. The Pekingese gives her master's name, and Dog Four immediately responds by commenting on her owner's job and position. In this chapter, whenever a new dog appears, its master's role and position are introduced: most of the masters are government officials who know each other. On the surface, while this chapter describes a dogs' assembly to exchange ideas about society, it has underlying deeper themes. There is an idiom in Chinese, '狗仗人势', 'a dog threatens people on the strength of its master's power' (the third idiom in Example 21, p. 162). When Mo Yan describes these dog assemblies, he is ironically describing the mechanisms of government officialdom. Consequently, through the omission, the irony presented in this passage has been lost.

Even though the omitted contents contain political messages, the omission cannot simply be attributed to ideological factors, as other parts of this chapter describing the dogs' gatherings and conversation also contain political irony. Thus, political concerns may not be the primary reason for removing this section. Only parts of this chapter's gatherings are presented in the English version and the prevalence of the animals' engagement is reduced and their storyline curtailed, which constitutes a re-balancing of the chapter's structure as a whole.

Refer to Example 24 (p. 266; p. 282):

This example also concerns the dogs' gatherings. Unlike in the examples discussed above, it is not the dogs' activities but the conversations between the animals that reveal and satirise social problems. This excerpt from the ST comes from Chapter 47, in which Hezuo takes Ximen Dog back to Ximen Village hoping to gain her family's support to save her marriage to Jiefang. This allows Dog Four an opportunity to meet his siblings, setting up two parallel storylines in the chapter. The primary storyline focuses on the human characters and discussions about Hezuo's marriage, while the secondary one focuses on the reunion of Ximen Dog's family and their conversations. The effects of this omission are twofold: the loss of criticism of societal issues, and the strengthening of the primary storyline.

The youngest in the family, Dog Four has three brothers and sisters, who have all been separated since they were little. The eldest dog was given to Jinlong and Huzhu, the second eldest to Ma Liangcai and Ximen Baofeng and the third eldest (the only female dog) to Pang Kangmei. The dogs' conversations about their masters' lives unveil social problems relating to the new, money-driven society. Ma Liangcai has been mentioned several times before this, but only in his capacity as Baofeng's husband, with his identity thus far restricted. It is through the dogs' conversations that Ma's life experiences are revealed.

Compared to the characters of Jinlong and Jiefang, Ma Liangcai plays a minor role in the novel. He only appears twice in the characters' dialogues, but the event of Ma's death has a special significance in Mo Yan's novel. Ma has had a peaceful and happy life working as a primary school teacher; when he decides to resign and join Jinlong's business, however, he loses his life. The preface to the novel explains that the title, *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*, is a phrase attributed to the Buddha. The philosophy behind this phrase is explained through another quotation given in the preface (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008): 'Transmigration

wearies owing to mundane desires, few desires and inaction bring peace to mind'. Ma Liangcai's death is related to his greed for money, a 'mundane desire' that would, according to the Buddha, impair the movement of the soul. Therefore, the story of Ma articulates the issues arising in the new money-driven society in which he lives. As a result of the omission, this reflection is absent from the English translation.

The TT also omits Dog Four discussing Jiefang's relationships with Hezuo and Chunmiao. Even though this is new information for the other dogs, it has been repeated several times in previous chapters, and removing this reiteration of information increases the concision and neatness of the text. This chapter contains two further omissions (cases 54 and 73, see Appendix One), which concern Dog Four's monologue and the dog brothers' reunion, respectively. In the ST, the dogs present their analysis and perceptions of the current state of affairs in human society. Due to the omissions of such conversations in the TT, these ideas are not fully presented and the dogs' interactions with the human world are limited. In the ST, this chapter shifts continuously between stories of Hezuo's family and the conversations between their dogs. The TT, however, omits the latter so that the stories of Hezuo's family take up the majority of the chapter, which leads to the loss of the characteristic interwoven structure of Mo Yan's novel. The result is that both the thematic significance of the author's implicit critique and the artistic value of his unique narrative structure are not as evident as in the ST.

As highlighted in the analysis of Examples 23 and 24, the TT focuses on the stories about the Lan family and removes the stories about the dogs, their conversations and activities. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that the English version is more concerned with the events affecting the Lan family. The other elements of the stories, which might distract the readers, have been trimmed or removed with the result of facilitating the reading process and strengthening the primary storyline.

Viewing historical events through the eyes of the animals is a significant feature of the ST of *L&D*. It is through animal characters that Mo Yan expresses criticism that might be too risky if spoken by a human character (He Chengzhou, 2014; Knight, 2014). The animals' stories are either presented as intradiegetic stories embedded in the extradiegetic level of the narration, or as plots running parallel to those of the human beings. Thus, in the ST, the stories of the animals and humans are intertwined and their absence in the TT weakens the novel's capacity for political criticism. In the English translation, the presence of animal characters and their interactions with humans is lessened, but not entirely cut out. The original structure has been reworked, with more emphasis placed on the human stories. Mo Yan himself explained the necessity of detailed descriptions of the animals' lives, saying the novel would be less interesting if the animals were merely the focalisers of the stories. The lives of the different animals add intricacy to the novel. Even though they are not directly relevant to the stories that are being narrated, these descriptions make the lives of the animals interesting (Zhang Xudong and Mo Yan, 2013, p. 212). This characteristic of the writing is lost through omission.

From the examples discussed in this chapter, it is evident that the political criticism of the ST has been diluted or weakened in translation, while the narrative structure has been tightened. With the omission of minor characters and some activities of the animal characters, more emphasis has been given to the formation of the main characters. Compared to the ST, the storylines of the main characters have been enhanced and streamlined. They are presented more concisely and compactly, with fewer interruptions and diversions. As explained at the beginning of this section, several characters have been removed from the main character list in the English version. It is thus reasonable to conclude that the English version places more emphasis on the family stories of Ximen Nao and his offspring.



## **CHAPTER SEVEN – OMISSION, DISTORTION, RECONSTRUCTION, AND KEY FEATURES OF THE OMITTED TEXTS**

This chapter is composed of two sections. The first analyses the omissions of lengthy passages of text, each of which contains two or more of the six types of omissions explained in Chapters Five and Six. Because of the length of the examples, the English translations of all the examples in this chapter are presented in Appendix Three. The second section explores and analyses the key features of the omissions.

### **7.1 Distortion and recreation: lengthy omissions**

In this category, the omitted text usually totals two or three pages, which constitutes a radical form of rewriting. The omitted text contains various forms of text types, as explained in Chapters Five and Six. 12 cases have been identified, and four examples containing the most types of omissions are analysed.

This extreme translation style undoubtedly reduces the content, restructures the plot and accelerates the pace of the narrative in the chapters affected. In addition, depending on the specific contents of the passages, the characterisation and language style may also be reworked. Due to the length of the examples, the translated text will be presented in Appendix Three.

Refer to Example 25 (p. 277; pp. 285–286):

The context of this excerpt is that Jiefang witnesses Huang Huzhu, the girl he has been admiring, developing a romantic relationship with his half-brother Jinlong, and he is greatly disturbed by the resultant feelings of devastation. In the ST, this excerpt depicts Jiefang's pain and his out-of-control state, the family members' and villagers' reactions, and Lan Qiansui's comments. The omission in this example covers the stories of main characters, social environment description as well as Lan Qiansui's comments, which are intertwined with one

another. In this case, the effects of the omission will be analysed with five considerations: the acceleration of the tempo; the chronology of the narrative tense; the extended distance between the narrator and the characters; re-characterisation; and the reduction of the richness of the language.

The acceleration of the tempo that results from this omission is evident. The progression of Jiefang's mental state in the ST, from his becoming deranged and losing control, through to when he receives treatment and is able to calm down, has been summarised in the TT as him 'writhing' and then settling down after receiving treatment. The original two pages of text has been summarised in only three lines. The story time in the TT is thus significantly reduced from a full scene to a brief summary.

This omission also alters the narrative tense. In the ST, Jiefang's recovery from his mania is related in the past tense and Qiansui adds his own comments from a present tense perspective. The narrative switches frequently between story time and narrative time. With the omitted text, however, only the story time in the past tense is preserved; thus, the retelling has been adjusted to run chronologically. Through this omission, the narration also shifts from 'showing' to 'telling'. The ST gives a detailed description of the events and the distance between the narrator and both the narrated event and the narratee is small, leaving the impression that the narrator witnessed the entire process and is trying to recount it in great detail for the narratee. In addition, the narrator's emotional distance from the characters is small, as indicated by his description of their situation, especially his sorrow for Baofeng. In the TT, the seemingly objective summarisation of the incident leaves the impression that the narrator is keeping a distance from the event and feels little concern for the characters involved.

The omission reduced the vividness and richness of the language. In the ST, Jiefang's pain and Baofeng's normal state are described in detail through metaphors. Furthermore, Lan

Qiansui, in his narrations and comments, employs some exaggerated expressions of the time. With the majority of this story omitted, the vitality and complexity of the language are lost.

The re-characterisation of Yingchun and Baofeng is evident and needs little exploration, as their reactions are erased from the English version. This analysis will focus instead on the re-characterisation of Lan Qiansui, the narrator. In this excerpt, his previous reincarnation as the pig serves as the focaliser. He is a talkative narrator who is attempting to tell and explain everything he knows to his grandfather, Lan Jiefang. His narration is fragmented: he continually jumps from one event to another, supplying every detail he knows, whether it is related to the event he is narrating or not. This language style suits his character as an emotionally charged and talkative five-year-old boy. The omission, which simply presents his emotionless statement, causes a shift in his characterisation.

Much of the information in this excerpt concerns the other villagers' reactions to Jiefang's temporary madness, which could distract readers. In this regard, the omission could also be viewed as an effective strategy to enhance the main storyline and highlight the protagonists.

In Chapter 27 of the novel, there are two further omissions. One contains the villagers' reactions to Jinlong losing consciousness, with a detailed account of the reaction of 'Mo Yan' (Example 26), and the other details Huang Tong's reaction to the heated quarrel between Hong Taiyue, Jinlong and Yingchun (case 3, see Appendix One). When considering these three omissions together, it is evident that the ST attempts to recount every detail of the stories, while the TT focuses on the events happening around Jiefang and Jinlong, the primary characters. The omitted excerpt colourfully reflects the reactions of various characters and provides a scenic and detailed narration; however, this may also distract readers from the main storyline.

By removing plots that are not directly linked to the events currently being narrated, the structure has been tightened.

Refer to Example 26 (pp. 278–279; pp. 286–287):

This example is also taken from Chapter 27. The contextual background to this passage is that Jinlong is drunk and touches the generator, which leads to him losing consciousness. The omitted text contains a comment on ‘Mo Yan’ from Lan Qiansui, the recounting of Jinlong’s loss of consciousness by ‘Mo Yan’ and the interactions between Ximen Pig and ‘Mo Yan’. The discrepancies will be analysed according to the following themes: the restructuring of the narrative order, the streamlining of the main plots, and re-characterisation.

The focaliser is Ximen Pig, who sees the villagers running to rescue Jinlong. Huzhu and ‘Mo Yan’ are the first two to appear. In the omitted text, Lan Qiansui makes his own comments on Huzhu and the events, as well as on ‘Mo Yan’. These comments supply the reader with the emotions of the female characters, Huzhu and Hezuo; at the same time, the character ‘Mo Yan’ is introduced to the readers in this manner. Following Lan Qiansui’s comments, the omitted text relays the explanation of ‘Mo Yan’ in great detail, as well as the interaction between Ximen Pig and ‘Mo Yan’. Therefore, there are switches in the narrative time in the ST because Lan Qiansui is commenting from the present tense of the narrative time. The omission edits the stories so that they develop chronologically.

In the ST, besides commenting from a present perspective, Lan Qiansui tries to recount the situation for Jiefang in detail. In the English version, the story of ‘Mo Yan’ has been omitted and the rescue of Jinlong is, therefore, present more systematically, without diverting the reader’s attention to other stories. The omission compresses the narrative structure and foregrounds the main story, as well as picking up the narrative pace.

Moreover, most of these omissions, both Lan Qiansui's comments and narrations, are related to 'Mo Yan' and removing these elements leads to his re-characterisation. In the ST, 'Mo Yan' is a narrator and a minor character who is loquacious and invested in many types of 'public affairs' in the village. He is ignored by nearly all the villagers. In the English version, the character 'Mo Yan' is almost absent. There are three other omissions (cases 18, 32 and 33) related to the talkative nature of 'Mo Yan'. When all these omissions work in combination, 'Mo Yan' has been recast in the TT in the role of an extradiegetic narrator: his participation in the stories, as well as his personality traits, are minimised.

Refer to Example 27 (pp. 279–283; pp. 287–292):

This example is a radical omission that lasts seven pages in the original, representing nearly 36% of the chapter. It contains three types of omission: animal monologues, the stories of the animal characters, and the quotation from the fictive novel by 'Mo Yan'. Specifically, the omitted contents include the description of the pigs enjoying themselves in the pigsty, the quarrel with Diao Xiaosan, the description of the moon, Ximen Pig's imaginings of the moon, the quotation from *Pole Vaulting to the Moon*, and Diao getting injured due to stealing an apricot. Three consequences of this omission will be analysed: the re-organisation of the storyline; the re-characterisation of Diao Xiaosan; and the simplification of the narrative structure.

There are two storylines: that of the animals, focusing on Diao Xiaosan and Ximen Pig; and that of the humans, focusing on the weddings of Jinlong and Huzhu, and Hezuo and Jiefang. The two storylines are intertwined. The omission, however, almost deletes the animals' storyline and rearranges the chapter: the narration focuses instead on the arrangement of the weddings, which is a key part of the human storyline. The human storylines have been maximised and brought to the fore. In the ST, in which the two storylines are interlaced, one

storyline is often interrupted by the other, while through the omission, the human storyline is presented as a whole, streamlined and smooth in its transitions.

In the ST, the portrayal of Diao is evocative and detailed. The pig's personality is implied through the presentation of multiple incidents, such as chasing the boar, debating with Ximen Pig and contemplating strategies to steal the apricot. Diao is framed as an important figure in the pigs' world. There are five other omissions related to Diao Xiaosan (cases 39, 40, 66, 67 and 68), these cases introduced different aspects of Diao's personality and his status in the pigs' world. Through the omission, many of the traces of Diao have been removed. Consequently, the figure of Diao has been transformed from a key character to a minor character in the pigs' world. However, it is also notable that, through the omission of Diao, Ximen Pig's image is further accentuated.

Through the omission of *Pole Vaulting to the Moon*, which is a fictive novel by 'Mo Yan', the narrative structure is simplified. The content of the novel repeats large amounts of information from Ximen Pig's narration, such as the description of the moon and the arrangement of weddings. The content of the novel repeats large portions of information from Ximen Pig's narration, such as the description of the moon and the arrangement of the weddings. However, as explained earlier, the purpose of the quotation is to prove that Lan Qiansui's narration is true, even though it may sound absurd. Moreover, an embedded narrative structure is formed: at the extradiegetic level, Lan Qiansui recounts the arrangement of the weddings, while at the intradiegetic level, the novel by 'Mo Yan' supplements the details. Through the omission, the repetitive texts have been omitted; thus, the contents are more streamlined in comparison to the ST. The multi-layered narrative structure has been simplified and reduced.

Refer to Example 28 (pp. 283–284; pp. 292–294):

The contextual background of this example is Ximen Pig travelling back to Ximen Village, where he observes the changes in people's lives. The omitted passage includes the details about Ximen villagers watching TV, a minor character Wu Fang, Hong Taiyue and Jinlong's heated discussion about Wu Fang and the police, and a conversation between Jiefang and Qiansui. This omission produces five effects that will be analysed: simplification of the narrative structure; reduction of the narrators; acceleration of the narrative tempo; dilution of political messages; and filtering of culturally specific knowledge.

Firstly, the omitted text contains two narrative levels. On the extradiegetic level, Lan Qiansui's recounts how Ximen Pig returns to the village and that Hong Taiyue is drunk. On the intradiegetic level, the stories include scene-setting in which villagers watch TV, villagers drink and chat in the tavern, and information about Jinlong and Hong Taiyue. Since all the omissions are from the intradiegetic level, the embedded narrative structure has been simplified to one level. The story develops continuously at the extradiegetic level, without interruptions.

In addition, the omission leads to the reduction of the narrators. In the ST, the narrators consistently switch. When Lan Qiansui states that he did not know the guard at that time, Lan Jiefang joins in the narration to supplement the background information about Wu Fang. A dialogue is thus formed between the two narrators. As a result of the omission, Lan Jiefang's narration is absent, and Lan Qiansui is the only narrator, which has a simplifying effect. Furthermore, the omission places the narrations in chronological order. There are frequent switches between the story time and narrative time since both Jiefang and Qiansui provide supplementary information about the stories observed from Ximen Pig's perspective. The omission removes this commentary and supplementation, and the narrated stories develop in order following Ximen Pig's focalisation, which also simplifies the narrative structure. This simplification, the removal of one narrator and the chronologising of the narrative line, all serve

to accelerate the tempo of the narrative. The English version also places more emphasis on the development of the plot at the extradiegetic level.

As well as leading to discrepancies in the structure, the omission filters out cultural and political messages. Jiefang compares Qiansui to a series of characters from famous Chinese classical novels, of which an English readership might well be ignorant. Therefore, the omission has filtered out potential cultural barriers.

This untranslated passage subtly criticises the profound influence of political discrimination. Jinlong and Hong's conversation highlights different reactions to the process of social transformation. The influence of political movements on a person's mind and language is also reflected in their conversation. The characters have become accustomed to relating every event to a political movement or slogan. Wufang is only one of many that have been rehabilitated, and his subsequent appointment as a guard is part of that process. However, Hong regards Wufang's appointment as a political mistake. In his conversation with Jinlong, several terms such as 'severe political mistake', 'class standard' and 'revisionism' are used, in addition to political slogans such as 'politics came first [...] politics was everything, all else had to give way to it' (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 242). At first glance, such grandiloquence appears absurd, but the seemingly ridiculous conversation reveals an obsession with political terms and slogans. This passage mocks the fact that politics and political rhetoric enjoyed such an absolute and superior position during the Cultural Revolution.

The character Hong can be read as a satire of CCP officers whose deeds do not match their words or their obligation to 'serve the people'. Instead of fulfilling their duties, they are more interested in the rights and privileges conferred by their status. Hong regards himself as a faithful follower of the CCP. Although the central government has already ended the Cultural Revolution, Hong—as a beneficiary of it—firmly believes that the views of this movement



were correct and that people with different political statuses should enjoy different benefits. The manner in which Wu greets Hong in the above excerpt is compared to a puppet village chief saluting a Japanese officer, with Hong in the Japanese role, thus mocking his self-cultivated image as an anti-Japanese soldier. Jinlong's words also mock the idea of CCP members being sincere followers of the Party. Jinlong has followed and worked for the Communist Party for a long time and has engaged in many political activities. However, in this conversation with Hong, he expresses the idea that, as ordinary people, it does not matter which party you support as long as you have a prosperous life. This characterisation of Jinlong satirises those CCP officers who enjoy a high position in the Party but hold no sincere political beliefs and for whom self-interest stands above all else.

In summary, in this excerpt, the novel focuses on the development of stories directly from Lan Qiansui's observations. Both the thematic significance and writing style have been reworked, and as a result, the multi-layered political satire of the original is not adequately presented in the translation. Mo Yan's complicated stream-of-consciousness narrative structure has been reworked and placed in chronological order with the omission of flashbacks and interpolations, which leads to a simplification of both content and construction.

The discrepancies caused by 28 examples from six categories of omission have undeniable effects on the presentation of the text to the reader. Although the consequences of the omissions differ in each example, there are still common characteristics among them. In the following section, we will explore the patterns of the omitted texts, analyse how the omissions reconstruct the novel and consider the consequences of the omissions.

## **7.2 Exploration and analysis of the omissions**

As highlighted in the literature review, omission inevitably entails the loss of information; however, the consequences of omission are not limited to this. It can lead to the reconstruction of other aspects of the text, or even to their enhancement and emphasis.

The deviations between the ST and the TT in each example have been explained above. Even though the deviations vary in each example, the primary consequences of the omissions can still be identified, including magnification of the main characters' stories, changes in characterisation, the softening of political criticism, the filtering of Chinese cultural messages and the reworking of the language style. Based on the textual evidence, it can be concluded that the omissions simplify the original novel and emphasise the primary storylines. Therefore, from this textual analysis, I suggest that the most significant consequence of the omissions is the augmentation of the main storylines in the translated version.

#### 7.2.1 Enhancement of the main plots

In this analysis, the enhancement of the main plots is shown to be the most obvious and common consequence of omission. There are some omissions of main characters, but only a relatively small proportion (12/128) compared to other types of omission, and those examples are relatively short. Hence, the main storylines remain essentially the same as in the ST. Compared to the ST, however, it is clear that the English version attaches increased importance to the consistent development of the main storylines. The increased development of the main plots is primarily achieved through the chronologising of the narrative order, the reduction of material regarding minor and animal characters, and the simplification of the narrative structure.

In the ST, the narration of one story is often accompanied by the narrators' comments from the present tense of the narrative time (Examples 9, 10, 11, 12), which results in switches between the story time and the narrative time. By removing the comments, this switching effect is reduced, and the result is not insignificant: 22/128 omissions are of this type. The storytelling is therefore made more concise and sticks to a clearer chronology, once the distractions of the narrators' comments have been removed.

Omissions of the characters' monologues are also commons (22/128) and result in a similar enhancement of the main storyline. Almost all the monologues are interpolated in the narrations and removing these interruptions from the stories makes their telling completer and more consistent, which is of great importance to the English version. Moreover, since the omitted monologues are predominantly assigned to animal characters, the omissions significantly reduce the animal characters' involvement in the stories. As a result, the human storylines are given greater prominence.

Moreover, most of the minor characters who appear only once or twice have been omitted. In the ST, the main characters' social environment is enriched by narration about these minor characters; they are presented using the 'showing' method of narration, with details about their behaviours and conversations. In some examples, the minor characters at the extradiegetic level also serve as narrators at the intradiegetic level; thus, an embedded narrative structure is formed. Through the omission of these minor characters, the embedded narrative structure has been simplified in the TT and the stories at the extradiegetic level develop without interruption. The omissions of this type are most evident in Chapter 33. On the extradiegetic level, this chapter concerns Ximen Pig's return to the village, while on the intradiegetic level, it is about the conversations and behaviours of different minor characters. In the ST, Ximen Pig's return is frequently interrupted by observations and conversations between minor characters. In the translation, 41% of the original text has been omitted, and what is lost is primarily these observations. Through these omissions, the embedded narrative structure has been simplified and the extradiegetic storyline that focuses on Ximen Pig's return to the village is given greater importance.

The streamlining of the main storyline is also achieved by the omission of the animals' stories. In the ST of 'Pig Frolics' and 'Dog Spirits', the storylines of the animals and the humans are intertwined. Through the translator's omissions, much of the animals' storyline has

been removed and the connections between the human and animal plots are inevitably reduced. This reworking of the original style allows the human storyline to run uninterrupted. The intertwining of the human and animals' storylines is most evident in Chapters 27 and 43, with detailed narrations of the pigs' and dogs' activities, respectively. However, most of the stories about the animals' lives are omitted in the English version.

Through the omissions, any monologues and comments by minor characters and animal characters that might distract from the development of the human storylines have been significantly reduced. However, it is worth noting that these characteristics have not been completely removed, but simply made less obvious in the English version. Through the diminution of these features, the stories of human beings have been significantly augmented.

In the ST, the novel panoramically 'shows' different characters' lives in the context of overarching contemporary political movements; whether they are major or minor, human or animal, the novel relates not only what characters experience but also how they think. Through the omissions of such material, the English version acts as a reconstruction of the text, with greater emphasis on the main characters and human storylines. As a result, the tempo of the narrative has also been accelerated.

### 7.2.2 The simplification of the narrative structure

Mo Yan's narrative perspective is unique, as he uses animals and children as narrators, and sometimes has multiple narrators working concurrently, engaging in a form of polyphony and dialogue with one other. Mo Yan often uses this shift in perspective to indicate two narrative types: firstly, one in which different stories are happening in different places at the same time, with Example 18 being the most notable instance; secondly, one in which several stories are occurring sequentially in the same place, with Example 20 being the most representative example. Linear narratives are often interrupted and expand into multiple

independent narrative spaces. Many new characters appear to supplement the narration, most evidently in Chapters 23, 33 and 41 in the novel, and they are secondary characters whose stories are sometimes told by alternating the two perspectives. This multiplicity of narrative voices and perspectives gives depth and dimension to Mo Yan's narrative. In the English version, the roles of the secondary characters are considerably reduced. As much as possible, the translation favours a single narrative point of view and its relevant storyline. The linear narrative of the main storyline is strengthened by the deletion of extraneous narration. In Mo Yan's writing, however, the multidimensionality of the narrative is not just a question of form and style, but of the meaning and ideas themselves, which are lost through omission.

### 7.2.3 The emphasis on the main characters

The omissions also result in re-characterisation, which is presented from two perspectives: the reinforcement of the main characters, and the marginalisation of animal characters and 'Mo Yan'. The images of most of the main characters remain unchanged. Even though there are 12 omissions related to the main characters, they only influence the character formation of Jiefang, Hezuo and Jinlong. The re-characterisation of Jinlong is worthy of discussion, as the omissions reinforce a certain aspect of his image. Jinlong is depicted as an opportunist and a political fanatic, who commands the other villagers but rarely undertakes any substantial work himself. Example 14 and case 4 in Appendix One depict Jinlong's wisdom and brave actions when the other villagers are helpless, which present a rarely seen aspect of his personality. Through the omission of this passage in the English version, Jinlong's image as a dictatorial, opportunistic political fanatic is reinforced.

The omissions regarding minor characters and animal characters are more substantial. Some characters are removed altogether, while other minor characters are marginalised and partially presented. The clearest examples are seen in the minor character 'Mo Yan', and the

animal characters Ximen Pig, Ximen Dog and the other pig, Diao Xiaosan. However, through the omissions in the English version (cases 32, 33, 78, 79, 85, 89, 121 and 122), the presentation of ‘Mo Yan’ has been greatly reduced, so that he appears as a mere narrator of events, without much engagement in the stories of Ximen Village. Another character that has been radically reduced is Diao Xiaosan. In the ST, Diao is presented as an intelligent and decisive pig. He has frequent interactions with Ximen Pig, and the stories in the pigs’ world are almost all developed around these interactions. Through the omissions (cases 38, 39, 65, 66, 67, 123 and 126), Diao has been marginalised to the extent of becoming almost ‘invisible’.

In the original novel, there are detailed narrations regarding the animal characters, especially Ximen Pig and Ximen Dog and the other pig character, Diao Xiaosan. Through the omission of animal monologues (21 cases) as well as animal activities (21 cases), the animal characters’ engagement has been greatly abridged in the translation. In the ST, Ximen Pig and Ximen Dog are the focalisers of the changes in Ximen Village; at the same time, they are involved and engaged in these movements, and have their own perceptions of the events. Through the omissions, their roles as the focalisers are stressed. It is through their perspective that these events are observed; however, their comments on the events are removed, so the characterisation of these two animals has been flattened.

Every type of character experiences re-characterisation, but the effect is not too great on many of the main characters due to the volume of material about them in the rest of the novel. In contrast, the engagement of minor characters and animal characters is significantly reduced, and their re-characterisation is considerable. In this way, the English version gives more weight to the stories about the main characters, as well as to their characterisation.

#### 7.2.4 The softening of political criticism

Political criticism is significant in the ST. It is reflected in the quotation of political terms and slogans in characters' conversations and monologues, as well as the mimicry of the Maoist style. The political criticism is completely removed in ten of the 29 examples analysed. The omissions remove some examples of such criticism or sarcasm; however, when viewing the novel as a whole, the political criticism is still evident, although tempered, and the core political issue of the novel is still prominent.

The omissions related to political messages have been addressed in previous studies on the English translation of *L&D* (Wang Lu, 2012; Huang Xin, 2014; Jia Yanqin, 2016). These scholars attributed omissions to manipulation based on Western ideology. This thesis emphasises the consequences of rewriting, rather than the possible factors leading to it. However, from the examples analysed, I suggest an alternative to their arguments. The political criticism is softened, but not for political or ideological reasons; rather, the omissions smooth the reading process and emphasise the consistency of the narration. This claim is supported by both textual and peritextual evidence.

It is undeniable that a substantial amount of political information has been omitted, but a great deal of it has been retained in the English version. Jia Yanqin (2016) studied the translation strategies of political discourse in *L&D* and highlighted that a substantial number of terms related to politics are retained in the English version. Moreover, in reviews of *L&D* in American newspapers, observations are also made regarding the political aspect of Mo Yan's writing. Jonathan Spence (2008) states in *The New York Times* that 'the political dramas narrated by Mo Yan are historically faithful to the currently known record', while Steven Moore comments in *The Washington Post* that 'Mo Yan has been writing brutally vibrant stories about rural life in China that flout official Party ideology... He also flouts literary conformity, spiking his earthy realism with fantasy, hallucination and metafiction' (2008).

Although their perceptions of the political information differ, it is evident that some political material is delivered in the English version.

When discussing the contextual background in Chapter Four, the response of Western critics to Mo Yan winning the Nobel Prize was reviewed. Although some of the criticisms are subjective and arbitrary, there is a view that Mo Yan is a member of the CCP and thus his criticism is not strong enough (Ai Weiwei, cited in Clark, 2012; Gu Bin and Feng Haiyin, 2012; Khong, 2012; Link, 2012; Müller, cited in Haq, 2012; Rushdie, cited in Daley, 2012; Tobar, 2012); it can therefore be speculated that criticism of the CCP is a topic which is understood and welcomed by at least some Western readers of Chinese literature. On this basis, the argument that Chinese political information has been omitted for the benefit of the English-speaking readership is indefensible. The questioning of this viewpoint is further supported by Goldblatt's interview with Ji Jin (2009), in which the former stated that American readers like to read works criticising politics.

I suggest that while the omission of political messages inevitably softens political concerns, these omissions might not be made for ideological or political reasons, but rather to simplify the text and create a smoother reading experience. Ten examples of discrepancies have been discovered between the ST and the TT which relate to political messages. With the exception of Example 1, in which the political criticism is indicated by the main characters' conversation, all of these examples present the political information via either minor characters' conversations, animals' activities or the narrators' comments, which occur in the present and are therefore retrospective. With the omissions in place, the central storyline becomes streamlined and the tempo of the narrative accelerates.

Some knowledge of the relevant cultural and historical background is required to fully understand political terms such as '黑五类' (the five categories of disgraced people) and '五



保户’ (five guarantees). Mo Yan also makes political criticisms by mimicking the Maoist style (Example 13), using parallel sentence structures to Maoist texts; identifying these instances of sarcasm requires cultural and historical background knowledge. In this sense, the omissions remove potential reading barriers for an English audience and facilitate the reading process.

Moreover, as stated in the critical introduction, the core political issue Mo Yan aims to reflect is the relationship between farmers and the land. This theme is most evident in ‘Donkey Miseries’ and ‘Ox Strength’; however, the omissions in these two parts are quite limited (7/128). Chapter 33 also contains significant omissions of political issues, which are explained in detail in the analysis of Example 13. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that a substantial amount of political information omitted from Chapter 33 relates to vindication following the Cultural Revolution, as well as the development of individual businesses, while Hong Taiyue and Lan Lian’s conversation regarding land ownership is retained. Therefore, I suggest that the minutiae of the political criticism have been lost in these omissions, but the core political issue of the novel has been reinforced.

#### 7.2.5 The filtering of Chinese cultural elements

The novel is deeply rooted in Chinese culture, as a primary element of the plot is based on the Buddhist concept of reincarnation, which is a key element of one of China’s oldest religions. There are many references to Buddhist figures and mythology throughout the text. Moreover, there are references to elements of Taoism, another Chinese religion; Chinese idioms and vernacular are used; and famous characters from Peking opera, Chinese classical novels and history all make an appearance. These cultural elements belong to the scope of the novel’s “universe of discourse”. They are important components of the ST but not all features of this “universe of discourse” would be accepted or understood by the TT readers, as they would by the ST readers.

In the English version, the stories from Buddhism and Taoism have been retained. However, Chinese idioms and references to Peking operas, classical novels and historical figures have been removed. All of the cultural elements that have been erased are story-based; therefore, if potential readers do not know the story, they will likely not understand the connotations and the function the story plays in the novel, and will not grasp a great deal of the original meaning. As Goldblatt explains, Chinese literary works tend to be China-centric. It is not hard to translate them into other languages, but cultural translation creates more of a challenge (Goldblatt, 2000b, p. 22). These cultural elements contribute to the formation of characters but are not directly pertinent to the main storyline. Therefore, the omissions do not influence the development of the plot or the complexity of the main characters, but they do remove potential barriers to improve the ease of reading. The cultural elements in the English version have been diluted but still enrich the text.

#### 7.2.6 Reworking of the language style

The language style of the original novel has been identified as a “hybrid”: it includes vernacular terms, political rhetoric, references to classical Chinese texts and other forms of literary works, and descriptive text. By close examination of the deviations from the ST that occur in each example, it is evident that other forms of literary text, such as descriptive texts, jingles, idioms and colloquialisms, as well as references to classical Chinese, have suffered significant instances of omission, which reduces the hybridity of the language style, as well as the vividness of the language. In contrast, the language of the TT is refined by this process.

Most of the descriptive passages from the ST are omitted in the TT. I hold that these omissions enhance and streamline the main plot, which is supported by the evidence of my analysis. Many of the detailed descriptions relate to items that were rare in the story’s time period, and the descriptive text reflects the extent to which the characters treasure them.

However, certain background information is required to appreciate the scarcity of the items mentioned; otherwise, the descriptive texts are likely to be regarded as redundant. The English version attaches more emphasis to the development of the plots, rather than to the details of the items or the social context.

The omissions of political criticism affect political slogans and Mo Yan's intended mimicking of the Maoist style. Consequently, these features are made less evident by the omissions. Moreover, classical Chinese and idioms, as well as certain vernacular terms, both fall under the scope of the 'universe of discourse'. This indicates that cultural background knowledge is required to understand these elements of the text. Goldblatt has discussed the difficulties posed by translating Mo Yan's work (2013), reinforcing that the language itself presents issues: for example, the original text contains rhymes, which are much easier to achieve in Chinese than in English. Rhyming while also retaining the original meaning can present great difficulties to the translator. In the case of the English translation of *L&D*, jingles pose this exact problem, and so omitting them is a translation strategy to bridge the cultural and linguistic gap.

The omissions also refine the language. A distinct feature of the original is the use of vernacular. However, some of this language is coarse, including direct references to genitalia and naked bodies. In the English version, most of the expressions referring to the naked body or genitalia have been removed (cases 9, 10, 11, 42, 84 and 90 in Appendix One), with the result that the language is less vulgar and more highbrow. Shao Lu (2011, p. 43) observes that Goldblatt supplemented the descriptions of sex in his earlier translations of Mo Yan's works, such as that of *Red Sorghum*, but chose to delete sexual descriptions in his translation of *L&D*; Shao does not provide an explanation for this change of translation strategy. Firstly, I assert that the published English version contains the work of both the translator and English editors (Goldblatt, 2011a; Goldblatt, 2014); therefore, it is arbitrary to attribute these omissions to the

translator. Secondly, these elements may not have been omitted because of their sexual connotations: the English version retains some reference to ‘making love’ and Chapter 55, entitled ‘Lovemaking Positions’ (Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 518), has been retained in its entirety. I suggest that the omissions were made because of the sexual references’ methods of expression. In Chapter Four, I examined Updike (2005) and Anna Sun’s comments (2012) regarding Mo Yan’s language. They both suggested that it lacked decorum and a proper literary tone, due to the explicit descriptions of the physical form and sex. Although Goldblatt (Luo Yu, 2005; Ji Jin, 2009) and Laughlin (2012) refuted their evaluation of Chinese literature as being judged against a Western standard, their comments may reflect some Western literary editors’, reviewers’ or general readers’ review towards a novel. In comparison to the original, the language in the English version has been edified, although the characters’ language is not as vivid.

The ST provides a panoramic narration of the lives of the Ximen villagers in the political movements between the 1950s and the 2000s, while employing embedded narrative structures and intertwined stories of humans and animals. However, the English version attaches greater emphasis to the storylines of the first two generations of the Lan and Huang families. The participation of the minor characters and animal characters has been significantly reduced; however, the main characters and the primary storylines remain almost identical. The political satire and criticism have been minimised, but they are still evident in the English version. The Chinese cultural elements which might require background knowledge for full understanding have also been filtered out. Therefore, from this textual analysis and narrative analysis, I suggest that the most significant consequence of the omissions is the enhancement of the main storylines in the translated version.

## CHAPTER EIGHT – RECEPTION STUDY: PERSPECTIVES FROM ENGLISH-SPEAKING READERS

From the ‘manipulation school’ viewpoint (Hermans, 1999, p. 11), the purpose of rewriting is to recreate a text for a specific target audience in conformity with target language norms, i.e. to create the desired image of the ST for the target readership. In relation to *L&D*, the translated text has a series of omissions that Goldblatt explained he did not make but rather they were made by the publisher with Mo Yan’s consent (Goldblatt, 2011a; 2014). Goldblatt claimed that the author’s attitude was ‘do what you must, since I can’t read it anyway’ (Goldblatt, 2011a, p. 101) and it is reasonable to suggest that the omissions, in this case, were primarily made by the publisher to make the book more attractive to an English-speaking audience. In an interview with Goldblatt concerning the co-operation between himself, the literary agent in the US and the publishing company, Goldblatt refused to provide information relating to the editors and suggested that the omissions were ‘what editors do in the US’ (Yan Jia, 2013, pp. 186–187).

Considering the translated text carries a series of omissions, it is interesting to explore how the rewritten text is received by the target readership. To understand how the text is received, this thesis has interviewed ten native English-speaking readers and asked questions relating to whether or not the audience likes the omissions, how the audience perceives the omissions in translation and which version of the translation is preferred. The audience responses to the omissions in mediating this novel for the English-speaking market are also explored in this chapter.

Based on the results of the textual analysis (Chapters 5, 6 and 7), patterns have been identified in relation to the omitted passages and the types of discrepancies between the ST and the English translation. The most evident discrepancies include the cutting of minor and animal

characters, the streamlining of plots and the softening of political criticism. Physical details and erotic descriptions have also been significantly reduced as well as general descriptive text. The designs of the questionnaire and the interview were, therefore, focused on these issues. From the results of the questionnaire, which offered a limited range of possible responses for each question, the interviewees' general attitude towards each omission can be observed. However, there might be a range of different reasons for their responses and during the interviews, there was an opportunity for them to explain their opinions more clearly and thoroughly. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative methodology allows the consequences of the rewriting to be explored more comprehensively.

Chapter 33 was selected as the sample to be used in the investigation. This chapter was chosen because, by providing a complete chapter, the interviewees were given a relatively complete story, which could help them to understand the omissions within a specific context. Furthermore, chapter 33 contains the most obvious omissions in the novel, with 41% of the original text omitted, and these omissions cover all six of the main categories as well as six of the 12 sub-categories identified for the study.

The historical background of this chapter is set from 1978–1982 and follows the end of the ten-year period of the Cultural Revolution. The chapter is narrated by a big-headed boy, Lan Qiansui, based on his memory of his reincarnation as a pig. In the form of a pig, Ximen returned to Ximen village. During the journey, he saw significant changes in people's lives, including in the land policy, the vindication of victim in the Cultural Revolution and the development of the individual economy.

The main storyline is interspersed with several less relevant vignettes, the main narrative is often interrupted by the narrator's memories, comments or flights of imagination, and a substantial number of minor characters are introduced for the first time. A second narrator,

Lan Jiefang, also contributes to the telling of the story and a conversation is formed between the two narrators.

The interviewees were asked to read two texts. Text A was the published translation and Text B was the researcher's literal translation of the original (proofread and edited by a native English-speaker), produced to minimise the linguistic divergence between Text A and the translation. The two interviewees in the pilot study stated that Text B read fluently and naturally.

The investigation of the native English-speakers' responses to chapter 33 consists of several sections, including responses to specific issues and the overall perception concerning the omissions. The first section introduces the general background of the interviewees and explains why they are representative for this project. The second section investigates the interviewees' responses to the omission of Chinese cultural and political messages that requires the reader to have some cultural and historical background knowledge to understand their significance. The third section explores responses to the omission of minor characters and animal characters. The fourth section studies their responses to the divergence in language style, and the fifth section investigates perceptions of the simplification of the multi-layered narrative structure. Finally, this chapter discusses the interviewees' perceptions of the overall omission, their preferences between the two versions and the perceived consequences of the rewriting.

### **8.1 Interviewees' background**

To begin with, it is worth considering who exactly constitutes the target (English-speaking) readers of the novel. It can be reasonably speculated that the potential readership of the work is similar in character to the interviewees. The request for interviewees was distributed through four channels: a lecturer in Chinese studies, the secretary of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, the academic officer of St Chad's College (the researcher's college at

Durham University), and the researcher's contacts. The secretary and the academic officer sent out emails via the university network to all undergraduates and postgraduates in the School and the College. It can be reasonably estimated that at least 700 students received the request and only five individuals responded to the request, an extremely small response rate.

The standard of call-out volunteers for this study was native English speakers, brought up and educated in the West. 12 interviews were conducted and ten interviews were selected. For the two interviewees that were not selected, although they met the standard required for the call-out it was felt that they were not representative of the general English-speaking readership. This because one interviewee was educated in Singapore for nine years and had a very strong background in Chinese language and culture and the other interviewee was a bilingual native English speaker and a writer of the opinion that omission in translation is intolerable.

From those who eventually completed the interview, eight of them were undergraduate students or held a bachelor's degree from either a UK or a US university and two of them held a master's degree from a UK university. It is interesting to note that all the interviewees had connections with China or Chinese culture; they were either taking courses in Chinese literature or Chinese history, had lived in or visited China in the past, or had Chinese relatives and friends. Nine of the interviewees could read Pinyin and seven could speak some Mandarin. The main significance of the response rate and the interviewees' backgrounds is that the sample represents an approximate percentage of English-speaking readers who may have an interest in reading Chinese novels. It is reasonable to suggest that the readership of the novel is most likely to be composed of people who are already interested in Chinese culture or who have investigated Chinese culture and politics in other ways.

## **8.2 Enhancing reading and entertainment: the omission of cultural references**



In his examination of western readers' responses to *Red Sorghum*, Davis-Undiano (2011, p. 22) uses the term 'contingent difficulty' to explain their lack of knowledge of the Chinese cultural and historical context of Mo Yan's work. *L&D* is rooted in Chinese culture, with reference to idioms, classical novels, historical figures and items with special cultural symbolic implications. However, in the English version, many of these cultural elements have been removed. In comparison to the ST, these omissions inevitably lead to a loss of cultural subtlety and, due to the differences between the source and target cultures, the messages that enrich Chinese culture and add literacy to the ST may not add the same value for English-speaking readers.

The cultural elements in chapter 33 primarily involve references to the classical novels *Journey to the West* (Wu Cheng'en, translated from *Xi You Ji*, first published around the 16<sup>th</sup> century), *Investiture of the Gods* (Xu Zhonglin, translated from *Feng Shen Yan Yi*, Ming Dynasty) and *Dragon Oath* (Jin Yong, 1961–1962). The interviewees' responses are investigated in this chapter, from two perspectives: whether the Chinese cultural references appeal to English-speaking readers and how the readers react to these omissions.

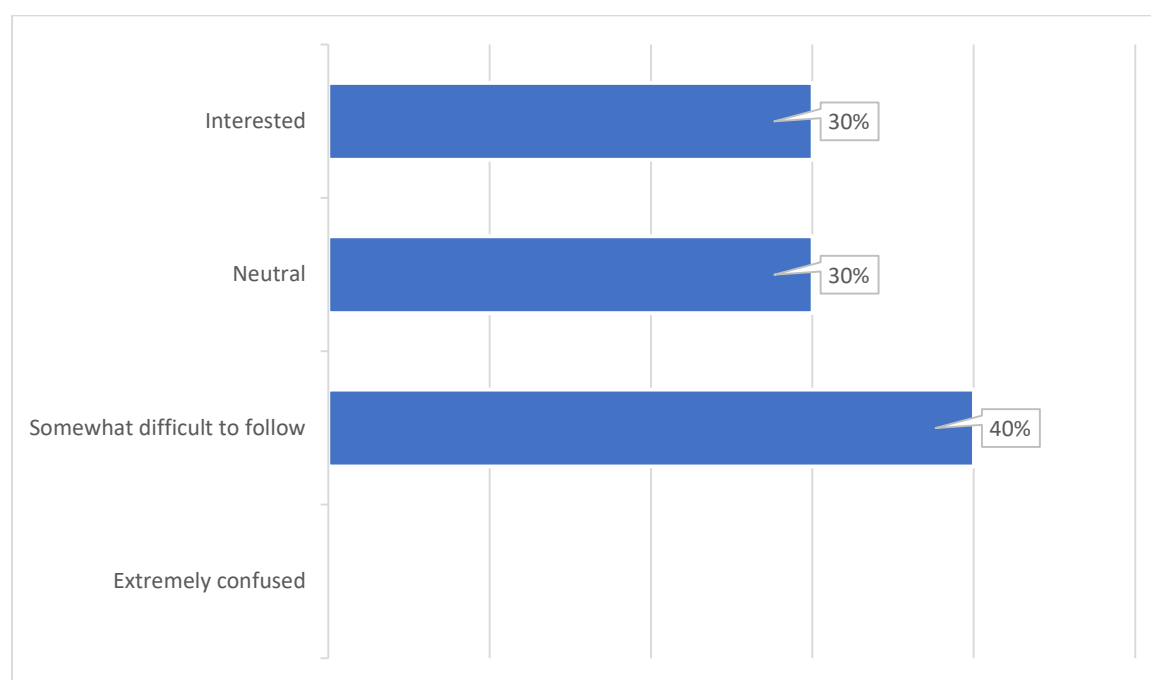


Figure 1: Interviewees' attitudes towards Chinese classical novels.

As shown in Figure 1, 40% of the interviewees found the references to Chinese novels somewhat difficult to follow. However, through the interview, all the interviewees held a similar attitude that the cultural reference might reduce the entertaining aspects of the reading, and might not enrich the Chinese culture in the text. 30% of the interviewees found the cultural references interesting and the interviews suggest that these interviewees (I3, I9 and I10) knew the general plot of *Journey to the West* either from reading it, watching a movie or seeing videogame adaptations. Their responses suggest that they were interested in the contents since they could make connections to their pre-existing knowledge. However, the interviewees did not think that the reference to Chinese classical novels added value to the text and they were concerned that for those who have no Chinese background, the cultural reference might be confusing.

For the three responses (I2, I4 and I6) that show a neutral attitude, one interviewee (I6) had read *Journey to the West* several times before and was interested to see the reference to this work; however, I6 had never heard of the other referenced novel and found the references somewhat difficult to follow. The other two interviewees (I2 and I4) did not have a personal interest in the cultural references since they were not familiar with them, so they did not think that these references added any special value but they understood that the references might be of interest to other readers. The remaining 40% of responses indicate that the interviewees found the references to Chinese classical novels somewhat difficult to follow. Like the interviewees with a neutral attitude, they were not familiar with the references and therefore they added no value to the text. It could be said that an excess of cultural references under these circumstances could confuse or discourage an English-speaking reader and impede the flow of the novel.

The interviewees who found the cultural references somewhat difficult to follow explained that the contents of the references are comprehensible and seem to come from nowhere. This understanding can be attributed to the interviewees' lack of cultural background. According to them, the information was clear enough without the cultural references since the following lines give further descriptions of what is being discussed. In this situation, instead of adding value, these cultural references are seen to distract the readers from the main storyline and make the text less entertaining. Two interviewees (I5 and I7) who stated that the texts are somewhat difficult to follow explain that they would want to search for more information if there were just one reference, however, where there are two classical novels and four characters mentioned in three lines, this is too demanding and overwhelming. In this context, the entertaining aspect of the novel has been lost and the interviewees just skim through all of these elements. The interview responses revealed that the reference to Chinese classical novels does not add value to or enrich Chinese culture to most of the English native-speaking readers.

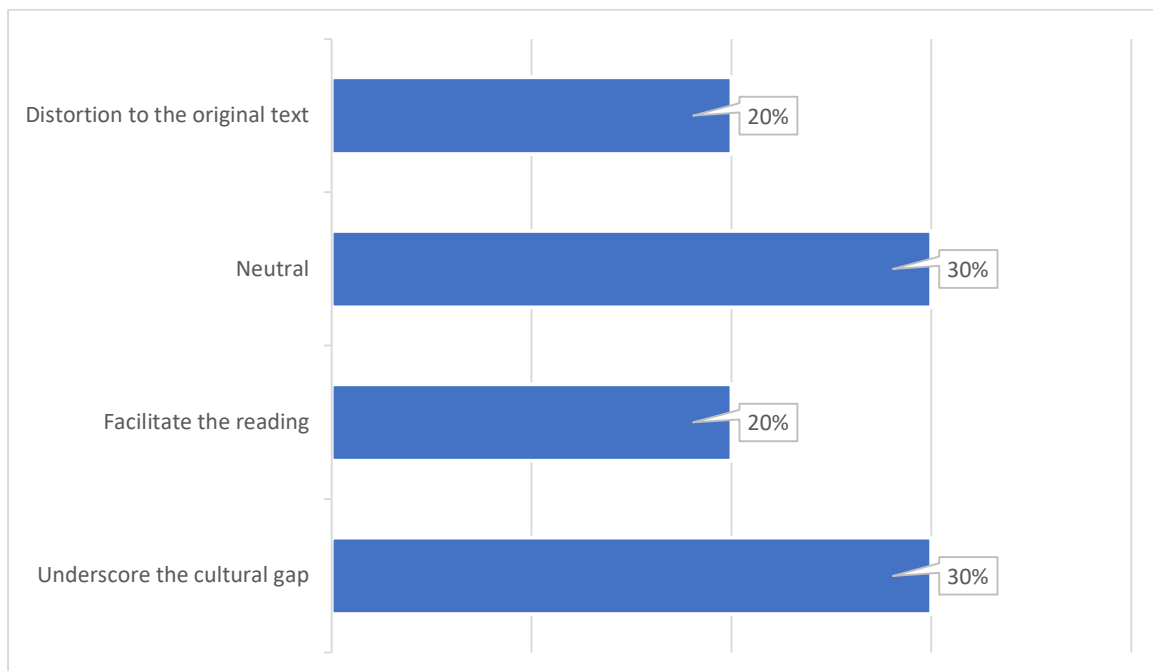


Figure 2: The response to the omission of Chinese classical novels.

As shown in Figure 2, 30% of responses stated that these omissions underscore the

cultural gap, i.e. not all the information in the ST can be understood by readers from another culture. They also express the view that these omissions facilitate the reading process. Among the 30% of interviewees with neutral attitudes, one interviewee (I2) thought that the text reads well either with or without the cultural references. This response further indicates that, for English-speaking readers without the relevant background knowledge, these cultural references do not add value to the text.

In the interview responses, all the interviewees considered that lacking cultural background knowledge is the primary factor leading to difficulty in understanding the text. They were also asked in the interview whether providing a one-line explanation would be helpful; 80% of interviewees suggested that cutting out cultural information would be better than adding explanations since putting in the explanatory text would also be distracting and would lead to the loss of the entertaining aspect of the novel. Moreover, these eight interviewees held the view that although the references enrich Chinese culture, cutting them out does not influence the development of the plot and, in this context, it is not necessary for English-speaking readers to understand all the Chinese cultural references.

However, not all interviewees agreed with this type of omission. It is interesting to note that the interviewees (I7 and I8) who held the view that the omission distorts the ST and should be avoided, also believe that the references to Chinese classical novels are somewhat difficult to follow. However, their interview responses share a similar viewpoint that, even though the references are difficult to follow and the text flows more smoothly after the omissions, the translator or the editor should not be empowered to edit or manipulate the ST for the target readership. The references are difficult for them to understand, but they may not be difficult for other readers and those who are interested in this novel might also have an interest in these references. Therefore, omitting the cultural references not only distorts the original text but also deprives the target readers of an opportunity to learn more about Chinese culture.

For most of the interviewees, their interests in Chinese culture are related to their background knowledge of it, which indicates that the Chinese cultural messages would be of interest to and understood by only a small proportion of readers. Also, most of the interviewees were more inclined to read a fluent story and they would not be upset if they missed some cultural messages from the original work. Therefore, based on most of the interviewees' responses, the omissions are justified as they facilitate the reading process by filtering out contents that are considered confusing and difficult for English-speaking readers.

### **8.3 Enhancing reading coherence: the omission of political messages**

Through the use of textual analysis, it can be observed that the ST's political criticism has been significantly diluted but not completely erased. Previous studies have argued that the omission of political messages has been identified as reflecting an ideological manipulation of Chinese political views or English-speaking readers' reluctance to read about Chinese politics (Bao Xiaoying, 2015; Jia Yanqin, 2016). This section explores how political messages were perceived by the interviewees, how much political information they understood and their attitudes towards the omissions. The interview results reflect that the political text was not resisted by the interviewees. However, the interviewees did not understand all of the social and political critiques in Text B.

The interview responses indicate that three interviewees (I3, I6 and I10) have solid background knowledge in Chinese history and are familiar with most of the political movements between the 1950s and 1970s, while the other seven interviewees did not know much about the subject. For the interviewees with background knowledge in Chinese history, the responses suggest that they do not want to read old opinions about Chinese political movements and they stated that reading stories set within Chinese political movements is acceptable and they are interested in finding out how Chinese writers depict these movements. In their opinion, this political information is not from Chinese official documents and therefore

does not represent communist propaganda but also, as the novel was not written by anti-communist Western writers, they are curious to see how a Chinese writer depicts these movements and how Chinese people live. It would appear that there is an appetite for Chinese politics among English-speaking readers but that, despite this, political criticism has been diluted in the published translation. During the interviews, all the interviewees were asked whether the political critique in Text B has been diluted or enhanced and all of the interviewees held the view that in Text B, the political criticism has been enhanced. As Goldblatt (2014) and Knight (2014) observe, Mo Yan wrote in a grey zone and his political critique were often expressed through depictions of ordinary people's lives rather than in a sharp and direct manner. It is, therefore, worth discussing whether the implied political messages are clear to English-speaking readers.

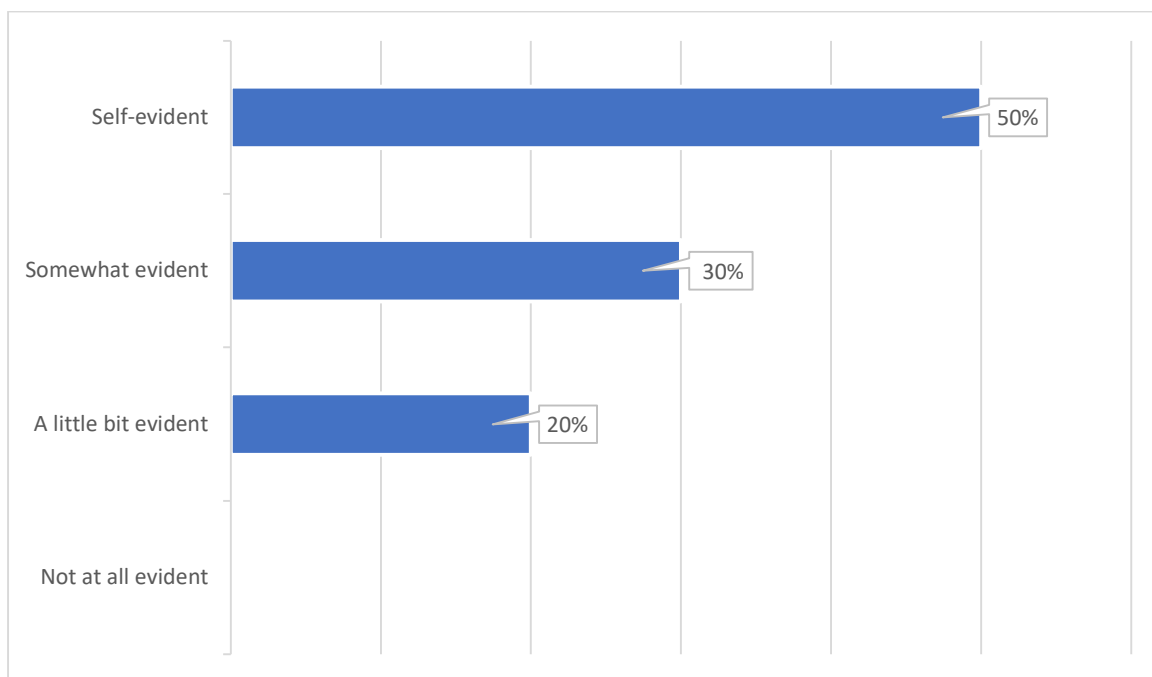


Figure 3: Is the political criticism evident in the omitted version?

Half of the interviewees believed that the political criticism is self-evident in Text A, 30% that it is somewhat clear, and 20% that the political criticism is only a little clear. The interviewees may not have understood which political movements are being referred to in the

text or what is being criticised, but they could sense that political criticism is being presented. This confirms that political criticism in Text A is evident and can be detected by English-speaking readers. Even though the political criticism was detected by all the interviewees, their understanding of the political terms may vary and the following question sought to further investigate whether the political terms are confusing.

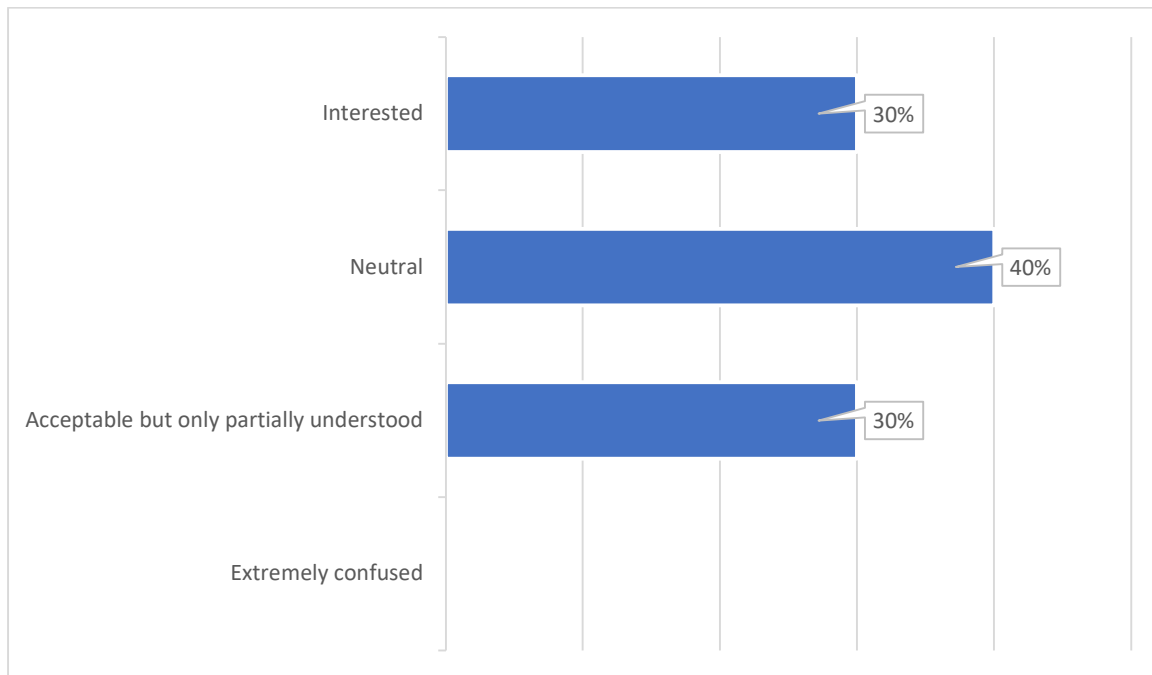


Figure 4: Responses to the political terms.

Figure 4 indicates that the political terms are understandable, but to varying degrees for different interviewees. The political messages in Text B include the change of land policy, the vindication of the Cultural Revolution and the development of the individual economy. In Text A the latter two were significantly or completely removed. In Text B, these three aspects of politics include both references to terms such as ‘revolution’, ‘revisionism’, ‘Communist’, ‘Chairman Mao’, ‘Nationalist’ and ‘Chiang Kai-shek’, as well as the indirect presentations from the characters’ casual conversation without any explicit statement of political terms. The interviewees were asked whether they were aware of these political terms, from which

information they were able to identify the criticism and if the political criticism in Text B is enhanced or diluted compared with Text A.

All the interviewees' responses reflect the idea that, compared with Text A, the political criticism in Text B is enhanced. For the 30% of the interviewees who had previous knowledge about this historical period, the interviewees recognised the enhancement of political criticism from direct terms such as 'revolution', 'revisionism', 'Communist', 'Chairman Mao', 'Nationalist' and 'Chiang Kai-shek', and from the minor characters' seemingly casual conversations they realised that these discussions refer to China's economic transformation from a planned economy to a market economy as well as the emergence of the individual economy from the individual tavern and the discussion about selling bamboo. The bribery which is alluded to implicitly from the pig's monologue was detected by I6, who learned Chinese history and had read intensively on the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. However, the implicit reference to political movements and events were not perceived by most of those interviewees who did not have background knowledge in Chinese history.

Thirty per cent of the interviewees could only partially understand the political terms. Forty per cent stated that, even though they do not know exactly the political movements being referred to, they hold a neutral attitude and that although the political terms are not appealing to them, they think if they knew more about Chinese culture and history, the messages would be interesting. One of the interviewees (I8) searched for all the political terms and was eager to learn more which indicates that the contents of the political messages are not necessarily resisted by English-speaking readers. The interviewees without much Chinese historical background thought that the political criticism is enhanced, but it is through the characters' conversations which contain terms such as 'revolution', 'revisionism' and 'Communist' that the direct presentations of Chinese political messages are to be found. In other words, they



think the political criticism is enhanced because the text contains more political terms. However, the interviewees without this historical background expressed confusion about the minor characters' conversations in the tavern and why a substantial number of minor characters are introduced so abruptly. It is notable that even those who thought that the political messages are interesting also held the view that, for average English-speaking readers without the relevant cultural and historical background knowledge, the political messages would be distracting. For readers who do not understand the criticism, the political messages could merely become the stories of the minor characters and animal characters and, with the frequent changes between characters, the messages could feel lost in the stories leading the reader to feel that this is not how literature is supposed to be.

Even though all the interviewees agreed that the political criticism is more obvious in Text B than in Text A, they thought that cutting out some of the political messages would appeal to a broader audience that does not have prior knowledge of the historical context. The interviewees felt that for the average reader without a full understanding of the Chinese cultural and political messages, the political criticism in Text A is rich enough and that readers would likely be bored by too many political messages. Their responses also suggest that the ways in which the political messages are expressed in Text B will probably not be understood by the average English-speaking reader since, in English literature, criticism is usually more direct or sharp.

Therefore, from the perspective of native English-speaking interviewees, the omission of the political messages would facilitate their reading by removing potentially confusing text, and it seems that the text has been edited according to the norms of English poetics. The English version retains the political messages that are most clear to English-speaking readers and maintains a balance between political criticism and the readers' comprehension. The storyline is also streamlined through the omission of minor characters.

However, the negative side of these omissions is also evident. Those interviewees who had some knowledge of Chinese culture and history, or who were learning about Chinese language, literature and culture, thought that the political messages in Text B are interesting, especially when these political criticisms are connected with their learning. These interviewees took a special kind of interest in these messages, as they regard the novel as a supplement for their textbooks and as presenting history from a different perspective showing stereotypes and representing people from different changing social classes. Apparently, for interviewees in this category, these omissions inevitably result in a loss of subtlety.

#### **8.4 Streamlining the storyline: the omission of minor and animal characters**

Through the textual comparison and analysis, it has been observed that the participation of minor characters and animal characters has been significantly reduced. The minor characters' conversations about their changing lives as well as the animal characters' observations of the human world and their monologues supplement the social background, political criticism and contribute to the full formation of these characters. The textual analysis chapter highlighted that their omission leads to re-characterisation, emphasising the main characters, streamlining the main storyline and reworking the narrative structure of the original novel. The following section shall explore the interviewees' responses to these omissions.

##### **8.4.1 Reinforcing the main storyline: the omission of minor characters**

As explained in the textual analysis chapter, the minor characters in this novel are categorised into three groups: those with little or no function (e.g. cases 17, 29 and 30); those whose stories and conversations supplement the background; and 'Mo Yan'. In the study sample (Chapter 33), the presentation of the minor characters takes the form of a gathering of villagers in a tavern and young people hustling on the street. The narration of their dialogue supplements the social context of the early 1980s.

Substantial political criticism is expressed through these minor characters, who only appear once or twice in the entire novel. More than ten such minor characters are introduced abruptly in this chapter and, through their conversations, the emergence of the market economy and the changes in people's lives after the Cultural Revolution are reflected. However, as analysed in the political criticism section, not all the political messages expressed through the minor characters are necessarily comprehensible for English-speaking readers.

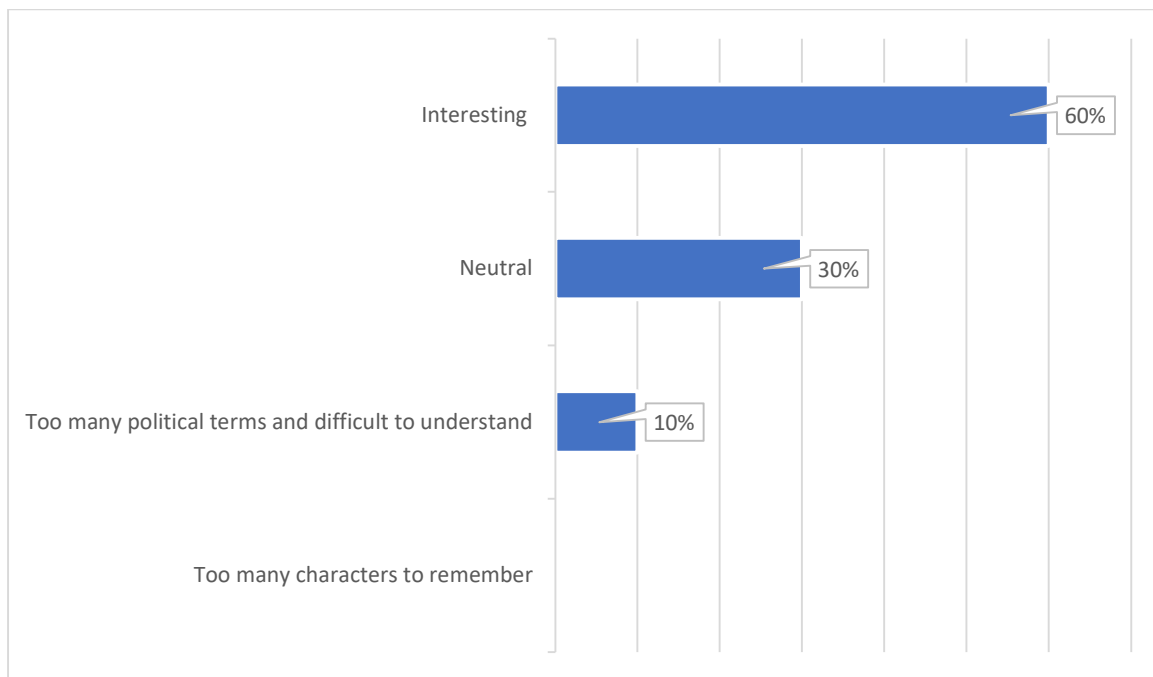


Figure 5: Interviewees' response to the description of minor characters.

Three interviewees (I7, I8 and I9) held a neutral attitude towards the minor characters; for them, while there is a lot of information presented in quick succession, it is informative – they believe that it is difficult but not impossible to follow. Interviewee I7 found the dialogue of the minor characters interesting, but also that the omitted text is too long and that placing it in the chapter could be distracting. Six interviewees thought the description of the minor characters is interesting and adds to the story. The minor characters give them more of an insight into how the village functions, how people are being rehabilitated and how the Communist Party has changed. However, two interviewees (I1 and I3) emphasised that

although the reading experience of minor characters is interesting, it is confusing at the same time since there are a large number of characters that appear suddenly. Even with a background in Chinese history, these two say that firstly, the detailed narrations of a huge number of minor characters are not common in English literature. I1 regarded that the minor characters in Text B provide a bundle of information, however, this will never be good literature by the standards of English literature. The second issue pointed out by I1 and I3 is that the number of Chinese names is a significant challenge and makes the text difficult to follow. In Jiang Fan's studies of the reception of *Hong Lou Meng* in the English market, one anonymous reader comments 'the translated novel is difficult to read because of the complexity of Chinese names to Western readers' (Jiang Fan, 2007, p. 100). Inspired by Jiang's studies, there was a question designed to investigate the respondents' perception of Chinese names in the reading and the results are presented below.

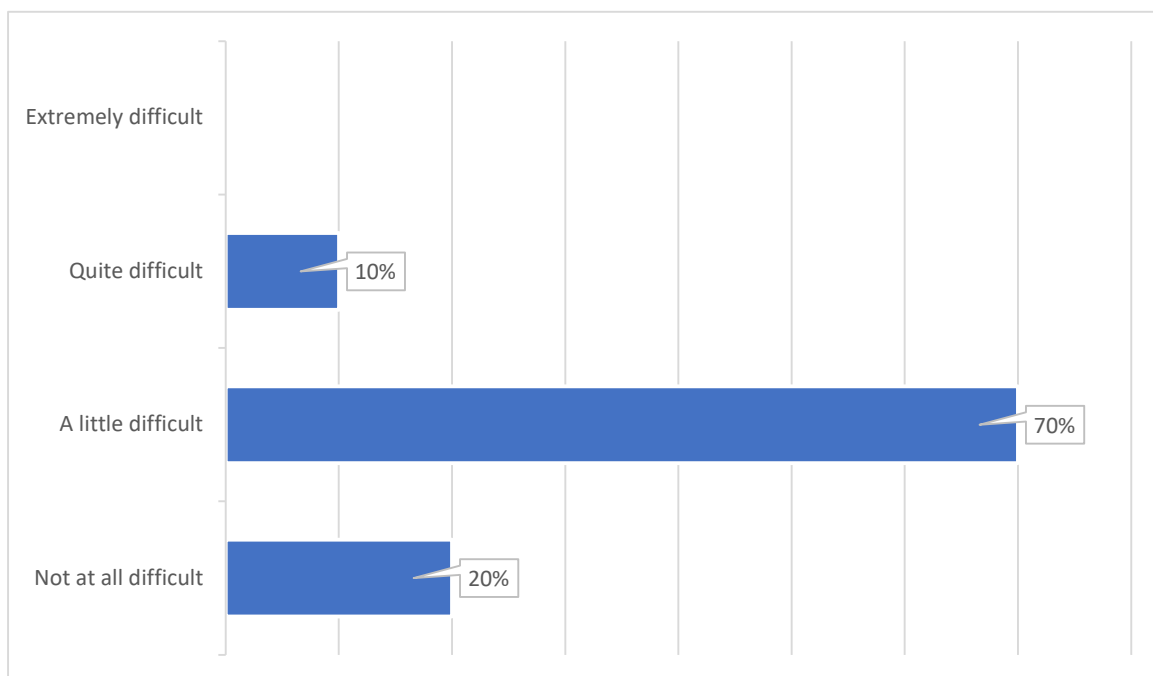


Figure 6: Does the number of Chinese names increase the difficulties of reading?

Twenty per cent of the interviewees (I6 and I10) did not think that the Chinese names are a problem at all which could be attributed to their backgrounds facilitating their reading: one spoke fluent Mandarin and had studied Chinese history in China for a year and the other was raised in the US in a state with an Asian-influenced culture.

One out of the ten interviewees (I5) felt that the large number of Chinese names rendered the text quite difficult to follow and that repeated reading is required to remember the relationships between the characters, even though this interviewee could read Pinyin. Interviewee I5 suggested if they were to read more of it the book they would be introduced to the characters more naturally and it may be easier to follow. However, it is worth noting that most of the minor characters in this novel appear only once or twice, with the function of supplementing the background information. Therefore, even if the interviewees were given the whole novel, some of the minor characters still only appear in the later chapters, which makes this suggestion by the interviewee less tenable.

Most of the interviewees were of the opinion that the number of Chinese names makes it a little difficult to follow the text and to keep track of each character. The main difficulty being that all the Chinese names in the form of Pinyin looked similar to them because they are not familiar with Chinese names. One interviewee (I7) mentioned an interesting issue that, when reading English literature, even if I7 skims over names, the interviewee can still understand a lot of the story because the names are more familiar and, therefore, I7 can easily tell them apart without much effort. However, with the translated Chinese names since they are less familiar to English-speaking readers and look similar to each other, it is difficult to distinguish between them and remember each character and their relationships, which makes reading challenging. I7 mentioned having to go back and forth, which significantly influences the flow of the plotlines and the entertainment value of the novel. Even though 90% of the interviewees could read Pinyin, seven of them mentioned having to read the text several times

to distinguish the characters and understand the relationships between them. Of the six interviewees who thought that the crowd in the tavern is interesting, four of them thought it would be acceptable, or even better, to cut out some minor characters as it would help them to focus on the storyline.

Considering that the implicit political messages expressed through the minor characters were only perceived by three interviewees (I3, I6, I10), the omission seems to remove potential reading barriers and streamline the stories. Where the political criticism has been significantly reduced, the minor characters' storyline has become a series of separate stories of different minor characters. For 40% of the interviewees, this is not seen as a standard approach in English literature since too many characters are introduced abruptly. Thus, the omissions reflect an adaptation to the poetics of the target culture and facilitate the reading experience for the English-speaking audience.

#### 8.4.2 Conforming to the English poetics: the omission of animal characters

As highlighted by Mo Yan (Nobel Prize, 2012a), one of the characteristics of *L&D* is the view of social change as presented through the eyes of animal characters. The stories of the human world and those of the animals are interwoven, reality and fantasy are merged and the boundaries between animals and human beings themselves are blurred. The presentation of animal monologues in Chapter 33 consists of Ximen pig's monologue and from this seemingly unconscious monologue, Jinlong's paying of bribes to gain promotion is revealed. In the textual analysis, it was noted that the animals' participation, including their activities and monologue, has been significantly cut down in the translation as the English version attaches more emphasis to the human storylines. This section will explore the consequences of such omissions based on the findings from the interviews.

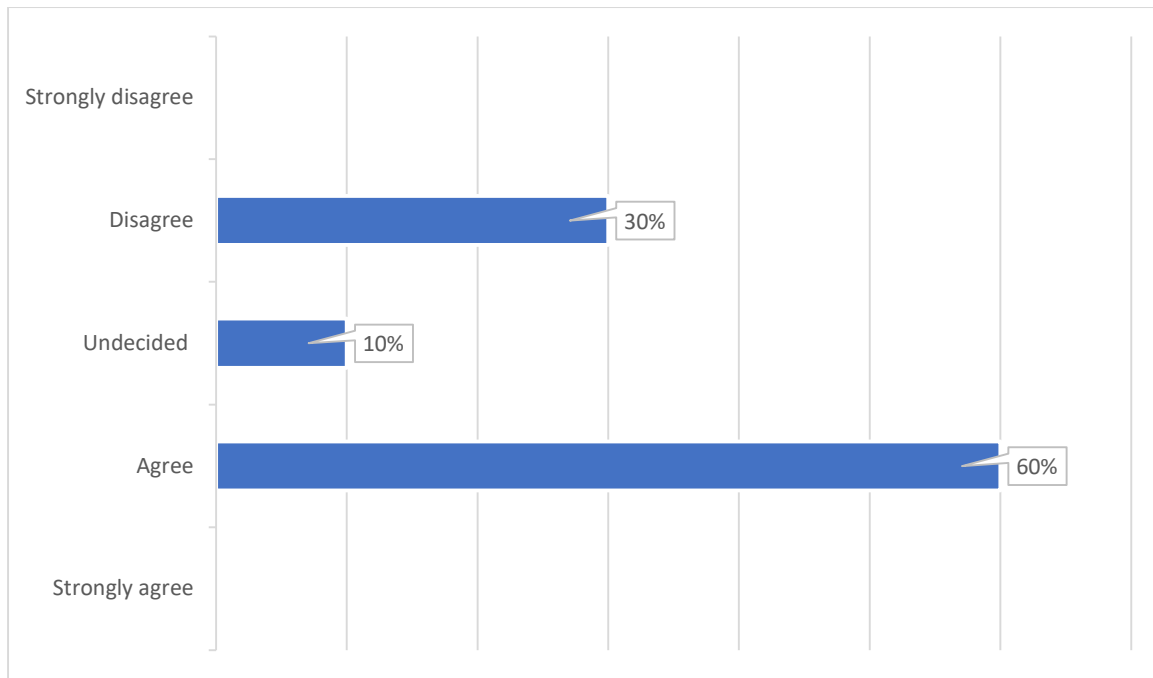


Figure 7: The omission of the pig's monologue weakens and distorts the text.

As Figure 8 indicates, 30% of the interviewees (I1, I5 and I6) preferred the omission of the pigs' activities and monologue as there was more interest in the political text and the human stories. These interviewees regarded the animal narrations as unnecessary, confusing and impactful to the consistency of the flow and consistency of the human stories as the transition between human and animal stories was seen as abrupt. Their main focus is on the stories and political criticism and did not feel that the animal monologues and comments assisted the reader to understand the text better. In addition, these three interviewees stated that the combination of animal and human characters is unusual in English literature and that talking animals are for children's literature. However, the three interviewees did mention *Animal Farm*, which they contrasted with Mo Yan's work, viewing the former as an allegorical novella where the animals have symbolic meaning and the animals in Mo Yan's work as mere witnesses to history. These interviewees understand the rationale of creating animal characters and agreed that illuminating history through animals' eyes is a creative writing technique; however, they think it would be sufficient to just view historical events through the animals' eyes, and they

are not interested in the animals' monologues as they do not see them as adding much value to the theme of the political criticism. They were also not interested in the narration of the animals' activities since the constant switch between the human storyline and the animal storyline was confusing for the interviewees and made them feel unsettled. Therefore, these omissions helped these interviewees to focus on the development of the stories, as the text is more like those they usually read. Interviewee three (I3) held a similar idea in that, from a personal reading perspective, I3 did not like the account of the pigs' activities or Ximen Pig's monologue because they disrupt the reading. However, I3 regarded the animals' participation to be an important element of the original text. In Text A, the animal characters are less obvious due to the omissions, and I3 often forgot when the story was being told from an animal's perspective and I3 found the animals' participation to be much clearer in Text B. Six interviewees were of the opinion that the omissions weaken or distort the original text as they think that the animals' monologues provide background knowledge and context that allows the reader to immerse themselves in the text. Interviewees I7 and I9 also thought of the combination of animals and human beings as bizarre and unusual in English literature, however, after reading the contextual background sheet and gaining an understanding of why the animal characters are present, they understand and regard it as acceptable. For the other four interviewees, the creation of animal characters was interesting and less obvious in Text A as opposed to Text B. In Text A they occasionally mentioned forgetting the existence of the pig but with the pig's monologues in Text B, they were reminded that the story is from the pig's perspective and they felt that the monologues contribute to a more complete characterisation of the pig.

Unlike with the previous questions, in which most of the interviewees stated that the omissions facilitate the reading, in the case of the animal characters, most of the interviewees think that the omissions weaken or distort the text. These omissions might streamline the development of the main storyline and emphasise the theme of political criticism, but the



animal characters are not fully developed. Moreover, it has been noticed that the interviewees' attitude towards animal characters is closely related to their preference for the focus of the novel. For the interviewees who were more interested in the human stories (I1 and I5) as well as the political criticism (I3 and I6), the pig's story seemed irrelevant and disruptive. However, for the interviewees (I8 and I10) who were interested in how the story is built up, the pig's story is interesting and adds complexity.

## **8.5 Unifying language style: the omission of erotic and descriptive language**

As explained in Chapter 5, the language style of *L&D* is a hybrid including, for example, vulgar language, references to classical Chinese and idioms and mimicking of the Maoist style. The use of jingles and descriptions of the scenery also enriches the language style of the novel. In chapter 33, the hybridity of the language style is primarily presented through erotic and descriptive language. From the perspective of the ST, the omission of these features reworks the language style.

### **8.5.1 Refining the language: the omission of erotic language**

Descriptions of sex and the human body feature in most of Mo Yan's novels. The sex described in this novel is not just about sexual love and the carnal desire of human beings, the mating activities between some of the animals are also depicted. At a time when politics dominated the whole of Chinese culture, sex was considered as something shameful that should be moderated. Therefore, Mo Yan's writing about sex was regarded as a breakthrough in terms of historical novels after 1949 (Jia Yanqin, 2016, p. 88). However, without such knowledge, this breakthrough might not be understood by English-speaking readers. John Updike (2005) has highlighted that Mo Yan is 'cheerfully free with the physical details that accompany sex, birth, illness, and violent death' and that there is no Victorian refinement of the novel's technique. Sun (2012) regards Mo Yan's language as 'diseased' due to his unreserved way of

writing physical details. Even though this view is biased, it suggests that, in the view of one English literary critic, Mo Yan's novel lacks the constraints of the literary style of English novels.

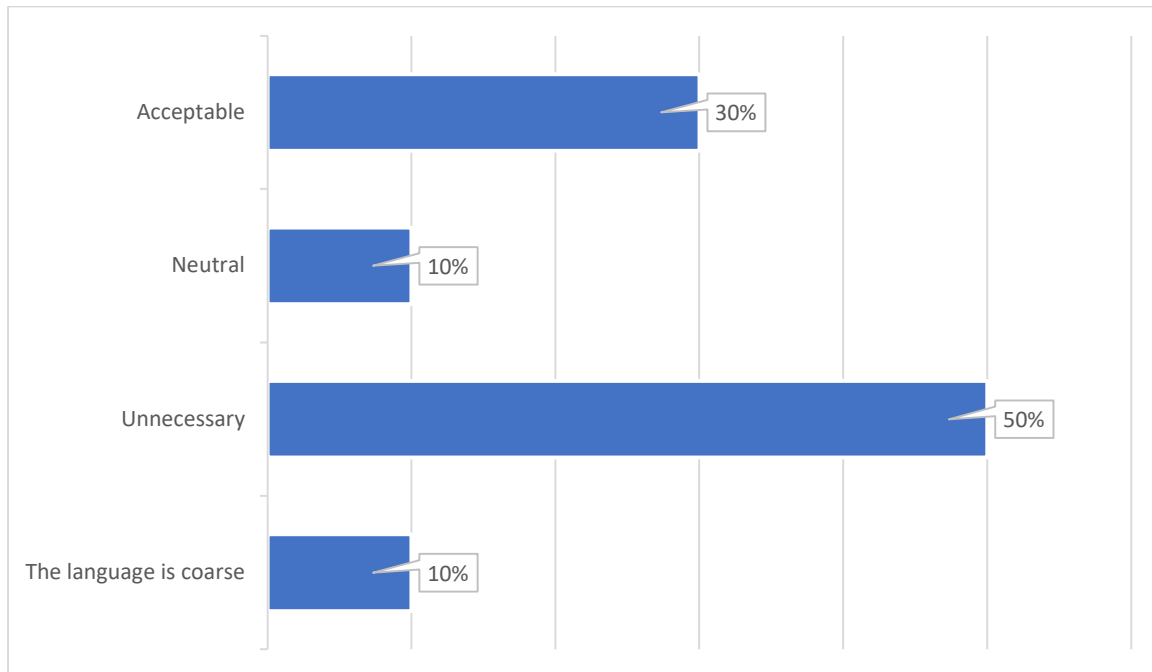


Figure 8: Interviewees' attitudes towards language related to body parts, sex and questionable jokes.

The interview responses indicate that all the interviewees consider that the topics of sex, dirty jokes and descriptions of the human body are acceptable. However, the degrees of acceptance differ, as do the perceptions of the pigs' mating activities, the dirty jokes, flirting, and the descriptions of genitalia.

Only one of the ten interviewees thought that the language is unacceptably coarse. This interviewee (I1) considered the description of the pigs' mating as disgusting and unnecessary, and the most vulgar and unacceptable section is the description of the boy's genitalia and urinating. This interviewee suggested that writing about sex is totally acceptable in English literature, but that, in a social criticism novel, the language should be subtle rather than so

abrupt and direct. It is thus not the contents that the interviewee viewed as unacceptable, but the way it is presented. For this interviewee, the way in which the sexual scenes are depicted goes against the dominant poetics in English literature as to how social criticism literature should be presented.

The interview responses indicate that two interviewees (I3 and I7) think that the language used to present this content is vulgar and coarse but, since English literature can also be vulgar and coarse, they view this as acceptable. The interviewees suggested that the language reflects an expected level of banter among the villagers and, in this context, it is acceptable as a verbatim account of a conversation. Four of the five interviewees who think the contents are unnecessary shared a similar view that the language is coarse but still be acceptable. In other words, 70% of the interviewees think that the language is vulgar, but they show varying degrees of acceptance of this. They all noted in particular that the description of the genitalia is too vulgar. Four interviewees (I4, I6, I8 and I9) think this description is awkward and the male interviewees felt that it is disrespectful towards female readers. As stated in chapter 6, 'having sex' is occasionally mentioned in an abridged manner in the translation; however, almost all the descriptions of naked bodies and genitalia (cases 9, 10, 11, 43, and 92 in Appendix One) in the ST have been erased. From this perspective, the omissions refine the language and adjust it towards the English-language standards of what a social criticism novel is supposed to be.

Fifty per cent of the interviewees felt that the biggest issue with the language is not vulgarity, but inconsistency and that the erotic descriptions are unnecessary and irrelevant. I6 suggested that in English literature the category of a social-political novel is very strict and therefore, erotic description in such a category of the novel is regarded as strange to English-speaking readers. Generally speaking, the language in the selected text is well written; however, the descriptions of the pigs mating and of the villagers' dirty jokes and flirting, as well as of the

boy showing off his genitalia, are vulgar. They appear abruptly, making language suddenly arrive from nowhere in vulgar form and then, after a short description, returning to normal. These interviewees questioned the skill of the writer, holding the view that the text flows well without these descriptions, i.e. that the descriptions of sex and body parts do not add value to the text. Most of the interviewees regard the novel as a social criticism novel and questioned the quality of the book in relation to the inclusion of erotic and 'vulgar' contents. It is not the concept of sex that is unacceptable; rather, it is the way in which the information is presented that feels unacceptable. The interview responses indicate that most interviewees are happy with these omissions; in their opinion, the contents itself is not unacceptable or unwelcomed, but the context is not correct, and through their omission, the language style and register of the language are made more consistent.

#### 8.5.2 Controversial attitudes: the omission of scenery descriptions

As analysed in chapter 5, the language in this novel is hybrid: besides the vulgarity, it also contains elegant and lyrical passages; this style is especially evident in the descriptions of scenery. A considerable number of descriptions use the moon as a metaphor, however, the most descriptive passages are removed in the translated version.

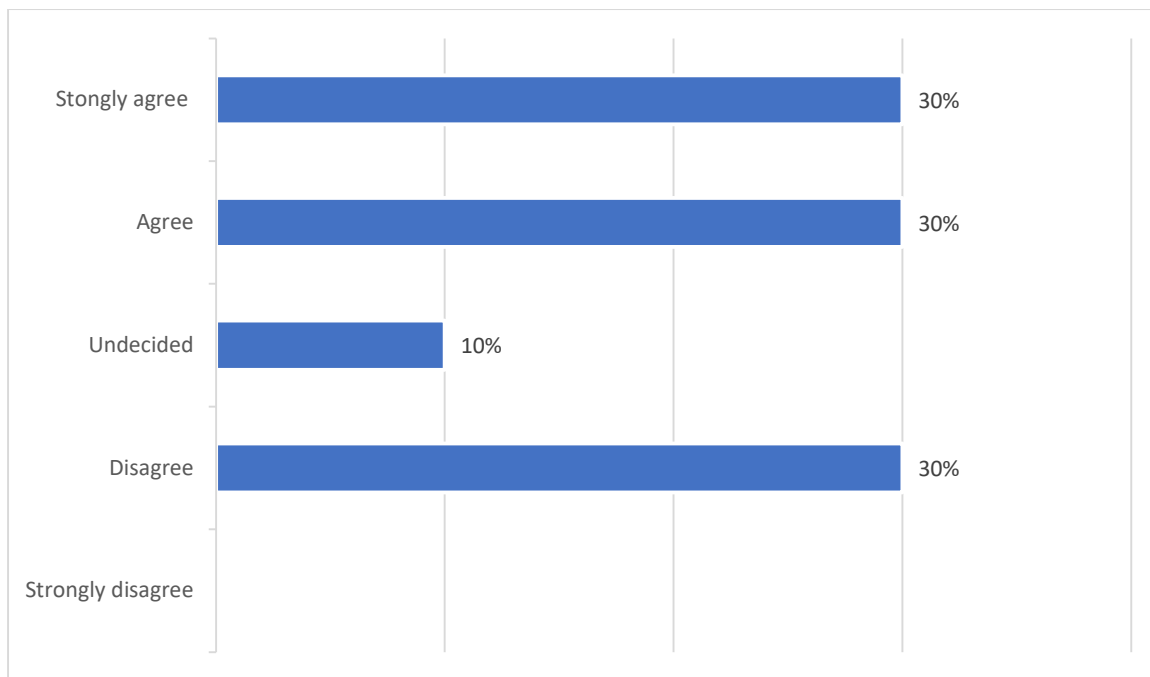


Figure 9: The additional descriptions of scenery in the full version enhances the text.

Most of the interviewees were of the opinion that the descriptions of scenery in Text B enhance the novel and provide a much more rich and vivid story. Three interviewees (I7, I8, and I9) who viewed the scenic descriptions as enhancing the text think that these descriptions provide a more realistic feeling and give a setting for the imminent stories; therefore, the reader has enough space to use their imagination and the entertainment value of the reading is increased. Two interviewees (I3 and I10) explained that they did not feel that Text A lacked any detail when reading it; however, they felt more engaged and interested in Text B. The other interviewee (I2) thought that the scenic descriptions are necessary because they provide a hint of the setting of the story; however, they also held the view that the detailed description of the sandbar and the metaphor are redundant and not pertinent to the text.

One interviewee (I4) had a neutral attitude towards the descriptions of scenery. Three interviewees believe that the descriptions of the scenery do not add to the story, but that since the descriptions are not lengthy, they were not distracted by them. These interviewees (I1, I5 and I6) agree that, while they give more information, the descriptions are rather unnecessary

to the development of the stories and make the text a little difficult to follow. This is because their focus in reading the text was mainly on social criticism rather than the scenery.

The interviewees' attitudes towards the language style are not unified. As stated previously, an individual's understanding of literary works is quite personal and depends heavily on the perspective from which they approach it. Those who thought that the scenery descriptions enhance the story like to immerse themselves into the stories and imagine the atmosphere. However, those who hold a different view admitted that they are 'impatient' readers and want the story or the dialogue to lead the way. For the latter type of reader, scenery descriptions impede their reading of a complete story. For approximately 50% of the interviewees, the descriptions of the scenery add to the literary richness of the text and provide an atmosphere for them to imagine the scene and immerse themselves into the story. The omissions also erase the subtlety of the original text.

The English-speaking readers of this novel will likely be those who are interested in the political aspect of the story rather than the dirty jokes or the descriptions of the scenery. As the results of the first figure reflect, only two interviewees realised that Text A is incomplete due to the lack of narration about the crowd. According to the interviewees, these two types of omitted text do not add to the novel from the perspective of story content. As pointed out by some of the interviewees, the register of the language in Text B is not consistent, and this is not standard for English literature. From this perspective, the omissions refine and unify the language style while also reflecting poetical influences.

## **8.6 Simplifying the narrative structure: omitting a second narrator and flashbacks**

There are two intradiegetic narrators in this sample chapter, each simultaneously serving as the other's intradiegetic narratee. Since both Jiefang and Kaifang are intradiegetic narrators, their recounting of the stories is often interrupted by their own feelings, comments

or even imagery. In addition, as intradiegetic narrators, they can add their comments from a contemporary perspective; consequently, the tense in their narration switches between story time and narrative time. There are some flashbacks and interpolations in the novel, in line with Knight's (2014, p. 101) observation that many of Mo Yan's works unsettle readers by switching between narrators and moving back and forth in time.

Besides the two alternating narrative voices, the book also features a third narrator, 'Mo Yan'. The depiction of this character has two functions, firstly, he supplements the narrations in the last section of the novel and secondly, is that the novels written by the character are called upon as evidence by Lan Jiefang and Lan Qiansui to support their ideas or to replace their narrations. In other words, these are stories within the stories of the real novel and thus, another level of the multi-layered narrative is formed. The textual analysis chapter explored how the omissions in this category simplify the narrative structure and provide a linear story which will now be explored in light of the responses from the interviewees.

#### 8.6.1 Enhancing fluency of reading: the omission of a second narrator

The primary narrator in this chapter is Lan Qiansui, while Lan Jiefang intervenes once to supplement the background information about the character 'Wu Fang'. In addition, a conversation is formed between Qiansui and Jiefang. In the English version, with Lan Jiefang being erased, Lan Qiansui becomes the sole narrator.

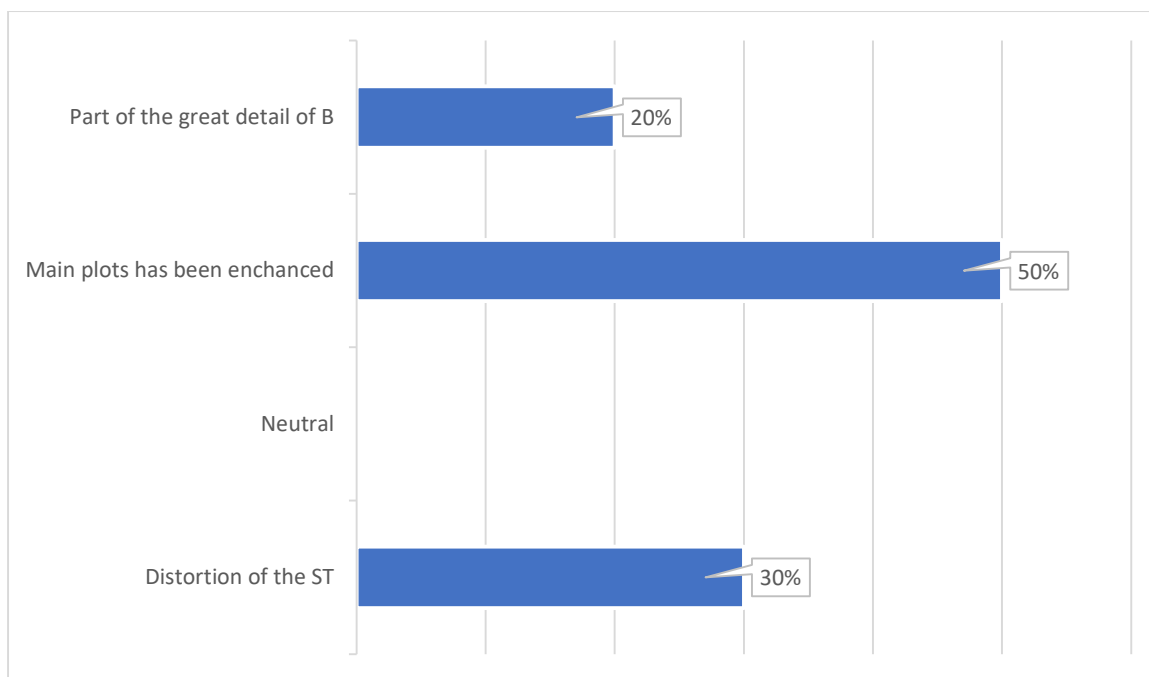


Figure 10: Interviewees' attitudes towards omitting the second narrator in Text A.

Half the interviewees thought that this omission enhances the main storyline. They consider that, even though English literary works can have multiple narrators, it is not common to have both their viewpoints in the same chapter. This statement shows again that the translated work is being judged by the poetics of the receiving culture. Moreover, there is a lack of distinction between who is talking and when, which makes the text more confusing. The inclusion of the second narrator does add to the intricacy of Text B in terms of narrative structure and it also makes the text difficult to follow. The interviewees also felt that the switches between the narrators are disruptive even though the use of two narrators adds intricacy to the narrative structure. Even though the changing of the narrators is mentioned in the contextual background document, it still seems to have felt unexpected, and the interviewees could not identify the switches at first reading. They mention feeling like 'someone else is talking' but having to read back and forth several times to identify the narrators since the switches happen very quickly, without any transition, which is very



confusing. The interviewees also felt that the content from the second narrator, Jiefang, is not pertinent to the main storyline and therefore the omission improves the flow.

Three interviewees believed that the omission of the second narrator is a distortion of the ST as it is difficult to identify who is talking. The interviewees share similar views that English novels do not always have multiple perspectives and that this omission improves the flow of the text. However, they think that, when reading a translated book, they would like to experience as closely as possible what the original author intended, otherwise they will feel they are reading an interpretation rather than a translation. In other words, they prefer the omission in terms of the reading experience, but at the same time, they think the translation should be as faithful as possible to the ST, even if translating the ST in this way makes the resulting text more difficult to read.

Two interviewees (I7 and I8) found having two narrators intriguing, viewing that, even though it is difficult to distinguish between the two narrators initially, it is an arresting and interesting writing technique. When the big-headed boy suddenly appears, they said that they were confused; however, they thought it is funny and regarded it as the author's unique writing strategy.

Based on these responses, according to the interviewees' understanding and approaches to the writing technique and translation, their reactions to the omission differ. However, all interviewees thought that having two narrators is difficult to follow. In this way, the omission eases the reading experience and streamlines the main plot.

#### 8.6.2 Loss of writing characteristics: the omission of flashbacks and interpolations

The original novel contains substantial amounts of flashbacks and interpolation. Temporally speaking, from the perspective of the narration, the comments and dialogue take place in the present tense, while the narrated stories take place in the past tense. Consequently,

there is a switching of time between the narrated stories and the narrators' comments and dialogue. Through the omission of flashbacks and interpolation, the narrative order has been adjusted chronologically and the narrative structure has been simplified.

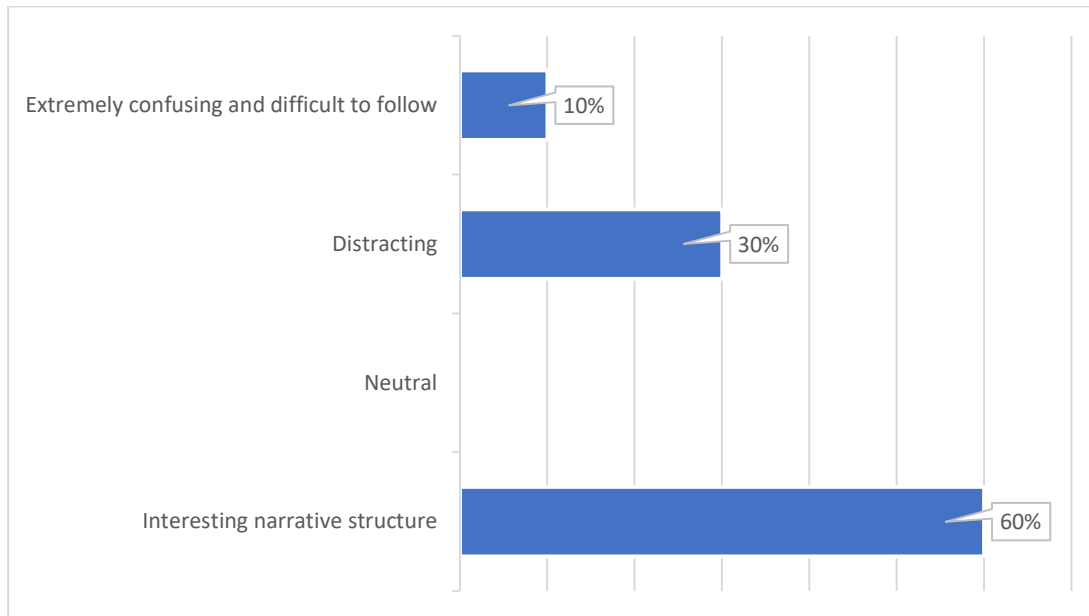


Figure 11: Interviewees' attitudes towards the flashbacks and interpolations in the full version.

One interviewee found the flashbacks extremely confusing and difficult to follow and three others (I1, I5 and I6) regarded them as distracting. The interviewees thought that their contents are intriguing but that their length makes the text difficult to follow. They have the impression that the writer 'tells a different story only because he remembered something' (I1) and that the contents are not relevant to the main storyline. According to interviewee responses, flashbacks and interpolations are acceptable forms also found in English literature, however, the interviewees felt that those in this chapter are too long and therefore, divert the reader's attention. Moreover, as the interviewees already felt they were grappling with numerous names and trying to situate the political claims, the flashbacks and interpolations added to the reading challenges.

Six interviewees regarded the narrative structure as interesting. They regard it as difficult to follow due to the length of the flashbacks, but they think that these devices draw the reader's mind back in time to different scenarios and allow connections to be made between different themes. The layered structure reminds the reader that they are not just receiving an omniscient narration; rather, they are seeing the story from the perspective of Lan Qiansui in his pig reincarnation form and this story is related to Lan Jiefang. The flashbacks provide background information and let the reader know the histories of these characters.

The interviewees' responses indicate a consensus that the flashbacks are difficult to follow. However, it must be highlighted that the content itself is not difficult to follow, rather, the way in which it is added to the text is confusing. The varying attitudes towards these omissions are mainly due to the perspective from which each interviewee reads the story. For those with a focus on the storylines, the omission definitely facilitates the reading process; however, for those intrigued by the narrative structure, the omissions distort the original text.

#### 8.6.3 Streamlining the narration: the omission of the embedded text

The ST features an embedded text, which is the fictive novel written by 'Mo Yan', a character in the novel. The fictive novel supplements the narration or the evidence requested by Lan Jiefang and Lan Qiansui to support their ideas or replace their narrations. These stories within stories form another level of the multi-layered narrative. In the textual analysis chapter, it was observed that the narrative structure has been simplified and the narrative line has been made chronological in the translation and, in this section, the interviewee responses to these omissions will be explored.

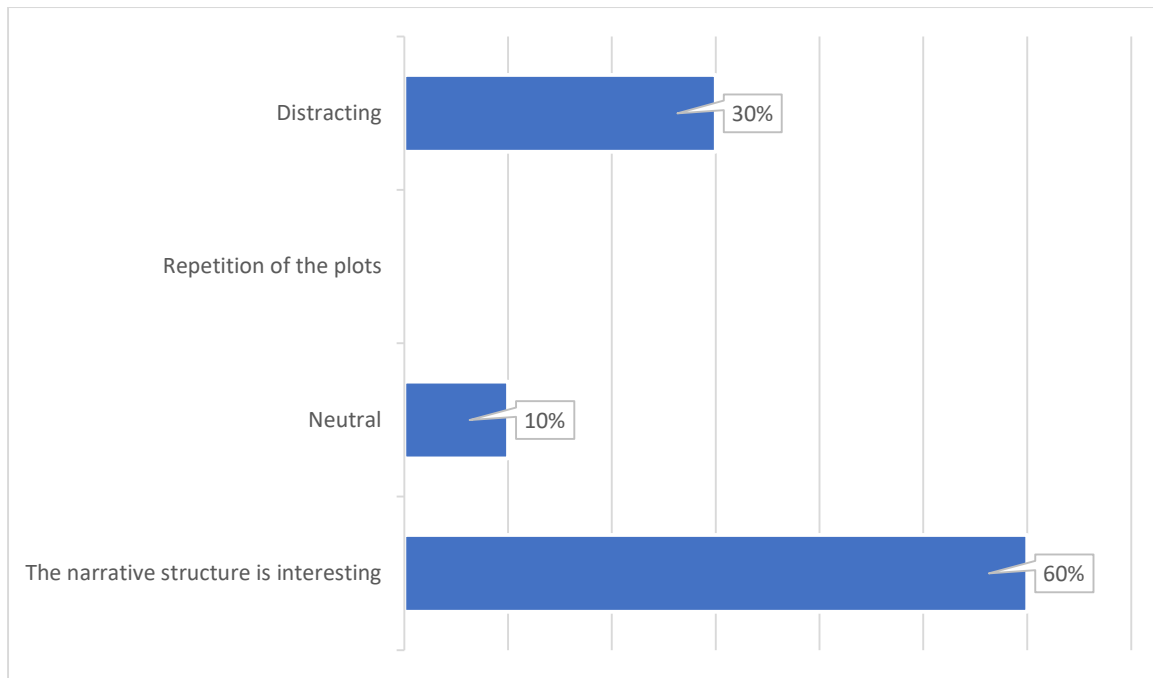


Figure 12: Interviewees' attitudes to the references to the 'fictive novel'.

In his 'fictive novel', 'Mo Yan' creates a character whose background and experiences are similar to those of Hong Taiyue. Qiansui introduces Hong through referencing the 'fictive novel' by 'Mo Yan'. However, only one interviewee mentioned realising that the protagonist in the 'fictive novel' is based on the stereotype of Hong Taiyue and that the reference supplements the characterisation of Hong Taiyue. The interviewee concerned is very well-read in Chinese history, especially in the period of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. The other nine interviewees regard the reference to this character as simply an introduction to the work of 'Mo Yan'.

In this context, three of the interviewees found the mention of the 'fictive novel' distracting as they are led to another story that is not relevant to the main storyline and then, after one paragraph, the narration returns to the original story, which they found confusing. These interviewees also maintained that the novel is not well organised, as it seems the author has added another story that has just been conceived. Furthermore, there are intensive references to political terms in this short paragraph, which cause confusion. Interviewee I10,

who had a neutral attitude to this question, also commented in the interview that this reference is the least vital part of the passage, but did not see it as detracting from the reading experience. Therefore, it is reasonable to speculate that having some background knowledge of Chinese history may influence the reader's perception of the novel. Most English-speaking readers without relevant cultural background knowledge will not perceive the supplementing of Hong Taiyue's personality. Most interviewees thought that the embedded narrative structure, as well as the introduction of the 'fictive novel' by 'Mo Yan', is intriguing. However, in their interviews, four interviewees maintained that it would make a reasonable omission, since it does not add to the main storyline, while another two wished to retain it as a feature of the original text.

As explained earlier, the multi-layered narrative structure is a characteristic of *L&D*. However, this characteristic was not appreciated by half the interviewees since it does not conform to an 'acceptable' form for English literature. This response reflected the poetic manipulation on the reproduction of a literary work since "the critics, reviewers, teachers, translators will occasionally repress certain works of literature that are all too blatantly opposed to the dominant concept of what literature should be" (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 14). The omission undoubtedly streamlined and enhanced the main storyline; however, the original narrative structure has been altered.

### **8.7 Is the omitted text received more favourably than the full translation?**

The previous sections explored interviewee attitudes towards different aspects of the omissions, this section will investigate the attitudes towards omissions as a whole. These attitudes will be investigated from four perspectives: whether Text A reads as a complete story; the interviewees' appreciation of Text A; whether the omissions are justified; and the interviewees' preferences between the two texts.

### 8.7.1 Does the omitted version read as a complete story?

Since 41% of the original chapter has been omitted, what the interviewees are actually reading in Text A is an extract from the original text. Therefore, it is worth investigating whether the incompleteness of Text A is detectable.

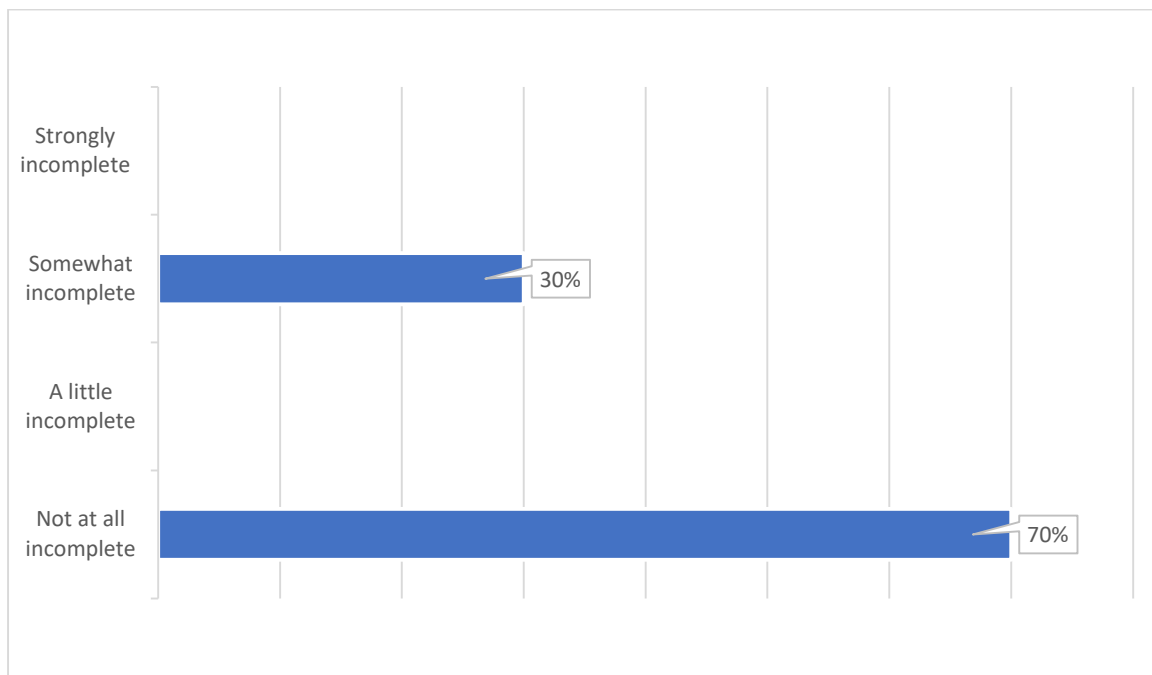


Figure 13: Did Text A feel incomplete at first reading?

Seven of the interviewees' responses (70%) show that, when reading Text A, they believed it is a complete text. Two interviewees (I1 and I5) thought that generally speaking, there are not many differences between Texts A and B; they see them as essentially the same story. These two interviewees regarded Text A as basic and passive, as it simply tells the readers what is happening and the descriptions are not as vivid as in Text B, which they thought was due to the writing style. The five other interviewees stated that Text B shows more detail, a more in-depth writing style and more fully developed characters. However, they viewed Text A as a complete story in its own right, not realising that anything is missing until they read Text B.

Three interviewee responses indicated a view that Text A is incomplete. Among them, one (I2) stated, without giving specific examples, that the stories in Text A are too superficial. The other two interviewees (I3 and I8) specified places where they believe some of the text is missing – I3 mentioned the section about villagers watching TV, while I8 highlighted a conversation between the character Yang Qi and two villagers in a tavern. From reading Text A, they expressed surprise that the story stops suddenly and thus they assume that something must be missing, but they also stated that the other parts of the chapter seem to flow fluently and coherently.

These responses indicate that the effects of the omissions are technical; most of them appear to go unnoticed. Even though the full translation is more engaging and compelling and provides more details, Text A reads as a complete story in its own right according to most of the interviewees. The following section explores how the interviewees appreciate the novel, the main goals being to explore whether the omissions influence the novel's thematic significance.

#### 8.7.2 The interviewees' critique of the omitted text

In the telephone interview following the announcement of his being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, Mo Yan (Nobel Prize, 2012a) recommended *L&D* as a starting point for reading his work for three reasons: first, because the book contained a reflection on the major political issues of Chinese history; second, because the book was an Oriental surrealist work, with the free transition between human and animal stories; third, because the book made bold use of different language styles and the author expressed his emotions freely, breaking the constraints of traditional literary form.

Translation is the most obviously recognisable type of rewriting and it projects the image of a work in another culture. To investigate the new image created by the omissions in

the sample text (chapter 33), the following questions for the interviewees concerned how they would introduce the novel to the English-speaking market based on their reading of Text A. It is assumed that the aspects the interviewees would choose to promote or emphasise are likely to be those that they find most appealing and view as characteristic of the novel.

All the interviewees' responses refer to this novel as showing the influence of Chinese political turmoil on Chinese individuals in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as presented by a writer from China. However, they believe it necessary to highlight that, although it has a political theme, this novel is not a biography or a factual work about the time period, but a work of fiction set against the historical background of Chinese political movements. They consider that native English readers will be interested in Chinese politics, and especially in the criticism of communism by a Chinese author. Native English speakers who are interested in what happens in China tend to question the authenticity of works about Chinese politics and history by western authors, who may be biased or anti-communist. Six of the interviewees' responses suggested introducing this novel as a Chinese parallel to *Animal Farm* (Orwell, 1945), which is more familiar to western readers, as this could provide readers with a context for understanding the novel.

Five interviewees (I1, I5, I6, I8, I10) thought it is important to emphasise that the novel is written in a different way from English literature so that readers will not find the different writing styles shocking. The combination of animal and human characters is unusual for most English readers, therefore, five interviewees thought it is important to emphasise this aspect and to help prepare potential readers for a new style. This unique way of rewriting is related to the concept of reincarnation, and four interviewees (I1, I6, I9 and I10) regarded it as a necessity to provide a brief introduction to this concept, since most English readers may not be familiar with it. Interestingly, the concept of reincarnation is particularly highlighted by the novel's German translator, Martina Hasse (China News, 2012), who recalls that the German publisher



was concerned that the concept of reincarnation might not be approved of by a German-speaking Christian readership.

These responses reveal two key points. Firstly, even though Mo Yan's political criticism has been diluted significantly in Text A, it is still apparent to the English-speaking interviewees. Secondly, English-speaking readers are conscious of the remaining political messages and they are even regarded as an appealing feature. Therefore, the omission of political messages may not be due to ideological manipulation as argued in previous studies (Bao Xiaoying, 2015; Jia Yanqin 2016). Aspects of Chinese culture, especially the concept of reincarnation and the combination of animal and human characters, are also emphasised in some of the responses. Even though the cultural information in the translation has been diluted from the perspective of the ST, it is still enriching for English-speaking readers. The omitted cultural messages are difficult to understand for 60% of the interviewees, thus the omission bridges the cultural gap in literary translation.

### 8.7.3 The justification of the omissions from the readers' perspective

This section will analyse the interviewee responses to the overall pattern of omissions in the text.

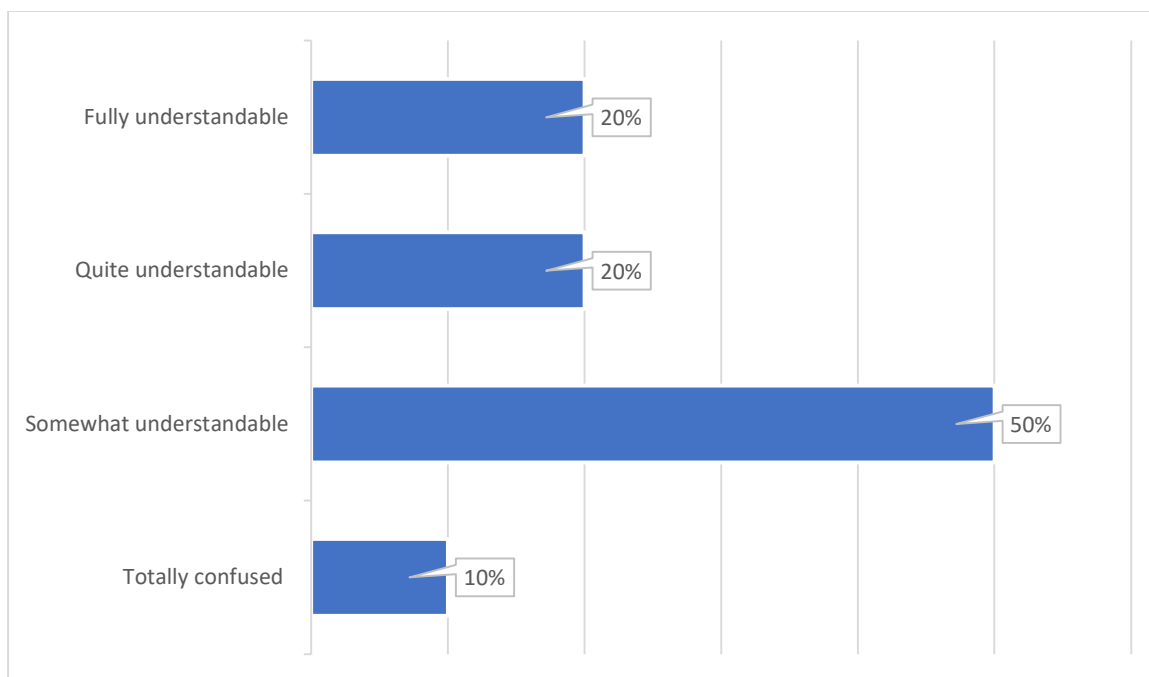


Figure 14: Are the omissions justified?

Only one interviewee (I2) indicated feeling totally confused by the omissions. This interviewee believe that Text B is much more representative and coherent and allows for more complete character development, which makes it much more interesting to read; and that Text B captures more of Mo Yan's story, allowing the reader to have as close an experience as possible to understanding the original Chinese text. This interviewee recognised that some of the cultural and political messages might be difficult for the average English-speaking reader to follow. However, the interviewee also believes that neither the translator nor the editor has the right to decide to edit these messages for the reader, but that the reader should be presented with a text that is as close to the ST as possible. If there are too many omissions and the text is changed too much, the readers will lose the fundamental meaning of the ST. Even if the full translation might not be as popular as the rewritten version, it would at least provide the readers with the essence of the ST. Moreover, this interviewee suggested that, if translators or western publishing companies continue to edit Chinese literature according to western cultural norms, the target readers will never really learn about Chinese culture or what Chinese authors are

actually trying to convey to their audience and therefore, a false image of Chinese culture and literature will be reinforced.

Two of the interviewees (I3 and I5) are in agreement with the omissions. Furthermore, 20% and 50% of the interviewees think that the omissions are ‘quite’ and ‘somewhat’ understandable, respectively. In the interview responses, the reasons for these views are explained from two perspectives. Two interviewees (I6 and I7) understand why the omissions have been made, but they do not agree with the motivations for the rewriting. They argue that a translated work will be unreliable if the reader is actually being presented with an interpretation of the original text. The interviewees’ justification of the omission is mainly from the following two aspects: reducing contingent difficulties through omission and adjusting to English language poetic standards through omission.

#### *8.7.3.1 Reducing contingent difficulties through omission*

The interviewees’ responses indicate that the issue of contingent difficulties plays an important role in the omissions. As mentioned by most of the interviewees, the text is challenging to read and the novel will not be a popular book that everyone will read. The publisher of the English version, Arcade Publishing, is a commercial publisher specialising in world literature, hence, market share and the book’s acceptability to a general readership are of great importance.

The omissions of the cultural and political messages are viewed as justified by 80% and 90% of the interviewees, respectively. For all the interviewees, the theme of political criticism is still evident in the omitted text. Although the interviewees are interested in reading about Chinese politics some of the cultural and political messages are still too in-depth for most who lack the relevant background knowledge. The responses underscore the cultural gap in the process of literary translation and not all the information in the ST can be appreciated or

accepted in another culture. When faced with too much information that they do not understand or are not familiar with the interviewees felt that the entertainment value of the novel is reduced. The most important features of an original novel may not be appreciated or even accepted by the target audience due to cultural differences.

In the case of *L&D*, certain background information is required for an understanding of many of the cultural and political messages as they both fall into the category of the ‘universe of discourse’ (Lefevere, 1992b, p. 87). The features of the ‘universe of discourse’ are particular to a given culture – they can include specific objects that exist or have special symbolic meanings in the relevant culture and unique expressions, values or conventions shared by groups with common cultural identities. They are important components of the ST; however, not all such features can necessarily be accepted or understood by TT readers in the same way as ST readers view them. Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews, the appreciation of cultural and political messages in *L&D* is based on the reader’s pre-existing knowledge. Therefore, these types of omission are justified from the perspective of contingent difficulty.

#### *8.7.3.2 Adjusting to English-language poetic standards through omission*

Unlike the interviewees’ unified attitudes towards the omission of cultural and political messages, the interviewees showed disagreement about the omissions related to the writing style. One view that was frequently mentioned in the interview responses was that ‘this [Text B] is not the way that English literature is supposed to be’ (I1), referring to features including the tone of social criticism, the minor characters, the animal characters, the language style, the presence of a second narrator and the length of the flashbacks. In other words, the differences in terms of poetics were deemed as noticeable by all the interviewees. Thus, their different

attitudes towards these omissions are related to their openness to the ST and whether they are willing to read a novel differently from works they habitually read.

Goldblatt has defended himself with the proviso that some of the rewriting decisions in this translation were not made by him, but by the book's editors after the completion of his work (Goldblatt, 2004; Goldblatt, 2011a; Goldblatt and Efthimiadou, 2012). The editors were native English speakers with little or no knowledge of the Chinese language and no access to the original Chinese novels and they evaluated the translated work against English-language standards rather than those used by the translator. Therefore, the only standard that they could have applied for their editorial work was to ensure that Mo Yan's stories read fluently in English to increase their market share. As stated earlier, Mo Yan recommended the novel in his Nobel Prize interview as an Oriental surrealist work with free transitions between human and animal stories and an unconstrained language style. However, 60% of the interviewees (I1, I3, I5, I6, I7 and I9) regarded the combination of animal and human stories as bizarre. As analysed in chapter 5 of this thesis, the animals' interactions with human beings and the stories based in the animal world have been significantly reduced in the translated version. Another characteristic, the unconstrained language style, was also received poorly by the interviewees; most of them thinking that the language related to animals mating and the naked human body is coarse to some degree. Two interviewees (I1 and I7) suggested that sexual descriptions are acceptable but are supposed to be more subtle in English literature. I1 further highlighted that the most important issue related to Mo Yan's language style is its inconsistency, with which I5 agreed. Therefore, Mo Yan's unconstrained language form was not appreciated by most of the interviewees. As observed in chapter 6, most descriptions concerned with mating, sex and nakedness have been removed in the translation. The language in the published English version has thus been refined and unified. Combining the results from the textual analysis and the interview responses, as well as the comparison between Chinese and Western narratives, it is

evident that, through these omissions, the original text has been adapted according to English stylistic conventions.

Based on the interviewees' responses, the omissions help the flow of the text and make it easier to read. This strongly reflects Venuti's argument that 'Anglo-American cultures are aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign and accustomed to fluent translations that invisibly inscribe foreign texts with English-language values and provide readers with the narcissistic experience of recognising their own culture in other cultures' (1995, p. 15). There is no doubt that these omissions have tailored the original text to something closer to what a novel is expected to be like in English, which might attract more English-speaking readers. As suggested by Venuti (1995, p. 17), the cultural capital of the foreign values has been diminished in the English version of the novel, thus presenting English-speaking readers with a false perception of a Chinese novel. The omissions undoubtedly facilitate reading; however, it is worth considering whether the original text has to be rewritten radically in the tradition of western literature in order to promote Chinese literature for the target audience of the translated novel and whether the readers appreciate such omissions.

#### 8.7.4 Interviewees' preferences between the sample texts

Seventy per cent of interviewees believed that Text A reads as a complete text and the omissions were justified by 90% of the interviewees. However, when asked which version they prefer, surprisingly 80% of the interviewees state a preference for reading Text B.

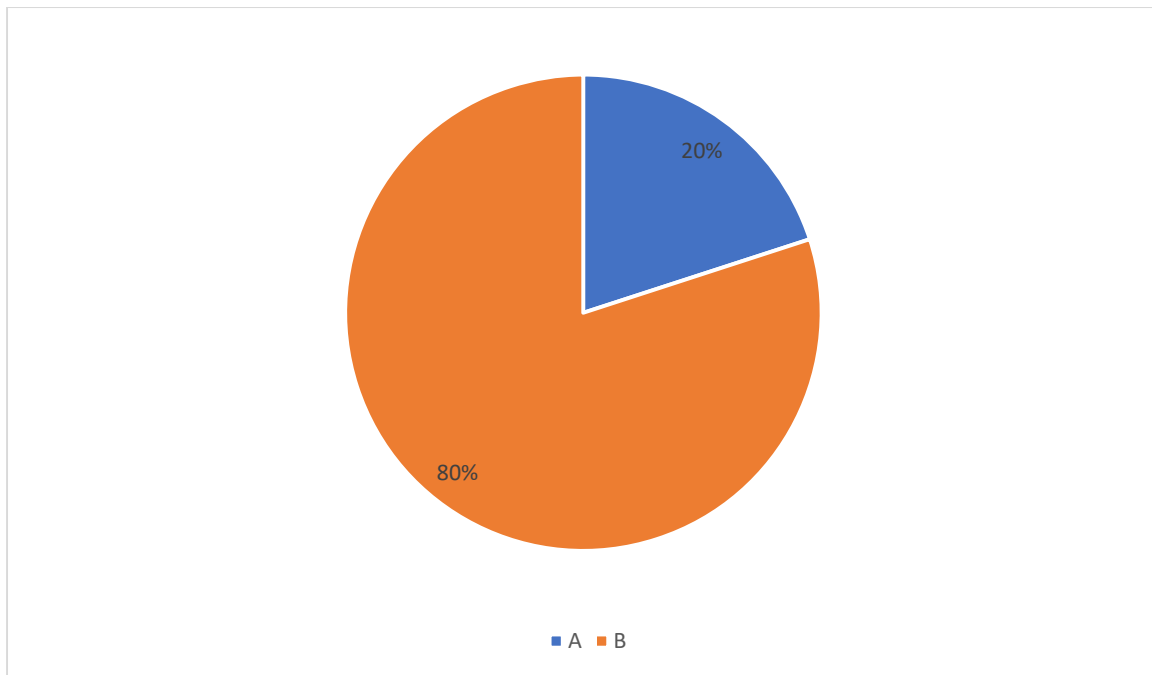


Figure 15: Which text do interviewees prefer?

Only two interviewees (I1 and I5) stated a preference for Text A. In their responses to the previous questions, both of these interviewees thought that Text A read as complete and viewed the omissions as either quite or fully understandable. Their other responses indicate that they also view almost every omission as justified. They think that Text A is a lot more passive, but they perceive this writing approach as more reflective of a work of social criticism within English literature because the writing style is more formal and less colloquial with less use of informal dialect. They viewed some of the original passages included in Text B as enjoyable and entertaining, but they do not see them as representing the style of a work of social criticism in English literature. Additionally, they stated that the storyline in Text A is clearer, while Text B seems less well organised and the characters' names also cause difficulties in terms of their understanding of the text. Most importantly, these two interviewees are more concerned with the storylines, especially the social criticism aspect; they do not object to the translator or editor rewriting the text to facilitate the reading process. While they acknowledged that the more faithful translation retains more of the Chinese cultural elements in the novel,

they think these contents are unlikely to be understood by the average English-speaking reader and may become obstacles to the reading experience. In other words, these interviewees would not object if they missed out on some details from the original work as long as they could read the main stories about Chinese culture in the English text. Moreover, in response to the previous questions about their attitudes towards the political messages, they also shared the view that they are not specifically interested in political themes, but that they find reading stories set against the backdrop of political movements acceptable. From these responses, it is reasonable to speculate that, for native English speakers who are more interested in the main plotlines, the omissions provide them with an easy-to-read and linear story.

Among the eight interviewees who preferred Text B, only one of them was completely confused by the omissions, while the other seven understood their necessity to varying degrees. It is interesting to investigate why the interviewees who understand the omissions prefer reading Text B.

Three interviewees' preferences for reading Text B is more related to their attitude towards the translated work. Interviewee I3 thought the description of minor characters was not thorough at first reading, I6 felt that the social critique in Text A is superficial, while interviewee I7 regarded Text A as complete at first reading and would be happy to read Text A if they did not know there was a Text B. None of these interviewees viewed all the ST information as being of value, as it makes the text harder to read and they even find some of the elements omitted from Text A to be boring and irrelevant. However, they still preferred Text B because it contains information that they do not think should be omitted. They hold the view that, if they are reading a book, they want to read it as the original author intended. They do not think that the translator or editor should sacrifice the information in the original text just to facilitate the reading experience; readers should have the right to decide what information they want to read.



The other five interviewees preferred Text B, considering it more informative due to the presentation of minor and animal characters, as well as the flashbacks. With these features, the text provides a more detailed description of Chinese society in the 1980s and the language is more vivid. In Text B, the tone of the story is more frantic and comedic, which fits in well with the narrators and the characters being described. Even though there is more dialogue, and it may feel less like traditional literature, the interviewees who preferred Text B thought of it as more skilfully written because the language better suits the characters. The text convincingly reveals the author's build-up of the story and these interviewees were intrigued by the multiple layers of the storyline. For these interviewees, there was also great appeal in the supplementary Chinese politics and history information which adds depth to the story.

It is notable that, although 90% of interviewees maintained the omissions are justified, at least 50% of them preferred Text B for literary reasons. It is therefore worth reconsidering the potential readership and their expectations for this novel. Before discussing whether the translated work should be close to the ST and try to transfer any aspect or detail of the ST, it is important to probe further into the issue of who is the target readership of the literary translation. As Jiang Fan (2007) observed, from the 1830s to the 1960s there have been 11 versions of the English translation of *Hong Lou Meng* (Cao Xueqin, r, 1791). The original novel has been adapted to meet a different group of readers for a different purpose, such as learn Chinese culture, entertainment and academic studies. McDougall (2007, p. 22) suggested the hypothetical readership of translated Chinese literature comprise three types: the committed reader, the interested reader, and the disinterested reader. The committed reader refers to the English-language readers with an existing commitment to learning about China, especially those with general cultural interest in China; the interested readers are those Chinese-language readers learning written English; Chinese-language or English-language academics in literary and translation studies; literary critics; the disinterested readers are English-language readers

with universalistic expectations of literary values. According to McDougall (2007, p. 23), the disinterested readers are representative of the English-language readers of Chinese works in general. They have their own norms, conventions and preferences as regards what they are willing to read, not so much in term of content but in terms of readability and they seek understanding rather than information.

Based on their interview responses, the interviewees can be divided into three categories. The first, (I1 and I5), focused only on the story itself; they do not have a particular interest in politics, either in China or their own home countries, but they are interested in the stories about the main characters – or, to use one interviewee's own (I5) words, they 'rushed to the ending of the characters and stories'. The interviewees in the second category (I3, I6, I7 and I9) have all studied or read Chinese history and politics intensively, especially the periods of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. They are curious as to how these historical periods are perceived by ordinary people in China and thus, while they enjoy the story, they are more interested in the novel's political themes. The interviewees in the third category (I2, I8 and I10) also have some background knowledge of Chinese history and politics, and they are interested in Chinese culture and the structure of Chinese novels. They regard the sample chapter as an excerpt from a larger literary work and wish to immerse themselves in the stories. They are not familiar with all the political and cultural messages in Text B, but they are willing to learn more and they believe that filtering out these cultural and political messages creates a false image of Chinese culture. Their preference between the texts is thus closely related to their background knowledge and their main interests in reading a novel.

Apparently, the omissions satisfy the expectations of those in category one, with the streamlining of the main plots, the removal of minor characters, the chronology of the storylines and the filtering of political and cultural messages that would require additional background knowledge. For the interviewees in the second and third categories, even though

they can understand why omissions have been made and most of them even thought that Text A was complete until they read Text B, their interest lies more in the original text for varying reasons, including wanting to know more about Chinese culture and literature. Goldblatt assumes that his target readership consists primarily of English-speaking readers with an interest in China or Chinese culture but who know little about China (Ji Jin, 2009). In this regard, the published version should be received as more acceptable by the potential readership.

The purpose of these omissions might be to appeal to more English readers who are interested in stories that take place in China. From this perspective, the omissions do facilitate the reading of the novel, however, based on the interviewees of this study, this kind of reader would represent a relatively small proportion of the audience. Most of the novel's English-speaking readers are likely to already have an interest in Chinese culture and politics rather than to know little or nothing about it. Sixty per cent of our interviewees suggested that the discussion of politics by the ordinary characters should be retained even though they feel that the number of Chinese names impedes their understanding. Moreover, the potential readers of this translated novel are also likely to take an interest in other elements of Chinese culture. For example, interviewee I8 searched online for the classical novels as well as the political movements mentioned in Text B. Even though this interviewee was not already familiar with the cultural and political messages, the interviewee was interested to learn more through reading about them. Interviewees I2, I3, I6 and I10 have some background knowledge in Chinese history and stated that, compared to factual textbooks, the discussion of politics in Text B has supplemented their understanding of the movements that form the chapter's setting. Interviewee I2 thought that Text A is superficial and more than 50% of the interviewees regarded the language in Text A as passive and less engaging. The omitted text might read as complete and be more appealing to general readers without relevant background knowledge; however, for those readers who want to learn more about Chinese culture through reading the

novel, the omitted version deprives them of the opportunity to appreciate some of the subtlety and the in-depth reflections within the ST.

## CHAPTER NINE – CONCLUSION

This study examines omission as a specific form of rewriting in the translation of Mo Yan's novel *L&D*. It analyses differences between Chinese and Western narratives in terms of the categorisation, narrator, organisation of the events and speed of narrative. It is important to note that the substantial omissions are related to the above-mentioned aspects, and the original novel has been adjusted to better conform to the Western political literary. The translation thus reflects the conflict and compromise between the ST culture and the TT culture, embodying a struggle between various extra-textual factors, including the reputation of Mo Yan amongst the English-speaking reviewers and general readers (the cultural capital of Mo Yan), Mo Yan's attitudes towards rewriting, the translator's viewpoints on translation and the publishers' concerns about attracting a mass audience. The original Chinese novel has, therefore, been rewritten and received in an English context based on modification, manipulation and deformation.

The current thesis studies different types of omission in the translation of *L&D*. Combining the textual evidence and interviews results, the current thesis finds an interesting phenomenon that although from the perspective of the ST, Chinese cultural distinctiveness, social and political critique has been significantly reduced, the interviewees held the view that cultural and political messages are actually enriched in the omitted version. Therefore, this thesis suggests that even though substantial cultural and political messages are omitted, the omission might primarily serve for poetic rather than ideological concern. This chapter summarises the research findings from the textual analysis and research interviews, outlining the construction of *L&D* in English, identifying the discrepancies between the two texts, investigating the effects of the omissions on readers and exploring the patterns of omission.

### 9.1 *L&D* in English: discrepancies and reconstruction

From the perspective of rewriting theory, rewriting that occurs in translation is often specifically designed to push a piece of literature in a certain direction. A literary translation thus creatively reproduces the ST with a different determination from that of the original. The main plot, characteristics and themes of the Chinese version of *L&D* were reviewed and outlined in Chapter 5. There are six significant discrepancies/variations from the original Chinese text in the English version: the weakening of culturally specific Chinese messages, the softening of political criticism, streamlining of the plot, the flattening of the portrayal of minor and animal characters, simplification of the narrative structure and unification of the hybrid language style.

Due to the omission of idioms and references to Chinese classical novels and historical figures, details portraying Chinese culture are not as evident in the English translation as in the original novel. Traditional ideas concerning marriage, family and death are largely absent from the English version. Additionally, in the English version, both the explorations of and reflections on political movements have been significantly removed. While the original text provides a detailed presentation of almost all the political issues and events that occurred in China during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the English version places most emphasis on the relationship between the ownership of the land and those who worked it, while Mo Yan's reflections concentrated on other political movements are weakened or neglected. In the original novel, Mo Yan employs a multi-perspective, multi-dimensional, non-linear sequential narrative structure through the interpolation of the stories of minor characters as well as the narrators' comments. By omitting these interpolations, the English translation simplifies the narrative structure and chronologises the plot, thus reducing the complexity of Mo Yan's narrative. Descriptions of the world of each of Ximen Nao's animal reincarnations is significantly reduced, with more emphasis being placed on the stories occurring in the society of humans, which therefore reduces the hallucinatory aspect of the novel. With the omissions

of the abovementioned features, Mo Yan's hybrid language style, which has been analysed (Goldblatt, 2014; He Chengzhou, 2014) as a counter-discourse to question, revise and then supplement the dominant grand discourse of modern China in a reflective and/or corrective manner, has been unified.

From the perspective of the original novel, the omissions inevitably distort the text. The TT is a reconstruction of the ST, both in terms of the thematic significance and narrative structure as well as the style of writing. The English version is characterised as a specially edited version of the original novel, emphasising the completeness and fluency of the main storyline of the Lan family. The interposition of historical background and other characters' stories has been reduced with the omission of political critique. Furthermore, the TT focuses on the development of the stories, and the the narrators' commentaries at the present time is reduced. With the omission of non-narrative text and minor and animal characters, the tempo of the narration has accelerated.

## **9.2 Patterns of omission**

Based on the consequences of the omissions as well as the interviewees' responses, it can be determined that the published English version attaches greater emphasis to the readability of the novel. The omissions tend to fall into two primary categories: removing elements that require cultural background knowledge and poetic adjustments based on English-language conventions. From the perspective of the universe of discourse, the omissions simplify the original text by removing the messages that can only be fully understood with a certain level of background knowledge and that are more obvious to readers possessing the relevant background political and cultural information. From the perspective of poetics, the omissions chronologise and streamline the plot, thus simplifying the complex narrative

structure, unifying the language style and removing Mo Yan's personal experiences and tributes to his favourite novels that are closely related to, or fit into, the stories.

#### 9.2.1 Political and cultural omissions: removing potential barriers to comprehension

In the translated version of *L&D*, the cultural and political messages are not entirely removed and, for the interviewees, these cultural and political messages remained apparent. It can be argued that the omissions are instead based on the universe of discourse, or the 'contingent difficulty', as explained by Robert Con Davis-Undiano (2011, p. 22) as the difficulty encountered by Western readers in unpacking and understanding Chinese cultural and historical events in Chinese novels.

Thus, three types of political message have been omitted. First, those expressed in an indirect manner through the minor characters' conversations and stories. Second, the animals' seemingly objective observations that reveal the dark side of human society and third, the allusions to political issues through the narrations of animal activities. If we understand the omissions of implicit political messages as being manipulations based on western ideology (Sun Huijun, 2014; Bao Xiaoying, 2015; Jia Yanqin, 2016), then we run into the logical problem that the English version often retains the presence of political terms but omits political text that requires extensive contextual background information. The omission of cultural messages follows a similar pattern, namely, first, story-based idioms and expressions and second, cultural references that require an explanation for English readers. These messages add artistic value to the text but are not central to the storyline.

These findings indicate that the omissions were motivated by a cultural gap or the universe of discourse rather than ideological manipulation. Due to the cultural gap, most of the omitted information would not be understood by the target audience; for example, among our interviewees, its implications could only be fully recognised by those who had solid



background knowledge of Chinese history. The omission of cultural and political messages evidently highlights that the English version attaches greater emphasis to fluent reading experience and the smooth development of stories than to the novel's thematic significance or artistic value.

### 9.2.2 Poetic omissions: adapting to English political literature

From the results of the textual analysis, the most substantial omissions concern firstly, the interaction between the two narrators, secondly, the interpolations of minor characters and animal character stories and thirdly, the flashbacks of the protagonists. These messages are embedded in or attached to the main storyline, making the narrative structure of the novel particularly complex. In line with the omissions in the sample texts, 80 per cent of the interviewees regarded the above-mentioned features of the ST as unusual, inconsistent and not in accordance with their idea of the novel focusing on political criticism in English. Through the interview, most of the interviewees justified omissions of this type as not following the conventions of what good literature is supposed to be in the English language. The published English version attaches more importance to the sequential development of the stories, strengthens the main storyline by omitting the stories of minor and animal characters, and unifies the language style. At the same time, the animals' discussions and activities, which were regarded by our interviewees as uncommon, are significantly reduced. The animals' language is formal and concise in comparison with the ST.

These types of omission clearly indicate that the published English version reconstructs the ST according to English poetic conventions of a novel with political critique. The omissions also reflect the conflict and compromise between the poetics of the ST and the TT. The evaluation of a literary work differs in different cultures and different literary genres have their own conventions. Through the omissions, the genre, style and literary devices of the original

novel have been reworked, and the political critique has been softened.

### **9.3 Effects of the omissions on English readers**

Literary translation is not produced in a vacuum; therefore, it is also important to explore how a text with omissions is received or admitted within the target literary system. The interview responses revealed that 70% of the interviewees regarded the version with omissions as a complete story, and 90% viewed the omissions as justified. The interviewees' feedback indicates that, although the English version has been radically edited, this editing smooths the reading process and enhances the entertainment value of the novel. In this sense, the version with omissions fulfilled most of the interviewees' expectations.

For most general readers of the text, as Goldblatt assumes that general American readers are curious but have little or no knowledge of Chinese culture (Shu Jinyu, 2005; Ji Jin, 2009), the translation strikes an artful balance between maintaining the characteristics of the ST and considering the receptive acceptance of the target readership. The justifications given for the omissions emphasise their role in facilitating reading from the perspectives of both content and poetics. First, the content of *L&D* requires a certain amount of cultural and historical background knowledge to comprehend, especially with respect to cultural references and political criticism. This justification reflects the effect that the universe of discourse has on the appreciation and understanding of work integrated from another culture. Second, for those participants without solid background knowledge of Chinese culture and history, it was difficult to understand the implicit political critique expressed through minor and animal characters, so they regarded the concentrated references to Chinese culture as distracting. In accordance with this, due to the omissions, the selected chapter reads more like a novel of political criticism than it should, according to English standards.

An interesting discovery is that despite the omissions of political messages, the English-speaking interviewees observed that there is substantial political criticism, and they would like to introduce the novel to other English-speaking readers as a novel reflecting and criticising Chinese politics. Eighty percent of the interviewees' perceptions of the political criticism were based on easily identifiable political terms, such as 'Cultural Revolution' and 'Chairman Mao', and were derived from the characters' conversations. Even though the interviewees may have little or no knowledge about the related political movements and critiques, they regarded the political critiques as evident. On the contrary, the political criticism expressed through euphemism and the indirect mimicking of political slogans and rhetoric inherent to the specific period was only understood by the 20% of the interviewees who had previously studied Chinese history and politics. Most participants without this cultural and historical background knowledge were unaware of or uncertain about the parody and therefore regarded the satire expressed through the minor characters as irrelevant stories appearing out of nowhere. This confused them and led them to question the author's competence. From the perspective of the ST, the omission of political critique is ultimately a distortion and loss. However, from the perspective of TT readers, the omission of political messages smooths the reading and strikes a balance between the political criticism in the ST and the receptive acceptance of the target readership. It is through the omission that the original text approaches the target readership by a more acceptable and accommodative route. On the one hand, the critical function of the literary text does not necessarily come from the content alone; on the other hand, the detailed translation of the political content distracts the target readership.

The interviewees held a similar attitude toward the omission of cultural messages as they did toward the omission of political criticism. The story-based idioms and references to Chinese classical novels did not add value for those interviewees who lacked the relevant cultural and historical knowledge. Instead, left them frustrated and puzzled, and thus the

culturally intensive messages lowered the entertainment value of the reading. The textual comparison revealed that the cultural messages had been significantly reduced in the TT, however, for most interviewees, cultural messages were still evident in the omitted version. Particularly, the construction of the stories within the framework of reincarnation was identified, as this was already a recognisable feature of Chinese culture. The novel still contained abundant Chinese cultural messages, even with the omission of idioms and references to classical novels.

Besides simplification of content, the omissions also accommodate the works within the parameters of what an English political criticism novel is supposed to be according to the opinion of English-speaking readers. The narrative structure of the original novel has often been viewed as highly complex (Goldblatt, 2014; Knight, 2014). The narration by the protagonists and the development of the main storyline are often interrupted by lengthy flashbacks involving the main characters, multiple focalisations and narrators, as well as the substantial interpolation of minor characters and animal characters. Overall, the contents of these aspects of the novel were not difficult to follow, but the way in which the content was organised differed from the interviewees' expectations based on their reading habits, which added reading difficulty, leading to them feel distracted. Through the omissions, the interpolations and interactions between narrators and flashbacks are significantly reduced. Thus, the narrative order has been adjusted into a linear form, and the complex, embedded narrative structure has been simplified.

The interviewees' responses reflected that they recognised the importance of interpolation in supplementing the details and contextual background of the work. However, they thought that the interpolated passages of text were too long and detracted from the main storyline. As noted by Chinese literary critics (Zhang Xudong and Mo Yan, 2013; Jia Yanqin, 2016), the minor characters in *L&D* represent an effective approach to supplement the main

plot, providing background information and vividly representing the political situation in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, because the political criticism is presented implicitly through the minor characters' conversation and activities, it could not be understood by most of the interviewees; instead, these contents were regarded as irrelevant to the main storyline. The interviewees thus felt that the minor characters appeared randomly, which was confusing and obstructed their reading and appreciation of the stories. More importantly, it contradicted their idea of the general rules of political criticism in English since it was less organised. Moreover, the substantial minor characters presented a challenge for the interviewees as they found it difficult to distinguish between and remember Chinese names. 80% of interviewees had to read back and forth to check the Chinese names, which significantly reduced the entertainment value of the novel.

The creation of animal characters is regarded as another important characteristic of Mo Yan's novel. It is through the eyes of the animals that Mo Yan observes political movements and voices his criticism, which might have been too dangerous if voiced through human characters (Knight, 2013; 2014). Mo Yan explained that he did not want to regard the animals as mere observers of history; therefore, he integrated the same stories into the animal world (Zhang Xudong and Mo Yan, 2013, p. 212). Even though the interviewees appreciated the motivation and rationale for using animal characters after this was explained to them, they felt that the talking animals were bizarre and childish, especially in a novel of political criticism. Overall, they expected the novel to concentrate on the stories of the human characters.

The switching of narrators, another important characteristic of Mo Yan's novel, was also regarded as confusing by 90% of the interviewees, and it was frequently mentioned that the presentation of two narrators in a single chapter is rare in English literature. The hybrid language style, which includes rural slang, questionable jokes, both educated and formal statements, classical literary Chinese and a mimicking of 'Mao-style' political discourse is

regarded as a distinctive feature of Mo Yan's writing; however, this was regarded as an inconsistent and casual writing style by most of the interviewees. Some of the political discourse in the novel was also questioned by some readers, who thought it was deficient and a basic attempt at writing. Although they felt that the language in the published version was less vivid compared to that in the full translation, they also felt that the language was more similar to that customary in English literature.

Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews, it has been found that 70% of the interviewees could not tell that the published English version was incomplete, even though 40% of the original text was omitted. In other words, even though a substantial amount of text was omitted, the story was viewed as complete, clear and concise to these native English-speaking readers. Interviewees were more interested in reading a fluent story taking place in China than in the political criticism, the Chinese cultural references or the intricacies of Mo Yan's technique. Therefore, the omitted version is more suitable for the general English readership. The life of the ST has thus been prolonged within the target culture by its being made more accessible through distortion to the general readership. The omissions have resulted in a reconstruction of the ST, creating a more reader-friendly text by anticipating the target readers' reading habits and overall understanding of another culture.

However, it should be noted that Chinese novels and literature may be misunderstood and lose their uniqueness in the long term in western markets. For the readers who have a strong interest in Chinese culture, history, political critique and the structure of the novel, the omissions lead to the loss of original characteristics. Knight (2011) warns that, in the long-term, this method of translation would lead to the loss of characteristics of Chinese literature. Furthermore, the dissemination of translated Chinese works might create a vicious circle in which a false impression of Chinese literature is reinforced. Those who want to gain a deeper

understanding of Chinese culture and society through reading will thus be deprived of the opportunity to do so here.

#### **9.4 Reflections on the case of *L&D* for literary translation**

It is interesting to find that although substantial passages have been omitted in the translated version, the version with omissions was regarded as complete in its own right by 70% of the interviewees. The omissions were justified by 90% of the interviewees since the text was considered to read more fluently. However, 80% of the interviewees expressed a preference for reading the complete version. They may not have understood all the messages in the complete text, and they did not generally realise that the version with omissions was incomplete while they were reading it. However, they believed that it was the readers, rather than the translator or the editors, who had the right to choose what they read. They regarded the version with omissions as unauthentic and felt ultimately cheated by the translator or editor, being presented with a false image of the original text.

These seemingly contradictory statements lay at the heart of long-standing debates in translation studies: i.e. how to view the relationship between ST and TT and the question of whether the TT should be as close as possible to the ST or should the readability of TT be regarded as the priority. These statements lead to further consideration of why rewriting is necessary in some cases. Even though this research could not provide definite answers to these questions, this case study, especially the interviewing of the native English speakers, does contributorily shed further light on this issue.

The omission within the translation of *L&D* exemplifies how translations can interact with other systems within society. In this instance, these include: the general condition of translated literature in the West, Mo Yan's reputation as a writer in the West before winning the Nobel Prize, the 'contingent difficulty' (Davis-Undiano, 2011, p. 22) of English readers due

to the cultural gap, the translator's target reader-oriented viewpoints, as well as the publisher's concern for the market share.

Translated literature has remained in a relatively marginalised position in the Anglophone market (Venuti, 1995, p. 17), especially concerning those works translated from Asian cultures (McDougall, 2014). As Evan-Zohar (2000, p. 194) indicates, in most cases, when translated literature occupies a peripheral position in the literary system, the translator's main effort is to concentrate on finding the best ready-made, secondary models for the foreign text. Goldblatt (2004, pp. 26–27) also explains that translated literary works from Asian languages are not easy to sell and the publisher requires the rewriting or shortening of the original work; however, he suggested the works of Nobel Prize winners and a couple of Japanese authors (Murakami Haruki and Banana Yoshimoto) could be an exception. The literary reviews of Murakami's works could further help shed light on the rewritings in Mo Yan's works. Murakami's novel *Norwegian Wood* (1987) has sold 2.5 million copies in the U.S. alone and, As Hegarty (2011) reported, the reception of Murakami's 1Q84 was entirely unprecedented in the case of works translated into English. Philip Gabriel, the English translator of 1Q84, describes that 'his subjects of loneliness, boredom and loss, have significance for readers anywhere' (Hegarty, 2011). Murakami's novel is regarded as un-Japanese and looks askance alongside its notable western influences, ranging from its writing style to the consistent American cultural references. At the same time, Murakami's writing is infused with the same directness, which makes it easy to translate into English. Onishi Norimitsu (2005) said that Murakami 'is the first Japanese author who broke through these Orientalist expectations that the readers have. They stop perceiving him as a Japanese author'. Philip Gabriel sees him as the quintessential modern writer, one who speaks to a truly globalised world, whereas Rowland (2019) regards Murakami as 'too 'western', and Kelts (2013) sees him as a literary alchemist who fuses east to west.



Interestingly, the review of Murakami's unprecedently positive reception in English falls in line with the interviewees' justifications of the omissions in Mo Yan's works: the cultural and political references presented are confusing for readers without the background knowledge and the novel is written in the way literature is supposed to be, according to the standards of English literature. A comparison between Mo Yan and Murakami indicates that the themes of Murakami's works such as loneliness, boredom and loss are attractive to the readers not only in Japan but also in the West. Even though there are reflections of individualism and collectivism, the themes of freedom and humanity in Mo Yan's works (Wang Der-wei, 2000), as discussed in Chapter 4, the reception of Mo Yan's works in the English literary circle is concentrated on his social and political critique of the Chinese government as this theme might not be attractive to the general English-speaking readers. As Damrosch (2003, p. 213) suggested, a work can enter into world literature by embodying what are taken to be universal themes and values so that local culture can be considered secondary or even irrelevant. The uniqueness of the culture and the regionality limit the potential dissemination and reception of a work. As such there may be a weakening of a work's thematic significance and language characteristics in order to create a compromise between two literary systems, as works with codified poetics may be problematic for publication or may even be rejected.

Another issue related to rewriting is that Mo Yan's capital as a writer is relatively small in the English literary arena. As explained at the beginning of this chapter, at least 500 people were invited to take the interview and only 12 people responded. From those who did respond, all the interviewees have connections with China or Chinese culture. It is therefore quite reasonable to suggest that Mo Yan's work is not immediately attractive to the general English-speaking readership.

Only three of the interviewees had heard of Mo Yan before (two in the course of their

Chinese literature studies, and one through a book review), and only one had heard of this specific novel, which seems to indicate that Mo Yan and his translator Howard Goldblatt are not well known in the English-speaking market. This result correlates with the findings of Chinese scholar Bao Xiaoying's survey (2015, pp. 139–140) on Mo Yan's popularity in the United States, in which only 12 out of 371 residents in Monterey, California had heard of the author (and of whom 11 had only heard of him after he won the Nobel Prize in Literature) and only 2 out of 76 interviewees in New York had heard of him, again, both after he won the Nobel Prize. Bao also investigated the sales of *L&D* before and after Mo Yan won the Nobel Prize for Literature, finding that 4,175 copies were sold between 2008 and October 2012, (Bao Xiaoying, 2015, p.156). Among the English translations of Mo Yan's works, the reception of this book is second only to *Red Sorghum* (1993), which had been on sale for 20 years before 2013. These results also indicate that, although the Nobel Prize increased Mo Yan's popularity in the English-speaking market, the author and the novel are still not popular and the number of readers of *L&D*'s translation remains limited. The small audience is likely to lead to the omission of unique features in his works to be omitted in order to attract a larger audience.

Eighty per cent of the interviewees expressed a preference for the complete version, but at the same time justified the omission in accordance with what English literature is supposed or perceived to be. The next logical consideration is therefore the readability of the translated work which has become the primary concern in translation. This case indicates the thematic significance and literary nuance in the ST culture might not be understood in the target readership. A similar sequence of events occurred regarding the reception of *Hong Lou Meng* (Cao Xueqin, r. 1791) in the Western market. The version, translated by Xianyi Yang and Gladys Yang under the title *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (1978), is regarded as a more faithful translation than that of British sinologists David Hawks and John Minford, published under the title *The Story of the Stone* (1973–1980). However, when compared with the latter,

the Yangs' translation is far less popular, accepted and influential in the English-speaking world. Jiang Fan (2007, pp. 99–105) examined the reception of both versions in the English-speaking market and found that Hawks and Minford's version has been published, reprinted and borrowed from libraries many more times than the Yangs' version.

The Yangs' translation is criticised by the anonymous English-speaking reader that 'being faithful to the precise word of a book isn't necessarily the same as being faithful to the spirit, and their translation is no fun to read' (Jiang Fan, 2007, p. 103). This example illustrates that being mechanically faithful to the ST does not guarantee a positive reception among the target readership.

Evidently, the traditional dichotomous debate on the relation between the ST and the TT, regarding faithfulness and betrayal, or domestication and foreignisation, is no longer feasible in the translation process of literary texts. Besides the linguistic differences, the divergence in poetic systems and the contingent difficulty indicates a conflict in literary translation. In this regard, the original text is more like the literary resources, while the translated version is more like a story re-organised and rewritten by the translator and editor as the craftsmen to make it more attractive to the audience from a different culture and more suitable to the poetics in the target culture at the time the translation is made. The TT is a new and independent work of the ST, but traces of the ST are still evident in the TT. The purpose of rewriting and manipulating the ST is to make it suitable to the target, both ideologically and poetically. Even though interviewees questioned the translator's and editors' right to omit texts, the life of the original *L&D* appears to have been prolonged in the English-speaking market through the omission and/or distortion of the original text.

It is in this sense that translation is rewriting, as it involves a translator's reading, interpretation and telling of an original story to a new audience. Variations and discrepancies from the ST are inevitable, but this does not mean that the translation is to be considered either

inferior or superior; it is a version of the ST that is more accessible and suitable to the target readership at the time that the translation is conducted.

### **9.5 Limitations and suggestions for further research**

This thesis has attempted to systematically analyse the omissions in *L&D* based on rewriting theory; however, the omissions can also be approached using other theories. In other words, although the study has gathered empirical evidence from textual analysis and research interviews, the research findings and conclusions may vary. Although this study exhaustively analysed omissions in the English translation of *L&D*, the limited scope of the case study means that the research findings cannot be readily applied to translation studies in general.

While rewriting theory emphasises the interaction between textual and extra-textual factors, in conducting the study, due to the restrictions of the practical situation, the constraining factors, such as translator, editors, publishers and other extra-textual factors are left underexplored. The interview sample was small, with an age range of 18 to 32 years and 90% of the sample had some background in Chinese language and culture. Although their opinions represent native English-speaking readers who are interested in Chinese novels, the obtained results might be different if taken from a more heterogeneous sample. Moreover, in conducting the research interviews, the researcher translated and supplemented the omitted text in the English version. Although the full translation was proofread by a native speaker, subjectivity cannot have been entirely avoided. When it comes to textual comparison and analysis, although elements of epitext are referred to in order to support the analysis, subjectivity again cannot be entirely avoided. However, no better methodology has been discovered to present the research findings more objectively.

This study concentrates on omissions as a radical form of rewriting at the macro level. Since the commencement of this study, many other scholarly articles have contributed to the

discussion of Goldblatt's rewriting and manipulating of Mo Yan's works. Since Simeoni's (1995) call for an agent-grounded study of translation, regarding translation studies as a 'human science', many researchers have adopted sociological approaches, for instance, Bourdieu's sociology of cultural production and Latour's actor-network theory, to analyse the concept of agency within the translation process across a variety of actors. Thus, it is suggested that further studies on this topic to investigate how different agents negotiate and conflict with each other and, crucially, to reveal who holds power in creating a TT, is thus recommended. Howard Goldblatt's collection at the Chinese Literature Translation Archive at the University of Oklahoma, which includes his translation drafts and correspondence with Mo Yan and English editors, should be applied as a valuable pretextual resource to investigate the rewritings and editing in his translations. Besides *L&D*, Goldblatt's translation of Mo Yan's *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* also contains significant editing, including omissions, additions and text rearrangement. Coincidentally, the English version was also published by Arcade Publishing, and it is worth exploring whether Arcade Publishing had a role in the omissions. From Bourdieu's sociology aspects, the cultural capital of both Mo Yan and Goldblatt was enhanced after Mo Yan's Nobel Prize win, which might have influenced English publishers' attitudes towards Mo Yan's work and which is likely to influence the further production of English versions of Mo Yan. It is, therefore, suggested that further researchers conduct a comparative study between the works translated before and after Mo Yan's Nobel Prize win and explore whether dynamic cultural capital influences the translation.

## APPENDIX ONE – CASE CLASSIFICATION

(note: the cases in bold are analysed in detail in the thesis)

Categorisations	Sub-categorisations	Case Number	Brief Contents	Chapter number in the novel	Page(s)
Stories	Main characters	1	<b>Conversation between Jinlong and Jiefang</b>	19	168–169
		2	<b>Jinlong prepares to get the pigs out</b>	23	214
		3	Huang Tong's reaction to Jinlong's drunkenness	27	268
		4	Jinlong's performance in the boar-hunting	34	355
		5	Jinlong accidentally runs over a chicken	38	383
		6	<b>Hezuo makes flatbread (curtailment)</b>	43	411–412
		7	<b>Huang Tong comments on the dogs' reunion</b>	47	441
		8	Pang Hu criticises Lan Jiefang (curtailment)	48	453
		9	<b>Hezuo takes a shower in the rain</b>	49	462
		10	Sexual acts between Jiefang and Chunmiao (curtailment)	50	472
		11	Sexual activities between Jiefang and Chunmiao (curtailment)	50	477
		12	<b>Jiefang and Chunmiao act out the movie (curtailment)</b>	52	493–494
	Minor characters	13	Zhang Youcai wants to play the part of Grandma Li	19	167
		14	Brigade catering team	20	178–179
		15	Multitude wear nose ring for Ximen ox	20	181
		16	Hong Taiyue talks to Bai Xing	22	202
		17	Male Commune members being criticised	23	211–212
		18	'Mo Yan' talking with Pang Kangmei at the wedding	28	282–283
		19	Yang Qi discusses business	33	332
		20	<b>Multitude crowd talking in the tavern</b>	33	332–335
		21	Young people on the street	33	335–336
		22	Young people mock Hong Taiyue	33	337
		23	Hong Taiyue gets drunk	33	340

		24	Crowd's reaction to Yang Qi's getting drunk	33	342–343
		25	Hong Taiyue's drunken speech	33	344–345
		26	Hunters in the boar-hunting	34	354–355
		27	The reward hunters	35	361–362
		28	Reactions of Kaifang and Dog Four to 'Mo Yan'	38	376
		29	Psychiatrist Li Zheng	40	390
		30	Civil servant in the corridor	40	394
		31	<b>Bank director Hu</b>	41	400
		32	<b>'Mo Yan' introduces Kaifang to Chunmiao</b>	41	403–404
		33	'Mo Yan' jokes with Chunmiao	41	404
		34	Mao, the blind person	45	426
		35	Fenghuang and Kaifang find Chunmiao and Jiefang	50	477–478
		36	Teenagers' armed battle	51	482–483
	Animal Characters	37	<b>Ximen Pig shares the good news</b>	24	219
		38	Ximen Pig talks to Diao Xiaosan	24	223–224
		39	Diao Xiaosan pursues love	27	261
		40	Yellow weasel chat	31	309
		41	Ximen Pig encounters animals as he escapes	32	319–320
		42	Pigs' mating	33	325
		43	Wild boar's life	34	351
		44	Bird activities	34	354
		45	The boars regard Split Ear as the hero	34	355
		46	Ximen Dog's father (abridged)	37	372
		47	Dog Three's kids	43	409
		48	Preparations for the party	43	409
		49	Dog Four orders 'sheep face' to search for Jiefang	43	410–411
		50	Dog Four orders search to be stopped	43	411
		51	Dog Four orders 'sheep face' to preside at the party	43	412
		52	Dog Four joins the party	43	413
		53	<b>Dogs' party</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>415–416</b>
		54	<b>The reunion of the dog brothers</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>441</b>
		55	Dogs visit the village	47	443–444
		56	Dog Four traces the men who hit Jiefang	49	463
		57	Dogs report their conditions to Dog Four	50	472
Monologue	Animal monologue	58	Ximen Donkey's remembering of its previous life	4	29
		59	Miss Ximen Bai	22	202

		60	Ximen Pig feels pity for its pig mom	23	206
		61	<b>Ximen Pig satisfied with the new pigsty</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>206–207</b>
		62	Ximen Pig daydreams of future	23	207–208
		63	Ximen Pig's curiosity about the outside the pigsty	23	208
		64	Ximen Pig's attitude towards new pigs	23	215
		65	Ximen Pig's self-defence after hitting Diao Xiaosan	24	220–221
		66	Ximen Pig's concern for Diao Xiaosan	24	221
		67	Ximen Pig mourns Diao Xiaosan	34	356
		68	Dog Four remembers previous reincarnations	39	384
		69	Dog Four is amazed by the new house	39	385
		70	Dog Four mocks Jiefang	39	386
		71	Dog Four's sadness at living outside the house	39	386
		72	Dog Four's opinion of Pang Kangmei and the primary school	45	424
		73	<b>Dog Four's excitement in the car</b>	47	437
		74	Dog Four thinks of Jiefang being beaten	49	464
	Jiefang's monologue	75	<b>About his appearance</b>	43	406
		76	Love for Chunmiao	43	406
		77	Jiefang's amazement at their love and forgiveness for the persons who have beaten him	50	470–471
	The monologue of 'Mo Yan'	78	Mo Yan's feelings on Chunmiao's death	Sun's colour	519
		79	<b>Mo Yan addressing readers</b>	A painful cut	535
Narrators' comments	Lan Qiansui	80	Why Ximen Pig understands human language	23	215
		81	The use of classical Chinese	23	229
		82	The use of proverbs	24	234
		83	Why Ximen Pig knows <i>References</i> newspaper	24	236–237
		84	<b>Paraphrase of the novel by 'Mo Yan'</b>	24	224
		85	Comments on the novel by 'Mo Yan'	26	253
		86	Legend of Master Gong (God of water)	27	259
		87	Comments on Chang Tianhong's singing	31	307–308



		88	The significance of the apricot tree	33	327
		89	Summarising and paraphrasing Mo Yan’s novel	33	338
		90	Sexual relations between Jinlong and Kangmei	36	365–366
		91	Criticism of Yingchun sweeping the snow	37	373
		92	<b>Government officers’ corruption and prostitution</b>	41	395–396
		93	Ximen Dog’s excellent sense of smell	41	396
		94	Qiansui explains his talents to Jiefang	41	402
	Lan Jiefang	95	<b>Jiefang questions the brutality of piercing ox’s nose</b>	20	181
		96	Jiefang questions the killing of ox	20	186
		97	Jiefang comments on the road’s condition	38	381–382
		98	Jiefang defends his promotion	40	388
		99	<b>Jiefang mocks Mo Yan’s writing</b>	40	389
		100	Jiefang explains Chunmiao’s previous visits	40	391
		101	Jiefang speaks highly of Chunmiao	40	391
Descriptive texts	Item	102	The alcohol Jinlong drinks	27	261
		103	<b>Radio</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>308</b>
		104	Radio	31	308
	Social environment	105	Branch catering team	20	178
		106	Advertisement on street	38	377
		107	<b>Jiefang’s home and street seen through his telescope</b>	44	420–421
		108	Children riding bicycle	44	422
		109	Street scene when Hezuo waits for Chunmiao	45	426
		110	Heavy rain	49	459
		111	Morning after the rain	49	465–466
		112	Street after flood	50	471
	Landscape	113	Days grow warmer	20	176
		114	Sunflowers around the pigsty	22	202
		115	Sandbar	33	326
		116	<b>Sandbar and the moon</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>326</b>
Embedded text	117	<b>Jingle about independent farming</b>	13	99–100	
	118	Ballad about independent farming	16	122	
	119	<b>Jingle about Lan Jiefang</b>	25	236	
Lengthy passages containing multiple omission types		120	<b>Villagers’ reactions to Lan Jiefang going crazy + Lan Qiansui’s comments</b>	27	259–260

	121	<b>Lan Qiansui's comments on Jiefang and Jinlong + the interaction between 'Mo Yan' and Ximen Pig</b>	27	266–268
	122	<b>The description of the moon + quarrel between Diao Xiaosan and Ximen pig + <i>Pole vaulting to the moon</i> + Diao's getting injured while stealing the apricot.</b>	28	272–278
	123	Description of the scenery + Qiansui mocks Jiefang and 'Mo Yan'	32	319–320
	124	<b>Details of TV program + the conversation between Qiansui and Jiefang + Qiansui's narrating of Jinlong and Hong Taiyue's debates</b>	33	328–330
	125	Ximen Pig's feelings on seeing Diao's body + Lan Qiansui talking about writing	35	361
	126	Detailed description of Chunmiao's previous visits + Lan Jiefang's monologue + Chunmiao getting dressed	40	392
	127	The details of the dogs' world + Ximen dog accompanying Kaifang to school	41	397–398
	128	Hezuo cleans the toilet + Kaifang's thoughtfulness consideration	49	459–462

## APPENDIX TWO – OMITTED CHINESE TEXTS IN EACH EXAMPLE

### Example 1:

金龙在他们结婚时大宴宾客的地方摆上了一张桌子，点燃一盏马灯，将收音机放在桌子正中，选择了一个声音最响亮、音质最清楚的台，让猪场的男男女女围拢观赏、听音。这玩意儿是一个长五十厘米、宽三十厘米、高三十五厘米的长方形的大家伙。正面是一层金灿灿的绒布，绒布上有一个红灯商标，壳子看上去像一种棕色的硬木。做工精致，造型优美，看到的人都想上前去摸摸。但谁敢上前去摸？

(Mo Yan, 2006, p. 308)

### Example 2:

我手持望远镜趴在窗口，开始了习以为常的功课。我头脑里有准确的时间表。县城的南部那时还没有高大的建筑物，视线通达，如果愿意，我可以把天花广场上那些晨练的老人的面孔拉到眼前。我先把望远镜对准了天花胡同。天花胡同一号，是我家的门牌号码。大门紧闭。门上有我儿子的敌人用粉笔画上的图案和标语。左边是一个龇牙咧嘴的男孩，半边脸涂白了，半边脸虚着，两条细胳膊举到头顶，仿佛是在投降，两条细腿叉开，中间有一个大得不成比例的生殖器，生殖器下一道白线，直画到大门底部，这肯定是尿液了。右边的门板上画着一个眼大如铃铛、嘴巴咧成月牙状、头角上翘着两根小辫子的女孩。她也是两条细胳膊举到双肩上方，两条细腿叉开，中间有一条白线直画到大门底部。男孩图案左侧写着三个歪歪扭扭的大字：蓝开放；女孩图案右侧写着三个歪歪扭扭的大字：庞凤凰。我明白这图画作者的意思。我儿子与庞抗美的女儿是同班同学，庞凤凰是他的班长。我的脑海里一一闪过春苗、庞虎、王乐云、庞抗美、常天红、西门金龙等人的脸，心中乱成一堆垃圾。

我把镜头略抬，天花胡同猛然缩短，天花广场收入眼底。喷泉休歇着，一群乌鸦在周围抢夺食物。那是些残缺不全的仿佛火腿肠的东西。我听不到乌鸦噪叫的声音，但我知道它们在噪叫。只要有一只乌鸦叼着食物飞起来，便会有十几只乌鸦奋勇地冲上去。它们在空中厮打成一团，被啄掉的羽毛在空中飘动，犹如为死人祭奠时烧化的纸灰。地上散乱着一大片啤酒瓶子，有一个戴着白帽子、大口罩、手持大扫帚的环卫女工正为了这些瓶子与一个拖着蛇皮袋子捡破烂的老头争执。环卫部门归我管，我知道捡卖废品是女工们的一大收入来源，而废品当中，利润最高的就是啤酒瓶子。那个捡破烂的老头每往蛇皮袋里装一只啤酒瓶子，那个环卫女工就用扫帚扑他一下。劈头盖脸地扑。每挨一下扑，捡垃圾老头就站起来提着一只酒瓶对那女工冲去，女工拖着扫帚便跑。老头也不真追，回去，蹲下，赶紧往袋子里装酒瓶，女工又举着扫帚冲上来。这情景让我想起从电视里看到的“动物世界”，捡垃圾的老头像一头狮子，而环卫女工像一匹鬣狗。

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 420–421)

### Example 3:

我沿着河堤顶部那条虽然狭窄但十分平坦的道路西行。河堤的南边是广阔的原野，河堤的北边是连绵起伏的红柳丛。河堤两边的斜坡上，生长着枯瘦的紫穗槐，紫穗槐上爬满疯狂的瓜蒌藤蔓，藤蔓上白花簇簇，散发着类似丁香的沉闷香气。

月亮当然很好，但与我对你重墨浓彩地描绘过的那两个月亮相比，这一晚上的月亮高高在上，显得有点心不在焉。它不再降低高度、变化颜色陪伴我，追逐我，而像一个坐在高辕的马车上、头上戴着插满羽毛的帽子、脸上罩着洁白的面纱、匆匆赶路的贵妇。

到达蓝脸那一亩六分顽固土地时，我立住了追赶着月亮匆匆西行的蹄爪。

(Mo Yan, 2006, p. 326)

(Example 4 is Chapter 5, p. 126)

Example 5:

公路笔直宽阔；路旁花树葱茏；路上车辆稀少；小胡开车贼猛。小车像插上翅膀一样飞起来了。我感到不是小车插上翅膀飞起来而是我肋间生出双翅飞起来了。我看到道旁的花木纷纷向后倒去，又纷纷往下落去，我感到公路像一道黑色的墙壁缓缓地竖了起来，路边的大河也跟着竖了起来。我们就沿着那直通天际的黑色道路往上爬行，而身边的大河之水犹如巨大瀑布飞泻而下……

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 437–438)

Example 6:

充当房笆的高粱秸秆也是新鲜产物，汁液未枯，散发着酸甜的气味，嚼起来味道肯定很好。但这是我的屋，我不会为了满足口腹之欲而自拆房屋，但咬一截尝尝滋味也不是不可以。我可以轻松地直立，仅用两条后腿支撑身体，像人一样行走，但这一手绝活，要尽量地保守秘密。我预感到自己降生在一个空前昌盛的猪时代，在人类的历史上，猪的地位从来没有如此高贵，猪的意义从来没有如此重大，猪的影响从来没有如此深远，将有成千成亿的人，在领袖的号召下，对猪顶礼膜拜。我想在猪时代的鼎盛期，不少人会产生来世争取投胎为猪的愿望，更有许多人生出人不如猪的感慨。我预感到生正逢时，从这个意义上想阎王老子也没亏待我。我要在猪的时代里创造奇迹，但目前时机尚未成熟，还要装愚守拙，韬光养晦，抓紧时机，强壮筋骨，增加肌肉，锻炼身体，磨炼意志，等待着那火红的日子到来。因此，人立行走的奇技，决不能轻易示人，我预感到此技必有大用，为了不致荒疏，我在夜深人静时坚持练习。

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 206–207)

Example 7:

我轻轻地拍着那半边蓝脸，自己骂自己：丑八怪！自信心顷刻间就要土崩瓦解。油然想起莫言那厮分明是为取悦于我而信口胡编的话：老兄，您这张脸，半边关云长，半边窦尔墩，绝对阳刚，少妇杀手。明知他胡言乱语，但自信慢慢恢复。好几次仿佛听到清脆的脚步声从走廊那头由远而近，慌忙开门相迎，但看到的总是空空的走廊。

(Mo Yan, 2006, p. 406)

Example 8:

“好了，别发疯了。为我这样一个女人，不值得毁了自己的前程，”庞凤凰也许是想冲淡一下压抑的气氛，便用玩笑的口吻说，“要想我嫁给你，除非你的蓝脸变白。”

正所谓“言者无意，听者有心”，对那种爱到人魔程度的男人，可不敢乱开玩笑。读者诸君一定记得《聊斋志异·阿宝》中那个名叫孙子楚的书生，只为了阿宝小姐一句戏言，便毅然剃去自己的辮指。后又身化鸚鵡，飞到阿宝的床头。几经生死后，终与阿宝结为夫妇。

阿宝故事以美好的结局告终，亲爱的读者，我的故事，却没有这么美好。还是那句老话：这不是我的情愿，这是他们的命运使然。

(Mo Yan, 2006, p. 535)

Example 9:

扎好了鼻环后，他们把你拖到了田野里。春天的大地万物复苏，处处洋溢着生命的气息。西门牛啊，我的朋友，你在这美好的季节里，表演了一场悲壮的戏剧，你的倔强，你忍受肉体痛苦的能力，你宁死不屈的精神，在当时令人们啧啧称奇，你的故事，至今还在西门屯民众口中流传。我们这些人，当时就感到你不可思议，直到今天，他们依然感到你是一个传奇，即便是知道了你的奇特身世的我，也感到你的行为超出了我的理解能力，你完全可以奋起抗争啊，用你伟岸的身躯，用你蕴藏在那全身的筋骨肌肉中的力量，像你在西门大院大闹人社典礼那次那样，像你在河滩地里怒顶胡宾那次那样，像你在集市上大闹批斗会那样，把妄图役使你的人，那些人民公社的社员，一个个顶起来，使他们轻飘飘地飞起，沉重地落下，在春天暄腾腾的土地里，砸出一个又一个深坑。使那些凶狠残忍的人，骨头断裂，内脏震动，嘴巴里发出青蛙一样的叫声，就算金龙是你的儿子，但那也是你为驴为牛之前的往事，六道轮回之中，多少人吃了父亲，多少人又奸了自己的母亲，你何必那么认真？又何况，金龙是那样的变态，那样的凶狠，他把自己政治上的失意，被监督劳动的怨恨，全部变本加厉地发泄到了你的身上，就算他不知道你曾经是他的亲生父亲，不知者不怪罪，但对待一头牛，也不能那样的凶狠啊！西门牛啊，我不忍心对你描述他施加到你身上的暴行，你已经在牛世之后又轮回了四次，阴阳界里穿梭往来，许多细节也许都已经忘记，但那日的情景我牢记不忘，假如那日的整个过程是一株枝繁叶茂的大树，我不但记得住这株树的主要枝杈，连每一根细枝，连每一片树叶都没有忘记。西门牛，你听我说，我必须说，因为这是发生过的事情，发生过的事情就是历史，复述历史给遗忘了细节的当事者听，是我的责任。

那天你一到地头，就卧在了地上。

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 181–182)

Example 10:

“小子，”刁小三咬牙切齿地说，“咱们俩的事还没完。总有一天，我要让你知道沂蒙山猪的厉害。我要让你知道老虎是从来不吃窝窝头的，我还要让你知道土地爷的鸡巴是石头的。”

关于土地爷鸡巴的问题，可以从莫言那小子的小说《新石头记》里寻找答案，那小子在这篇小说里描写了一个膝下无子的石匠，为了积德行善，用一块坚硬的青石，雕刻了一座土地爷的神像，安放在村头的土谷祠里。土地爷系用石头雕成，土地爷的鸡巴作为土地爷身上一个器官，自然也是石头的。第二年，石匠的妻子就为石匠生了一个肥头大耳的男婴。村子里的人都说石匠是善有善报。石匠的儿子长大后，成了一个性格暴躁的匪徒，他打爹骂娘，行同禽兽。当石匠拖着一条被儿子用棍棒打断的残腿在大街上爬行时，人们心中不由得感慨万千，世事变幻莫测，所谓善恶报应之事，也是一笔难以说清的糊涂账。

对于刁小三的威胁，我一笑置之。

(Mo Yan, 2006, p. 224)

#### Example 11:

凤凰是庞抗美和常天红的女儿。我知道凤凰实际上是西门金龙的种子，播种的地点是杏园里那棵著名的浪漫树下。杏花盛开月光皎洁的时候，西门金龙将时任公社党委书记的庞抗美顶在杏树干上，把我们西门家的基因优良的种子播进高密县第一美人的子宫。据莫言那小子的小说所说，当金龙撩起庞抗美的裙子时，庞抗美双手扯住了金龙的耳朵，低沉但是严厉地说：我是党委书记！金龙把她的身体用力挤压到树干上，说：干得就是你这个书记，别人用金钱贿赂你，我用鸡巴贿赂你！然后庞抗美就瘫软了。杏花如雪，落在他们身上。二十年后，庞凤凰成为绝代美人是无奈的事：种好地好，播种时的环境充满诗情画意，她不美，天理难容！

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 365–366)

#### Example 12:

什么事都瞒不了我的鼻子——大头儿蓝千岁目光炯炯地说。

他的神情和眼色使我意识到，此刻，不是庞凤凰生养的那个与我的关系复杂得无法称谓的异秉孩子在跟我说话，而是我家那条死去多年的狗在跟我说话。

什么都瞒不了我的鼻子，他自信地说，1989年夏天，你到驴镇去，名为检查工作，实则与你那几个铁哥们儿——驴镇书记金斗宦、驴镇镇长鲁太鱼、驴镇供销社主任柯里顿一起吃喝玩乐打扑克。每到周末县里的干部大半都窜到乡下去吃喝玩乐打扑克。我从你手上闻到了金、鲁、柯的气味，这些人到咱们家里来过，在我头脑中那个气味储存库里，存有他们的档案。一嗅到气味我马上就想到了他们的相貌、声音，你能瞒得了老婆孩子但你瞒不了我。你们中午吃了运粮河里的甲鱼，吃了当地名产黄焖鸡，还吃了蝉的幼虫与蚕蛹，还有许多乱七八糟的东西我懒得一一叙说。这些都无关紧要，重要的是，我从你裆里嗅到了一股腥冷的精液气味与橡胶避孕套的气味。这说明，你们在酒足饭饱之后，去找小姐“打炮”了。驴镇濒临大河，物产丰富，风景优美，沿河一字排开数十家酒店、发廊，其间有许多美色女子半公开地从事古老的职业，这事儿，你们都心照不宣。我是一条狗，不负责“扫黄”问题，我把你这件风流事儿抖搂出来的目的是想说明，即便与你有过性关系的女人，她的气味也是浮在你的基本气味外边，你认真地洗上一个澡，往身上喷洒点香水，就基本上可以把她的气味清除或者掩盖，

但是这一次却不同，这一次你身上没有精液气味，也没有她的体液气味，但分明有一股极其清新的气味与你这个人的基本气味发生了混合，使你的基本气味从此发生了变化。于是我就明白了，你与这个女人之间，已经产生了深刻的爱情，这爱情渗入了你们彼此的血液、骨髓，无论什么样的力量，也难把你们分开了。

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 395–396)

Example 13:

金龙从大门西侧那个用玉米秸子做屏障的临时公共厕所出来，双手扣着裤扣，脸上沐浴着红太阳的光辉。白雪覆盖的房顶，炊烟袅袅上升。墙头上羽毛华丽的大公鸡和羽毛朴素的老母鸡，夹着尾巴跑过的狗，场面朴实又庄严，正是说话的好时机。我急忙迎上去，挡住他的去路。他吃了一惊，厉声道：你想干什么？我张口结舌，耳朵发烧，哼唧了半天，从牙缝里艰难地挤出一个“哥”字——打我跟着爹单干后这还是第一次这样称呼他——我支支吾吾地说：哥……我想加入你的红卫兵……我想演那个叛徒王连举……我知道这个角色没人愿演，人们宁愿演鬼子，也不愿演叛徒。他眉毛上扬，把我从头看到脚，又从脚看到头，用极蔑视的口吻说：你没有资格！……为什么？我急了，说，为什么连吕秃子和程小头都可以演鬼子兵，为什么连莫言都可以演小特务，我反倒没有资格？——吕秃子是雇农子弟，程小头的爹被还乡团活埋了，莫言家虽是中农，但他奶奶掩护过八路军伤病员，你是单干户！知道不？哥说，单干户比地主富农还要反动，地主富农都老老实实在地接受改造，单干户却公然地与人民公社对抗。与人民公社对抗就是与社会主义对抗，与社会主义对抗就是与共产党对抗，与共产党对抗就是与毛主席对抗，与毛主席对抗就是死路一条！墙上的雄鸡撕肝裂胆地长啼一声，吓得我几乎尿了裤子。哥四下里看看，见远近无人，压低了声音对我说：平南县也有一家单干户，运动初起时，被贫下中农吊在树上活活打死，家庭财产全部充公。你和爹，如果不是我变相保护，早就命丧黄泉了。你把这事悄悄跟爹说，让他那榆木脑袋开开缝，抓紧时间，牵牛入社，融入集体大家庭，让爹把罪行全部推到刘少奇头上，受蒙蔽无罪，反戈一击有功。如再执迷不悟，顽抗到底，那就是螳螂挡车，自取灭亡。告诉爹，让他游街示众，那是最温柔的行动，下一步，等群众觉悟了，我也就无能为力了。如果革命群众要把你们俩吊死，我也只能大义灭亲。看到大杏树上那两根粗枝了吗？离地约有三米，吊人再合适不过。这些话我早就想对你说，一直找不到机会，现在我对你说了，请你转告爹，入了社天宽地阔，皆大欢喜，人欢喜牛也欢喜，不入社寸步难行，天怒人怨。说句难听的，你如果继续跟着爹单干，只怕连个老婆也找不到，那些瘸腿瞎眼的，也不愿嫁给一个单干户。

哥一席长谈，让我胆战心惊，用当时流行的话说，是深深地触及了我的灵魂。我望望杏树上那两根向东南方向伸展开的粗枝，脑海里立即浮现出我与爹——两个蓝脸——被吊在上边的凄惨景象。我们的身体被拉得很长，在寒风中悠来荡去，脱了水，失去了大部分重量，犹如两根干瘪的大丝瓜……

我到牛棚去找爹。

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 168–169)

Example 14:

看到金龙来到，众人齐声道：好了，好了！解铃还需系铃人。既然金龙能把这头野猪从沂蒙山拉来，就有办法把它从汽车底下弄出来。洪泰岳递给金龙一支烟，并亲自为他点着火。书记敬烟，高级礼遇，非同小可。金龙嘴唇发白，眼圈发青，头发凌乱，看上去十分疲惫。这次沂蒙山购猪，他劳苦功高，在社员中树立了威信，并重新赢得了洪书记的信任。书记的敬烟，看来也让他受宠若惊。他将抽了半截的香烟放在一块砖头上——那烟随即就被莫言捡了去抽——脱掉那件已经褪色发白、肩膀和袖口都打了补丁的旧军装，显出一件紫红色的翻领运动衫，胸前用白漆印着“井冈山”三个毛体大字，把袖子捋上去，弯腰就要往车下钻。洪泰岳一把拉住他，说：“金龙，不要蛮干，这头猪，基本上是疯了。我不希望你伤了它，更不希望它伤了你。你与它，都是我们西门屯大队的宝贵财富。”

金龙蹲下身，往车下张望着。他捡起一块沾满白霜的瓦片掷进去，我猜想那刁小三一张口就咬住了那瓦片，“喀嘣喀嘣”嚼碎，小眼睛凶光四射，让人不寒而栗。

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 214–215)

Example 15:

你老婆当真烙起葱花饼来。她和面。她竟然和了像半个枕头那样大一块面，她是不是要让你儿子的全班同学都吃上她烙的葱花饼呢？她揉面，瘦削的肩膀耸动着揉面，“打出来的老婆揉到的面”，这是说，老婆是越打越贤惠，面是越揉越筋道。她的汗水流出来了，肩胛后的褂子湿了两片。她的眼泪时流时断——有恼恨的泪水，有悲伤的泪水，有回忆往事感慨万千的泪水——有的落在她的胸襟上，有的滴在她的手背上，有的砸在柔软的面团上。面团越来越软，一股甜丝丝的味道散发出来。她往面团里掺上干面再揉。她有时会低沉地呜咽出声，但马上就会用袖子把哭声堵回去。她的脸上沾着面粉，显得又滑稽又可怜。有时她会停下活儿，垂着两只沾满面粉的手，在厢房里转来转去，好像在寻找什么东西。有一次她脚下一滑，一屁股坐在地上——这是绿豆惹的祸——她怔怔地坐在地上，目光直直的，仿佛在盯着墙上的壁虎，然后她使用手掌拍打着地面，呜呜地哭起来。哭一阵，她站起来，继续揉面。揉一会面，她将那些剁得稀碎的葱和油条收拢到一个搪瓷盆里，倒上油，想一会，又放上盐，又想，又抓起油瓶子往里倒油。我知道，这个女人的脑子已经混乱不堪了。她一手端着瓷盆，一手持筷子，搅拌着，在屋里又转起圈子来，目光东张西望，仿佛在寻找什么东西。地面上的绿豆又把她滑倒了。这一下跌得更惨，她几乎仰面朝天躺在了坚硬光滑冰凉的水磨石地面上，但奇迹般地她手中的瓷盆竟然没有脱手，非但没有脱手，而且还保持着平衡。

我就要纵身前去搭救她时，她已经缓慢地将上半身抬起来。她没有站起来，还是坐着，悲哀地，像个小女孩似的哭了几声，便戛然而止。她用屁股往前蹭着，蹭了一下后，又连续蹭了两下，因为屁股的残缺，每一次蹭动之后她的身体就要往左后方大幅度倾斜。但她手中盛着馅儿的瓷盆却始终保持着平衡。她探身往前，将瓷盆放在案板上，身体又猛地往左后方仰了。她没有站起来，平伸着双腿，上身前倾，头几乎低垂到膝盖，好像在练一种奇怪的气功。夜已经很深了，月亮已经升到最高点并且发出了最强的光辉。西邻家那架老挂钟夜深人静时的报时声惊心动魄，距离我们群狗大会只有一小时了。我听到许多狗已经聚集在天花广场喷泉边，还有许多狗，正沿着大街



小巷往那里汇合。我有些焦虑，但我不忍离去，我生怕这女人在厨房里干出什么蠢事。我嗅到了那条麻绳子在墙角的纸箱子里放出的气味，我嗅到了煤气从那胶皮管接口处极其微弱的泄露，我还嗅到了墙角用油纸袋层层包裹的一瓶“敌敌畏”，这些，都可以致人死地。当然她还可以用菜刀切腕、抹脖子，用手摸电闸，用头撞墙，她还可以掀开院中那口水井上的水泥盖板一头扎下去。总之，有许多的理由让我不去主持这次圆月例会。羊脸与结伴同行的郭红福家的俄罗斯尖嘴在大门外呼喊我，并用爪子轻轻地敲门。俄罗斯尖嘴娇滴滴地说：“会长哎，我们等你啦。”我压低嗓门告诉它们：“你们先去，我这里有要事难脱身，如果我实在不能按时赶到，就让马副会长主持。”——马副会长是肉联厂马厂长家养的一条黑背狼犬，狗随主姓。它们一边调着情，一边沿天花胡同南下。我继续观察着你的妻子。

她终于抬起了头。她先把身体周围的绿豆用手掌收拢起来，然后，坐着，用单侧屁股艰难地蹭着，把地面上的绿豆收拢起来。她把绿豆拢成一堆，尖尖的一堆，宛如一个精巧的坟墓。她盯着这绿豆坟墓，发一会儿呆，脸上又挂了泪。她猛然抓起一把绿豆扬出去，又扬了一把，绿豆在厢房里飞舞，有的碰撞到墙壁上，有的碰撞到冰箱上，有的落在面缸里。屋子里响了两阵，犹如冰霰落在枯叶上。她抛撒了两把便停止了。撩起衣襟，彻底地擦干了脸，探身将簸箕拖过来，将那堆绿豆，一捧一捧地捧进去。她将簸箕推到一边，困难地站起来，走到案板前，又揉了几把面，又搅了几下馅，然后便撕开面团，制作馅饼。她把平底锅放到灶上。她拧开煤气打着火。

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 411–413)

#### Example 16:

你儿子哭着说：“妈妈，回家，看你淋成什么样子了……”

傻儿子，哭什么？下这么大的雨，高兴还来不及呢！”你妻子把雨伞推回到你儿子头上，说，“好久好久没下这么大的雨了，自从我们搬进县城还没下过这么大的雨，真好，我们的院子，从来没这么干净过。”你妻子指指厕所，指指房顶上那些亮晶晶的瓦片，指指那像黑鱼的脊背一样的甬道，指指那些黑油油的梧桐树叶，兴奋地说，“不光我们家干净了，县城里千家万户都干净了，没有这场好雨，这座城就臭了，就烂了。”

我叫了两声，表示对你妻子意见的赞同。你妻子说：“你听听，下大雨，不但妈妈高兴，连我们的狗都高兴。”

你妻子把你儿子推进屋去。我与你儿子，一个站在正房门口，一个蹲在厢房门口，看着她站在院子正中甬路上清洗身体。她命令你儿子关了房檐下的灯，院子随即沉入黑暗，但一道道闪电还是不断地照亮你妻子的身体。她用一块被雨水泡胀了的绿色香皂，往头发上和身体上涂抹着。然后她就搓揉，丰富的泡沫使她的头庞大无比，院子里洋溢着肥皂的香草气味。雨点越来越稀疏，雨打万物的声音减弱，街道上流水哗哗，闪电过后，隆隆的雷声滚来。微风刮过，梧桐树上积存的雨水像瀑布般落下。你妻子用井台边的水桶里和脸盆里的积水冲洗干净身体。每一次闪电亮起我都能看到她那残疾的屁股和那些黑森森的毛发。

你妻子终于进了门。

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 461–462)

Example 17:

导演把剧情大概给我们讲了讲。说的是这个外号“蓝脸”的土匪，杆子被打散后一个人逃进了深山。解放军知道他是孝子，便做通了他妹妹和他母亲的工作，让他母亲诈死，让他妹妹进山报信。“蓝脸”闻讯下山，披麻戴孝扑进母亲的灵堂，混杂在前来帮忙的乡亲们群中的解放军一拥而上，将“蓝脸”按倒在地，这时，他的母亲从棺材里坐起来，说：儿子啊，解放军优待俘虏，你投降！——明白了吗？导演问我们。明白了，我们说。导演说，眼下大雪封山，没法拍外景，你就把自己想象成一个土匪，潜逃外地多日，突闻母亲死讯，然后不顾一切回来奔丧。能不能找到感觉？让我试试看。给他换上孝服。几个女人从一堆散发着霉味的旧服装中翻一件白袍子披在我的身上，又找了一顶孝帽子扣在我的头上，腰问又给我捆上了一道麻绳。春苗问：导演，我的戏怎么演？导演说，你就把他想成你亲哥就行了。我问导演：是不是还需要一支枪？导演道：你不说我还忘了，这“蓝脸”是个双枪将呢。道具道具，弄两支枪给他插到腰里。还是那几个帮我穿孝服的女人，弄来两支木头手枪插到我的腰里。春苗问：我要不要穿孝服？导演说：给她也换上孝服。

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 493–494)

Example 18:

“老大，小四，你们哥俩儿，有多少年没有见面了呢？让我算算……”迎春掰起指头，数着，“一年，两年，三年……啊呀呀，你们八年没有见面了啊，狗八年，等于人的大半辈子啊……”

“可不是怎么着，”一直得不到说话机会的黄瞳说，“狗活二十年，等于人活一百岁。”

我们碰碰鼻子，互相舔舔面颊，然后用脖子互相摩擦，用肩膀互相碰撞，表达我们久别重逢的欢欣和感慨。

(Mo Yan, 2006, p. 441)

Example 19:

“奶奶的，吴秋香，真能顺着竿儿爬啊，”杨七有几分无奈地说，“那就‘小老虎’！”

孙龙孙虎兄弟交换了眼神，孙虎道：“哥，杨大老板的主意，听上去可真不赖。”

孙龙有些结巴地说：“我好像看到那些人民币，树叶子一样，从天上哗啦哗啦地往下落呢。”

“二位兄弟，”杨七道，“刘玄德为什么要抬着礼物三顾茅庐请那诸葛亮？他是吃饱了闲着没事干吗？不，他是去请教安邦定国之策。诸葛亮一席话给刘玄德指明了方向，从此天下三分。老杨我这番话，对你们二位，就是一次隆中对！将来发大了，别忘了谢军师！”

“买大锅，盖厂房，雇工人，把买买做大，可是，钱在哪里？”孙虎道。

“找金龙帮你们贷款呀！”杨七一拍大腿，道，“想当初金龙在这杏树上搭平台闹革命时，你们哥儿四个，可是他的忠实走狗啊。”

“老杨，什么话一到你嘴里就变了味了，什么‘忠实走狗’？那叫‘亲密战友’！”孙虎道。  
“好好好，亲密战友，”杨七道，“反正，你们兄弟，在他面前还是有面子的。”

“老杨，”孙龙巴结着问，“这贷款，终归是要还的？赚了，当然好，赔了呢？拿什么还？”

“你们真是猪脑子！”杨七道，“共产党的钱，不花白不花。赚了，咱想还他们也许不要；赔了，他要咱们没钱。再说了，这‘红’牌辣椒酱，注定了是要往死里发的一个牌子，除非你炒辣椒时不烧柴火烧人民币，否则，往哪里赔？”

“那就求金龙帮咱们贷款？”孙虎问。

“贷。”孙龙答。

“贷到款就买大锅、招工人、盖房子、做广告？”

“买、招、盖、做！”

“这就对了！你们这两个榆木脑袋终于开了窍了！”杨七拍着大腿说，“二位老板盖厂房所需的木料，老哥负责供应。井冈山毛竹，坚韧挺直，百年不腐，价钱只有杉木檩条的一半，是真正的价廉物美，你们盖二十间厂房，用檩条四百根，如果用毛竹，每根少说也便宜三十元，仅这一笔，我就给你们省下一万二千元！”

“绕了这么一个大圈子，原来是卖毛竹啊！”孙虎道。

吴秋香提着两瓶“小老虎”、捏着两盒“良友”烟走过来，互助右手端着一盘黄瓜蒜泥拌猪耳朵，左手端着一盘油炸花生米随后跟着。吴秋香将酒噉在桌上，将烟放在杨七面前，嘲讽道：“不必害怕，这两盘菜，是我送给孙家兄弟下酒的，不算在你账上。”

“吴老板，瞧不起老杨？”杨七拍拍鼓鼓囊囊的衣兜，说，“老杨大钱不趁，但吃盘黄瓜的钱还是有的。”

“知道你有钱，”秋香道，“但这两盘菜是我巴结孙家兄弟的，你们这‘红’牌辣椒酱我看能火。”

互助微笑着，将那两盘菜放在孙家兄弟面前。他们慌忙站起来，忙不迭地说：“嫂子，还麻烦您亲自动手……”

“闲着没事，过来帮个手……”互助微笑着说。

“老板娘，别光照顾大老板啊，也招呼一下我们啊！”那一桌上，伍元捏着那张用塑料套了膜的简易菜谱，扇打着一只白色的飞蛾说，“我们点菜。”

“你们自己喝着，一定要喝足，别给他省酒钱，”秋香为孙家兄弟斟满杯，斜着一眼杨七，说，“我过去招呼一下那些坏蛋。”

“这些坏蛋，吃尽了苦头，也该着他们过几年人日子啦。”杨七道。

“地主、富农、伪保长、叛徒、反革命……”吴秋香指点着桌子周围那些人，半玩笑半认真地说，“西门屯的坏蛋，差不多全齐了，怎么？你们聚会，想干什么？想造反？”

“老板娘，别忘了，你也是恶霸地主的小老婆呢！”

“我跟你们不一样。”

“什么一样不一样，”伍元道，“你说那些称号，那些黑帽子，铁帽子，晦气帽子，都是过去的事了。我们现在，跟大家一样，是堂堂正正的人民公社社员呢！”

余五福道：“摘帽一年了。”

张大壮道：“不受管制了。”

田贵还是有几分胆怯地往杨七那边瞅了一眼，低声道：“不挨藤条抽啦。”

“今天是我们摘帽、恢复公民身份一周年，对我们这些受了三十多年管制的人来说，是大喜的日子，”伍元道，“我们聚在一起，喝两盅，不敢说是庆祝，就是喝两盅……”

余五福眨巴着发红的眼睛，说：“做梦也没有想到的事情，做梦也没想到……”

田贵眼里夹着泪说：“……我那孙子，去年冬天竟然当了解放军，是解放军啊……过春节时，金龙书记亲手把‘光荣人家’的牌子挂在我家门口……”

“感谢英明领袖华主席啊！”张大壮说。

“老板娘，”伍元道，“我们这些人，都是草包肚子，吃什么什么香，你就照量着给我们置办上点就行了，我们都是吃了晚饭来的，肚子不饿……”

“是该好好庆祝庆祝，”秋香道，“按道理说，我也算是地主婆呢，但幸亏我跟着黄瞳沾了光。另外，说千道万，咱们老洪书记是个好人，搁在别村，我和迎春都逃脱不了。我们三个，就苦了他们大娘……”

“娘，你唠叨这些干什么呀！”端着茶壶茶碗的互助从背后蹭了一下秋香，笑脸对着那些人，道：

“各位大叔、大伯，先喝茶！”

“你们信得过我，我就替你们做主啦。”秋香道。

“信得过，信得过。”伍元道，“互助，你是书记夫人，亲自给我们端茶倒水，倒回四十年去，做梦也不敢想。”

“哪还用倒回四十年？”张大壮嘟哝着，“倒回两年去也不敢想……”

我说了这么久，你要不要说两句？发几句牢骚？发几点感慨？大头儿道。我摇摇头，道：解放无言。

蓝解放，我对你不厌其烦地描绘那个夜晚西门家大院的情景，向你转述我作为一头猪听到的和看到的，其目标是要引出一个人，一个重要的人，洪泰岳。

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 332–335)

Example 20:

当时社会治安确实不好，一是说县城内游荡着六个从南方来的女人贩子，俗称“拍婆子”，她们化装成卖花的、卖糖果的、卖彩色鸡毛毽子的，她们身上藏着一种迷药，见了漂亮孩子，在脑门上拍一掌，那孩子就痴了，跟着她们乖乖地走了。还有就是工

商银行行长胡兰青的儿子被绑匪绑架，要价二百万，不敢报案，最后花了一百八十万才赎回。你儿子拍拍自己的蓝脸说：拍婆子专拍漂亮男孩，我这样的，跟着她们去她们也会把我赶走。如果有绑匪，你一个女人管什么用？你又不能跑——你儿子瞅着你老婆的半边残臀说。

(Mo Yan, 2006, p. 399)

Example 21:

按说，作为一条狗我就不能跟进书店，但庞春苗给了我这个特权。新华书店是县城最冷清的商品交易场所，只有三个女售货员，两个中年妇女，一个庞春苗。那两个中年妇女对庞春苗十分巴结，原因不说自明。莫言那小子是书店少有的几个常客，他把这里当做卖弄的场所。他自我吹嘘，不知是发自内心呢还是胡乱调侃。他喜欢把成语说残，借以产生幽默效果，“两小无猜”他说成“两小无——”，“一见钟情”他说成“一见钟——”；“狗仗人势”他说成“狗仗人——”。他一来庞春苗就乐了。庞春苗一乐那两个中年妇女就乐了。他那丑模样用他的言语方式说那可真叫“惨不忍——”，但就是这样“惨不忍——”的一个人，竟让高密县气味最美好的姑娘喜欢他。究其原因，依然是气味，莫言的气味与那种烟农烘烤烟叶的泥巴屋里的的气味相仿，庞春苗是一个潜在的烟草爱好者。

(Mo Yan, 2006, p. 404)

Example 22:

我对第一排第一间猪舍中的那五头猪中最聪明的母猪蓝菜花说：

“告诉大家，不要害怕，我们的好日子来了！”

我对第二排第一间猪舍中那六头猪中最为阴险的阉猪野狼嚎说：

“告诉大家，不要害怕，我们的好日子来啦！”

我对第三排第一间猪舍中那五头猪中最美丽的小母猪蝴蝶迷说：

“告诉大家，不要害怕，我们的好日子来啦！”

(Mo Yan, 2006, p. 219)

Example 23:

“妈的，我让它们拖出一箱尝尝，可它们整出了二十多箱，明天，看仓库的老魏头要倒大霉了。”马副会长不无得意地说。

“马副会长，偶(我)敬你……你一杯……”小京巴媚态可掬地说。

“会长，这是玛丽，刚从京城来的。”马副会长指着京巴对我说。

“你的主人是谁？”我问。

京巴炫耀道：“偶(我)的主人是、是高密县城四大美人之一巩紫衣呀！”

“巩紫衣？”

“招待所长呀!”

“噢，是她。”

“玛丽聪明伶俐，善解人意，我看就让它给会长做秘书。”马副会长意味深长地说。

“再议。”我说。

我的冷淡态度显然使玛丽受了打击，它斜眼看着那些喷泉边狂饮暴吃的狗，不屑地说：

“你们高密狗，太野蛮了。我们北京狗，举行月光 party 时，一个个珠光宝气，轻歌曼舞，大家跳舞，谈艺术，如果喝，那也只喝一点红酒，或者冰水，如果吃，那也是用牙签插一根小香肠儿，吃着玩儿，哪像它们，你看那个黑毛白爪的家伙——”

我看到一个本地土狗，蹲在一边，面前摆着三瓶啤酒，三根火腿，一堆蒜瓣儿。它灌一日啤酒，啃一口火腿，然后用爪子夹起一瓣大蒜，准确地扔到口中。

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 415–416)

#### Example 24:

小四，我还以为这辈子再也见不到你了呢，我的大哥眼泪汪汪地说，你不知道我和你二哥有多么想念你们，想念你，想念你三姐。

二哥呢？我着急地问着，同时张大鼻孔，搜索它的信息。

你二哥家最近遇上了丧事，狗大哥同情地说，你还记得那个马良才？对，就是你家主人的姐夫，很好的一个人，吹吹，拉拉，写写，画画，样样都能拿起来，当着小学校长，挺好的一个美差，人民教师，谁不尊敬？可他偏要辞职去给西门金龙当副手。被县教育局不知哪个领导批评了几句，回家后心情郁闷，喝了几杯酒，说要出去撒尿，站起来，身体晃晃，一头栽倒，就这样死了。嗨，人生一世，草木一秋，我们狗，又何尝不是如此呢？我的大哥说，怎么，他们没把这消息告诉你家主人吗？

我的男主人，最近勾搭上了一个年轻姑娘，你猜是谁？就是三姐家主人的妹妹，回来要跟这一位，我用下巴指指在大院里手扶杏树与互助说话的合作，悄声说，离婚，这一位，差不多疯了，这几天刚缓过点劲儿来，你看她今天这模样，是专门回来断那蓝解放的后路的。

哼，果然是家家都有难念的经，狗大哥说，咱们当狗的，只能听主人调遣，为主人服务，这些麻烦事儿，不归我们管。你等着，我去叫老二，咱们哥仨好好聚聚。

何必大哥亲自去跑，我说，咱们狗类，不都有千里传音的本事吗？我仰起脖子，正要嗥叫，就听到大哥说，不必叫了，你二哥，已经来了。

我看到，从西方向，来了我的二哥和它家的女主人宝凤。狗二哥在前，宝凤在后。宝凤的身后，跟着一个身材瘦高的男孩。改革的气味从我记忆中浮上来，这小子，长得可真高。有人说我们狗眼看人低，呸，那是放屁。在我们眼里，高的自然高，低的必然低。

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 441–442)

### Example 25:

被绑住手脚的蓝解放身体扭动，身体里好像有巨大的能量在汹涌奔突，仿佛武侠小说中所描述的，那些吸入了别人超强内力而又无法容纳的武功低下者，其状痛苦万端，于是张开的嘴巴和嘴巴中发出的哀嚎就成了唯一的排泄通道。有人试图往他的嘴里注入一点凉水，借以浇灭他心中的邪火，但呛了他的喉咙，引起他剧烈的咳嗽。一股血，呈雾状，从他的嘴巴和鼻孔里喷出来。

“我的儿啊……”迎春嚎哭着晕了过去。

女人，有的可以坦然喝血，有的见血就晕。

正在此时，西门宝凤背着药箱匆匆而入。她有很好的医务工作者的气质，并不因为炕下躺着昏厥的母亲，炕上躺着喷血的弟弟而惊慌失措。她已经是经验丰富的“赤脚医生”。她脸色苍白，目光忧郁。她的手无论冬夏，都像冰一样凉。我知道她的内心也为情感所苦。她痛苦的病根就是那个“大叫驴”常天红，这是历史事实，我曾亲眼见到，莫言的小说里也有踪可寻。她打开箱子，拿出一个扁扁的铁盒，抽出一根闪闪发光的银针，对准迎春的“人中”穴，又准又狠地刺了一下，迎春呻吟了一声，睁开了眼睛。宝凤示意人们，将被捆绑成一捆树棍子模样的解放往炕边拖了拖。她既没摸他的脉，也没听他的心脏；没试他的体温也没量他的血压；仿佛一切俱在她的意料之中；仿佛她要治疗的不是蓝解放，而是她自己。她从药箱捏出两支安瓿，夹在手指的缝里，然后用镊子敲破，用针管吸光瓶中药液，将针管举起，对着明亮的电灯，推动针管，亮晶晶的水珠从针尖射出。这个画面很神圣很庄严很经典很常见，那些宣传画上，那些电影电视中，常常有这样的画面和镜头，干这种活儿的人被称为白衣天使，戴着白帽子穿着白大褂戴着大口罩瞪着大眼睛翻卷着长睫毛。在我们西门屯，西门宝凤不可能戴上白帽子大口罩，也不可能穿着白大褂，她穿着一件大翻领的蓝华达呢上衣，一件白衬衣的领子翻在蓝褂子的领上。这是当时的时尚，青年男女们总是突出表现层层叠叠的衣领，如果因为家贫买不起多层次的内衣，就买那种几毛钱一个的假领子。这个晚上宝凤的外衣里边穿着的确是衬衣而不是假领。她的苍白的脸色和忧郁眼神也很符合小说家笔下的正派人物肖像。她用酒精棉球，轻描淡写地擦了擦蓝解放的胳膊上那块发达的肌肉，一针扎下去，不到一分钟，注射完毕，针头拔出来。她注射的部位不是常见的屁股而是胳膊，这可能与蓝解放被人用绳子捆绑的特殊情况有关。对蓝解放这种因精神遭受强烈刺激，内心巨大痛苦的人而言，别说在他的胳膊上扎一针，即使卸去他一条胳膊，他也不会哼一声。

当然，这是俺极度夸张的说法。这样的说法，在当时的语境里，也算不上什么大话。当时的人，包括你蓝解放，不也是动不动就口出豪言壮语，什么“泰山压顶不弯腰”，什么“砍头只当风吹帽”，什么“粉身碎骨也心甘”吗？莫言那小子，更是说这种牛皮大话的行家里手。后来他成了所谓的作家之后，对这种语言现象有所反思。他说：“极度夸张的语言是极度虚伪的社会的反映，而暴力的语言是社会暴行的前驱。”

宝凤给你注射了安神镇静的药物之后，你慢慢地安静下来。

(Mo Yan, 2006, 259–260)

## Example 26:

第一个冲进发电机房的，不是洪泰岳，也不是迎春，而是黄家的互助。第二个跑进发电机房的，依然不是洪泰岳和迎春，而是莫言。虽然他被孙家的老三擒到一边受了些皮肉之苦，虽然他被洪泰岳冷嘲热讽，但他浑然不觉似的、从孙老三铁钳般的手指下挣脱之后，便一溜烟儿似的蹿进了机房。黄互助后脚刚进屋，他前脚便跨进了门槛。我知道那天晚上其实最受委屈的是合作，而处境最尴尬的是互助。她与金龙在那棵歪脖子老杏树上行浪漫之事，引发了解放的癫狂。在繁花似锦的树冠里做爱，本来是富有想象力的大美之事，但因为莫言这个讨厌鬼给搅得一塌糊涂。这人在高密东北乡实在是劣迹斑斑，人见人厌，但他却以为自己是人见人爱的好孩子呢！人闯入被月光照彻的机房，犹如青蛙跳入宁静明亮的池塘，一声响亮，激起了琼屑碎玉。黄互助一见躺在月光中、额头有血的金龙，情从心发，悲从中来，一时也就顾不上羞涩和矜持，宛如一匹护崽的母豹子，扑到金龙的身上……

“他喝了两瓶景芝白干，”莫言指点着地上的酒瓶子碎片说，“然后把柴油机油门按到最大，‘啪’，灯泡爆炸了。”在浓重的酒气和柴油气味中，莫言连说带比画，其状滑稽，像个手舞足蹈的小丑。“把他弄出去！”洪泰岳吼道，嗓子有破锣音。孙豹抹着他的脖子，使他几乎脚不点地出了机房。他还在解说，仿佛不把他看到的情景说出来就会憋死一样。你们说，人杰地灵的高密东北乡怎么会生出这样一个坏孩子？“然后‘啪’的一声闷响，马力带断了，”莫言被孙豹抹着脖子还忘不了补充细节，“马力带是从接口处断的，我估计，一定是接口处的铁销子抽到了他的脑袋上。当时，柴油机疯了，每秒转速八千圈，产生的力量大无边，没把他的脑浆子抽出来就是不幸之中之大幸！”听听，他竟然半文半白，仿佛一个饱读诗书的乡儒。“去你的‘之大幸’！”臂力过人的孙豹把莫言举起来，用力往前掷出。即使是在空中飞行这短暂的瞬间他的嘴巴里还是喋喋不休。

莫言跌落在我的面前。我以为会把这小子跌得支离破碎，没想到他打了一个滚就坐了起来。他在我面前放了一个长长的臭屁，令我好生烦恼。他对着孙豹的背影喊叫着：“孙老三，你不要以为我在编瞎话。我说的都是我亲眼所见，就算略有夸张，也总是八九不离十。”孙家老三根本不搭理他，他就转过脸对我说：“猪十六，你说我说得对不对？你别跟我装傻，我知道你是一头成了精的猪，你除了不会说人话，什么都会。洪书记说你能刻篆字图章——他用这讽刺我，我明白——其实，我知道刻个篆字图章根本难不住你，给你一套工具，我看你能修理手表。我早就注意你了。我在大队部值班时就发现了你的才华，我每天晚上大声朗读《参考消息》其实就是读给你听的。我们两个是心心相印的老朋友。我还知道，你的前世曾经是人，你与西门屯的人有千丝万缕的联系。我说得对不对？如果我说得对你就点点头。”我看着他那张肮脏的小脸上那种似乎洞察一切的狡猾表情，心中暗忖：可不能让这小子信口胡咧咧了。茅厕里说话，墙外有人听。如果让屯里人都知道了我的身世和秘密，那一切就不好玩了。我嘴巴里哼哼着，趁着他不注意，在他肚皮上猛咬了一口。——我留有余地，不想毁了他的性命——我预感到这个小子对于高密东北乡的重要意义，咬坏了他，阎王老子不会饶了我——如果我尽力地咬，会把他的肠子咬断——我使了三分劲儿，隔着他那汗臭的小褂子，在他的肚皮上留下了四个出血的牙印。这小子惨叫一声，慌乱之中在我的眼睛上挠了一爪子，便挣脱跑开了。其实是我故意松了口，如果我不松口，他怎能挣脱？他的爪子戳了我的眼睛，眼泪汪洋而出。我半是清明半是朦胧地看到他失魂落魄地逃到离我十几米远的地方，撩起褂子看肚皮上的伤口。我听到他嘟嘟囔囔地骂我：“猪



十六，你这个阴险毒辣的家伙，竟敢咬你大爷。总有一天我要让你知道我的厉害。”我心中窃笑。看到这小子从地上抓了几把混合着杏花瓣儿的泥土，按在肚皮的伤口上。他的嘴里念念有词：“土是土霉素，花是花骨朵儿，消炎，解毒，咄，好了！”然后他就放下衣襟，没事人儿一样，往发电机房那边溜去。这时，白氏几乎是连滚带爬地到了我的面前。我看着她出了汗的脸，听着她气喘吁吁地说：

“猪十六啊猪十六，你怎么跑出来呢？”

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 266–268)

#### Example 27:

婚礼的日期是那年的阴历四月十六，十五的月亮十六圆。好大的月亮，好低的月亮，在杏园里流连不去，仿佛是特为参加婚礼来的。月亮上那几支羽箭，是远古时代那个因为女人发了疯的男人射上去的。几面星条小旗是美国的宇航员插上去的。大概是为庆祝你们的婚礼，猪场为猪们改善了伙食，散发着酒糟味儿的红薯叶里，添加了高粱和黑豆混合粉碎而成的杂合面儿。猪们吃得肠满肚圆，个个心情舒畅，有的卧在墙角睡觉，有的趴在墙头上唱歌。刁小三呢？我悄悄地扶着墙头站起来往它窝里一看，发现这小子把那面小镜子嵌在墙上，右爪夹着不知从哪里捡来的半截红色塑料梳子，梳理着脖子上的鬃毛。这家伙最近身体状况很好，腮帮子上鼓出了两坨肉，使那个长嘴显得短了些，狰狞的面相得到了部分改善。梳子与它粗糙的皮肤接触，发出腻人的响声，并有一些麸皮般的皮屑飞起来，在月光中浮游，宛如日本伊豆半岛地区秋天的雪虫。这家伙一边梳毛，还一边对着那面小镜子龇牙咧嘴，如此臭美，说明它正在恋爱。但我断定它是单相思，别说年轻貌美的蝴蝶迷不会瞧上它，连那些生过几窝小猪的老母猪也不会对它感兴趣。刁小三从那面小镜子里发现了偷窥的我，哼了一声，不回头，说：

“哥们儿，不用看！爱美之心，人皆有之，猪也皆有之。老子梳妆打扮，光明正大，怕你怎的？”

“如果把那两颗伸出唇外的獠牙拔掉，您会更美。”我冷笑着说。

“那是不可能的，”刁小三严肃地说，“獠牙虽长，也是父母所生，不敢毁伤，孝之始也。这是人的道德准则，对猪同样适用。而且，也许有的母猪，偏偏喜欢我这两颗獠牙呢？”

刁小三经多见广，学问庞杂且口才极好，跟它磨牙斗嘴，根本占不到便宜。我讪讪而退，一个饱嗝溢上来，口中不是滋味。前爪扶枝直立，张嘴撕下几颗青黄的杏子咀嚼着，口水盈盈，牙根发酸，舌头上有些甜味。看着这将树枝压低的累累果实，我心里优越感陡增。再过十天半月，当杏子黄熟时，刁小三，你就在一边嗅味儿，馋死你这杂种。

吃罢青杏后，我卧着，养精蓄锐同时思考问题。时光荏苒，不觉麦收将至。南风洋洋，草木葳蕤，正是交配的大好时机。空气中洋溢着母猪发情的骚味儿。我知道他们选了三十头年轻健康、品貌端正的母猪，作为繁殖小猪的工具。被选中的母猪都单圈喂养，饲料中精料的比例大大提高。它们的皮肤日渐滑腻，眼神日渐骚情，盛大的

交配活动即将开始。我清楚地知道自己在猪场中的地位。在这场交配大戏中我是 a 角，刁小三是 b 角。只有当我筋疲力尽时，才会让刁小三出来拉拉帮套。但养猪人并不知道我跟刁小三都不是凡猪。我们思维复杂，体能超常，翻越围墙如履平地。在无人监督的夜间，我与刁小三有同样多的交配机会。必须按照动物界的规矩，在交配前把刁小三打败。一方面让那些母猪明白它们全部属于我，另一方面，要从生理上和心理上把刁小三彻底摧毁，让它见到母猪就阳痿。

我考虑问题时，巨大的月亮就歇息在东南方向那棵歪脖子老杏树上。你知道那是一棵浪漫的杏树。杏花烂漫时，西门金龙与黄互助、黄合作在那上边做爱，导致了严重的后果。但任何事情都有两个方面。这异想天开的树上交配一方面导致了你的疯狂，另一方面，却带来了这棵杏树空前的大丰收。这是一棵多年来每年只是象征性地结几颗杏子的老树，今年硕果累累，枝条都被压低，几乎接近了地面。为了防止树杈子被压断，洪泰岳吩咐人在树下支起架子。一般的杏子，要到麦收之后才能成熟，这棵杏树，品种独特，现在已经色泽金黄，香气扑鼻。为了保护这棵树上的杏子，洪泰岳命令孙豹派民兵日夜看守。民兵们背着土枪在杏树周围巡逻。孙豹命令民兵：有胆敢偷杏者，只管开枪，打死勿论。所以，尽管我对这棵浪漫树上的果子垂涎欲滴，但也不敢冒险。被民兵们用塞满了铁砂子的土枪打一家伙，那可不是闹着玩的。多年前的记忆难以忘却，使我见到这种土枪就胆战心惊。刁小三诡计多端，自然也不会轻举妄动。硕大的月亮颜色如杏，坐落树头，使那些低垂的树枝更低垂。有一个半疯的民兵竟然对着月亮开了枪。月亮抖了抖，毫发无伤，更柔和的光线发射出来，向我传递着远古的信息。我耳边响着舒缓的音乐，看到有一些身披树叶和兽皮的人在月光下舞蹈。女人裸着上身，乳房饱满，乳头上翘。又有一个民兵开了一枪，一道暗红的火焰喷出，成群的铁砂子，如同一群苍蝇，向月亮扑去。月亮暗了一下，脸色变白。月亮在杏树梢头跳动几下，便慢慢上升。在上升的过程中，它的体积渐渐变小，光线却越来越强。升到距离地面约有二十丈了，它悬在那里，眷恋不舍地凝望着我们的杏园和猪场。我想月亮是专门来参加这场婚礼的，我们应该用美酒和金杏招待它，使它把我们杏园作为一个停泊点，但那两个鲁莽的民兵竟开枪对它射击，虽然伤不了它的身体，但伤了它的心。即便是如此，每年的阴历四月十六日，高密东北乡西门屯村的杏园里，也是地球上最佳的赏月地点。这里的月亮又大又圆，而且是那样的多情而忧伤。我知道莫言那厮写过一篇梦幻般的小说，题目叫做《撑杆跳月》，他写道：

……在那个古怪岁月的奇特日子里，我们在养猪场里为四个疯子举行盛大的婚礼。我们用黄布缝成的衣服把两个新郎打扮得像两根蔫唧唧的黄瓜，用红布缝成的衣服把两个新娘打扮得像两个水灵灵的萝卜。菜嘛，只有两种，一是黄瓜拌油条，二是萝卜拌油条。本来有人建议杀一头猪，但洪书记坚决不同意。我们西门屯以养猪闻名全县，猪是我们的光荣怎么能杀？洪书记是正确的。黄瓜拌油条和油条拌萝卜足以让我们大快朵颐。酒的质量比较差，是那种散装的薯干酒，用容积五十公斤的氨水罐装来整整一罐。负责去买酒的大队保管员偷懒，没将氨水罐子刷干净，倒出的酒里有一股刺鼻子的气味。没有关系，农民跟地里的庄稼一样，对肥料亲切，有氨水味儿的酒，我们更喜欢。这是我平生第一次享受成人的礼遇，在十桌宴席上，我被安排在首桌，我的斜对面，端坐着洪书记。我知道这礼遇来自我的锦囊妙计，那天我闯入大队部发表了一通见解，牛刀小试脱颖而出，他们再也不敢小瞧我。两碗酒落肚，我感觉地面在上升，身体里似乎蕴藏着无穷无尽的力量。我冲出酒宴，进入杏园，看到一个直径足有三米

的金黄大月亮稳稳地坐落在那棵结满了金杏的著名杏树上。那月亮分明是来找我约会的。这既是嫦娥奔过的那个月，又不是嫦娥奔过的那个月；这既是美国佬登过的那个月，又不是美国佬登过的那个月。这是那颗星球的魂魄。月亮，我来了！我脚踩云团般地奔跑着，顺手从井台旁边抄起那根拔水用的、轻巧而富有弹性的梧桐杆子。平端在胸前，如同骑在骏马上的武士端着一杆长枪。我可不是去刺月亮，月亮是我的朋友。我要借助这杆子的力量飞上月亮。我在大队部义务值班多年，熟读了《参考消息》，知道苏联的撑杆跳运动员布勃卡已经越过了6.15米的高度。我还常到农业中学的操场上去玩耍观景，亲眼看到过体育教师冯金钟为那个很有跳高潜质的女生庞抗美示范，亲耳听到受过科班训练、因膝盖受伤而被省体工大队淘汰到我们农业中学来当体育教师的冯金钟老师为原供销社主任现第五棉花加工厂厂长兼党总支书记庞虎和原供销社土产杂品公司售货员现第五棉花加工厂食堂会计王乐云的生着两条长腿、仿佛仙鹤的女儿庞抗美讲解过撑杆跳高的动作要领。我有把握跃到月亮上去。我有把握像庞抗美那样手持长杆飞速奔跑插杆入洞身体跃起一瞬间头低脚高弃杆翻转潇洒地落到沙坑里那样降落到月亮上。我无端地想到那歇息在杏树梢头的月亮应该是柔软而富有弹性的，而一旦我落上去，身体就会在上边弹跳不止，而月亮，就会载着我缓缓上升。那些婚宴上的人们。会跑出来向我与月亮告别。也许那黄互助会飞奔而来？我解下腰带对着她摇晃，期望着她能追上来抓住我的腰带，然后我会尽最大力量把她拔上来，月亮载着我们升高。我们看到树木和房屋逐渐缩小，人变得像蚂蚱一样，似乎还隐隐约约地能听到下面传上来的喊叫声，但我们已经悬在澄澈无边的空中……

这绝对是一篇梦话连篇的小说，是莫言多年之后对酒后幻觉的回忆。那天晚上，发生在杏园猪场的一切，没有比我更清楚的了。你不用皱眉头，你没有发言权，莫言这篇小说里的话百分之九十九是假话，但惟有一句话是真的，那就是：你和金龙穿着用黄布缝制的假军装，像两根蔫唧唧的黄瓜。婚宴上发生了什么事你说不明白，杏园里发生的事你更不清楚。如今那刁小三说不定早就轮回转生到爪哇国里去了，即便他转生为你的儿子也不能像我一样得天独厚地对那忘却前世的孟婆汤绝缘，所以我是唯一的权威讲述者，我说的就是历史，我否认的就是伪历史。

那天晚上莫言只喝了一碗酒就醉了，没容他借酒狂言，就被虎背熊腰的孙豹拎着脖子拖出来，扔到那个腐烂的草垛边，趴在冬天死去的那些沂蒙山猪的闪烁着绿色磷光的骨殖上沉沉睡去，撑杆跳月亮，大概就是这孙子那时做的美梦。事实的真相是——你耐心听我说——那两个也许没捞到参加婚宴的民兵对着月亮开了枪，把月亮打飞了。成群的铁砂子没击落月亮，但却把树上的杏子击落了许多。金黄的杏子噼里啪啦地降落下来，在地上铺了厚厚一层。许多杏子被打碎了，汁液四溅，香甜的杏子味与芬芳的火药味混在一起，格外地诱猪。我因为民兵们野蛮的举动而恼怒，还在那儿满怀忧伤地望着逐渐升高的月亮发呆呢，就感到眼前黑影一闪，脑子里也如电光石火般一闪，马上明白了，也马上看清了，黑色的刁小三跃出圈墙，直奔那棵浪漫杏树而去。我们之所以不敢去吃那棵杏树上的杏子是因为我们惧怕那两个民兵手中的土枪，而民兵们开了枪，起码半个小时装填不上火药，而这半个小时，足够我们饱餐一顿。刁小三，真是一头冰雪聪明的猪啊，我稍一分神就可能被它超越。没什么好后悔的。我不甘落后，没用助跑就蹿出了猪圈。刁小三直奔杏子而去，我是直奔刁小三而去。顶翻了刁小三，树下的落杏就是我的。但接下来发生的事情让我备感庆幸。正当刁小三即将吃到杏子而我又即将顶到刁小三的肚皮时，我看到那个右手只有三根半手指的民兵，

扔出了一个红色的、迸溅着金黄色火花、滴溜溜满地乱转的东西。不好，危险！我前腿用力蹬地，克制着身体前冲的巨大惯性，就像紧急煞住了一辆开足马力奔驰的汽车；事后我才知道后肘被磨出了血；然后我打了一个滚，脱离了最危险的区域。我在惊惶中看到，刁小三那杂种竟然像狗一样地叼住了那滴溜溜乱转的大爆竹，然后猛一甩头。我知道它是想把这大爆竹回敬给那两个民兵，但很遗憾这爆竹是个急信子，就在刁小三甩头的瞬间它轰然爆炸，仿佛从刁小三嘴里喷出了一个炸雷，放射出焦黄的火焰。老实说，在这危急的关头，刁小三反应敏锐，处置果断，具有久经沙场的老战士才具有的冷静头脑和勇敢精神，我们在电影上经常看到那些老兵油子把敌方投掷过来的手雷投掷回去，这个壮举，却因为爆竹引信太短成了一场悲剧。刁小三连哼都来不及哼一声就一头栽倒了。浓烈的硝烟香气弥漫在杏树下，并渐渐地往四周扩散。我看着趴在地上的刁小三，心中情感复杂，有敬佩有哀伤有恐惧也有几分庆幸，坦白地说还有那么几丝幸灾乐祸，这不是一头堂堂正正的猪应该产生的情绪，但它产生了我也没有办法。那两个民兵转身就跑，跑了几步后又猛然地停步转身，彼此张望着，脸上的表情都是麻木而呆滞，然后他们就不约而同地、慢慢地向刁小三靠拢。我知道这两个蛮横的小子此时心中忐忑不安，正如洪泰岳书记所说，猪是宝中之宝，猪是那个年代的一个鲜明的政治符号，猪为西门屯大队带来了光荣也带来了利益，无端杀害一头猪，而且是担负着配种任务的公猪——尽管是替补角色——这罪名实在是不小。当这两个人站在刁小三面前，神色沉重，惶惶不安地低头观察时，刁小三哼了一声，慢腾腾地坐了起来。它的头像小孩子手中玩耍的拨浪鼓一样晃动着，喉咙里发出鸡鸣般的喘息声。它站起来，转了一个圈，后腿一软，又一屁股坐在地上。我知道它头晕目眩，嘴巴里痛疼难忍。两个民兵脸上露出喜色。一个说：“我根本没想到这是一头猪。”另一个说：“我以为这是一匹狼。”一个说：“想吃杏还不好说吗？咱摘一筐送到你圈里去。”另一个说：“您现在可以吃杏了。”刁小三恨恨地骂着，用民兵们听不懂的猪语：“吃你妈的个！”它站起来，摇摇晃晃地往窝的方向走。我有几分假惺惺地迎上去，问它：“哥们儿，没事？”它冷冷地斜我一眼，啐了一口带血的唾沫，含混不清地说：“这算什么……奶奶个熊……老子在沂蒙山时，拱出过十几颗迫击炮弹……”我知道这小子是瘦驴拉硬屎，但也不得不佩服它的忍耐力和勇气。这一下炸得实在不轻，它是满嘴硝烟，口腔黏膜受伤，左边那根狰狞的獠牙也被崩断了半根，腮帮子上的毛，也烧焦了不少。我以为它会采用笨拙的办法，从铁栅栏缝隙中钻进它的窝，但是它不，它助跑几步，凌空跃起，沉重地落在窝中的烂泥里。我知道这小子今夜将在痛苦中煎熬，无论那母猪发情的气味多么浓烈，蝴蝶迷的叫声多么色情，它也只能趴在烂泥里空想了。两个民兵仿佛道歉似的，将几十个杏子，投到刁小三的窝里，对此我不嫉妒。刁小三付出如此沉重的代价，吃几个杏子也是应该的。等待我的不是杏子，而是那些像盛开的花朵一样的母猪，它们笑眯眯的嘴脸，像被图钉钉住了脑袋的豆虫一样频频扭动的小尾巴，才是地球上最美味的果实。等到后半夜，众人睡去时，我的幸福生活就可以开始了。刁兄，抱歉了。

刁小三的伤害使我免除了后顾之忧，可以放心去参观那盛大的婚宴。月亮在三丈的高度上，有些冷漠地看着我。我举起右爪，给了受到委屈的皎皎明月一个飞吻，然后尾巴一拧，流星般迅速地到了养猪场北边、紧靠着村中道路的那一排房屋前。这排房屋有十八间，从东往西依次是养猪人住宿休息处、饲料粉碎处、饲料煮蒸处、饲料仓库、猪场办公室、猪场荣誉室……最西头那三间房子被布置成了两对新人的居室。中间一间是共用的堂屋，两侧是他们的洞房。

莫言那小子在小说中说：“宽敞的大屋子里摆开了十张方桌，方桌上摆着用脸盆盛着的黄瓜拌油条和油条拌萝卜，房梁上挂着一盏汽灯，照耀得房间里一片雪亮……”这小子又在胡编，那房间长不过五米，宽不过四米，如何能摆开十张方桌？别说是西门屯，就是在整个的高密东北乡，也找不到一个能摆开十张方桌、供一百个人共进晚餐的厅堂。

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 272–280)

Example 28:

在路北边一座二层小楼前的一片空地上，大约有一百余人，多半是老婆孩子，围着一台二十一英寸的日本产松下牌电视机，观看一部电视连续剧《大西洋底来的人》。那是一个手指和脚趾间生有蹼膜的英俊青年的神奇故事。他能够像鲨鱼一样在水中优雅地游泳。我看到西门屯的老婆孩子聚精会神地盯着那小小荧屏，并不时地发出“啧啧”的感叹声。电视机安放在一张紫红色的方凳上。方凳安放在一张方桌上。方桌旁坐着一个头发花白的老头，胳膊上套着一个红色的、写着“治安”字样的袖标，双手拄着一根细长的木棍，面对着观众，目光犀利，仿佛一个监考的老教师。我当时不知道他是谁——

“伍方，富农伍元的大哥，原国民党第五十四军军部电台上校台长，1947 年被俘，解放后以历史反革命罪被判无期徒刑，发配大西北劳改，不久前被释放回家，因年老失去劳动能力，家中又无亲属照顾，享受‘五保户’待遇，并每月从县民政部门领取十五元生活补助……”我插言道。

连续几天来大头儿的讲述犹如开闸之水滔滔不绝，他叙述中的事件，似真似幻，使我半梦半醒，跟随着他，时而下地狱，时而入水府，晕头转向，眼花缭乱，偶有一点自己的想法但立即又被他的语言缠住，犹如被水草缠住手足，我已经成为他的叙述的俘虏，为了不当俘虏，我终于抓住一个机会，讲说这伍方的来龙去脉，使故事向现实靠拢。大头儿愤怒地跳上桌子，用穿着小皮鞋的脚踩着桌面。住嘴！他从开裆裤里掏出那根好像生来就没有包皮的、与他的年龄显然不相称的粗大而丑陋的鸡巴，对着我喷洒。他的尿里有一股浓烈的维生素 b 的香气，尿液射进我的嘴，呛得我连连咳嗽，我感到刚刚有些清醒的头脑又蒙了。你闭嘴，听我说，还不到你说话的时候，有你说话的时候。他的神情既像童稚又像历经沧桑的老人。他让我想到了《西游记》中的小妖红孩儿——那小子嘴巴一努，便有烈焰喷出——又让我想起了《封神演义》中大闹龙宫的少年英雄哪吒——那小子脚踩风火轮，手持点金枪，肩膀一晃，便生出三个头颅六条胳膊——我还想到了金庸的《天龙八部》中的那个九十多岁了还面如少年的天山童姥，那小老太太的双脚一跺，就蹦到参天大树的顶梢上，像鸟一样地吹口哨。我还想到我的朋友莫言的小说《养猪记》中那头神通广大的公猪——

老子就是那头猪——大头婴儿回到他的座位上，气势汹汹但又颇为得意地说。我后来当然知道那老头儿是富农伍元的哥哥伍方，我还知道已经接任了大队党支部书记的金龙安排他在大队办公室看守电话并负责每天晚上把全屯唯一的那台彩色电视机搬出来供社员们观看。我还知道退休的洪泰岳对此事甚为不满，找到金龙理论。洪泰岳披着褂子，趿着鞋子，有几分落魄江湖的样子——据说他自从卸任党支部书记后就是这模样。当然不是他自愿交班让贤，是公社党委以年龄为由逼他卸任。此时的公社党委书记是谁？是庞虎的女儿庞抗美，全县最年轻的党委书记，一颗灿烂的政治新星。

我们后边还有许多讲到她的机会。据说洪泰岳沾着八分酒到了大队部——就是眼前这栋新盖的二层小楼——负责看门的伍方对着他点头哈腰，好像伪保长见到了日本军官。他用鼻子轻蔑地哼了几声，昂首挺胸进了楼，据说他指着坐在楼下大门口那个忠于职守的看门人的光秃秃的头顶，怒斥金龙：

“爷们儿，你这是严重的政治错误！那是个什么人？国民党的上校台长，本该枪毙他二十次，留他一条狗命，就是宽大处理。可是你，竟然让他享受‘五保’，你的阶级立场，站到哪里去了？”

据说，金龙掏出一支相当高级的进口香烟，用一个仿佛纯金打造的、燃烧丁烷的打火机点燃，然后，把点燃后的香烟插到洪泰岳嘴巴里，好像他是一个双手残废不能自己点烟的人。金龙将洪泰岳按坐在那张当时还很少见的旋转皮椅上，而他自己，则一抬屁股坐在办公桌上。他说，洪大叔，我是您亲手培养起来的，是您的接班人。无论什么事，我都想按您的老路走。但世道变了，或者说时代变了。让伍方享受“五保户”待遇，这是县里的决定。他不但享受“五保户”的待遇，他每月还可以从民政部门领取十五元生活补助金。爷们儿，您气？但我告诉您千万别气，这是国家政策。您气也没用。据说洪泰岳气势汹汹地说：那我们革命几十年不是白革了吗？金龙跳下桌子，把那转椅拨动半圈，让洪泰岳的脸对着窗户外边被灿烂的阳光照亮的一片崭新的红瓦房顶，说：爷们儿，这话可千万别出去说。共产党闹革命，其目的并不是为了推翻国民党，打跑蒋介石，共产党领导人民闹革命的根本目的是为了让老百姓过上丰衣足食的好日子。国民党蒋介石挡了共产党的路，所以才被打倒。所以，爷们儿，咱们都是老百姓，别想那么多，谁能让咱过得更好咱就拥护谁。据说洪泰岳怒道：你这是胡说，你这是修正主义！我要到省里去告你！据说金龙嬉笑着说：爷们儿，省里哪有闲工夫管咱们这一级的破事？依我看，只要缺不了您的酒喝，少不了您的肉吃，缺不了您的钱花，您就不要发牢骚、管闲事了。据说洪泰岳执拗地说：不行，这是路线问题，中央肯定出了修正主义。您就睁大眼睛看着，这一切，才是刚刚开了头，接下来的变化，很可能就像毛主席诗歌里说的那样，是“天翻地覆慨而慷”呢！

我在围观电视的人群后待了约有十分钟时间便往西跑去，你知道我要去的地方在哪里。

(Mo Yan, 2006, pp. 328–329)

### APPENDIX THREE – EXAMPLES IN CHAPTER SIX AND SEVEN

#### Example 13:

I bowed my head in a desire to participate in the torrent of revolutionary activities. He [Jinlong] said so.

[Jinlong emerged from the makeshift public toilet on the west side of the gate, which was made of corn stalks. He did up his trouser buttons, and his face was bathed in the glow of the red sun. Cooking smoke rose from the snow-covered roofs. With the big feathered rooster on the wall and the plain old hen with feathers, and the dog running past with its tail between its legs, the scene was plain and solemn, just the right time to talk. I rushed to meet him, blocking his way. He was shocked, and snapped: What do you want? I opened my mouth, my ears were feverish, I hummed for half a day, and I struggled to squeeze the word ‘brother’ out of my teeth – this is the first time I’ve called him that since hitting my father and working alone – I stammered: brother... I want to join your Red Guards... I want to play the traitor Wang Lianju... I know no one wants to play this role, people would rather play a ghost than a traitor. He raised his eyebrows and saw me from head to toe and back again and said in a tone of great contempt: you are not qualified! ..... Why? I was in a hurry and said, “Why can even Lü Tuzi and Cheng Xiaotou play Japanese soldiers, and why can even Mo Yan play a little secret agent, but I am not qualified? – Lü is a hired peasant, Cheng’s father was buried alive by the Landlord Restitution Corps. Although Mo Yan’s family is a middle peasant, his grandmother cared for the wounded and sick of the Eighth Route Army. Do you know? I said, the individual farmer family is more reactionary than the landlord rich peasants, landlord rich peasants are honestly undergoing reform, but the individual-farming family openly confront the people’s commune. To fight against the People’s Commune is to fight against socialism, to fight against socialism is to fight against the Communist Party, to fight against the Communist Party is to fight against Chairman Mao, to fight against Chairman Mao is to die! The rooster on the wall let out a long, tearful cry, so frightened that I almost peed my pants. Jinlong looked around and saw no one near or far; he lowered his voice and said to me: Pingnan County also has an individual farming family. When the movement began, they were hanged from a tree by the poor peasants and the family property was all confiscated.

If I hadn’t protected you and Dad in disguise, you would have died a long time ago. You can tell Dad about this quietly, let his elm brain open up, seize the time, bring the cow into the community, integrate into the collective family, let Dad put all the crimes on Liu Shaoqi, be deluded and not guilty, and get credit for the attack against the enemy. If you remain stubborn and resist to the end, it is the mantis that stands in the way of the car and takes its own life. Tell Dad to parade him through the streets, that’s the gentlest of actions, and next, when the masses are enlightened, there’s nothing I can do. If the revolutionary masses want to hang the two of you, I can only do what is righteous. See those two thick branches on the big apricot tree? It’s about three meters off the ground, so it’s perfect for hanging people. I have long wanted to say these words to you, but I have not been able to find the opportunity, and now I say to you, please tell your father that the world is wide and broad, and all are happy, and the people are happy when the cows are happy, and it is difficult to walk without entering the community, and the heaven is angry with people. To put it bluntly, if you continue to work alone with your father, you may not even find a wife, and those who are lame, and blind may not want to marry an individual-farming family.

My brother's long talk scared me and, in the popular words of the time, touched my soul deeply. I looked at the two thick branches of the apricot tree that stretched out in a south-easterly direction, and my mind immediately conjured up the dismal sight of my father and I – two blue faces – hanging from the top. Our bodies were stretched long, wandering around in the cold wind, stripped of water and losing most of their weight, as if they were two large dried up lucre...]

So I went to see my dad in the ox shed, which had become his refuge, his place of safety.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 199)

Example 14:

“Here he is,” the crowd roared, “he will save the day”.

[It is up to the doer to undo the knot. Since Jinlong was able to pull this wild boar from the Yimeng Mountains, there was a way to get it out from under the car. Hong Taiyue handed Jinlong a cigarette and lit for him. It is a high courtesy from the branch Secretary. Jinlong's lips were white, his eyes were green and his hair was messy, and he looked very tired. This time, he worked hard to buy pigs in Yimeng Mountain, built up prestige among the members, and regained the trust of Secretary Hong. Hong's lighting of the cigarette seemed to flatter him as well. He put the half-smoked cigarette on a brick – the cigarette was then picked up by ‘Mo Yan’ to smoke – took off the old military uniform that had faded – white, patched shoulders and cuffs, revealing a fuchsia-colored lapel sweatshirt, with white paint on the chest “Jinggangshan” three woolly characters, rolled his sleeves up. ] Jinlong bent down and looked under the vehicle, then picked up a piece of broken tile and threw it in.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 240)

Example 15:

Then she banged her hands on the floor and wailed, but just for a moment, before getting to her feet and starting work again.

[After kneading the flour, she gathered the chopped shallots and dough sticks into an enamelled basin, poured in some oil, thought for a moment, put salt in, thought again, grabbed the oil bottle and poured more oil in. I can see this woman's mind is in disarray. She held the porcelain basin in one hand and the chopsticks in the other, stirring while circling around the house, her eyes looking east and west as if she was looking for something. The mung bean on the ground tripped her up again. The fall was even worse, and she lay almost on her back on the hard, smooth, cold terrazzo floor, but miraculously the porcelain basin in her hand did not fall, not only did it not fall, but it kept its balance. As I was about to leap forward to help her, she was already slowly lifting her upper body. She didn't get up, but sat still, and sadly, with a few cries like a little girl, she came to a scream. She rubbed her hips from back to front, and after rubbing a bit, rubbed two more, because of her hips are crippled, her body had to tilt sharply to the left rear after each rub. But the porcelain basin holding the stuffing in her hand was always balanced. She reached forward and placed the porcelain basin on the workbench, her body leaning back sharply to the left again. She didn't stand up, spreading her legs flat, her upper body tilted forward, her head almost down to her knees, as if practising a strange kind of qigong. The darkness was already deep, the moon had risen to its highest point and was giving off its strongest glow. The old wall clock at the neighbour's house chimed alarmingly in the



dead of the night, just an hour before our meeting. I heard that many dogs had gathered at the fountain in the Tianhua square, and many more were converging there along the avenue and lanes. I was a little anxious, but I couldn't bear to leave, I was afraid that this woman would do something stupid in the kitchen. I smelled the twine in the paper box in the corner, I smelled the faintest leak of gas from the hose, and I smelled the bottle of dichlorvos wrapped in a paper bag in the corner, all of which could kill someone. Of course, she could cut her wrists and score her neck with a kitchen knife, touch the electric switch with her hands, bang her head against the wall, or lift up the cement cover over the well in the courtyard and plunge in headlong. All in all, there are many reasons why I was not going to chair this regular meeting of the Round Moon. The Russian Pointy Mouth of Guo Hongfu's family, who was accompanied by Goat Face, called out to me at the gate and knocked gently with his paws. Russian Pointy Mouth said, "Chairman, we're waiting for you." I lowered my voice and told him, "You go ahead, I have important business here that I can't get out of, and if I really can't get there on time, let Vice President Ma preside." —Vice-President Ma is a black-backed wolfhound bred by the owner of the Meat Union Plant. The two dogs were flirting with each other as they walked south along smallpox alley. I continue to watch your wife. She finally lifted her head. She first gathered the mung bean around her body in the palm of her hand, and then, sitting down, rubbed hard against one side of her butt, gathered the mung beans on the ground. She gathered the mung bean into a pile, a domed pile, like an elaborate grave. She stared at the mung bean grave, fuming for a moment, and a tear hung on her cheek. She grabbed a handful of mung beans and threw them out, again and again, and some of them crashing into the walls, some crashing into the refrigerator, some landing in the noodle bowl. The house rang twice, as if ice shrapnel had fallen on dead leaves. She tossed a couple of them and stopped. She lifted up her lapel, dried her face thoroughly, reached over and dragged the dustpan over, taking the pile of mung beans into the pile one by one. She pushed the dustpan aside, stood up with difficulty, walked over to the workbench, kneaded the dough a few more times, stirred the filling a few more times, and then tore the dough apart to make the pie. She put the pan on the stove. She unscrewed the gas and lit the fire. She poured a little oil into the pan very deliberately.]

Once the dough was ready, she set her pan on top of the stove, turned on the gas, and lit the flame.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 417)

Example 16:

"Come inside, Mama, you're wet from head to toe." He was crying.

"What are you so worried about? You should be happy it's raining hard." She pushed the umbrella over your son's head. "We haven't had rain like this for a long time, not once since we moved into town. It is wonderful. Our yard has never been this clean. And not just ours, but every family's. If it wasn't for this rain, the town would stink."

I barked twice to approve her attitudes.

"Hear that?" she said. "I am not the only one who's happy with this rain. So is he."

[Your wife pushed your son into the house. I stood with your son, one of us at the door of the main room, the other crouching at the entrance door, watching as she stood in the middle of the courtyard on the paved path to wash her body. She ordered your son to turn off the light under the eaves, and the yard sank into darkness, but a bolt of lightning continued to illuminate your wife's body. She took a piece of green soap that had been soaked by the rain and rubbed

it into her hair and onto her body. Then she rubbed, the rich lather making her head bulky and the yard smell of soapy vanilla. The rain grew thinner and thinner, the sound of the rain striking everything diminished, the street flowed with water and a rumbling thunder rolled in after the lightning. The breeze blew and the rainwater that had accumulated on the sycamore trees fell like a waterfall. Your wife rinses her body with standing water from the bucket by the well table and her face from the basin. I could see her crippled ass and those dark hairs every time the lightning struck.]

But eventually she did go inside, where, my nose told me, she dried her hair and body.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 461)

Example 17:

The director gave us a summary of what we'd be doing: After the gang led by the bandit Blue Face has been dispersed, he flees into the mountains alone. Knowing his reputation as a filial son, the PLA convinces his sister and mother to fake the mother's death and sends his sister into the mountains to pass on the news. Blue Face comes down from the mountains in his mourning garments and goes straight to his mother's bier, where PLA soldiers, who are staked out among the mourners, rush up and pin him to the floor. At that moment, his mother sits up in her coffin and says, Son, the PLA always treats its prisoners humanely, so please surrender to them... "Got it?" the director asked us. "Got it," we said. [The director said it was snowing outside, so we couldn't go to the location. 'Just imagine that you're a bandit who has been on the run for many days. Suddenly, you hear the news that your mother has passed away. You come down from the mountains for the funeral.' Then, the director asked me to give it a try: "Give him the mourning garments." I looked at several costumes for a while and picked up a white gown from a pile of clothes. Then, they gave me a mourning cap and finally tied a hemp rope around my waist. Chunmiao asked, "Director, how should I perform?" The director pointed at me and told Chunmiao that she just needed to think of me as her brother. I asked the director if a prop gun was needed. The director replied, "I almost forgot about that. Blue Face can use a gun in each hand. Prop Master, give him two guns." The same women who helped me put on the mourning gowns passed me two wooden guns. Chunmiao asked, "Do I need to wear a mourning gown as well?" The director agreed and immediately asked for her to be dressed in a mourning gown too].

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 491)

Example 18:

"You two brothers, how many years has it been? Let's see..." She counted on her fingers. "One, two, three years...my goodness, it's been eight years. For a dog that's half a lifetime!"

["Exactly!" said Huang Tong, who had been denied a chance to speak, "Twenty years of a dog's life is equal to a hundred years of a man's life."]

We touched noses and licked each other's face. We were very happy.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 444)

Example 19:

[The two brothers, Sun Dragon and Sun Tiger, exchanged glances. Sun Tiger suggested, “Boss Yang”’s ideas sound like an awful lot to take in.”

Sun Dragon stammered, “I can imagine that money falling like the leaves of a tree from the sky.”

“Brothers,” Yang Qi continued, “why did Liu Xuande visit Zhuge Liang on three separate occasions bearing expensive gifts? Did he have nothing better to do? No, he went to ask about strategies to help stabilise the State! The words of Zhuge Liang pointed Liu in the right direction. After that, Liu gained his power and influence during the Three Kingdoms period. I am your Zhuge Liang! Once you obtain your fortune, don’t forget me!”

“Buying pots, building factories, hiring workers, and expanding the business all require money. Where can we find this money?” asked Sun Tiger.

“Ask Jinlong to help you with a loan,” said Yang as he beat his thigh. “Remember? When Jinlong built the platform around this apricot tree and led the revolution, you four brothers were his faithful lackeys!”

“Watch your mouth, Yang! What do you mean by “lackey”? We were his “intimate comrades”!” replied Sun Tiger.

“Fine, intimate comrades,” Yang Qi continued, “anyway, you brothers still mean something to him.”

“Yang, the loan needs to be repaid, right?” asked Sun Dragon in a flattering way. “It will be great if we earn money, but what if we lose money? How can we repay it then?”

“You two are so stupid”!” exclaimed Yang Qi pressing forward. “It’s CCP’s money, you can just spend it. They may not even ask you to repay it even if you earn the money; if you lose the money, you have nothing to repay when they ask. What can they do? By the way, the “RED” chilli sauce is destined to bring you a fortune. The only possibility of you losing money is if you burn the money when cooking.”

“Then, shall we ask Jinlong for a loan?” asked Sun Tiger.

“Let’s do it,” answered Sun Dragon.

“We will buy the pots, hire the workers, build the factories and produce advertisements as long as we get the loan.”

“Buy! Hire! Build! Advertise!”

“Exactly! You two idiots finally get it!” Yang Qi patted his lap and continued, “I will be in charge of providing the wooden materials you need for construction. The bamboo from Jingangshan is firm and can last for 100 years without decaying, and the price is half that of the cedar purlins. Let’s see, if you build 20 factories, you will need 400 cedar purlins or bamboo. If you use bamboo as an alternative, the price per bamboo is 30 yuan cheaper. I’ll be able to save you a total of 12000 yuan!”

“So, in such a roundabout way, it turns out that you just want to sell bamboo!?” exclaimed Sun Tiger.

Wu Qiuxiang then arrived with two bottles of “Little Tiger” and two packets of “Good Friends” cigarettes. Huzhu carried a dish of cucumber, garlic and sliced pig’s ear in her right hand and a dish of fried peanuts in her left hand. Wu put the alcohol on the table and placed the cigarettes in front of Yang Qi, announcing mockingly, “Don’t worry, I’m giving these two dishes free to the Sun brothers to go with the drinks, they’re not being added to your bill.”

“Boss Lady, are you looking down on me?” Yang Qi patted his bulging pocket and said, “Even though I don’t have a big fortune, I’ve got enough for a plate of cucumbers.”

“Nice try, I know you’re rich,” Wu replied, “but I’ll butter up the Sun brothers, I too believe the “RED” chili sauce will be popular.”

Huzhu smiled and placed the two dishes in front of the Sun brothers. They both quickly stood up, “Sister, it’s such a great pleasure to be served by you...”

“I am free, so have just come to help,” replied Huzhu with a smile.

“Boss Lady, don’t just take care of the rich, we need service as well,” called out Wu Yuan on the other table, who was holding a simple menu covered in plastic film to fan away a white moth. “Can we order?” he asked.

“Help yourselves. No need for him to save money,” said Qiuxiang pouring some liquor for the Sun brothers and casting a glance at Yang Qi, “I am going to serve those bastards.”

“Those bastards suffered a lot. It is time for them to lead a real life.”

“Landlords, rich peasants, puppet village chiefs, traitors, counter-revolutionaries...”

Qiuxiang pointed to the people and said half-seriously, half-joking, “You guys are almost all of the bastards in this village, right? Now that you’re getting together, are you going to revolt?”

“Don’t forget you used to be the second concubine of the landlord.”

“My situation was different.”

Wu Yuan joined the conversation, “What’s the difference? These distinctions are meaningless. Those titles no longer hold any importance. We are now, like everybody, members of the People’s Commune.”

Yu Wufu continued, “Our titles were removed a year ago.”

Zhang Dazhuang also added, “We are no longer under surveillance.”

Tian Gui, who was too timid to glance at Yang Qi, whispered, “We don’t get beaten anymore. Today is the one-year anniversary of the removal of rightist labels and the return to citizenship for those of us who have been labouring in the fields.” He was still too timid to glance at Yang Qi, whispering, “No to the cane.”

“Today is our day for getting rid of the labels and returning to citizenship, and for those of us who have been in control for more than three decades, it is a big day,” said Wu Yuan. “We come together, we dare not say for a celebration, but we need to drink.”

Yu Wufu blinked his reddish eyes and said, “I could never have dreamt this day would happen.”

With tears in his eyes, Tian Gui interrupted, “My grandson was admitted into the PLA last winter, and the PLA Secretary Jinlong hung the sign “Glorious House” on my house during the Chinese New Year....”

“We are sincerely grateful to Chairman Hua,” added Zhang Dazhuang.

“Boss Lady,” said Wu Yuan, “people like us are not choosy about food, please bring some simple food for us, we have already had dinner and have just come for some drinks.”

“You deserve a celebration,” said Qiuxiang, “I used to be a concubine of the landlord; luckily, I re-married Huang Tong early on. Anyway, Secretary Hong is a nice person; otherwise, both Yingchun and I would have suffered a lot. Nevertheless, it’s too bad that Ximen Nao’s wife was inevitably tortured.”

“Mom, don’t say too much,” said Huzhu taking the teapot and smiling to her guests, “have some tea, please!”

“If you trust me, I can choose for you,” replied Qiuxiang.

“Of course we trust you,” said Wu Yuan turning to Huzhu, “you’re the wife of the secretary, but you are serving us. This would have been unimaginable forty years ago.”

“This would not have happened even two years ago let alone forty years ago.”

“I have been talking for so long. Do you want to add any details? Do you want to complain? Do you have any other thoughts?” asked the big-headed boy. I shook my head, “Jiefang has nothing to add.”]

Lan Jiefang, I’m painting a detailed picture of what was going on in the Ximen family compound, describing what I heard and saw, as a pig at the gate, in order to bring the conversation around to a very important individual, Hong Taiyue.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 349)

Example 20:

Public safety was a big problem in the 1990s. People knew there were some women from the south — known on the street as slap-ladies — who traded in children. Pretending to be selling flowers or candy or shuttlecocks made with colourful chicken feathers, they hid a spellbinding drug in their clothes, and when they saw a good-looking child, they slapped him or her on the head, and the child walked off with them. [The son of Hu Lanqing, the Governor of the Industrial and Commercial Bank, was kidnapped. Hu was asked to pay an RMB 2,000,000 ransom and did not dare to report the case to the police. After a negotiation, he paid RMB 1,800,000.]

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 406)

Example 21:

As a rule, dogs were not allowed inside the bookstore, but Pang Chunmiao made an exception for me. You couldn’t find another shop in town that was as deserted as the New China Bookstore, which employed three female clerks, two middle-aged women, and Pang Chunmiao. The other two women did their best to butter up Chunmiao, for obvious reasons.

[‘Mo Yan’ was one of the most well-known customers at the bookstore, and he always showed off there. You never knew if it was out of confidence or if he just did it for fun. He liked to quote parts of Chinese proverbs, which he thought might have a humorous effect. For example, he might say, *Liang Xiao Wu* — instead of *Liang Xiao Wu Cai* (intimacy of childhood), *Yi Jian Zhong* — instead of *Yi Jian Zhong Qing* (fall in love at first sight), and *Gou Zhang Ren* — instead of *Gou Zhang Ren Shi* (be a bully under the protection of a powerful man). Whenever he came in, Pang Chunmiao smiled. If Pang Chunmiao smiled, the other two middle-aged women smiled as well. The most accurate proverb to describe ‘Mo Yan’s’ appearance would be *Can Bu Ren Du* (could not bear the sight) or, in his style, *Can Bu Ren* —. Even though he was so ugly, Pang Chunmiao, the girl with the best sense of smell in our town, liked him. I guess it must have been his smell. You could always smell cigarettes on ‘Mo Yan’, so Pang Chunmiao must have been a subconscious tobacco lover.] ‘Mo Yan’ once saw Lan Kaifang sitting in a corner absorbed in a book, so he went over and tugged on the boy’s ear. Then he introduced him to Pang Chunmiao, telling her he was the son of Director Lan of the County Supply and Marketing Cooperative.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 409)

Example 23:

“Damn it. I told them to bring over one case, but they brought twenty cases of the stuff. Guard Wei over at the warehouse is going to be in deep shit tomorrow.” There was a noticeable degree of pride in his voice.

[“Deputy Chairman Ma, I’d like to propose a toast to you,” a Pekingese bitch said charmingly.

“Chairman, this is Mary, she just came from Beijing.” Ma introduced the Pekingese bitch to me.

“Who’s your master?”

“Well, my master is one of the four Beauties in Gaomi Township, Gong Ziyi,” she boasted.

“Well, the manager of the guesthouse.”

“Yes, that’s her exactly.”

“Mary is clever and sensible; why not let her be your secretary, my Chairman?” Ma recommended.

“We can discuss it later,” I said coldly.

My aloof attitude disappointed Mary. She squinted at the dogs gathering at the fountain enjoying their food and commented scornfully: “You Gaomi dogs are barbarous. Our Peking dogs are well dressed and glitter with jewels; we sing merrily and dance gracefully; we talk about the arts. We only drink wine or cold water, and we only eat sausages with forks. Oh my God, look at those dogs!”]

I spotted a mongrel crouching off to the side with three bottles of beer lined up in front of him, along with three chunks of sausages and some garlic cloves. He took a swig of beer, then a bite of sausage, and flipped a clove of garlic into his mouth.

Example 24:

We touched noses and licked each other's face. We were very happy.

["Little Four, I thought I wouldn't have the opportunity to meet you again," my eldest brother said, bursting into tears. "Can you imagine how much Dog Two and I miss your sister and you?" "Where is Dog Two?" "I asked eagerly, trying to sniff its location.

"Dog Two's master died recently. Do you remember Ma Liangcai, Lan Jiefang's brother-in-law? He was a really nice guy, good at instruments and drawing. He used to be the principal of a primary school. Isn't it a good job to be a respectable teacher? However, he insisted on resigning and working for Jinlong. One director from the town education bureau criticised him, which made him upset and he got drunk. When he went out to go to the toilet, he couldn't stand upright, and then he fell over and died. This is life. Why didn't they tell the news to your master?"

"My master recently hooked up with a young girl. Guess who it is?" I pointed with my chin at Hezuo, who whispered with Huzhu under the apricot tree in the courtyard. "This lady almost got crazy hearing the news, and just recovered a little bit recently. Look at her today, she came back specifically so that Jiefang's parents would forbid him to divorce her."

It's true that every family has its cross to bear, the eldest dog said, "we are dogs, we can only listen to the master's command, serve the master, these troubles are not our business. You wait, I'll go get Dog Two and the three of us will get together."

I said, "Don't we dogs have the ability to communicate with each other even we are a thousand miles' apart?" I craned my neck and was about to howl when I heard my big brother say, "No need to howl, your second brother, he's here."]

Just then my second brother came toward me from the west, along with his mistress, Baofeng. A skinny boy was right behind Baofeng, and the smell told me it was Gaige. I was amazed by how tall he'd gotten.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 444)

Example 25:

Bound hand and foot, you writhed and twisted in a mighty attempt to get free. [Just as described in the martial arts novels, those in the lower rank who had inhaled the super strength of others but could not accommodate the martial arts, in such a painful state that the open mouth and the wailing from the mouth became the only channel for escape. Someone tried to pour a little cool water into his mouth to quench the evil fire in his heart, but it choked in his throat and caused him to cough violently. A stream of blood, cloudy, spurted out of his mouth and nostrils.

"My son....." howled Yingchun and fainted.

Women, some can even drink blood, some get dizzy at the sight of blood.

At this moment, Ximen Bao Feng hurriedly left with the medicine chest on her back. She had the air of a good medical person, and was not alarmed by the fainting mother lying

under the bed, and the blood-sputtering brother on the bed. She is already an experienced "barefoot doctor". Her face was pale and her gaze was melancholy. Her hands were as cold as ice in winter and summer. I know that her heart is suffering from emotion too. It is a historical fact that the root of her pain is the "yelling donkey" Chang Tianhong. She opened the medical bag, took out a flat iron container, pulled out a gleaming silver needle, aimed it at Yingchun's "human middle" acupuncture point, and stabbed it accurately and fiercely, Yingchun groaned and opened her eyes. Bao Feng gestured to the people and dragged the liberation, which was tied into a bundle of sticks, towards the kang. She didn't feel his pulse, she didn't listen to his heart; she didn't test his temperature or take his blood pressure; it was as if everything was as she expected; as if it wasn't Jiefang she was treating, but herself. She took out two ampoules from the medicine bag, clamped them between her fingers, then cracked them with tweezers, siphoned the two vial's contents with a syringe, lifted the syringe up to the bright electric light, pushed the syringe, and bright droplets of water shot out of the tip. This image is very sacred and solemn and classic and common, those propaganda posters, those movies and television, there are often such images and shots, the people who do this kind of work are called white angels, wearing white hats and white coats and big masks, staring from large eyes with rolled long eyelashes. In our Ximen Village, it was impossible for Ximen Baofeng to wear a large white hat mask or a white coat; she wore a blue coat with a large overturned collar, and a white shirt with the collar over the collar of the blue coat. It was the fashion of the time, and young men and women always highlighted the layered collars, and if they couldn't afford layered under garments because they were poor, they bought one of those fake collars that cost a few cents. This evening Baofeng was actually wearing a blouse instead of a false collar inside her coat. Her pale face and melancholy eyes also fit well with the portrait of a decent character written by a novelist. She used a cotton alcohol ball and gently rubbed the well-developed muscles on Blue Liberation's arm, and in less than a minute, the injection was finished and the needle pulled out. The site of the injection was not the common buttocks area but the arm, which may have been related to the special case of Blue Liberation being tied up with rope. To a man like Blue Liberation, who was suffering from intense mental stimulation and immense inner pain, not to mention the stabbing of a needle in his arm, even if one of his arms was removed, he would not make a murmur.

Of course, that's an extreme exaggeration on my part. Such a statement, in the context of the time, is not much of a big deal. At that time, people, including you Lan Jiefang, spoke grandiose words a lot, such as, "You won't bend over even if Mountain Tai crashes on your head, "beheaded only as the wind blows the hat", "I'd be willing to die for it". Mo Yan, as a boy, also spoke these kinds of cowardly big words of the expert. Later, after becoming a so-called writer, he reflected on this linguistic phenomenon. He said, "The language of extreme exaggeration is a reflection of the extreme hypocrisy of society, and the language of violence is a precursor to social atrocities."]

So Baofeng gave you a sedative and you slowly relaxed, your eyes open but unfocused, sounds of sleep coming from your mouth and nose.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, p. 285)

Example 26:

None of that appeared to bother him, for after breaking free from Sun's grip, he slipped back into the generator room, no more than a step behind Huang Huzhu. [I know that Hezuo was the most heart-broken one at the night, and Huzhu felt the most awkward. Her love-making with Jinlong in that crooked-necked old apricot tree triggered Jiefang's craziness. Making love under a canopy of flowers is a magical and beautiful thing, but it's all shattered



because of Mo Yan, a nasty guy. This person is notorious for one's misdeeds in the northeastern countryside, but he thinks he is a good boy who is loved by everyone! The person broke into the machine room illuminated by the moonlight, as if a frog jumped into a quiet and bright pond, a loud sound, stirring up the jade-colored fragments.] (Huzhu) threw herself on Jinlong's body, like a mother protecting her offspring, the moment she spotted him lying there, bathed in moonlight, his forehead bloodied, Powerful feelings and sadness at what had befallen him drove all thought of modesty and decorum out of her mind. [ "He drank two bottles of Jingzhi Alcohol," said Mo Yan, pointing at the fragments of the bottle on the floor, "and then turned the diesel engine throttle to maximum, 'pop' and the light bulb exploded." Amidst the strong smell of alcohol and diesel, Mo Yan talks and points in a comical manner, like a hand-waving clown. "Get him out of here!" Hong Taiyue shouted, his voice having the sound of a broken gong. Sun Bao wiped his neck, causing him to barely walk out of the machine room on his feet. Mo Yan kept speaking, as if he'd be suffocating if he didn't get the scenario he'd seen out. You guys say, how could the northeast countryside of High-Media, where the people are famous, give birth to such a bad boy? "Then 'snap' a muffled sound, the horsepower belt broke," Mo Yan being rubbed on the neck by Sun Bao, still could not desist from adding details, "The horsepower belt was broken from the interface, I reckon, must be the iron pin at the interface pumped into his head. At the time, the diesel machine went crazy, revving at eight thousand revolutions per second, generating so much power that it would have been a blessing among misfortunes not to have pulled his brains out!" Mo Yan's words is half classic, half vernacular, as if he were a gentleman who has read a lot of poetry. "To hell with your 'no-no-uki'!" The overpowered Sun Bao lifted Mo Yan up and threw him forward with great force. Even in the brief moment of flying through the air his mouth was still forming words.

Mo Yan dropped down in front of me. I expected the boy to drop to pieces, did not expect him to give a roll and sit up. He let out a long stinky fart in front of me that annoyed me so much. He shouted at Sun Bao's back, "Sun Laosan, don't think I'm making this up. What I say is what I've seen with my own eyes, and even if it's slightly exaggerated, it's always 80% or 90% accurate." Sun Laosan didn't answer him at all, so he turned his face to me and said, "Pig Sixteen, are you saying I'm right? Don't play dumb with me, I know you are a pig that has become a monster, you can do everything except speak no human language. Secretary Hong said you can carve a seal in seal script – he used that sarcasm, I understand – in fact, I know you can't carve a seal in seal script at all, I'll give you a set of tools, I'll see if you can fix your watch. I've been watching you. I discovered your talent when I was on duty at the brigade headquarters, and I actually read the Reference Message aloud to you every night. The two of us are old friends from our heart-to-hearts. I also know that you were once human in a previous life and that you are inextricably linked to the people of Ximen Tun. Am I right? Nod your head if I'm right." I looked at his grubby little face with that cunning expression that seemed to see everything and thought in my heart: I can't let this kid talk about anything he likes. Talking in the toilet, someone outside the wall might be listening. If the people of Ximen village knew my identity and secrets, it would not be funny. I grunted in my mouth and took advantage of his inattention to take a hard bite at his belly. —I had a sense of the importance of this boy to the Northeast of Gaomi, and if I bit him, Yan would not spare me – if I tried my best, I could bite his intestines off – I made three efforts, and through his sweaty, smelly coat, I left four bleeding tooth marks on his belly. The boy yelped miserably, scratched me in the eye in panic, and broke free and ran away. In fact, it was me who deliberately let go, if I hadn't, how could he break free? His paw poked me in the eye, and tears welled up in his eyes. I was half clear-eyed and half blind when I saw him fleeing to a place a dozen meters away from me, lifting his shirt to look at the wound on his belly. I heard him mumble and scold, "Pig Sixteen, you insidious and vicious guy, how dare you bite your grandpa. Someday I'm going to show you

how good I am." I snickered inwardly. Seeing that, the boy grabbed a few clods of dirt mixed with apricot petals from the ground and pressed them to the wound in his belly. His mouth mumbled, "The earth is hyomycin, the flowers are flower bones, anti-inflammatory, detoxifying, duh, there!" Then he let go his shirt lapel and slipped off towards the generator room as if nothing was wrong.]

At about the same time, Ximen Bai staggered up to me. As I looked into her sweaty face, I heard her gasp:

"Pig sixteen ah pig sixteen, how did you get out of your pen?"

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, pp. 291)

Example 27:

The wedding took place on the sixteenth day of the fourth lunar month that year, under a full moon that was unusually bright and hung low in the sky, seemingly reluctant to leave the apricot grove, almost as if it had shown up in honor of the wedding.[The feathered arrows on the moon had been shot by a man who had been maddened by a woman in ancient times. Several small star-spangled flags were inserted by American astronauts. Presumably in celebration of your wedding, the pig farm improved the diet for the pigs, and the sweet potato leaves, which smelled like wine, were added to a mixture of sorghum and black beans crushed into an heirloom noodle. The pigs ate to their hearts, each in a good mood, some lying in the corner of the wall to sleep, some lying on the wall to sing. I quietly moved to the wall and stood up to look into his nest, and found the boy had embedded the small mirror in the wall, his right paw clenching the red plastic comb he had picked up out of nowhere, combing the mane on his neck. The guy had been in good shape lately, with two piles of flesh bulging out of his cheeks, making that long mouth appear shorter and the fierce face partially improved. The comb made a greasy rasping sound against his rough skin, and some bran-like flakes flew up and floated in the moonlight, resembling autumn snow worms in the Izu Peninsula region of Japan. This guy is combing his hair and grimacing at the little mirror, so pretty that he's in love. But I 'concluded that it was an unrequited love, as that young, beautiful butterfly fan wouldn't look at it, not even old sows who'd had a few litters of piglets would be interested. Diao Xiaosan spotted the peeping me from that small mirror and grunted, not looking round, saying.

"Dude, don't look! All people have a love of beauty, and all pigs have it. What's the matter with me dressing up and being fair and square and afraid of you?"

"You would be even more beautiful if those two fangs sticking out of your lips were pulled out," I grinned coldly.

"That is impossible," said Diao Xiaosan seriously, "Even though the fangs are long, they are also born of parents, and in not daring to destroy the wound, filial piety begins. This is a human moral code that applies equally to pigs. Besides, maybe some sows, who knows, prefer me with these two tusks?"

Diao Xiaosan is knowledgeable and eloquent, I cannot have the best argument with him. I sighed and retreated, a full belch overflowing, not a taste in my mouth. I stood upright, opened my mouth to tear off a few green and yellow apricots and chewed them, my mouth full of sweet and sour flavors. Looking at the copious fruit that held the branches down, I felt a deepening sense of superiority in my heart. In ten and a half days, when the apricots are ripe, Diao Xiaosan, you'll be sniffing at them while you're at it, you bastard.

After eating a green apricot, I lay down and pondered my problems. Time passes, and the harvest is near. The South wind, and lush greenery, means a great time for mating. The air smelled like a sow in heat. I know they select thirty young, healthy, good-looking sows to use as breeding tools for their piglets. The selected sows are fed in single pigpen and the proportion of concentrate in the feed is considerably higher. Their skin is getting slicker by the day, their eyes are getting more flirtatious by the day, and a grand mating event is about to begin. I am well aware of my place in the pig farm. In this big mating drama I am the A character and Diao Xiaosan is the B character. Only when I was exhausted would I let Diao Xiaosan out to cheer me on. But the pig farmers didn't know that Diao Xiaosan and I were not ordinary pigs. We're complex-minded and physically superior, and we climb over the fences as if we're on our own. On unsupervised nights, I had just as many mating opportunities with Diao Xiaosan. One must follow the rules of the animal kingdom and defeat Diao Xiaosan before mating. On the one hand, to make the sows understand that they all belong to me, and on the other hand, to physically and psychologically destroy Diao Xiaosan so that he will be impotent when he sees a sow.

The huge moon rested on the crooked-necked old apricot tree to the southeast as I considered the question. You know it's a romantic apricot tree. When the apricot blossoms were rotten, Simon Golden Dragon made love to Huang Huzhu and Huang Hezuo in there, leading to serious consequences. But there are two sides to everything. This whimsical mating in the tree has led to your madness on the one hand, and an unprecedented harvest of apricot trees on the other. It was an old tree that for years had only symbolically borne a few apricots a year, and this year was so fruitful that the branches almost touched the ground. In order to prevent the branches from breaking off, Hong Taeyeok instructed people to erect a stand under the tree. Normally, apricots don't ripen until after the wheat harvest, but this apricot tree, of a unique variety, is now golden in color and fragrant. In order to protect the apricots on this tree, Hong Taiyue ordered Sun Bao to send the militia to guard the tree day and night. The militia patrolled around the apricot trees with village-made guns on their backs. Sun Bao ordered the militia to shoot anyone who dared to steal an apricot, but not to be killed. So, even though I was salivating over the fruit on this romantic tree, I was afraid to take a chance. It's no laughing matter to be beaten up by militiamen with village-made guns filled with iron-colored sand. The unforgettable memory of many years ago made me shudder at the sight of a clay gun. Diao Xiaosan was full of shenanigans, but naturally he would not act rashly. The great moon, colored like an apricot, sits at the head of the tree, making the low-hanging branches look even lower. One half-crazed militiaman went so far as to shoot at the moon. The moon shivered, unharmed, and emitted a softer light, sending a distant message to me. Soothing music was ringing in my ears and I saw a number of people dressed in leaves and animal skins dancing in the moonlight. The women were topless, full breasts and nipples turned up. Another militiaman fired a shot, and a dark red flame erupted, and clouds of iron sand, like a swarm of flies, swooped towards the moon. The moon darkened for a moment and its face turned white. The moon bounced a few times at the tips of the apricot trees and then slowly rose. In the process of rising, it tapers down in size, but its light gets stronger. It rose to about twenty feet above the ground, where it hung, gazing wistfully at our apricot garden and pig farm. I thought the moon was dedicated to this wedding, and that we should entertain it with fine wine and golden apricots, so that it would use our apricot orchard as a mooring, but the two reckless militiamen competed to shoot at it, not wounding it physically, but breaking its heart. Even so, on April 16 of the lunar calendar, the apricot garden in Ximentun Village, northeast of Gaomi, is the best place on earth to enjoy the moon. The moon is big and round here, and so moody and sad. I know that Mo Yan wrote a fantastic novel called "Pole-jumping to the Moon", in which he wrote:

...We had a grand wedding for four crazy people on a pig farm on that strange day in those strange years. We made the two grooms look like two wilting cucumbers with yellow cloth sewn into their dresses and two brides look like two watery radishes with red cloth sewn into their dresses. There are only two kinds of dishes, one is cucumber with fritters and the other is radish with fritters.

It was suggested that a pig be killed, but Secretary Hong strongly disagreed. We're from Ximendingun. Pigs are famous all over the county, how can we kill pigs that are our glory? Secretary Hong is right. The cucumber tossed with fritters and the fritters tossed with radishes were enough to make us gorge ourselves. The quality of the wine is poor, it's the kind of dried potato wine in bulk, with a volume of 50 kg. The ammonia come in a full jar. The quartermaster who went to buy the booze was lazy. The ammonia jar was not brushed clean and the poured wine had a nose stinging odor in it. It didn't matter. The farmer is friendly with fertilizer, with ammonia, to the crops in the field. Watery wine, we prefer. This is the first time in my life that I've enjoyed adulthood. Courtesy, at the ten-table banquet, I was placed at the first table, diagonally opposite mine. Sitting at the end was Secretary Hung. I knew it was the gift from my own pocket the other day. I broke into the brigade and made a speech. He will never again dare to underestimate me. Two bowls of wine drunk and I felt the ground rise. There seems to be an endless amount of power hidden in the body. I rushed out of the banquet. Enter. The apricot orchard, seeing a big golden moon three meters in diameter. Sit still. Landed on the famous apricot tree that bore golden apricots. The moon is clearly looking for... I'm dating. This is both the month that Chang'e ran through and the month that Chang'e didn't run through.

It was the month that the Yanks posted it, and it wasn't the month that the Yanks The month it was posted. This is the soul of that planet. Moon, here I come! I ran with my feet like a cloud, and took one stick from the well platform. A light and flexible sycamore pole for use. Flat end on the chest, as the warrior on the steed had a lance at his end. I'm not going to stab the moon. The moon is my friend. I'm going to fly to the moon with the power of this rod. Me. Years of volunteer duty at the brigade headquarters, familiarity with the *Reference News*, knowledge of the Soviet The pole vaulter has crossed a height of 6.15 meters. I also... I've been to the playground of the Agricultural High School to see the sights. Teacher Feng Jin Zhong demonstrates for the girl with high jump potential, Pang Ant-Mei, kissing her ear. I've heard that the provincial gymnastics team has been eliminated due to a knee injury. The teacher who came to our agricultural high school as a physical education teacher, Mr. Feng Jinzhong, is the former head of the supply and marketing agency. Pang Hu, currently Director of the Fifth Cotton Processing Plant and Party General Secretary, and former Supply and Marketing Agency Salesman of a local produce and miscellaneous goods company and now canteen accountant of the Fifth Cotton Processing Plant, Wang Leyun. The two-legged daughter of a crane, Pang Yimei, explained pole vaulting. High action essentials. I leapt to the moon with confidence. I'm sure I look like Pang. He ran like a long club and jumped up and down the hole. The low-footed high-drop pole flips dashing into the bunker and lands on the moon like that. I thought for no reason that the moon resting at the top of the apricot tree should be soft and rich. It's flexible, and once I fall on it, the body bounces around on it.

The moon, on the other hand, will carry me slowly up. Those people at the wedding party. will Run out and say goodbye to me and the moon. Maybe the yellow Mutual Aid would come flying in? I unbuckled my belt and swung at her, expecting her to catch up and grab me by the waist. Then I'll do my best to pull her up and the moon will carry us up. High. We see trees and houses shrinking and people becoming like grasshoppers.

It seemed that shouts could vaguely be heard coming from below, but we are already hanging in the clear air.....

It's definitely a dream story, a recollection of Mo Yan's drunken hallucinations years later. Nothing could have been clearer to me than what happened that night at the Apricot Garden pig farm. You don't have to frown, you don't have any say in it. Ninety-nine percent of Mo Yan's words in this novel are false, but one is true, and that is: you and Jin Long are wearing fake military uniforms sewn with yellow cloth, like two wilting cucumbers. You don't understand what happened at the wedding, and you don't even know what happened in the almond garden. Now that Diao Xiao San is probably already reborn in Java, even if he is reborn as your son, he will not be as privileged as I am to be insulated from the soup of forgetting his past life, so I am the only authoritative narrator, I speak 'true history, what I deny is false history.

That night, Mo Yan only drank a bowl of wine and became drunk. Before he was allowed to make a drunken speech, he was dragged out by the neck by the tiger-backed Sun Bao and thrown on the rotting haystack, where he fell asleep on the shimmering green phosphorescent bones of the Yimeng mountain pigs that had died in winter. The truth of the matter is – and you listen to me patiently – the two militiamen who cannot go the wedding party shot at the moon and knocked it off its feet. The clouds of iron-colored sand did not strike the moon, but did knock many apricots off the trees. Golden apricots burst and landed, laying a thick layer on the ground. Many apricots were broken, the juice splashed, and the sweet apricot flavor mingled with the fragrant smell of gunpowder to entice the pig extraordinarily. I was annoyed by the barbaric behavior of the militia, and was still staring sadly at the rising moon, when I felt a black shadow flash before my eyes and a flash of lightning in my mind, and immediately understood and saw it clearly. The reason why we dared not go and eat the apricots from that apricot tree was because we were afraid of the village-made guns in the hands of the two militiamen, whoever fired then could not refill the gunpowder for at least half an hour, and that half an hour was enough to fill us with a meal. Diao Xiaosan, what an icy smart pig, I may be overtaken by him in a moment of distraction. There's nothing to regret. I didn't want to be left behind, so I jumped out of the pigsty without help. Diao Xiaosan went straight to Apricot, and I went straight to Diao Xiaosan. I've overtaken Diao Xiaosan, and the apricot under the tree is mine. But what happened next made me feel grateful. Just as Diao Xiaosan was about to eat an apricot and I was about to jump over Diao Xiaosan's belly, I saw the militiaman, who had only three and a half fingers on his right hand throw something red, spraying golden sparks and spinning round. Watch out, dangerous! I kicked my front legs hard to the ground, restraining the great inertia of my body's forward rush, like an emergency brake on a full-horsepower Mercedes; I realized afterwards that the blood had been rubbed out of my back elbow; then I rolled and got out of the most dangerous area. I saw in horror that Diao Xiaosan's muzzle had actually caught the big, slippery firecracker in his mouth like a dog, and then he shook his head violently. I knew he was trying to return the big firecracker to the two militiamen, but unfortunately the firecracker was a messenger in a hurry, and just at the moment Diao Xiaosan shook his head it exploded, as if a thunderbolt had come out of Diao Xiaosan's mouth, radiating a burning yellow flame. To be honest, in this critical moment, Diao Xiaosan reacted sharply and disposed of it decisively, with the calm mind and courageous spirit that only veterans of the battlefield have, and with the action we often see in movies where those veterans throw back the grenades thrown by the enemy, a feat that became a tragedy here because the firecracker fuse was too short. Diao Xiaosan fell head over heels before he could even grunt. The strong aroma of nitrous smoke permeated the air under the apricot trees, and gradually spread in all directions. I looked at Diao Xiao San lying on the ground, the emotions in my heart complicated, admiration, sadness, fear and also a little bit of happiness, and frankly there is also a little bit of gloating, these are not the kind of emotions that an upright pig should produce, but I could not help producing them. The two militiamen turned and ran, and after a

few paces, they stopped abruptly and turned around, looking at each other with a numb and dull expression on their faces, before they slowly leaned towards Diao Xiaosan. I know that these two brutal lads were at this moment restless in their hearts, and as Secretary Hong Taiyue said, the pig was the treasure of treasures, the pig was a stark political symbol of the era, the pig brought glory and benefit to the Ximentun Brigade, and the crime of killing a pig for no good reason, and a boar with a breeding mission at that – albeit in a substitute role – was really not small. When these two men stood in front of Diao Xiaosan with a heavy expression and looked down in anxiety, Diao Xiaosan grunted and sat up slowly. Its head bobbed like a playful rattle in a small child's hand, and a chicken-like wheeze came from its throat. It stood up, spun around a bit, went limp on its hind legs, and sat down on its buttocks again. I knew it was dizzy and aching in its mouth. The two militiamen had a look of joy on their faces. One said, "I didn't even realise it was a pig." The other said, "I thought it was a wolf." One said, "Can't you say if you want to eat apricots? Let's pick a basketful and put it in front of you." Another said, "You can eat apricots now." Diao Xiaosan cursed hatefully, in a pig language that the militia couldn't understand: "Eat your mother's ass!" It stood up and staggered off in the direction of the pigpen. I greeted it with a bit of pretence and asked, "Dude, is everything okay?" It coldly slanted me a glance, spit a mouthful of bloodied spit, and said incoherently, "Son of a bitch. When I was in Yimeng Mountain, I jumped a dozen mortar shells..." I knew this kid was a skinny donkey pulling hard shit, but also had to admire his patience and courage. He was full of nitrous smoke, the mucous membrane of his mouth was injured, and the fierce fangs on the left side were half broken, and the hair on its gills was burned quite a bit. I thought it would take a clumsy approach and burrow into its nest through the gap in the fence, but it didn't; it took a few steps and leapt up into the air, landing heavily in the mud of its nest. I knew the boy would be in agony tonight, and no matter how strong the sow smelled in heat or how erotic the butterfly fan's cries were, he would just have to lie in the mud and think empty thoughts. As if apologizing, the two militiamen threw dozens of apricots into Diao Xiaosan's nest, which I am not jealous of. Diao Xiao San paid such a heavy price, it was only right to eat a few apricots. It is not the apricots that await me, but the sows like blooming flowers, with their smiling faces and their little tails that twist as frequently as the beanworm whose head is pinned with a maple, that are the most delicious fruits on earth. By the time the gathering went to sleep in the latter half of the night, my happy life could begin. Brother Diao, I'm sorry.

Diao Xiaosan's injury relieved me of my worries and allowed me to visit that grand wedding banquet. The moon, at an altitude of thirty feet, looked at me somewhat indifferently. I raised my right paw and gave the aggrieved Moon a flying kiss, then with a twist of my tail, shot off like a meteor to the row of houses on the north side of the pig farm, immediately adjacent to the road in the village. This row of eighteen buildings, from east to west in order is the pig farmers' accommodation, feed mill, feed steamer, feed warehouse, farm office, farm honor room ... .. the westernmost dwelling was arranged as a couple of living rooms. In the middle is the shared area, flanked by their rooms. In the novel, Mo Yan, the boy, says.

"Ten square tables were set up in the large, spacious room, with cucumbers and fritters and radishes tossed with fritters served in basins, and a steam lamp hung from the beam of the room, shining brightly into the room..." That room is only five meters long and four meters wide, how can there be ten square tables. Even in Ximen Tun, even in the entire northeastern town of Gaomi, there is no hall where ten square tables can be set up for a hundred people to dine together.]

When the moon was at its height it looked down on me with cool detachment.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, pp. 295)

Example 28:

North of the road stood a two-story building fronted by an open square in which a hundred or more people – mostly old women and children – were watching an episode of a TV drama on a twenty-one-inch Matsushita Japanese television set. [The drama concerned the fantastic story of a handsome young man with webbing between his fingers and toes who could swim gracefully through the water like a shark. I saw the women and children of Ximen village staring at the small screen attentively and tut-tutting from time to time. The TV was set on a square, purple stool, which was placed on a square table. At the square table sat an old man with grey hair, who had a red armband with the words "Public Security" on his arm and a long, thin stick in his hands. Facing towards the audience, his eyes were sharp, as if he were an old invigilator. I didn't know who he was at that time: 'Wu Fang, the eldest brother of the rich peasant Wu Yuan, former colonel and head of the radio station of the Fifty-Fourth Army of the Kuomintang, captured in 1947. After liberation, he was sentenced to life imprisonment for historical counterrevolutionary crimes and was sent to do reform work in Northwest China. He was released home not long ago, but because of his old age he could no longer work. At home, he had no relatives to take care of him. However, he enjoyed the "Five Guarantees" treatment and received a 15 yuan living allowance from the region civil affairs department every month.' "The department receives a 15 yuan living allowance.....," I interposed.

For several days, the story told by Qiansui was like water flowing out of a gate. The events in his account were as real as they were unreal, which left me feeling half awake, following him sometimes to hell and sometimes to the water mansion; I was dizzy and dazzled. Occasionally, I would have some ideas of my own, but they were immediately interrupted by his talking, just like being entangled by water plants. I became a prisoner of his story, and in order to not be entirely captured, I finally seized the opportunity to tell the story of Wu Fang and bring it closer to reality. The big-headed boy jumped angrily onto the table and stamped on it with his shoes: 'Watch your mouth!' From the crotch of his pants he took out a thick and ugly cock that seemed to have formed without a skin and which was of a size obviously disproportionate to his age, and sprayed me with it. There was a strong smell of vitamin B in his urine, which poured into my mouth and choked me as I coughed. I suddenly felt that my mind had become clear again. 'You shut up and listen to me. I will leave some time for you, but not now!' He looked like both a child and an old man. He reminded me of the little red boy in *Journey to the West* — the little boy's mouth being full of flames; and also reminded me of Nezha, the young hero who made a scene in the Dragon Palace in the *Investiture of the Gods* — the little boy stepping on a wind-and-fire wheel, holding a golden gun, and with a shrug of his shoulders producing three heads and six arms. He also made me think of the 90-year-old lady with the particularly juvenile face in Jin Yong's *Dragon Oath*. With a stamp of her feet, the little old lady could jump to the top of a towering tree and whistle like a bird. I also thought of the boar in my friend Mo Yan's novel *Pig Raising* — I being the pig — as the big-headed boy returned to his seat, blustering but proud. Later, of course, I knew that the old man was Wu Fang, the elder brother of the rich peasant Wu Yuan. I also knew that Jinlong, who had taken over as the Party's Branch Secretary of the brigade, arranged for him to answer the telephone in the brigade office and made him responsible for moving out the only color TV set in the whole village every night for the townspeople to watch. I also knew that the retired Hong Taiyue was very dissatisfied with this matter and found Jinlong to argue this point with. Gathering his clothes together and stepping into his shoes, Hong looked quite down on his luck. It was said that he had been like this ever since he left his position as the Party branch secretary. Of course, he didn't voluntarily resign, it was the Party Committee of the commune that had forced him to resign on the basis of his age. Who was the party secretary of the commune at

this time? It was Pang Kangmei, Pang Hu's daughter, the youngest party secretary in the county and a brilliant new political star. There are plenty more opportunities for us to talk about her later. It is said that it was in a drunken manner that Hong Taiyue arrived at the brigade headquarters — the newly completed two-story building standing in front of him — when Wu Fang, who was in charge of the gate, bowed to him as if he had seen a Japanese officer. To this Hong Taiyue snorted scornfully a few times, held his head high and entered the building. It is said that he then pointed at the bald head of the loyal doorman sitting at the gate downstairs and scolded Jinlong: ‘Man, you have made a serious political error! Do you actually know who that guy is? He used to be a colonel in the Kuomintang. Killing him 20 times over would not be enough. We are generous enough to let him keep his life — how dare you allow him to take advantage of the "Five Guarantees" policy! What is your class position?’ It is said that Jinlong then took out quite a sophisticated imported cigarette, lit it with a lighter that appeared to be made of pure gold and which burned butane, and then inserted the lit cigarette into Hong's mouth, as if he were a quadriplegic and unable to light his own cigarette. Jinlong pushed Hong into the leather swivel chair, a rarity at that time, while he heaved up his buttocks and sat on the desk. He said, ‘Uncle Hong, you brought me up, and I am your successor. No matter what, I want to follow your old way, but the world has changed, or at least the times have. It is the county's decision to let Wu Fang enjoy the "Five Guarantees" policy. Not only does he enjoy the treatment under the "Five Guarantees" but he also receives a 15 yuan living allowance from the civil affairs department each month. Man, are you angry? Well don't be. It's a national policy, it's no use being angry’. It is said that Hong Taiyue replied to this bluntly, ‘Isn't what we achieved in the revolution being wasted?’ Jinlong jumped down from the table and turned the swivel chair 180 degrees so that Hong Taiyue faced towards a brand-new, red-tiled roof illuminated by the bright sunlight outside the window. ‘Don't say that, man. The purpose of the Communist Party's revolution was not to overthrow the Kuomintang and drive Chiang Kai-shek away. The fundamental purpose of the Communist Party's leadership in the people's revolution was to enable the people to live a good life with plenty of food and clothing. Chiang Kai-shek of the Kuomintang blocked the way for the Communist Party, so he was defeated. So, man, we are all ordinary people. Don't think so much. We will support whoever can make our lives better.’ Hong Taiyue was then said to have retorted angrily, ‘You are talking rubbish, you are a revisionist! I'll go to the province and get the law on to you!’ Jinlong replied to this with a smile, ‘Man, do you think the provincial government has the time to worry about this kind of thing? In my opinion, as long as you have enough liquor, meat and money, you should not complain or meddle.’ Hong Taiyue was then said to have replied stubbornly, ‘No, it's a question of the means. The Central Committee must have been revisionist.’ ‘Just open your eyes, all of these changes are just the beginning. The next changes may be as Chairman Mao once said in his poem, “In heroic triumph, heaven and earth have been overturned”.’]

I observed the crowd of TV watchers for about ten minutes before continuing on, heading west. You know where I was going. But now I needed to stay off the road.

(Mo Yan and Goldblatt, 2008, pp. 346–347)



**APPENDIX FOUR – QUESTIONNAIRE FOR A STUDY OF THE TRANSLATION  
OF MO YAN’S *LIFE AND DEATH ARE WEARING ME OUT***

*Please give first the following personal data:*

*Age:*

*Gender:*

*First language:*

**Questions**

**Please put a tick or an X in the box; or highlight your choice following the chosen answer.**

**If you have any comments, please add them in the line below each question (optional)**

1) Had you heard of Mo Yan or Howard Goldblatt before?

Neither		Mo Yan		Howard Goldblatt		Both	
---------	--	--------	--	------------------	--	------	--

2) Had you read or heard of *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* before?

(a) No            (b) Yes

If you answered yes, could you please specify the source (the Internet, TV, book review, etc)  
through which you heard of it?

3) Did you find that the number of Chinese names made it hard to read?

- (a) Not at all
- (b) A little
- (c) Quite difficult
- (d) Extremely confusing

Comments:

4) The additional descriptions of scenery in Text B enhance the text:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree

Comments:

- 5) The omission of the pig's monologue weakens and distorts the text

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
		X		

Comments:

- 6) The political criticism in Text A was clear to me

- (a) Not at all
- (b) A little bit
- (c) Somewhat
- (d) Self-evident

Comments:

- 7) The politically loaded terms in both texts were confusing?

- (a) Extremely confused
- (b) Acceptable but only partially understood
- (c) Neutral
- (d) Interested

Comments:

- 8) The fact that there are two narrators in Text B, but only one in Text A makes it more interesting.

How did you react to this discrepancy?

- (a) A distortion of the original writing style, and should be avoided
- (b) Neutral
- (c) The main plot has been emphasised through the omission.
- (d) It's part of the greater detail of Text B.

Comments:

- 9) Mention of other Chinese novels such as *Journey to the West* and *The Investiture of the God*, and the reference to historical figures such as Liu Bei and Zhuge Liang add interesting colour to the text

- (a) Extremely Confused
- (b) Somewhat difficult to follow
- (c) Neutral
- (d) Interested

Comments:

- 10) The omission of Chinese literature and historical figures in Text A distorts the text

- (a) It underscores the cultural gap.
- (b) It facilitates the reading.
- (c) Neutral
- (d) It is a distortion to the original text and should be avoided.

Comments:

- 11) The description of the crowd in the tavern in Text B is unnecessarily confusing

- (a) Too many characters and difficult to remember
- (b) Too many political terms and difficult to understand
- (c) Neutral
- (d) Interesting

Comments:

- 12) Mention of the fictive novel *Post-revolution Warrior* in Text B adds interest

- (a) The engaged narrative (story within a story) is interesting.
- (b) Neutral
- (c) Repetition of previous plots
- (d) Distracting

Comments:

13) The flashbacks and interpolations in this selected chapter make it hard to follow

- (a) Interesting narrative structure
- (b) Neutral
- (c) Distracting
- (d) Extremely confusing and difficult to follow

Comments:

14) Expressions such as “mating”, “jerking off”, “cock” in the novel coarsen the work

- (a) The language is unacceptably coarse.
- (b) Seems unnecessary to the plots
- (c) Neutral
- (d) Acceptable

Comments:

15) The reading experience of Text A was enjoyable

- (a) Very interested
- (b) Interested
- (c) Mildly interested
- (d) Not interested at all

Comments:

16) In Text A the story felt incomplete

- (a) Not at all
- (b) A little bit incomplete
- (c) Somewhat incomplete
- (d) Strongly

Comments:

17) The reading experience of Text B was enjoyable?

- (a) Very interested
- (b) Interested
- (c) Mildly interested
- (d) Not interested at all

Comments:

18) The omission of more than 40% of the original text was justified

- (a) Totally confused
- (b) Somewhat understand
- (c) Quite understandable
- (d) Fully understand

Comments:

19) Which aspect of the missing content interested you most?

- (a) The detailed descriptions of minor characters' lives
- (b) The discussion of politics by ordinary people
- (c) The complicated narrative of flashbacks and interpolation
- (d) The narrators' monologues

Comments:

20) Which text do you prefer?

- (a) Text A
- (b) Text B

Reasons:

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