

Gaze of the Other and Subject Alienation: Centering on Novel Welcome to the World

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Abstract: Bi Feiyu's new novel *Welcome to the World*, published in 2023, focuses on the urology department of the city's First Hospital during the SARS period, and tells the story of the protagonist Fu Rui's mental breakdown and galloping toward madness with a medical accident. Fu Rui has been living under the established arrangements of others since birth, is a pursuit of perfection of the "good life" image, as if an "exception" dissociated from the reality of the world, but the resulting is the constant internalization of high requirements under the gaze of others. After the successive failure of the operation, Fu Rui fell into endless mental internal friction, exposing the pathological psychology under the domination of the meritocratic society. As the plot of the novel progresses, Fu Rui attempts to break the bondage of the outside world, and tries to save Copernicus and Xiao Cai in an irrational way, and finally completes the subject alienation in the carnival. With salvation as the clue, *Welcome to the World* draws a secular picture of the world through the course of a doctor from rationality to madness, deeply explores the spiritual secrets dormant in people's hearts in contemporary society, and reflects the spiritual symptoms of *The Times* in irony.

Keywords: *Welcome to the World*; Bi Feiyu; Gaze of the Other; Subject Alienation.

1. Introduction

Welcome to the World is a novel by Bi Feiyu published 15 years after the publication of *Massage* (2008). The novel takes "SARS", which shocked the whole country in 2003, as the story background, and revolves around Fu Rui, a young attending doctor of urology department in the first Hospital of the city. In a succession of six deaths, all from the kidney transplant, the young girl Tian Fei became the seventh accidental death under the knife of Fu Rui, and triggered a series of chain reactions, and used to the "good life" identity of Fu Rui thus fell into the emotional mire of self-doubt, in the face of the reality and the spirit of the double crisis, his behavior gradually frothy, and eventually toward insanity. The novel continues the tradition of modern novels focusing on the inner activities of characters. Through the depiction of multi-layered relationships between doctors and patients, departments, families, and couples, the novel deeply analyzes the psychological malfunctions formed by a seemingly flawless doctor under the gaze of others, and reflects the mental symptoms common among people in today's fast-paced society with a profound soul narrative. The so-called "gaze", explained by French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan as the reflexive gaze of the object world, is a projection of desire, always stationed in the mind in the form of imagination. The overwhelming power of the gaze makes the subject completely subject to the desires of the other, to whom the other is like a mirror, and it is in him that the subject acquires its complete form about itself. According to Lacan's gaze theory, when human beings enter the category of language, the determination of self-identity will be continuously affected by others. It is under the gaze of others that Fu Rui, the protagonist of the novel, reconstructs his self-identity, thus generating alienation and being compelled to go mad. In this sense, Bi Feiyu sets the year 2003, when Chinese society is developing rapidly, as the time point of the novel, aiming to "look forward to the life of the entire ethnic group after the

new century, dig deep into the complex souls and inner pain of the contemporary people, and try to respond to the spiritual problems of *The Times* with a redemptive "human world".

2. Outside the Mundane: The Exception in the Real World

The hospital is an important narrative space in *Welcome to the World*, but the author does not go straight into it, but at the beginning of the novel, the urban landscape outside the hospital is depicted with great pains, such as a set of magnificent overhead shots, which are full of a sense of *The Times* in the narrative, creating a realistic "human" picture for the development of the story. A sculpture of a thousand Li horse broke the crux of *The Times*: In order to reflect the speed of *The Times*, an urban sculpture soon stood in the center of the oval square. It's a horse, sitting north facing south. Crimson, almost like a person stood up, like running, like jumping, more like flying. The horse's left front leg is bent and its right front leg is stretched straight - drawing speed from its muscles. The horse's expression was strangely bitter, it was angry, it was neighing. Bi Feiyu's description of the "thousand-li horse" modality reflects the pain brought by the excessive emphasis of *The Times* on the rapid development, and reflects the various abnormal phenomena under the tide of *The Times*. Under the modern commercial logic, the old street with a strong semi-colonial and semi-feudal flavor was directly renamed "commercial street". And the hospital is no longer purely in the holy place of saving people, as the hospital secretary at a meeting of the municipal People's Congress summed up the hospital operation: last year's annual turnover has exceeded one billion, there is no doubt that the hospital has already become a key link in the complex social network under the operation of capital, staged a "human" state.

However, Fu Rui, the protagonist of the novel, is a secular, almost perfect, "unreal" existence, he was born well, strict family, his father is the Party secretary of the hospital

affiliated to the medical university, his mother was a broadcaster, in the eyes of others, Fu Rui is elegant, lonely and indifferent, he is Schrodinger's cat, in 'here', not 'here'; He belongs to 'us' and he does not belong to 'us'. The only time "Welcome to the world" appears in the novel is the inner monologue of Min Lu and Fu Rui on their first blind date: "How beautiful Fu Rui's eyes are oh, the eyes are clean and clear." Like glass, strictly speaking, like a laboratory utensil, shiny, yet stable, without noise. Such vessels are always accompanied by the label: Handle with care. Min-lu will. She'll be careful. She'll be gentle. Min Lu just looked at Fu Rui and said to himself: Fu Rui, welcome to the world. This is also the first time that the word "human" appears in the text. Obviously, "Welcome back to the human world" is Minlu's subjective emotional judgment on the "legendary" existence of Fu Rui, but it is also a factual judgment. The novel deliberately separates Fu Rui from the "human world" in the characterization, beautifies his image, and even compares him to "laboratory vessels". It highlights the technical characteristics of instrumentalization, mechanization and cold, and forms a sharp contrast with the hustle and utility of modern cities.

Bi Feiyu has always been known for his excellent characterization. In order to explore the human reality from a broader perspective, Bi Feiyu also arranged many realistic representative characters in the story line of the novel, showing a group picture of the human world. First of all, Fu Rui's fellow brothers and department colleagues Guo Dong, he is talkative and cheerful, unrestrained, can be said to be completely the opposite of Fu Rui, he from the bottom of the countryside all the way to the city, a family, a decent life, but with the same family nurse An Quan blatant development of extramarital affairs in the hospital, drunk in sensory pleasure, greedy and reckless. Xiao CAI, also a nurse from the bottom of the countryside, is eager to live a stable and exquisite life in the metropolis, closely following the trend of social entertainment, and trying her best to integrate into the city and The Times. However, without capital support, she can only choose to correct her attitude toward the body. She has talked about the object seven times, and finally she is willing to be the lover of rich Hu Hai because of a red pot of 200,000 yuan. Lost in the drive of The Times. Similar characters are Fu Rui's parents, Lao Zhao and Ai Qiu and so on. Through the detailed narration of the real human feelings and human nature, the author reveals the plight of people's lives in the context of the great era, which makes the secularization of the novel more clear, and thus strengthens the "non-human" characteristics that Fu Rui is inconsistent with the numerous secular, and constructs an image of a doctor outside the secular.

3. Mental Distress: Sickness under the Gaze of the Other

With the title of "Welcome to the World" and the death of Tian Fei as the trigger point, the novel focuses on Fu Rui's transformation to "the human world" and focuses on the proposition of individual self-reshaping under the action of external forces in the post-modern context. "The significance of death as the beginning lies in the re-establishment of the relationship between the hero, the event and the world", which plays the narrative function of ending the old order. Fu Rui is a typical perfectionist, does not allow a mistake, in the text, Fu Rui placed infinite hope on Tian Fei, but finally failed to save her successfully, which is no doubt a fatal spiritual

crisis for Fu Rui, who is accustomed to the label of "good life". After coming out of the operating room, Fu Rui's emotions were on the verge of collapse, he constantly reflected on his problems in the operation, fell into endless remorse and trance, immersed in his extended imagination of mental trauma. And this reprocessing of traumatic memories comes from the gaze of the other. In the present society, the ubiquitous gaze of the other has a latent and profound influence on our psychological mechanism, resulting in the constant spread of anxiety and nibbling away at our vitality. Contrary to the reader's usual thinking, the novel then does not focus on the negative impact of the accident, but sets up two dramatic praise, giving Fu Rui's mental predicament more explicit direction.

The first praise in Lao Zhao launched subordinate evening news to Fu Rui late night visit good deeds of publicity. To a large extent, this praise article caused Fu Rui's fate to change dramatically. For this news feature, the attitude of Fu Rui's parents is quite thought-provoking. Wen Lan, the mother, previously knew nothing about these deeds, "Wen Lan is also the first time to know that her son is living like this." Is his life going to last? Is he still asleep or not? How come you never heard Min Deer complain?" Three questions in a row reveal Wen Lan's love and care for her son as a mother; Fu Rui's father was disappointed with the content of the report, believing that the so-called good deeds were meaningless to Fu Rui's development, "the Fu Rui he desired should not go to the public in 'such a' way." Fu Rui should approach the media and the public with his business - theoretical breakthroughs, or clinical innovations." Under the surging of the media, Fu Rui was recommended by the hospital to participate in the new "backbone training" in the city, and it is this training that broke Fu Rui's spiritual defense line. In the training center, Fu Rui struggled to sleep every night under the torture of insomnia, and even appeared at night. Unexpectedly, due to the investigation of a theft, the security guard in the process of viewing the monitoring accidentally found Fu Rui mop the floor in the aisle at five o'clock in the morning, the center director decided to take the opportunity to commend, and play the video clip of the probe at the conference, Fu Rui also got the praise of the center director and the students long applause, however, in the face of the video "trance, unspeakable, obscene, Spooky, despicable expression of their own and the center director's Acura, Fu Rui as if experienced a painful facial surgery, "Fu Rui facial skin was torn, is a whole." Fu Rui's face was blurred, bright red, like a festering cherry. It doesn't hurt at all, it just itches." From the surreal description with such absurd meaning and feeling color, it is enough to see that the external paradoxical praise did not bring Fu Rui spiritual comfort, on the contrary, it pushed him to the endless abyss.

In fact, the late-night visitation praised in the "Old Zhao Diary" is most likely a wayward move made by Fu Rui in the case of serious anxiety after the failure of the operation, and the morning mop is the externalization of his extreme anxiety and anxiety. Therefore, the two external praise and rendering to Fu Rui is actually to make his most secret spiritual troubles public. Under the unknown attention of others, Fu Rui's dignity is trampled little by little, but he can not break out of the shackles of power relations, so he has to fall into the endless spiritual internal friction. According to Foucault, "In a disciplinary system the child is more personal than the adult, the sick more personal than the healthy, the insane and the criminal more personal than the healthy and the law-abiding."

In each of these cases, the personalization mechanisms in our civilization favor the former." In a way, Fourie is like the child, the sick and the mad in Foucault's words. From the day of his birth, to his profession, to his work, Fu Rui could not escape the fate of being arranged and controlled at every node of his growth. All he did was to satisfy others, and the gaze of others was constantly internalized in his self-requirements, which made his mental pressure more and more heavy, and finally it was difficult to cure himself in contradiction and pain. Thus, we can also strongly feel the novel's sharp social critical consciousness and thinking about people: behind the seemingly bright image of success, there is hidden the pathological psychology under the domination of the meritocratic society.

4. The Pain of Alienation: After Abandoning the Rational Carnival

Lacan once pointed out: "The other is a structural force of the other in nature, a field of signifier, and a place where the subject completes its identification. The so-called subject is structured, in fact it is constituted in the order of the other, and the identification process of the subject is actually the process of putting a different self in itself." In other words, the self-identification of the subject is essentially the identification of the other, and if we want to obtain the identification of the other, we must pay the price of the alienation of the subject. Fu Rui was an "excellent student" in the eyes of everyone before Tian Fei's death and the chain of events triggered by it, but after that, he gradually exposed the reality and spiritual crisis he was facing, and his body and heart were in a state of alienation and division, and he began to try to break the external bondage, showing his long-suppressed "irrationality".

In the second half of the novel, Fu Rui changes his original rationality and calmness, and a major feature of his attempt is to save the real world with his own power, and this rescue is almost crazy, and it is carried out under the guidance of "irrational". First of all, in front of the library of the training center, Fu Rui found that the statue of Copernicus was covered with cement that fell from the sky during the renovation. In history, Copernicus was once a doctor. Therefore, facing Copernicus's suffocating expression and asking for help, Fu Rui, who was mentally depressed, had a strong sense of resonance and was determined to save Copernicus. He sees the emergency as "one doctor's mission to another doctor." Unable to cope with the hard cement, Fu invited Guo Dingrong, but under Guo Dingrong's "positive performance", the neck of the Copernicus statue was broken by the hammer. The novel writes of the situation: "It was an astonishing scene, a terrible scene, a ground-breaking scene, almost a murder scene, bordering on terror. Fu Rui looked at the fracture in his neck, lost his mind, and his face suddenly changed." The failure to save Fu Rui is undoubtedly another injury, blank, helpless, silent collapse, which is basically the most real state of ordinary people in the real society when they face the sadness that they cannot escape. "As long as Fu Rui has a drop of oil in his tank, Fu Rui will never stop watching the struggle continue." In the process of writing, the author deliberately adopts a "non-violent" way to deal with the problem and promote the plot, which follows the logic of the character development of the protagonist to the greatest extent, and reflects Fu Rui's endless self-depletion vividly.

The second salvation is the salvation of CAI's soul. Since he met CAI and Hu Hai who have been living together at the

dinner party, Fu Rui decided that CAI's soul had fallen, so he planned to vomit CAI with the centrifugal force of the car to remove the dirt in her body: "To save the soul, it is not possible to rely on drugs, transplant surgery is not possible, it only needs a car." Obviously, this kind of healing program without scientific basis is completely contrary to the image of the doctor who believes in science, and is full of crazy, absurd and metaphysical colors. In this rescue, Fu Rui showed unprecedented indulgence and carnival: "Fu Rui once on the straight down, once rushed to the corner, he desperately whipped Passat's ass, driving!" - Ah!" In the rescue process of this "struggle" with Passat, Fu Rui finally completely pulled out from the body and rules of rationality, broke free from the domestication and restraint of society in a very excited cry, and "got rid of the weekday depressed grumpy..... I put aside all the serious and solemn things that usually make me unhappy, and I enjoyed myself to the fullest." Therefore, this is not so much a redemption of CAI's soul as Fu Rui's self-redemption. In Shangdao Coffee, Fu Rui could not help laughing wildly, he changed into a sheep, into a dog, into a snake, into a silkworm, and finally fell asleep, feeling unprecedented ease, and fully realizing the alienation of the subject in the carnival. These seemingly inexplicable behaviors and extreme ways of presentation are not the author's subtle control of the spiritual world of the novel characters, the realistic portrayal of the psychological aberrations of contemporary people, or an ironic allegory of *The Times*?

5. Conclusion

With salvation as the clue, *Welcome to the World* draws a secular picture of the world through the dual propositions of salvation of the other and self-salvation, allowing readers to see the historical reflection of contemporary life and human nature from the special period 20 years ago. The image created by the author at the beginning of the novel is a perfect healer - also a hero who walks on the edge of the secular world. However, the contradictions in reality do not allow such a pure and rational person to be included, and the mental state of Fu Rui is oppressed layer by layer, so Fu Rui goes further and further on the road of saving patients and self-redemption. In the end, he almost went crazy in the carnival and completed the alienation of the subject. The novel presents Fu Rui's spiritual dilemma revealed under the gaze of others in a "non-violent" way, and truly returns to the human world, aiming to analyze the spiritual secrets of people facing work, family, ideals, power, and dignity in the contemporary urban environment with the closest brush to reality, and to pay attention to the unspeakable sickness with solid and profound writing, reflecting the symptoms of *The Times*. In this sense, "Welcome to the world" welcomes Fu Rui, or perhaps not only Fu Rui.

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