

Analysis of the spatial dimension in Bao'erji Yuanye's prose: a case study of *Like Morning Dew*

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Abstract. Bao'erji Yuanye is an outstanding writer distinguished by a highly individual literary style, and his prose, in particular, has won widespread acclaim among readers. One of the defining features of his prose is its pronounced spatial aesthetics, which endows his works with remarkable artistic depth. Drawing upon Gaston Bachelard's theory of the poetics of space and Wang Guowei's theory of *jingjie* (artistic realm), this paper adopts a spatial perspective to examine Bao'erji Yuanye's prose collection *Like Morning Dew*. It identifies and analyzes three interrelated literary spaces constructed in the collection: natural space, social space, and poetic space. Through a detailed examination of these three dimensions, the paper explores the artistic connotations of Bao'erji Yuanye's prose and offers a critical assessment of its literary value.

Keywords: poetics of space, *jingjie* theory, Bao'erji Yuanye, prose

1. Introduction

Bao'erji Yuanye is a Mongolian writer whose distinctive creative style has earned him widespread recognition, with his prose enjoying particular popularity among readers. Existing scholarship on Bao'erji Yuanye's prose has focused predominantly on ecological themes. In fact, the thematic scope of his prose extends far beyond ecological concerns and encompasses a much broader range of artistic and philosophical reflections. Adopting space as its analytical perspective, this paper takes *Like Morning Dew* as its primary research object and explores the artistic implications embedded in Bao'erji Yuanye's prose.

The Poetics of Space was published in 1957 by the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard. In this work, Bachelard integrates phenomenological theory to investigate spatial imagery in poetic works, offering profound and poetic interpretations of the abstract spaces in literature that cannot be adequately explained through rationalism or scientific methodology [1]. Bachelard argues that space serves as the dwelling place of human consciousness. His theory of the poetics of space examines the origins of literary images through the exploration of individual consciousness, thereby constructing the subjectivity of imagery while revealing its intersubjective dimensions [2].

In *RenjianCihua (Remarks on Ci Poetry in the Human World)*, Wang Guowei proposed the theory of *jingjie* (artistic realm), establishing *jingjie* as the highest aesthetic criterion of classical Chinese poetry. He identified three levels of artistic realm, the essence of which lies in the harmonious integration of "genuine emotion" and "authentic scenery", ultimately culminating in the ideal state of the unity of self and object. The

theory of *jingjie* seeks to unite the artistic realm with the realm of human existence, thereby exploring the philosophical dimensions of life itself [3].

Two key concepts within the theory of *jingjie*—"youwo zhi jing" (the realm with the self) and "wuwo zhi jing" (the realm without the self)—address the presence of the subject within artistic space. In this sense, the subject-oriented perspective embodied in the theory of *jingjie* may be regarded as an alternative interpretation of the poetics of space [4]. Since both the poetics of space and the theory of *jingjie* investigate and distill the ways in which authorial consciousness manifests itself through the subject within literary space, the two theoretical frameworks share an intrinsic affinity and can therefore complement and enrich one another.

Bao'erji Yuanye's prose constructs an artistically rich and multilayered spatial world. From the perspective of spatial analysis, this paper integrates Bachelard's theory of the poetics of space with Wang Guowei's theory of *jingjie* to examine and interpret the profound meanings embedded in Bao'erji Yuanye's works.

2. Emotional engagement with natural space

Nature is the most recurrent subject in Bao'erji Yuanye's prose and the domain in which his literary strengths are most fully realized. As the foundation of the artistic spatial construction in his prose, natural space serves as the primary source of his creative imagination and emotional expression. Yuanye's enduring concern for the natural world constitutes the wellspring of his artistic life.

2.1. The grassland as the space of home

In *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard argues that the ultimate destination of human consciousness is the primordial dwelling space constructed through imaginative consciousness [2]. As a traditionally nomadic people, the Mongols have, for generations, followed the grasslands in search of pasture. This way of life has become deeply embedded in their cultural memory and collective consciousness. As a Mongolian writer, Bao'erji Yuanye imagines the boundless grassland as the primordial home to which his consciousness naturally returns.

In Yuanye's prose, the grassland is portrayed as an original homeland where one may take the sky as a blanket and the earth as a bed. It is a realm in which consciousness can roam freely and without restraint. Even while living in the city, the writer grows twenty-eight clumps of grass in flowerpots, a symbolic projection of his emotional attachment to the grassland into urban reality. The grassland accommodates lives that are primitive, untamed, and vigorous. In contrast, the people and achievements celebrated as great within modern civilization often appear absurd or even foolish when viewed through the values of the free and unpretentious inhabitants of the grassland. In *The Retreating Moon*, for example, Yuanye remarks that although the then U.S. President George W. Bush is widely admired for continuing to jog in his sixties, the herdsmen regard him simply as "a man who choked on a biscuit and lost his mind" [5].

The grassland also embodies Yuanye's exploration of subjectivity within an expansive spatial environment. In *The Silent Grassland*, he observes that "the scenery of the grassland possesses two qualities: it cannot be fully seen, nor can it ever be exhausted" [5]. By comparing the experience of viewing the grassland with that of gazing at the sea, Yuanye points out that, unlike the observer of the sea who remains outside the landscape, one who views the grassland is already situated within it. In the grassland, human beings cease to be objects standing in opposition to space; instead, they become participating subjects immersed in the spatial environment and directly connected with it. Whether regarded as an objectively existing landscape or as an internalized image shaped by consciousness, the grassland represents a quintessentially expansive space. Wherever one stands upon its boundless expanse, that very spot may be perceived as the center of the

grassland. Such vastness not only liberates consciousness and allows the imagination to wander freely, but also evokes feelings of uncertainty and existential disorientation, as limitless space offers no fixed point upon which consciousness may settle.

The grassland further reflects Yuanye's exploration of the vitality inherent in primordial living space. In *Speaking the Language of Grass*, his nephew Ashan describes the spring grassland by saying, "The grass has revolted" [5]. Even the seemingly gentle green grass erupts with astonishing vitality in spring. Children's language, characterized by innocence and instinctive wisdom, frequently appears in Yuanye's prose, enabling him to reveal phenomena inaccessible to the adult perspective. Inspired by the phrase "the grass has revolted", Yuanye notices a butterfly fluttering among the shrubs like a patient recovering from illness. Within this primordial living space, every form of life struggles passionately to survive, while the arrival of spring amplifies the wildness and vitality of all living things. Through his close observation of life on the grassland, Yuanye heightens the sensory participation of the subject, achieving the "youwo zhi jing" (realm with the self) through experiential imagination in his exploration of life's essential force.

2.2. The river as a dynamic spatial form

The river, by its very nature, flows ceaselessly. As a primordial image embodying the dialectical relationship between motion and stillness, it also carries profound philosophical significance. In Yuanye's literary world, the ever-moving river system constitutes a dynamic field of existence. As a fluid spatial form, it simultaneously bears the dual philosophical dimensions of the here and the beyond.

"The destination of temporal movement is invariably the place through which water flows" [5]. This observation appears in Yuanye's essay *The River Lies Beyond the River*. Within its textual context, what rushes forward without pause is not only the abstract current of time but also the tangible flow of the river itself. In the spatial configuration created by flowing water, the relationship between the present and the distant shore remains in a constant state of transformation. This association naturally recalls Confucius's famous reflection before the flowing river—"What passes away is like this"—through which the perpetually moving body of water becomes a medium for extending time and space across both temporal and spatial dimensions.

The dynamic extension of river space depends upon the gradual accumulation of countless minute individuals. In *Not a Single Drop of Water in the River Is Superfluous*, Yuanye argues that the movement of a river is not an act of escape but one of continual advance. Its progress relies on the convergence of every single drop of water, each contributing indispensably to the river's onward flow. Drawing upon this dynamic spatial phenomenon, Yuanye reflects on the meaning of human life, observing that "Life is not truly difficult; every moment of time has its value" [5]. The worth of an individual's life is determined not by temporary gains or losses but by the cumulative value created in each passing moment. Rather than losing one's ideals and becoming disoriented over the course of a long life, one should devote oneself wholeheartedly to living each present moment well.

The flowing movement of river space gives concrete form to the passage of time. When the dynamic river becomes frozen, however, time itself appears suspended, allowing space to assume temporal significance. In *Gazing at the Frozen River*, although the river has solidified into ice, it nevertheless preserves the posture of perpetual flow. This dialectical coexistence of movement and stillness embodies a conception of spatiotemporal development in which diachronic continuity and synchronic coexistence are held in dynamic unity.

2.3. Natural scenic space

Natural scenic space constitutes the most vivid dimension of Bao'erji Yuanye's artistic spatial construction. Natural landscapes serve as the vehicles of his dreams and imagination; like birds' nests, they provide a dwelling place for the imagination through the projection of the subject's consciousness onto external objects. If the grassland represents the spiritual homeland of Yuanye's consciousness and the point of departure for his imagination, then natural scenic space is the expansive realm in which his consciousness is liberated and his imagination unfolds without restraint.

In *Entering the Forest Is Like Passing Through the Neck of a Bottle*, Yuanye steps into an alternative world where the sky is completely concealed beneath the forest canopy. The forest, untouched by human society, constitutes a primordial space in which human beings appear as outsiders. Yet under the influence of its primitive atmosphere, Yuanye imaginatively sheds the trappings of civilization and, at the level of consciousness, identifies himself with the creatures inhabiting the forest. The forest offers him an unfamiliar and mysterious space for exploration, where language no longer functions as a medium of communication and experience must instead be gained through the most fundamental forms of perception and sensation. At the same time, however, this primordial environment awakens the animistic consciousness long repressed within the human mind. An unconscious sense of fear makes Yuanye acutely aware of the objectifying gaze imposed upon his own subjectivity by the forest space. As he remarks, "If this place has preserved its primitive appearance, how could it possibly be without monsters [5]?" At the level of consciousness, the subject becomes estranged from the space in which consciousness exists, rendering the objectivity of space increasingly prominent. This, in turn, gives rise to the unknown and the mysterious, while those aspects of reality beyond the grasp of human cognition become sources of fear. The primordial forest thus resembles the cellar described by Bachelard—a hidden chamber that preserves the unknown shadows dwelling within humanity's dream space.

The naturally formed desert occupies a similarly extraordinary place in Yuanye's writing as a space of profound stillness. In *Bolongke*, he observes the natural desert landscape known as *Bolongke*. Although its surface bears rippling patterns resembling flowing water, the desert itself is static and motionless. Within this seemingly immobile space nevertheless exists a complete ecosystem in which tamarisks, animals, insects, and grasses coexist. Such an almost motionless landscape represents a secluded corner of natural space. Its stillness resembles a shell that shelters dream space after it has been separated from material reality, quietly contemplating the world in complete independence and self-sufficiency. Yuanye further emphasizes the distinction between naturally formed deserts and land degraded into desert through human activity. In *The Land of Euphrates Poplars*, Suhai's indiscriminate hunting of Mongolian gazelles and excessive excavation of edible algae led to the extinction of wildlife and severe desertification. The towering euphrates poplars became the dwelling place of departed lives, standing as "the souls of countless wild animals and plants, remaining in this world in silent postures of painful accusation" [5]. Through the spatial imagery of the desertified landscape, Yuanye expresses his deep concern for the ecological environment. This concern reflects not only his responsibility as a member of human society to confront the destructive consequences of social development, but also his ethical commitment to recognizing the equality between human beings and all forms of life in nature [6].

Natural space consistently occupies a central position in the cultivation of Yuanye's artistic imagination. It is within these spaces that he seeks, through the movement of consciousness, the spiritual homeland of his dreams. Nature offers him an abundance of sensory experiences, the essence of which lies in its vivid and authentic beauty. This authenticity further inspires his artistic pursuit, leading him beyond the mere representation of objective scenery toward the creation of emotionally infused landscapes that transcend

physical appearances. At the same time, through the continuous process of artistic creation and reflection, Yuanye establishes his own identity as a creative subject. This affirmation of subjectivity further strengthens his emotional engagement with the spaces he inhabits, while deepening his sense of ethical responsibility toward both nature and existence—a defining characteristic that is consistently manifested throughout his prose.

3. Humanistic concern in social space

Within the dimension of social space, the humanistic concern embodied in Bao'erji Yuanye's prose is particularly prominent. One of the defining characteristics of his writing is its strong affirmation of human subjectivity. Michel Foucault once advanced the pessimistic proposition of the "disappearance of the subject" in modern society [7]. In marked contrast, Bao'erji Yuanye rediscovers the value of subjectivity through his exploration of the relationship between urban and rural spaces. At the same time, the social problems emerging in the course of modern development are thoughtfully interpreted and critically examined through his treatment of these spatial themes.

3.1. Urban space

In the works of many contemporary writers, the city is often portrayed as a negative space that suppresses individuality and constrains human nature. In reality, however, the expansion of cities has become an inevitable consequence of the development of human civilization. Although the urban space depicted by Bao'erji Yuanye possesses its darker aspects, his primary concern lies in offering a calm and reflective examination of urban humanity.

In *The North Window and the South Window*, Yuanye observes from the north-facing window an orderly arrangement of urban buildings, whose architectural forms possess a certain aesthetic charm. Yet the lives of the people inhabiting these buildings appear emotionally numb and spiritually detached. Through this contrast, Yuanye questions the values governing modern urban existence and calls for the recovery of aesthetic appreciation and genuine sensibility. While urban space undoubtedly provides convenience and material comfort, it simultaneously confines individuality and suppresses humanity's instinctive desires. As Yuanye remarks in *Snow Cleanses All Things*, anyone who were to immerse themselves joyfully in a snowfall would likely be regarded as mentally unstable and provoke public disturbance. By contrast, the view from the south-facing window is especially precious in Yuanye's eyes: a small garden situated between apartment buildings and a busy street. This modest green space represents a rare breathing space within an otherwise monotonous urban environment, where the changing trees quietly mark the succession of the seasons. During the heat of summer, it even becomes a favored meeting place for young couples. The landscape beyond the south window thus reveals the city's capacity for vitality and emotional resonance [5].

In the same essay, Yuanye recalls his former residence—a cramped room with only a west-facing window overlooking an automobile repair shop. The incessant clanging of hammers caused him constant irritation. Yet within this seemingly unbearable environment, he came to realize that the mechanics laboring outside the window had no choice but to endure such exhausting work in order to earn their livelihoods. Hidden within every corner of the city are ordinary working people engaged in occupations that many self-proclaimed "civilized" citizens may regard as dirty, noisy, or undesirable. Through his artistic construction of urban space, Yuanye not only explores the question of the disappearance of subjectivity in modern society but also directs careful attention to the lived experiences of those at the grassroots level.

Nevertheless, Yuanye's portrayal of the city never descends into cynical pessimism or wholesale negation. On the contrary, he actively seeks moments of beauty within urban space. In *The Vastness Within Reach*, he describes the magnificent evening glow spreading across the sky above the municipal square. For Yuanye, the confusion surrounding human subjectivity in the city can ultimately be overcome not through rejecting urban life but through enriching one's inner spiritual world. By maintaining curiosity and observing life with eyes that continually search for beauty, individuals can transform their experience of the city. When the inner space of consciousness becomes sufficiently rich, the external world likewise reveals itself as vibrant and full of wonder [5].

3.2. Rural space

In literary works, the countryside often appears as a counterpart to the city. In Bao'erji Yuanye's prose, however, rural space is imbued with profound human warmth, and he openly expresses the deep sense of belonging that the countryside inspires in him. As the embodiment of his attachment to the native land, rural space represents a dreamlike realm in which existence retains its primordial character and human life remains closely integrated with the natural world.

The construction of rural space in Yuanye's prose is characterized by a harmonious relationship between humanity and nature. *At the End of the Village* illustrates the intimate connection between trees and everyday life. Through the transformation of trees into doors, the essay constructs an imaginative space that links the homes and lives of rural residents. *The Village Requiem* evokes the primitive atmosphere of the countryside; by restoring phenomena to their essential nature, it recreates the simple and authentic character of rural life. In *The Quiet Village at Night*, Yuanye employs poetic expression to recreate the rural nightscape, guiding readers into an imaginative rural space [5].

The countryside is one of humanity's oldest living spaces and the cradle of early civilization. In *Beyond the Village Wall*, the innocent smile of a child awakens Yuanye's cherished memories of childhood. Just as Lu Xun's *Baicao Garden* and Xiao Hong's grandfather's vegetable garden serve as enduring symbols of childhood in their respective works, Yuanye's prose likewise features a mulberry grove that embodies his own youthful memories. These childhood experiences constitute the key to understanding his construction of rural space. Life in the countryside provides Yuanye with his most authentic subjective experiences, enabling him to affirm his own subjectivity in the process of constructing artistic space.

Rural space also embodies Yuanye's profound concern for ordinary people living at the grassroots level. In *Water, Oh Water*, he recounts the hardships faced by his cousin's family in the countryside. Industrial expansion has devastated the land through excessive exploitation, drying up local water sources and leaving farmers struggling to survive [5]. Yuanye neither conceals the pressure that urban industrialization places upon rural space nor overlooks the limitations imposed by the countryside's rigid and singular modes of livelihood. He understands that his cousin's predicament cannot simply be solved by lending money to dig a new well. Yet the heartfelt longing for water expressed by his young grandnephew Hubo deeply moves him. Ultimately, the harsh contradictions of rural decline and entrenched ways of life are softened by the enduring warmth of human affection.

Throughout Yuanye's works, rural space is presented as an idealized realm in harmonious coexistence with the natural environment. Among its defining qualities, the villagers' reverence for and protection of the land receives Yuanye's particular admiration. This is vividly illustrated in *"How Far Has the Soil Drifted from Us?"*, where the elderly villager Tubuxun spends years dredging silt from the riverbank. Each depression he excavates is gradually filled again by sediment carried downstream [5]. What distinguishes the old man's labor is that, despite the enormous effort involved, he never disturbs the grassland's topsoil. Beneath this seemingly

ordinary narrative lies a profound reflection on the ecological damage inflicted by industrialization. Through this portrayal, Yuanye reveals his deep concern for both the current environmental crisis and the future of humanity's relationship with nature.

3.3. Train space

Within Yuanye's literary imagination, the train constitutes a dynamic spatial form that not only connects urban and rural worlds but also embodies a distinct sense of intersubjectivity. As a mobile space, it establishes close relationships among geographically separated places while facilitating encounters between different social subjects.

In *The Scenery Beyond the Train Window*, the train unfolds a continuously changing landscape before its passengers, as the scenery framed by the carriage window shifts from moment to moment [5]. As a mobile spatial medium, the train creates the possibility of reconciling the tensions between urban and rural spaces. Because of its fluid nature, the train's own spatial identity remains constantly in transition. During the journey, passengers themselves also undergo transformations in their modes of existence. Travelers from cities and villages, whether sharing a long or short journey, temporarily inhabit the same spatial environment, where their awareness of themselves as social subjects becomes especially pronounced. In this way, train space provides artistic space with a dynamic sense of openness and spatial vitality.

The station space generated through the movement of the train likewise deserves attention. In *The Moon at the Railway Station*, the station functions as an almost symbolic space where the train completes its spatial transition. Employing the traditional image of the moon, Yuanye renders this transformation particularly vivid: "Each night, the train carries the moon into the distance, handing it over to the moon of the next station" [5]. By juxtaposing the moon as an objective image with the arrival and departure of the train, Yuanye depicts the station as the point at which one spatial identity gives way to another.

Train space connects multiple spatial subjects. Through encounters with other subjects, it continuously generates mutual influence and reciprocal fulfillment, thereby completing the construction of its own spatial meaning. As a space characterized by intersubjectivity, the train creates a transitional zone that mediates between the rural and urban spaces portrayed in Yuanye's prose.

As a writer deeply engaged with society, Bao'erji Yuanye consistently expresses profound humanistic concern through his construction of social space. The process of shaping literary social space vividly reveals his strong sense of social responsibility. Viewing society from the perspective of a thoughtful observer, Yuanye offers a measured analysis of the tensions between rural and urban spaces while actively exploring the possibility of establishing spaces of communication and reconciliation. As a writer endowed with acute social consciousness, his construction of social space ultimately reflects the breadth of his intellectual vision and the depth of his humanistic commitment.

4. Philosophical imagination in poetic space

Bao'erji Yuanye's prose is distinguished by its pronounced poetic quality. From the perspective of artistic construction, the creation of poetic space represents the highest form of his spatial writing. Such poetic space encompasses childhood fantasies, the pursuit of collective memory, and the philosophical sublimation of imaginative reflection. Through the construction of poetic space, Yuanye elevates prose beyond aesthetic expression to the level of philosophical inquiry into human existence [8].

4.1. Childhood fantasy space

Yuanye frequently incorporates memories of childhood into his prose, constructing a vividly colored imaginative space through the boundless fantasies of children.

In *Apple Seeds*, Yuanye recalls burying five apple seeds in the soil as a child, believing that by the time his friends who had moved away returned, the seeds would have grown into apple trees from which they could eat as many apples as they wished. Later in life, however, experienced adults informed him that apple seeds cannot, in fact, grow into fruit-bearing apple trees [5]. Although this romantic childhood illusion was eventually dispelled, the apple tree continued to flourish within the space of childhood imagination. Human beings often need such seemingly unrealistic fantasies to soften the harshness of reality. The sincere hopes cherished in childhood may become treasures that accompany a person throughout an entire lifetime.

Stories of the Mulberry Grove constructs a complete spatial world of childhood memory. In Yuanye's writing, the mulberry grove becomes a sanctuary that preserves innocence, where every plant possesses its own vitality. This imagery recalls Bachelard's phenomenology of the circle in *The Poetics of Space*. The mulberry grove functions as a circular space in Yuanye's imagination—one that has no exterior boundary yet possesses a rich and fulfilling interior. As a complete and harmonious spatial image, it provides the young Yuanye, whose childhood was marked by profound upheaval within his family, with a secure and comforting refuge [2].

In *A Letter of Dew*, Yuanye recounts a romantic tale told to him by his great-grandmother, who explained that dew was a letter written by the moon to the sun. As the story unfolds, it gradually transforms into playful banter between grandmother and grandson. Such fairy tales crystallize into enduring fragments of imagination, each capable of transporting the reader back into the fantastical world of childhood.

The imaginative world of children gently mediates the relationship between the child and objective reality. Adults are often surprised by children's remarkable affinity with their surroundings. Yet it is precisely the fantasy space constructed within children's consciousness that enables them to engage in dialogue with the external world and experience what they perceive as the authentic reality of existence.

4.2. Collective memory space

Collective memory space is a historical realm that Yuanye constructs through recollection and imagination. Characterized by a communal mode of narration, this space embodies his distinctive understanding of history.

In *Beiling: The Green Belonging to the People*, Yuanye contrasts the former and present identities of Beiling. Once an imperial mausoleum reserved for emperors, it has now become a public park where people gather to exercise and enjoy everyday life. As the wheel of history continues to turn, such transformations inspire profound reflection. The resting place of former feudal rulers has been transformed into a space of freedom for ordinary people, allowing readers to witness dramatic historical change through this striking juxtaposition.

Yuanye's historical imagination also constructs a richly layered and expansive historical space. In *Hay*, while lying upon a pile of hay in a storage shed, he imagines stories connected with his own family history. Through this imaginative reconstruction, Yuanye seeks to discover himself as a participant within historical space. By envisioning a family history imbued with legendary qualities, he simultaneously establishes a deeper sense of personal identity and affirms his own subjectivity within the broader continuum of history.

Yuanye is particularly adept at deriving an individual's sense of belonging from collective memory. In *The Sun Warms Itself on the Ice*, he watches a woman performing the dance *Beloved Chairman Mao*, and the scene fills him with a profound sense of warmth. The belonging he experiences through collective memory strengthens his self-identification and reinforces his clearly defined sense of subjectivity. Consequently, he is

able to uncover affirmative meanings even within painful historical experiences. Through his active engagement with history, Yuanye develops firm ideals and convictions while constructing a historical consciousness grounded in a strong sense of subjective agency.

4.3. The space of philosophical reverie

The space of philosophical reverie represents the highest philosophical realm attained in Bao'erji Yuanye's artistic creation. Through literary imagination directed toward natural life and cosmic phenomena, Yuanye elevates the creative subject entirely to the level of consciousness, engaging in philosophical inquiry into the essence of life and the truth of the universe. Within this space, his reflections on life and the cosmos achieve a distinctly poetic transcendence.

In *Notes on Jingyuetan*, Yuanye expresses his aesthetic preference for living things in nature: "I am fond of small things, especially those tiny lives that reveal their vitality in the presence of immensity" [5]. This observation recalls Bachelard's dialectics of the small and the large, according to which poetic consciousness is capable of discovering an expansive universe within the smallest of things. Beneath towering ancient trees, Yuanye notices delicate flowers swaying gently in the wind, much as the Qing dynasty poet Yuan Mei discerned profound beauty in the humble image of moss. Through his contemplation of these minute forms of life, Yuanye opens a poetic space of imagination, revealing the resilience of life by perceiving the greater through the seemingly insignificant.

Yuanye also possesses a remarkable ability to discover beauty in the most ordinary things. In *Shrubs*, he describes snow-covered shrubs whose slender yet tenacious branches continue to extend beneath the blanket of snow. For Yuanye, life is constantly expressing its beauty, but such beauty must first be perceived by those willing to look for it. In *A Record of Flowers*, he encounters a female military officer who speaks to flowers and remarks that flowers deserve praise. Through this dialogue with living beings, people discover both the richness of life and their own identities within the cognitive space of consciousness. Such reflections gradually develop into philosophical contemplation, ultimately reaching a realm of pure subjective self-awareness.

Yuanye's depiction of the universe likewise enters the domain of poetic philosophical reverie. In *The Phoenix Lander Report: It Snowed on Mars*, the snowfall on Mars prompts him to reflect upon realities in the universe that lie forever beyond human reach. Snow on Earth is almost always associated with human activities and emotions, whereas snowfall on Mars occurs entirely independent of humanity. While countless significant events unfold within human society, Mars quietly experiences its own snowfall, indifferent to human affairs. From this irreducible objectivity of cosmic space, Yuanye imagines the universe itself as possessing a form of subjectivity. Cosmic space is at once all-embracing and fundamentally beyond the limits of human consciousness. Through his contemplation of the essence of life and the vastness of the cosmos, the poetic space in Yuanye's prose ultimately attains what Wang Guowei termed the "wuwo zhi jing"—the "realm without the self", a state of pure consciousness transcending individual subjectivity.

Poetic space fully demonstrates Yuanye's extraordinary imaginative power as a writer. Beginning with the dream space of childhood fantasy, he gradually extends and enriches his imaginative universe. Through collective memory, he constructs a historical consciousness grounded in a strong sense of agency, and finally, through his unceasing exploration of the essence of life and the universe, he elevates artistic space to the pure realm of "wuwo zhi jing" by means of profound philosophical reverie.

5. Conclusion

With its distinctive artistic and literary qualities, Bao'erji Yuanye's prose constructs a rich and multilayered literary space. Natural space encompasses the grassland as the primordial home of his artistic imagination, the river as a space imbued with philosophical reflection, and natural scenic space as the locus of primordial vitality. Social space comprises the city, representing modern modes of existence; the countryside, embodying traditional patterns of life; and the train, a dynamic space characterized by intersubjectivity. Poetic space, in turn, includes the childhood fantasy space in which imagination first unfolds, the collective memory space that embodies Yuanye's distinctive historical consciousness, and the philosophical reverie space that elevates artistic creation to the transcendent realm of "wuwo zhi jing".

The literary spaces constructed in Bao'erji Yuanye's prose illuminate his ecological consciousness, his affirmation of human subjectivity within modern society, his historical awareness grounded in a sense of agency, and his philosophical understanding of individual existence within the vast cosmos. Collectively, these dimensions reveal Yuanye's profound sense of ecological responsibility, his commitment to humanistic values, his expansive historical vision, and his philosophical wisdom concerning life itself. From a micro perspective, his prose enriches the thematic and aesthetic dimensions of Chinese western regional literature; from a macro perspective, it broadens the horizons of modernity and artistic expression in contemporary Chinese literature.

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