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FROM MYTH TO SENSORIUM: RECASTING THE MARVEL IN CONTEMPORARY CHINESE NARRATIVE (MO YAN'S 70TH ANNIVERSARY)

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The article examines Mo Yan's poetics within the transnational trajectories of magical realism, marking the author's 70th anniversary as a key context. It proposes to interpret Chinese "hallucinatory realism" as a localized form of magical realism grounded in corporeality and sensory experience. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Wendy B. Faris, Amaryll B. Chanady, Mikhail Bakhtin, Jacques Lacan, and Paul Ricoeur, the study develops the concept of a poetics of corporeality, where the marvelous is embedded in the material and phenomenological world. Through close analysis of Mo Yan's major novels – "Sandalwood Death", "Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out", "Frog", "Pow!", "The Republic of Wine", and "Red Sorghum" – the article demonstrates that bodily sensoriality functions as a mediator between memory, history, and power. The marvelous is not detached from the real but naturalized within it, manifesting through theatricality, acoustics, gastronomy, and color. This research advances the idea of corporeal realism as a universal narrative model that expands magical realism beyond its Latin American origins. The study highlights Mo Yan's contribution to world literature and underscores the significance of Chinese narrative experience for contemporary comparative literary studies.

Keywords: *Mo Yan; magical realism; poetics of corporeality; sensoriality; Chinese literature; comparative literature; cultural semiotics; Ricoeur; Lacan; Bakhtin.*

Introduction

Over the past few decades, magical realism has emerged as one of the most vigorously debated categories in global comparative literature. From its Latin American origins, rooted in Alejo Carpentier's *lo real maravilloso*

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and the canon established by Gabriel García Márquez, the critical lens has gradually shifted toward the exploration of transnational and localized forms that arise within cultures far removed from the New World. Contemporary Chinese fiction of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries – most notably in the works of Mo Yan, the 2012 Nobel laureate – has become a key argument in the ongoing discussion of whether magical realism can be regarded as a universal aesthetic strategy, or whether it is inevitably shaped by regional and historical conditions.

The relevance of this study is determined by several interrelated factors. First, the globalization of literary processes compels us to examine how aesthetic models migrate and transform as they traverse cultural boundaries. If Latin American magical realism grew out of the specific mythopoetic imagination of the New World, Mo Yan's fiction draws instead upon the bodily experience, sensory perception, and collective memory of the Chinese village.

Second, while the international attention that followed Mo Yan's Nobel Prize has inspired an extensive body of scholarship, much of it has remained confined to the historical context, political allegory, or issues of censorship. The poetics of corporeality and sensory experience, where the marvelous becomes materially grounded, has not yet received systematic analysis.

Third, Chinese literary material itself invites a redefinition of magical realism: it should not be viewed merely as an exported Latin American model but as a universal narrative strategy capable of local adaptation across diverse cultural environments.

The novelty of this article lies in its proposal to interpret Mo Yan's magical realism through the lens of *the poetics of corporeality*. In contrast to studies that focus primarily on political allegory or historical context, the present analysis emphasizes that the marvelous in Mo Yan's prose is anchored above all in the sensory realm – in color, sound, smell, taste, and pain. Such an approach reveals not only a critique of social structures but also an original epistemology in which knowledge of the world is mediated through the body and the senses.

The central hypothesis of this research is that Mo Yan's magical realism is not *an imported* stylistic device but a localized narrative form grounded in embodied and sensory experience. While it retains the universal features of magical realism as described by Faris and Chanady, it also radically transforms them, transferring the marvelous from the

mythopoetic to the material and phenomenological domain. If García Márquez situates the marvelous within genealogy and collective myth, Mo Yan naturalizes it within the body, turning it into a phenomenon of lived experience.

Methodological framework: The methodological foundation of this article combines a hermeneutic approach with a narratological perspective. On the one hand, it draws upon the theoretical frameworks developed by Wendy B. Faris², Amaryll Chanady³, and *The Cambridge Companion to Magical Realism*⁴. These sources make it possible to outline the key diagnostic features of the genre: the “irreducible element” of the marvelous, the “authorial reticence”, and the dual chronotopic structure.

On the other hand, the analysis proceeds within the framework of cultural semiotics, which enables an examination of color, sound, and corporeality as sign systems encoding historical experience. Methodologically significant are also the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin (the carnivalesque body), Jacques Lacan (*objet petit a* as the structure of desire), and Paul Ricoeur’s philosophical hermeneutics, which emphasizes corporeality as the mediator between lived experience and textual representation.

In this context, the article aims to trace how, in Mo Yan’s later novels (“Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out”, “Frog”, “Pow!”, “The Republic of Wine”), the marvelous becomes embedded in bodily sensuality, and how these strategies correlate with his early novel “Red Sorghum”, which forms the initial matrix of his poetics. In addition, the study examines Mo Yan’s place within the global history of magical realism through comparison with the Latin American tradition and other forms of localization (African and East European). The result is the substantiation of the concept of *the poetics of corporeality* as a productive analytical instrument that makes it

² Faris W. B. *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004, <https://surl.lu/jmsesr> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

³ Chanady A. B. *Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved versus Unresolved Antinomy*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1982, <https://archive.org/details/Chanady1982/page/n7/mode/2up> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

⁴ Hart S. M., Ouyang W.-C. (eds.) *A Companion to Magical Realism*. Woodbridge; Rochester: Tamesis Books, 2005, <https://ru.z-lib.fm/book/823265/228329/a-companion-to-magical-realism.html> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

possible to interpret the Chinese material within a broad international context.

Thus, the article enters the international discussion on the transnational forms of magical realism and offers an original perspective on Mo Yan's work. It proceeds from the hypothesis that it is precisely sensoriality and corporeality that serve as mediators of the marvelous, transforming it into a cultural code rooted in the local Chinese tradition while remaining relevant to global comparative studies.

Main Part

Beyond the New World: Mapping the Global Trajectories of Magical Realism

From the Latin American concept of *lo real maravilloso* to Mo Yan's *hallucinatory realism*, the path is not a direct line of influence but rather a network of poetics and critical concepts that make it possible to describe a special type of narration in which the marvelous does not negate reality but expands its boundaries.

In the Duke University Press collection «Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community»⁵ magical realism is interpreted as a historically mutable yet conceptually recognizable “intermediate mode” of writing that originated in Latin America and subsequently spread across the world; at the same time, it is emphasized that it functions as a mode rather than a rigid genre, with corresponding transnational and postcolonial applications.

A synthetic definition is offered by Wendy B. Faris in her monograph “Ordinary Enchantments” (2004): magical realism is characterized by (a) the presence of an “irreducible element” of magic, (b) “a strong presence of the phenomenal world,” (c) “unsettling doubts” – the reader's hesitation, (d) “the narrative merges different realms” of the living and the dead, of myth and history, and (e) “disturbs received ideas about time, space, and identity”⁶.

It is important to note that in Faris this is an analytical five-part framework of characteristics: “In Chapter II propose five characteristics of

⁵ Zamora L. P., Faris W. B. (eds.) *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995. https://archive.org/details/magicalrealismth0000unse_a1s2/page/n3/mode/2up (Accessed 04.10.2025).

⁶ Faris W. B. *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004, p. 7.

magical realism and locate it at the intersection of modernism and postmodernism, engaging both sets of agendas and aesthetics”⁷, rather than a closed definition.

In Amaryll B. Chanady’s classic study “Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved versus Unresolved Antinomy” (1985), the key criterion of distinction lies in “authorial reticence” and the “resolved antinomy” of the natural/supernatural in magical realism versus the “unresolved” one in the fantastic. Magical realism, as Chanady emphasizes, is based on the “absence of obvious judgments about the veracity of the events”⁸.

In the complementary perspective of the *Cambridge Companion* (CUP, 2020), magical realism appears as “between modernism and postmodernism” and “It mingles the probable and improbable, the real and the fantastic, and it provided the late-twentieth century novel with an infusion of creative energy”⁹.

Historically, a significant point of convergence in the discourse is Alejo Carpentier’s essay on *lo real maravilloso americano* (1949), which sets forth a fundamental premise: the marvelous in America is not an exotic supplement to realistic description but a way of experiencing reality as a cultural and historical given. Carpentier formulates the thesis of *the real marvelous* of the New World as the very texture of history itself. This line can also be traced in the work of Miguel Ángel Asturias, in whom, according to critical tradition, mytho-ritual structures and Indigenous cosmologies (above all in “Hombres de maíz”) do not merely “season” realism but reshape its perspective. A revealing authorial emphasis (quoted from a 1966 interview) reads: “el paisaje ha cobrado vida propia” – “the landscape has acquired a life of its own”¹⁰, which is emblematic of the magico-realist animation of the world. Gabriel García Márquez stands as the acknowledged mediating figure who canonized a mode of writing in which “sacred everydayness” intertwines with political history; yet it is

⁷ Ibid., p. 3

⁸ Chanady A. B. *Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved versus Unresolved Antinomy*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1985, p. 35.

⁹ Warnes C., Sasser K. A. (eds.) *Magical Realism and the ‘Boom’ of the Latin American Novel*. / In: *Magical Realism and Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, October 2020. – pp. 101-116, <https://surl.lu/njasje> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

¹⁰ Hatley P. Myths Die Hard: Parker Hatley reviews Gerald Martin’s updated translation of the Guatemalan novel “Men of Maize” by Miguel Ángel Asturias. *Fiction Review*. September 11, 2024, <https://surl.li/qnuesh> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

important to remember that by the mid-1990s criticism had already begun to move magical realism beyond the strictly Latin American context toward global trajectories¹¹.

It should also be noted that although Borges is often invoked in this “genealogy”, mainstream comparativism remains cautious: Borges’s metaphysical fantastic experiment is not equivalent to the poetics of *magischer Realismus* in the sense of Carpentier, Asturias, or García Márquez. This skepticism is institutionally reinforced by contemporary reference works insisting on the distinction between “fantastic” and “magical-realist” modes¹². By the 1960s-1990s, magical realism was already being conceptualized as an international mode of writing: «a model of understanding magical realism that sees it originating in Latin America before spreading across the globe»¹³.

On Anglo-American material, the operationalization proposed by Faris and the body of studies where the magico-realist model of interpretation is applied to Toni Morrison (historical trauma vs *rememory* in “Beloved”) and to Ben Okri (African *animist* variation) prove particularly useful. Thus, P. Gabrielle Forman demonstrates how magical realism differentiates itself from adjacent modes and why it is precisely this form that allows history to be rewritten “from below” (Morrison / Allende), while studies on Okri discuss *petro-magic realism* and the poetics of the “third eye”: “the acceptance of the supernatural and a profound rootedness in the real world at the same time, without one taking precedence over the other”¹⁴. Here, it is also relevant to recall a “working” citation that has entered the textbooks: according to Salman Rushdie, it is “the commingling of the improbable and the mundane”¹⁵, a formula that Bowers employs as a heuristic guideline for English-language corpora.

¹¹ See: Zamora L. P., Faris W. B. (eds.) *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995.

¹² See: Warnes C., Sasser K. A. (eds.) *Magical Realism and Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, October 2020, <https://surl.li/sugghi> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁴ Foreman P. G. Past-on Stories: History and the Magically Real, Morrison and Allende on Call. *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Summer, 1992), pp. 369-388, <https://surl.li/jphdxt> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

¹⁵ Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight’s Children*. Random House. New York, NY. 2006, p. 4, <https://surl.lt/tdlere> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

In the British feminist key, Angela Carter's "Nights at the Circus" (1984) demonstrates the instrumental role of magical realism as a strategy for subverting "naturalized" ideologies; the corpus of reviews and critical studies emphasizes the synthesis of "postmodern subversions" and fairy-tale mythological symbolism¹⁶. In American fiction, a significant case is John Updike's "Brazil" (1994): this is a deliberate engagement with the Brazilian South as a stage for a magico-realist inversion of the Tristan and Isolde myth, where Brazil becomes the perfect scenery for Updike to employ the magical realist genre. At the intersection of popular and "high" fiction stands Jonathan Carroll, whose early novels are consistently read through the prism of magical realism. An academic overview explicitly notes: "The amalgamation of magical with realistic elements, so typical of Jonathan Carroll's style, is the most common feature of magical realist literature, present in the canon"¹⁷. For the post-Yugoslav context, a revealing example is the phenomenon of "historical postmodernism," where Goran Petrović (alongside Pavić and Petković) employs the political branch of magical realism as a technology of memory and a means of revising the "official truth." At the same time, Petrović creates in his later works a "magical space of suspended childhood"¹⁸, filtering postmodernist devices through the lens of magical realism. Finally, in the Russian literary field, magico-realist continuity finds expression in Mikhail Shishkin "The Letter Book" (2010), with certain reservations – in Narine Abgaryan's "Simon" (2020); while Dmitry Lipskerov's novel "The Last Dream of Reason" (2001) is consistently described by critics as a work within the framework of fantastic (magical) realism, along with a monograph on magical reminiscences in Lipskerov's prose.

Relying on the works of the theorists of magical realism, Chanady and Faris, one can develop a stable diagnostic framework for reading "magico-realist" texts outside the Latin American center, provided that (1) the marvelous is not "*displaced*" into an autonomous fantastic world but

¹⁶ Michael M. C. Angela Carter's Nights at the Circus: An Engaged Feminism via Subversive Postmodern Strategies. / Contemporary Literature, Vol. 35, No. 3, (Autumn, 1994), pp. 492-521, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1208642> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

¹⁷ Wiśniewska E. Magical Realist Traits in the Early Works by Jonathan Carroll. Piotrków Trybunalski: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego, 2022, <https://bibliotekacyfrowa.ujk.edu.pl> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

¹⁸ Pavić Milorad. O Gorane Petroviće, travinke iz rukopisi i nezdešnih mećtah, Goran Petrović. Atlas, sostavlenyj neбом. SPb, 2000.

“fused” with empirical reality (closely related to “*authorial reticence*” in Chanady), (2) the phenomenality of the world “*as it is*” is preserved (Faris), (3) the marvelous marks traumatic and political horizons (postcolonial / transitional modernities), and (4) the narrative does not explain the miracle but “*naturalizes*” it within social time. This is precisely how Mo Yan’s *hallucinatory realism* functions: the Nobel formula of 2012 defines his prose as “hallucinatory realism that merges folk tales, history and the contemporary”¹⁹ – a characterization that conveniently “builds a bridge” from the Carpentier line to the Chinese locus.

From this perspective, the Nobel Committee’s designation ‘hallucinatory realism’ proves not only appropriate but methodologically precise. When Mo Yan’s fiction is read through the lens of the embodied poetics developed in this article, the body emerges as the primary medium through which the marvelous enters empirical reality – not as an autonomous fantasy, but as a sensory and physiological aftermath of political violence, agrarian modernization, and collective trauma. What appears as “hallucinatory” is therefore not illusion but a mode of embodied knowledge, a corporeal way of registering historical rupture.

In Mo Yan’s case, we can observe how this syntactic linkage (*the marvelous vs history vs the contemporary*) generates the political energy of narration. As a starting “realistic” basis, it is useful to recall that his early novel “Red Sorghum” represents life-historical prose that entered cultural memory largely thanks to Zhang Yimou’s film adaptation (1987), one of the key channels of Mo Yan’s reception outside China.

Modalities of Magical Realism in Mo Yan’s Early 21st-Century Fictional Corpus

Mo Yan’s early texts were often structured around folkloric motifs and family chronicles, his novels – “Sandalwood Death” (2001), “Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out” (2006), “Frog” (2009), and “Pow!” (2003) – employ the marvelous as a systematic method for representing trauma and biopolitics. In each of these works, magical realism becomes localized within a specific medium: theatrical, Buddhist, acoustic, or sensory. This localization is not decorative; it establishes corporeality as a key channel of memory, pain, and power.

¹⁹ See: <https://surl.li/fqsjqj> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

In “Sandalwood Death” (檀香刑, 2001), Mo Yan does not displace the marvelous into the realm of the fantastic but weaves it into the very fabric of history, using operatic performance as a medium of collective memory. The text is structured through the registers of Shandong *maoqiang* opera (茂腔), in which arias, recitatives, and the ritual of execution are not mere stylization but genuine performative acts that contain the impossible within the historical chronotope. The characters not only live and suffer within the world of events but also *perform* it, as though fate itself were staged as drama.

The key scene of ritual execution described in the novel acquires a double nature: it becomes both a chronicle of political and social violence and a performative spectacle in which sound and corporeality create the effect of a *second level of reality*: “In his red-tasseled skullcap and long robe, topped by a short jacket with buttons down the front, he paced the courtyard, counting the beads on his Buddhist rosary...”²⁰.

Andrea Riemenschneider emphasizes that *maoqiang* in the novel functions as a stage for local history: through it, violence becomes a form of collective remembrance, and aesthetic form turns into a means of experiencing trauma (see: “Staging Local History between Empires”, 2021). This reveals the productivity of the concepts developed by Faris (see: “Ordinary Enchantment”, 2004) and Chanady (see: “Magical Realism and the Fantastic”, 1985): the marvelous is embedded within the chronicle, while authorial reticence naturalizes it. Thus, “Sandalwood Death” demonstrates how the theatrical form becomes a marvelous element of Chinese history – one inscribed within corporeal experience and collective memory.

The novel “Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out” (生死疲劳, 2006) occupies a central place in Mo Yan’s corpus as an epic of twentieth-century peasant destiny. Its defining feature is the use of Buddhist metempsychosis, which functions not as a metaphor but as a narrative instrument for fixing historical chronicle. The protagonist, Ximen Nao, passes through six reincarnations – *donkey, ox, pig, dog, monkey, and boy* – and each of these incarnations provides a perspective on history “from below”²¹, through the

²⁰ Mo Yan. Sandalwood Death. Translated by Goldblatt, 2013, p. 3, <https://surl.li/liusiy> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

²¹ Mo Yan. Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out. Translated by Goldblatt, 2008, pp. 17-18, <https://surl.li/orvpsr> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

eyes of a bodily and vulnerable being: “The pouch swayed like a public house shop sign”²². Here the marvelous is not relegated to an autonomous sphere of the “fantastic”, but organically interwoven with the chronicle of the twentieth century. This exemplifies the “double code” effect described by Chanady: the reader perceives the reincarnations simultaneously as a miracle and as a credible chronicle, without encountering any authorial explanation (*Chanady*, 1985).

Critics note that in this novel metempsychosis becomes an epistemological instrument: “Ximen’s reincarnations are not an allegory but a means of retaining in memory every historical phase of the village, every social upheaval”²³.

A comparison with the Latin American tradition reveals a crucial difference: whereas in Gabriel García Márquez the ghosts of ancestors return as reminders of genealogical memory (*Zamora & Faris*, 1995), in Mo Yan’s work the hero’s reincarnations become radically corporeal – history is lived through the body, through pain and hunger.

Thus, “Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out” demonstrates how hallucinatory realism fuses Buddhist cosmology with the peasant chronicle of the twentieth century: the marvelous does not negate history but transforms itself into its bodily mechanism.

In “Frog” (蛙, 2009), Mo Yan fuses magical realism with the biopolitical dimension of modern Chinese history. The plot centers on a rural midwife who for decades performed abortions and enforced birth control. The title itself encodes a triple homonymy: 蛙 (*wa*, “frog”), 娃 (*wa*, “child”), and 娲 (*Nüwa*, the mythical ancestress). This linguistic play connects obstetric practice, corporeality, and mythopoesis, transforming sound into a semiotic knot. The novel’s central image is acoustic. In the climactic scene, the midwife hears croaking as the cries of infants: “The croaking of frogs is often described in terms of drumbeats. But that night it sounded to her like human cries, almost as if thousands of newborn infants were crying”²⁴. The Chinese text confirms this: “常言道蛙声如鼓，但姑

²² *Ibid.*, p.7.

²³ Barmé G. R. China’s Flat Earth: History and 8 August 2008. *The China Quarterly*, 2009, pp. 64-86, <https://chinaheritage.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Olympics-Opening.Published.pdf> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

²⁴ Mo Yan. *Frog*. Translated by Goldblatt, 2014, p. 250, <https://surl.li/yszmlg> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

姑说，那天晚上的蛙声如哭，仿佛是成千上万的初生婴儿在哭”²⁵。

The phrase “蛙声如哭” – “croaking like crying” – naturalizes the marvelous: the sound of nature becomes a social marker. The original text further intertwines two motifs – “青蛙的叫声与婴儿的哭声”²⁶ – “the croaking of frogs and the crying of infants”.

According to Wendy Faris (2004), this represents a “chronotopic disruption”: the boundary lies not in time or space but in acoustics – a sound that should signify life becomes a sign of death and power. By Foucault, biopower is theorized as the modern transformation of power that “makes live and lets die,” shifting the locus of sovereignty into the regulation of bodies and populations²⁷. Mo Yan’s narrative links amphibian symbolism with the state’s reproductive politics, merging folklore with contemporary trauma.

Thus, “Frog” demonstrates the localization of the marvelous in the village’s acoustics: croaking and crying become the chronicle of trauma and politics, while the marvelous transforms into a corporeal and sonic mediator of power.

In “Pow!” (四十一炮, 2003), Mo Yan realizes the marvelous through a form of sensory grotesque. The narrative unfolds as a confession delivered by a boy to a monk, blending social chronicle with personal testimony. The novel thematizes “注水肉” (*zhushui rou*: “water-injected meat”). In the English excerpt “Bull” (*The New Yorker*, 2012), Lao Lan is portrayed as the inventor of a method for injecting fluid into animal carcasses. Chinese criticism interprets this as a metaphor for the substitution of reality by simulacrum – “from watery meat to watery culture” (中国作家网, 2015).

At the ethical level, one of the characters remarks: “Money’s money. It’s not to blame; people are”²⁸. This line establishes the frame: material objects are neutral, yet social relations turn them into instruments of violence. In the climax, the bull throws off the butcher, and the scene is perceived not as allegory but as sensory testimony of collective retribution.

²⁵ 莫言. 《蛙》. 北京: 作家出版社, 2009. <https://surl.lu/wdnyrj> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ See: Foucault M. *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*. Translated by R. Hurley. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

²⁸ Bull. *The New Yorker*, 2012, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/11/26/bull-2> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

Thus, “Pow!” illustrates the third modality of the marvelous in Mo Yan’s work: if “Sandalwood Death” is built upon operatic performativity, “Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out” upon Buddhist cosmology, and “Frog” upon the acoustics of the village, then “Pow!” embodies the marvelous through sensory grotesque and the economy of the body.

Mo Yan’s later novels – “*Sandalwood Death*”, “*Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*”, “*Frog*”, and “*Pow!*” – demonstrate four modalities of magical realism within the Chinese context. The marvelous emerges through theatre, metempsychosis, sound, and sensory experience. Yet the unifying principle of all these modalities remains the body.

- In “*Sandalwood Death*”, the body becomes the object of performativity and the stage of memory.
- In “*Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*”, it passes through reincarnations, preserving the trauma of history.
- In “*Frog*”, the acoustics of the body (crying/croaking) transform into a chronicle of politics.
- In “*Pow!*”, the body – flesh, blood, and smells – becomes the site of economic and moral drama.

Thus, Mo Yan’s hallucinatory realism is not an abstract mythologization but a *poetics of corporeality*, in which the marvelous is rooted in the phenomenal world and functions as a mediator between memory, trauma, and power.

Mo Yan’s *The Republic of Wine*: Institutional Discourse and Cannibalism

In “The Republic of Wine” (酒国, 1992), Mo Yan’s hallucinatory realism operates as a distinctive mechanism of institutional discourse, in which the monstrous is sustained within the phenomenal world through a triple strategy. The first layer is the bureaucratic registration of the impossible: the entry into the text is marked by an official, impassive tone – “I have arrived <...> to investigate reports that at your mine they are roasting and eating babies”²⁹. The horrific is not questioned but incorporated into the bureaucratic protocol itself, which corresponds to Chanady’s principle of authorial “reticence”. The second layer is that of sensory hyperreality – the banquet scenes possess gastronomic density,

²⁹ Yan Mo. *The Republic of Wine*. Translated by Howard Goldblatt, 2011, https://royallib.com/book/yan_mo/the_republic_of_wine.html (Accessed 04.10.2025).

where smell and texture become *evidentiary*: “The boy sat cross-legged in the middle of the gilded platter, golden brown and oozing sweet-smelling oil”³⁰,

and the dialogue: “Why is this fake child so lifelike?” – “Because our chefs are uncommonly skilled...”³¹

Here the marvelous is not exposed but rationalized through craftsmanship, producing the binary code of belief and doubt described by Chanady. The third layer arises through a meta-frame: the letters of Li Yidou and the appearance of Mo Yan as a character merge document and narrative, report and correspondence, so that reality and fiction circulate within a single textual space.

Such a structure turns the novel into a political allegory, where cannibalism is not a marginal fantasy but a codified institutional procedure. Tiffany Yun-Chu Tsai defines the text as a “cannibal labyrinth”³² in which letters, scenes, and institutions mutually devour one another. In this sense, “The Republic of Wine” can be logically correlated with earlier literary codes.

Already in “Water Margin” (水滸傳), the innkeepers Sun Erniang 孫二娘 and Zhang Qing 張青 prepare *renrou baozi* (人肉包子: “meat buns made of human flesh”), while bandits boil their captives into soup. In *Chapter 27*, the “technology” of obtaining meat from travelers who stray into the hamlet of Shizipo is described in detail³³. The tavern owner Zhang Qing tells Wu Song –who narrowly escapes becoming part of the menu – about his trade: “How can one make a living in the city? So I decided to return to my old place, built a house, and opened a tavern here where the two of us lure passing travelers. <...> My wife’s surname is Sun. She has fully mastered her father’s art, and people call her the Man-Eater, Sun Erniang”³⁴. This confession evokes no horror in the would-be victim of the gastronomic experiment; instead, it becomes the foundation of a lasting

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Tsai Y.-C. Tiffany. Cannibal Labyrinth: Narrative, Intertextuality, and Politics of Cannibalism in Mo Yan’s *The Republic of Wine*. / *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 2020, pp. 230-276, https://www.jstor.org/stable/27032490?read-now=1&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents (Accessed 04.10.2025).

³³ Naj-An’ Ši. Rečnyje zavodi. Roman v dvuh tomah. /Per. A. Rogačova / M., 1959, tom 1, ss. 414-418.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 417.

friendship between Wu Song and the cannibal couple. A similar motif appears in *Chapter 32*, centered on the future bandit leader Song Jiang, who is captured by forest outlaws intending to “cook him into hangover soup”³⁵. The gang chief’s order “to take out this ox’s liver and heart” and “make three bowls of strong spicy soup for a hangover”³⁶ is never carried out thanks to a moment of recognition: Song Jiang turns out to be one of their own, a member of the brotherhood, and therefore untouchable among the *liangshan* outlaws. This reconciliation and fraternity stem from the country’s destitution and widespread famine, which had normalized cannibalism. Such archetypal gastro-grotesque unites horror with farce.

Lu Xun’s «Diary of a Madman» (狂人日记, 1918) reworks this motif into a modernist allegory: the narrator reads between the lines of the classics the hidden ideogram 吃人 (“eat people”), and the diary ends with the cry “救救孩子” (“save the children”). Cannibalism here exposes the feudal tradition as institutionalized violence embedded in culture. In Mo Yan, the same code is radicalized: 吃人 is transferred into a post-socialist feast, where gastronomy merges with bureaucratic discourse. The “boy on the platter” and the scene with the “dummy”³⁷ are no longer symbols but simulacrum, validated by report and documentation. In both cases, the monstrous becomes institutionalized: in Lu Xun through the archive and the “classics,” in Mo Yan through accountability and the menu.

This mechanism readily aligns with the European tradition of recording the “unthinkable.” In “The Name of the Rose” (*Eco*, 1980) we find the episode: “...they took a newborn infant and tossed him back and forth... Then, having torn the infant’s body apart, they mixed it into dough to bake blasphemous wafers!”³⁸.

The scene, like Mo Yan’s, is presented in a documentary register – not as a “tale of horror”, but as part of an inquisitorial report. Elsewhere in the novel, death comes through the poisoned pages of Aristotle, where knowledge is literally consumed. In both cases, the monstrous is *produced*

³⁵ Ibid., p. 480.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 481.

³⁷ Yan Mo. *The Republic of Wine*. Translated by Howard Goldblatt, 2011, https://royallib.com/book/yan_mo/the_republic_of_wine.html (Accessed 04.10.2025).

³⁸ Eko Umberto. *Imja rozy*. /Per. E. Kostjukovič, M., 2013. 83.

by the speech of the institution: by the library and the Church in Eco, by the Party and bureaucracy in Mo Yan.

The same effect can be traced in historical sources: “Practica inquisitionis hereticae pravitatis” by Bernard Gui and “Directorium inquisitorum” by Nicholas Eymerich (1376) record “heresies” in the dry language of interrogation; the “Hexenhammer” (“Malleus Maleficarum”, bei Heinrich Kramer und Jakob Sprenger) of the fifteenth century makes horror part of legal procedure.

This interlocking shows that hallucinatory realism in “The Republic of Wine” functions not as “fantasy” but as a mode of articulating power. Cannibalism – from the Ming prose *renrou baozi* and Lu Xun’s modernist cry (吃人, 救救孩子), through Mo Yan’s post-socialist banquet, and further to inquisitorial manuals and Eco’s rhetoric – appears as a universal model of institutional speech: a protocol that renders the unthinkable part of the social contract.

A comparison of Mo Yan’s novel with the European tradition reveals striking parallels. In “A Modest Proposal” (1729) Jonathan Swift employs a parodic device: in the bureaucratically dry tone of economic reasoning he describes the absurd transformation of infants into a food commodity³⁹. It is precisely this register of ironic mimicry of the official voice that proves closest to the bureaucratic protocols of “The Republic of Wine”, where cannibalism is recorded as a report – or a menu.

The Latin American context broadens the analytical framework. In Miguel Ángel Asturias’s “Hombres de maíz”, food functions as a mediator between nature and collective identity, while in Gabriel García Márquez’s “Cien años de soledad” banquets and culinary imagery become symbolic forms of genealogical memory. Against this background, Mo Yan’s feast appears as a radicalized version of the same culinary code: the body itself becomes food, inscribed within the language of power.

The principle described by Mikhail Bakhtin as the “*carnavalesque body*” is equally productive for reading the novel. For Bakhtin, the body is an open, ever-transforming form, inseparable from the rituals of laughter and the grotesque. In “The Republic of Wine”, this logic is realized in grotesque form: the corporeal becomes part of a social ritual in which the

³⁹ Swift J. A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland, from Being a Burden on Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick. Dublin: S. Harding, 1729, <https://surl.li/dwdttq> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

boundaries between life and nourishment, between body and product, lose their stability.

A psychoanalytic framework introduced by Jacques Lacan adds another dimension. The figure of the child transformed into an object of consumption may be interpreted as a variation of what Lacan defines as *objet petit a* (*l'objet perdu a*) – the “little object a”, the object-cause of desire that perpetually eludes full possession but precisely through that elusiveness structures desire itself⁴⁰. In Mo Yan’s novel, bureaucratic language conceals this very structure: the act of eating is framed as a normative discourse in which desire is transformed into an administrative fact.

Finally, the composition of the novel reveals a Borgesian hypertextuality. The labyrinth of letters, reports, and menus generates a self-referential system in which documents cite one another and construct a closed reality. This resonates with Borges’s model of the textual labyrinth, where the marvelous arises not through reference to the external world but within the structure of writing itself.

“The Republic of Wine” thus unites the Chinese tradition (from “Water Margin” and Lu Xun), European satire (Swift), Latin American gastronomic metaphors (Asturias, Márquez), Bakhtinian notions of the *carnavalesque body*, Lacanian theory of desire, and Borgesian hypertextuality. At the center of all these intersections stands the body – represented as food, as an object of power, as a sign of desire, and as a mediator of memory.

Here, the marvelous does not destroy the social order but is embedded within it: it is articulated through protocols, menus, and reports, becoming the very language of the institution. In this sense, “The Republic of Wine” can be seen as the culmination of Mo Yan’s corporeal poetics, where the marvelous becomes document, and the body – the universal code of power and magical realism.

Hallucinatory Realism of the Red: Color and Flesh as the Optics of History in “Red Sorghum”

The novel “*Red Sorghum*” (红高粱家族, 1986) became the point of departure for Mo Yan’s poetics – a kind of originating myth in which the

⁴⁰ Lacan J. Le Séminaire, Livre XI: Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse. 1964, p. 210, https://nosubject.com/images/0/0c/Seminaire_11.pdf (Accessed 04.10.2025).

key features of his artistic method first take shape: corporeality, sensory perception, and the marvelous rooted in the material world. The color red here is not a symbol in the narrow sense; it resists reduction to mere metaphor. It structures the entire chronotope of the narrative, flowing through the soil, the plants, the blood, and the bodies of the characters. In the scenes of harvest, love encounters, and brutal executions, the red sorghum “burns” and “blooms”, transforming the landscape into a chronicle of memory.

This sensory texture embodies what Wendy Faris defines as the *irreducible element* of magical realism: the marvelous cannot be dismissed as allegory – it is woven into the very fabric of the material world (Faris, 2004). At the same time, the novel operates through the “double code” described by Amaryll Chanady (Chanady, 1985): each scene allows both realistic and mythological readings, while the author’s position remains deliberately restrained.

The film adaptation of “Red Sorghum” (1987), directed by Zhang Yimou, played a decisive role in solidifying the novel’s sensory poetics. “Red Sorghum” became a hallmark of the “Fifth Generation” of Chinese filmmakers and brought global recognition to Chinese cinema, winning the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival. In Zhang’s cinematic version, close-up shots saturated with red dominate the screen: the sorghum fields literally “burn,” merging the erotic and the tragic, life and death, festivity and execution. Zhang Yimou’s visual strategy transformed the novel into an audiovisual myth, where sensoriality is inscribed at the level of a global visual language. Chinese criticism aptly speaks of a “politics of color”: red simultaneously marks vitality and bloody history, becoming a code of national and cultural memory⁴¹.

Parallels with world cinema further illuminate the significance of this text. In Sergei Parajanov’s work, color functions as an iconic code, where red signifies both vitality and martyrdom – as in “The Color of Pomegranates” (1969). In Andrei Tarkovsky’s films, sensorial experience – smell, sound, touch, the tactility of earth and water – becomes an epistemology of memory, as in “Mirror” (1975). In both Mo Yan’s prose and Zhang Yimou’s film, we observe a similar principle: sensoriality – the

⁴¹ See: Li Zhiying. On the Development of Color Language in Zhang Yimou’s Films. Hangzhou: China Academy of Fine Arts, 2023, <https://surl.li/himoch> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

smell of sorghum, its taste, texture, and the visual intensity of red – serves not as decoration but as a mode of cognition, a way through which history is experienced by the body.

In the global cultural context of the twentieth century, the color red became established as a symbol of revolution, heroism, and sacrifice – pervading propaganda posters, socialist realist art, and political aesthetics. In *“Red Sorghum”*, this code acquires deep ambivalence: red signifies initiation, fertility, and eroticism, but at the same time, blood and death. In the climactic scenes of both the novel and the film, red transforms the chronicle of life into a chronicle of memory, where the marvelous emerges not as an abstract myth but as a phenomenal experience.

Thus, *“Red Sorghum”* can be viewed as the matrix of Mo Yan’s entire poetics. Here, for the first time, the strategies later institutionalized in *“Frog”*, *“Pow!”*, and *“The Republic of Wine”* are announced: sensoriality as *epistemē*, corporeality as the mediator of the marvelous, and the spatiotemporal fabric as bodily experience. Following Faris, the marvelous in the novel functions as an “irreducible element” embedded within the material world; following Chanady, it operates as a “double code,” enabling the scenes to be read simultaneously as chronicle and as myth. Through Zhang Yimou’s film, this code was translated into the visual language of world cinema and aligned with the aesthetic line of Parajanov and Tarkovsky.

In this regard, Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of selfhood provides a particularly fruitful theoretical lens. In *“Oneself as Another”*, he insists that the body mediates between lived experience and narrative identity, serving as the ground where memory is articulated and interpreted. Ricoeur emphasizes that human experience cannot be reduced either to pure objectivity or to pure interiority: it is always embodied, and it becomes meaningful only when translated into narrative form.

This insight resonates with *“Red Sorghum”*, where Mo Yan’s sensorial narrative transforms color, smell, and taste into markers of historical identity. The body in Mo Yan’s prose does not merely endure suffering or desire; it also interprets, giving shape to collective memory through sensation. Just as Ricoeur argues that narrative identity is constituted in the dialectic between selfhood and otherness, Mo Yan shows how individual sensory experience is absorbed into the broader horizon of communal history. In this sense, *“Red Sorghum”* may be read as a “narrative of the

body,” in which corporeal registers are not ornamental but epistemological – the body itself becomes a text that records and transmits history⁴².

“*Red Sorghum*” is not only Mo Yan’s debut but also a concentrated synthesis of his future poetics: the red chronotope, bodily sensoriality, and the marvelous anchored in material reality. This novel and its cinematic embodiment set the model for how magical realism can be localized within the Chinese context and presented to the world as a universal artistic code.

Conclusion

In examining Mo Yan’s corpus – from “*Sandalwood Death*” to “*Red Sorghum*” – we have seen that magical realism in his prose is neither a borrowed technique nor an imitation of the Latin American canon. It emerges as a localized strategy in which the marvelous is naturalized through corporeality and sensory experience. This *poetics of corporeality* becomes the key to understanding what the Nobel Committee described as *hallucinatory realism*: a reality saturated with the marvelous yet never severed from its phenomenal foundation.

The central finding of this study is that corporeality in Mo Yan’s works functions as a mediator between memory, history, and power. The theater in “*Sandalwood Death*”, metempsychosis in “*Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*”, acoustics in “*Frog*”, sensory grotesque in “*Pow!*”, and institutionalized gastronomy in “*The Republic of Wine*” – all these modalities operate toward the same end: they anchor the marvelous in the lived experience of the body, in smell, taste, pain, and sound. Even in the early “*Red Sorghum*”, the color and taste of sorghum become an epistemic structure through which history is both interpreted and embodied.

Thus, Mo Yan’s poetics expands the boundaries of magical realism by offering a new mode of conceptualization. Whereas in García Márquez and Asturias the marvelous is rooted in myth and cosmology, in Mo Yan it is grounded in the phenomenal and corporeal. This shift of emphasis allows us to view his work as a kind of “second stage” in the development of magical realism—from the mythopoetic to the sensory.

The scholarly novelty of this article lies in its systematic description of this very *poetics of corporeality*. Until now, criticism has most often interpreted Mo Yan through the lenses of political allegory, post-socialist

⁴² Savage R. W. H. (ed.) Paul Ricoeur and the Lived Body. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020, <https://surl.li/frarc1> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

discourse, or historical chronicle. We have shown instead that his narrative strategies are based on sensory codes that anchor the marvelous in the material world. This approach opens the possibility of reading Mo Yan within the framework of global comparative studies – not as a *Chinese García Márquez*, but as an author who has created a unique model in which the body and sensory perception become the epistemic medium of history.

Methodologically, the article demonstrates the productivity of combining hermeneutics and cultural semiotics with the theoretical frameworks of magical realism (Faris, Chanady). These perspectives made it possible to identify the universal features of magical realism – “the irreducible element,” “authorial reticence,” and the “double code” – and to show how they are transformed in the Chinese context. As a result, the concept of a *poetics of corporeality* is justified as an analytical tool not only for the study of Mo Yan, but also for a broader corpus of texts in which sensoriality and corporeality serve as mediators of historical memory.

The conclusion of this article reaches beyond the study of Mo Yan to the prospects of comparative literature as a whole. The analysis of corporeal poetics expands the horizons of magical realism beyond its traditional canons and proposes a new paradigm for its study. In the global context, we see how the *corporeal marvelous* becomes a form of cultural memory – whether through the acoustics of the village, the gastronomy of power, or color as a code of history. It is precisely here that the intersection with broader theoretical frameworks arises.

Edward Said emphasized the need to view literature as a field of intersections between the local and the global⁴³; Homi Bhabha, in “The Location of Culture”, proposed the concept of hybridity, which helps us understand how local forms of writing become part of transnational processes⁴⁴; and Antônio Candido argued that “world literature” must include the voices of the peripheries as well as those of the centers⁴⁵.

⁴³ Said E. W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979, <https://surl.li/dtfcdr> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

⁴⁴ Bhabha H. K. *The Location of Culture*. London; New York: Routledge, 1994, <https://surl.li/acwzze> (Accessed 04.10.2025).

⁴⁵ Candido Antônio. *Recortes*. São Paulo: Todavia Livros, 2024, <https://ru.scribd.com/document/743618200/Recortes-Antonio-Candido> (Accessed 05.10.2025).

In light of these perspectives, Mo Yan emerges as precisely the kind of author who demonstrates how magical realism – born on the periphery of the world literary canon – can be rearticulated in another cultural periphery and, in doing so, attain universal significance.

Further research perspectives are connected with the expansion of the textual corpus and the refinement of analytical tools. First and foremost, a more detailed comparison between Chinese, Latin American, and African forms of magical realism is required in order to identify the patterns of transformation that the marvelous undergoes in different cultural contexts. Another promising direction involves studying the reception of Mo Yan in both Anglophone and Chinese criticism, which will help reveal how the *poetics of corporeality* is interpreted across distinct academic traditions. Finally, special attention should be devoted to the interaction between literature and cinema: Zhang Yimou’s adaptations open the way for an intermedial analysis, in which corporeality and sensoriality are captured not only through language but also through the visual image.

As Paul Ricoeur has argued in “*Time and Narrative*”, “time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal existence”⁴⁶. This insight reinforces our reading of Mo Yan: his *hallucinatory realism* is not only embodied but also temporal, binding sensory experience to the flow of historical time. Through the body, narrative organizes memory; through narrative, history itself becomes sensible.

Ultimately, we arrive at the conclusion that Mo Yan’s magical realism is not imitation but transformation. His *hallucinatory realism* constitutes a *poetics of corporeality*, in which the marvelous is anchored in bodily experience, and the body itself becomes the mediator of memory and history. It is precisely this model that renders his work not only nationally significant but also universally relevant within the landscape of world literature.

⁴⁶ Ricoeur P. *Time and Narrative*. Vol. 1, trans. by Kathleen McLaughlin & David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984, p. 52.

**ԱՌԱՍՊԵԼԻՑ ՄԻՆՉԵՎ ԶԳԱՅԱՐԱՆ. ՍՔԱՆՉԵԼԻԻ
ՎԵՐԱԻՄԱՍՏԱՎՈՐՈՒՄԸ ԺԱՄԱՆԱԿԱԿԻՑ ՉԻՆԱԿԱՆ ԱՐՁԱԿՈՒՄ
(ՆՎԻՐՎԱԾ ՄՈ ՅԱՆԻ 70-ԱՍՅԱԿԻՆ)
Նատալիյա Գոնչար-Խանջյան⁴⁷**

Հողվածը ուղղված է Մո Յանի պոետիկայի վերլուծությանը մոզական ռեալիզմի տրանսագգային ձևերի համատեքստում և նվիրված է գրողի 70-ամյակին: Հետազոտությունը առաջարկում է չինական «հայուցինացիոն ռեալիզմը» դիտարկել որպես տեղայնացված մոզական ռեալիզմի մեկ դրսևորում, որի հիմքում մարմնայնությունն է և զգայական փորձառությունը: Վ. Ֆերիսի, Ա. Չենադիի, Մ. Բախտինի, Ժ. Լականի և Պ. Ռիկյորի տեսական մոտեցումներին հենվելով՝ արտահայտվում է «մարմնայնության պոետիկայի» գաղափարը, որտեղ սքանչելին ներծծված է նյութական և ֆենոմենոլոգիական աշխարհի մեջ: Վերլուծվել են գլխավոր վեպերը՝ «Մանդալի բույրով մահը», «Հոգնեցի ծնվել ու մեռնել», «Գորտեր», «Pow!», «Գինու երկիր» և «Կարմիր սորգո»: Արդյունքները ցույց են տալիս, որ մարմնային զգայականությունը գործում է որպես միջնորդ՝ հիշողության, պատմության և իշխանության միջև: Մոզականը չի կործանում իրականությունը, այլ ներթափանցում է դրա հյուսվածքի մեջ՝ թատերական, ձայնային, գաստրոնոմիական և գունային սկզբունքների միջոցով: Աշխատությունը ներկայացնում է «մարմնային ռեալիզմի» ունիվերսալ մոդել, որն ընդլայնում է մոզական ռեալիզմի սահմանները լատինաամերիկյան կանոնից դուրս՝ ընդգծելով չինական պատմողական փորձի կշիռը ժամանակակից համեմատական գրականագիտության համատեքստում:

Բանալի բառեր՝ *Մո Յան, մոզական ռեալիզմ, մարմնայնության պոետիկա, զգայականություն, չինական գրականություն, համեմատական գրականագիտություն, մշակութային սեմիոտիկա, Ռիկյոր, Լական, Բախտին:*

⁴⁷ Նատալիյա Գոնչար-Խանջյանը ԵՊՀ Եվրոպական լեզուների և հաղորդակցության ֆակուլտետի արտասահմանյան գրականության ամբիոնի դոցենտ է, բ.գ.թ., էլ.փոստ՝ natalie.goncharkhanjyan@ysu.am, ORCID՝ 0009-0002-5462-8509:

ОТ МИФА К СЕНСОРИУМУ: ПЕРЕОСМЫСЛЕНИЕ ЧУДЕСНОГО В СОВРЕМЕННОЙ КИТАЙСКОЙ ПРОЗЕ (К 70-ЛЕТИЮ МО ЯНЯ)

Наталья Гончар-Ханджян⁴⁸

Статья посвящена осмыслению поэтики Мо Яня в контексте транснациональных форм магического реализма и приурочена к 70-летию писателя. Исследование предлагает интерпретацию китайского «галлюцинаторного реализма» как локализованной формы магического реализма, основанной на телесности и сенсорном опыте. На основе теоретических подходов В. Фэрис, А. Чэнади, М. Бахтина, Ж. Лакана и П. Рикёра раскрывается понятие «поэтики телесности», в которой чудесное осмысляется как феномен материального и чувственного мира. Анализ ключевых романов («Смерть пахнет сандалом», «Устал рождаться и умирать», «Лягушки», «Pow!», «Страна вина» и «Красный гаолян») показывает, что телесность и чувственное восприятие выступают посредниками между памятью, историей и властью. Магическое здесь не разрушает реальность, а влетает в её ткань – в форме театрального, звукового, гастрономического и цветового начал. В результате разворачивается универсальная модель «корпорального реализма», расширяющая границы магического реализма за пределы латиноамериканского канона. Работа демонстрирует значимость китайского опыта для сравнительного литературоведения и мировых гуманитарных исследований.

Ключевые слова: Мо Янь; магический реализм; поэтика телесности; чувственность; китайская литература; сравнительное литературоведение; культурная семиотика; Рикёр; Лакан; Бахтин.

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