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Spatial Narratives in Ge Fei's Novels: Exploring Scenes of Survival, Destiny and Spiritual Solitude

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Abstract

Ge Fei's novels writing lasted from the 1980s to the present. These not so short and not so long thirty years have been enough for the spatial image of social life to change radically. Especially in the last two decades, the commodity economy and consumerism are in full swing, and the imagination and efficiency of production are increasing day by day, offering more colourful spaces to people. In the face of increasingly aggressive social space and gradually retreating personal territory, and in the face of fragmented life, spatial narrative overshadows temporal narrative, which is highlighted in the textual behaviour of Ge Fei's long novels. Ge Fei's novels after 1990s are mostly long novels, in which spatial images such as "countryside" and "house" can be clearly recognised. This paper focuses on the spatial narratives in Ge Fei's novels, and analyses how the description of spatial images and spatial relations in Ge Fei's novels outlines the scenes of human existence, and how it contemplates the issues of loneliness of life and individual destiny.

Keywords: *Ge Fei, spatial narrative, medium-length fiction*

Spatial narration in novels refers to a narrative technique that conveys emotions, themes, and information by depicting characters' actions, communication, and interactions in specific spaces. In novels, space serves not only as the backdrop for character activities but also as a crucial factor in the development of the story. Spatial narration can be expressed through detailed descriptions of scenes, revealing characters' psychological spaces, and depicting the blending of time and space. Through careful spatial design, novels can create a unique atmosphere and evoke emotions, enabling readers to delve deeper into the understanding and experience of the plot and characters. In novels, spatial narration is often closely connected to elements such as plot and character development. Through the description and presentation of space, novels can present a diverse and rich world, providing readers with a strong visual and psychological impact during the reading process (Tao, 2022).

Ge Fei has written novels such as "The Jiangnan Trilogy", "Spring Breeze," and shorter works including "Lost Boat," "Encounter," and "Invisible Cloak," as well as specialized works like "The Invitation of Literature" and "Snow Concealing Egrets." His novella "Invisible Cloak" won the 2015 Lu Xun Literature Prize and Lao She Literature Award, while "The Jiangnan Trilogy" received the 2016 Mao Dun Literature Prize. In 2021, Ge Fei's English version of "Peach Blossom Faces" was nominated for the National Book Award for Translated Literature in the United States. In Ge Fei's novels, space is not merely a static backdrop but an active

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element intricately linked to characters, plot, and themes (Cai, 2019). He skillfully employs spatial narration to construct unique and symbolically rich survival scenes, allowing readers to experience the ebb and flow of destiny and the solitude of the soul within them. These scenes serve as both the stage for character activities and the externalization of their inner worlds, revealing the human condition and spiritual pursuits in a complex society. By delving into the spatial narratives in Ge Fei's novels, we not only gain a better understanding of his works but also engage in profound reflections on our own existence and fate. This batch of novels from the new century reflects Ge Fei's ambition to reorganize spatial order. Focusing on space in Ge Fei's extensive novel writing provides a unique perspective for examining "Chinese-style" creations after the 1990s.

1 Spatial Forms in Ge Fei's Novels

Space, as the foundation of human and material existence, necessitates the unfolding and conducting of material production activities and artistic creation activities within a certain space. And novels, as a fundamental form of artistic creation, cannot exist apart from space, whether in the writer's creative process or the reader's reception process. As Jean-Yves Tadié stated, "The novel is both a structure of space and a structure of time. It is called a spatial structure because, on the unfolding pages, it presents us with the organization and system of forms where our gaze remains stationary" (Jang, 2021). The construction of space in novels plays a crucial role in novelistic narration; the development of the novel's plot, the unfolding of character activities, and the introduction of backgrounds all need to be completed within various types of spatial constructions in the novel. The layout and utilization of space in novels not only impact the narrative effect but also reflect the writer's level of creativity.

In narrative space within novels, various characteristics such as material, social, psychological, and ideological exist. Scholars in the field of narrative studies and spatial theory have proposed diverse spatial classification schemes based on the different characteristics, functions, and manifestations of space. For instance, Henri Lefebvre, in his work "The Production of Space," proposed various spatial forms such as natural space, social space, bodily space, abstract space, feminine space, mental space, masculine space, and concrete space. Among these, the most fundamental are natural space, social space, and mental space. Edward Soja, building on Lefebvre's spatial classification, categorized space into the first space with material attributes, the second space with mental or cognitive attributes, and the third space that integrates subjectivity and objectivity, reality, and imagination. Raymond Williams, in his work "The Country and the City," studied and discussed rural space and urban space in literary works. In China, spatial narrative scholar Fang Ying combined Lefebvre's, Soja's, and Michel de Certeau's spatial classification methods, proposing that "in literary narratives, there mainly exist three types of space: physical space, mental space, and social space" (Shi and He, 2017). From the above classifications, it is evident that spatial categorization is diverse, with different spaces possessing different attributes. Some narrative spaces encompass both materiality and sociality, while others may unify sociality and spirituality. Therefore, scholars' classifications of space are not unique or universally applicable. Regardless of the classification, it is challenging to encompass all spatial forms in literary works, and there may be cases of different spatial forms mutually containing each other. However, for a better understanding of spatial elements in narrative works, spatial classification is necessary. In this context, based on the distinctive spatial features in Ge Fei's novels, the author divides the spatial representation in Ge Fei's novels into three parts: rural space, house space, and fragmented space. The following discussion will

elaborate on the specific manifestations of these three spatial forms, thereby analyzing the impact of spatial elements in Ge Fei's novels on the narrative process and theme presentation.

2 Exploration of Survival Scenes: Rural Space

The transformation of the countryside symbolizes changes in the living environment. Following the economic reforms and opening up, rural areas gradually became engulfed in the tide of industrial and urban civilization, leading to significant transformations in the appearance and way of life in the countryside. Conflicts and collisions between agriculture and industry, rural and urban, ecology and development, as well as material and spiritual aspects, are portrayed in Ge Fei's novels. This reflection underscores the complexity and diversity of rural survival scenes.

2.1 The Depiction of Ru Li Zhao Village's Decline

Ge Fei's "Spring Breeze" focuses on Ru Li Zhao Village to narrate the historical changes in the countryside. Through the perspective of the narrator, Zhao Boyu, who frequently returns to his hometown, the novel portrays the transformations occurring in the village. The narrative reflects the contradictions between urban civilization and rural civilization, as well as the ecological damage in the modern rural world during the process of economic and social transition (Wang, 2022; Mirsanjari et al 2021)

The decline of Ru Li Zhao Village is first manifested in the degradation of its ecological environment. In the past, the environment was tranquil and beautiful, but after demolition, it became a scene of desolation. During childhood walks, Ru Li Zhao Village was a picturesque utopia, with the sound of oars in the river, the calls of boatmen, and the sweet scent of the river mingling with the fragrance of grass and wood ash. Even after experiencing a fire, it still radiated vibrant vitality. However, with the operation of capital, urban expansion, and industrial development, the ecological environment began to deteriorate. When Zhao Boyu, in his middle age, returns to his hometown and witnesses the aftermath of demolition, he is met with fear and unfamiliarity. Ru Li Zhao Village is inundated with industrial wastewater, emitting a foul odor, ancestral halls are razed to the ground, and the ancient temple is dismantled. Rivers dry up, water is contaminated, farmland is destroyed, and biodiversity decreases, leading to the deterioration of the living space and environment. Villagers flee their homes, and eventually, Ru Li Zhao Village becomes deserted with not a soul in sight.

The decay of Ru Li Zhao Village is further evident in the collapse of rural ethical and moral values under the manipulation of capital. In contrast to the ecological degradation, the spiritual crisis and the breakdown of rural relationships completely destroy the spiritual home of Ru Li Zhao Village. Before the invasion of capital into the village, Ru Li Zhao Village was filled with warmth and compassion. For instance, Dezheng, an orphan placed in the village ancestral hall, grew up eating communal meals and receiving the village's protection. After becoming the village party secretary, Dezheng continued to contribute to and develop his hometown, persistently working on opening new fields and building schools. When Dezheng is falsely accused of rape and about to be taken away by armed forces, villagers come together to fiercely resist the armed forces. However, after the reform and opening up, the warmth, simplicity, and moral beliefs of Ru Li Zhao Village were dismantled under the invasion of capital. Cousin Zhaoliping embezzles village funds for personal gain, pollutes the village with industrial wastewater to facilitate villagers' relocation, and takes over "my" family's courtyard without permission to set up a factory. Familial and village ties become tools and means for Zhaoliping

to gain greater benefits. Xuelan, who wavers between multiple relationships, openly cohabits with a Shanghai technician upon learning about the loss of Zhao Boyu's mother's influence and his challenging urban life. Xuelan's infidelity not only reflects a distorted view of marriage but also signifies the erosion of traditional ethical and moral values by consumerism and the supremacy of money. The Guoyi injustice incident demonstrates the powerful influence of capital in eroding rural ethical and moral values. After Guoyi is fatally hit by a large truck operated by the Zhufang Group, the transportation department, disregarding facts, attributes the accident to Guoyi's responsibility. Guoyi's father Xiaoman protests at the paper mill to seek economic compensation but is brutally beaten. Meifang sympathizes deeply with the injustice suffered by Guoyi's family and, brandishing a kitchen knife, demands justice from the Zhufang Group. At this moment, Zhaoliping, the chairman of the Zhufang Group, promises Guoyi's family a compensation of five hundred thousand and arranges a job for Guoyi's wife. The enormous benefits offered by Zhaoliping push aside the unjust death of Guoyi. Meifang, seeking justice, becomes the target of Zhaoliping's coercion, while Zhaoliping, who shields the murderer and holds power, becomes the object of praise. This undoubtedly illustrates the distortion of human nature and values brought about by money and power.

The disappearance of rural culture is another manifestation of the decay of Ru Li Zhao Village. In "Spring Breeze," the fortune-telling skills of Zhao Yunxian, who had a profound understanding of both ancient and contemporary times, will no longer be passed down; the lingering sound of Zhao Mengshu's ancient zither playing in the Biqi Pavilion will never resonate again; the three-foot lectern of private tutor Zhao Xiguang is now covered in dust; and Wang Manqing's once dreamlike garden is now only home to black-winged butterflies dancing over the ruins. The way Little Wusong used wrestling victories and defeats to determine the village's discourse power has long ceased to exist. The various characters in Ru Li Zhao Village, representing traditional skills, Confucian integrity, customs, and other aspects of the deep historical roots of rural culture, have all dissipated with the arrival of urbanization and industrialization waves.

2.2 The Utopian Quest of Huajiashe and Puji

The writing of utopia has always been a significant theme in Ge Fei's works, and he particularly favors narrating the quest for utopia within rural spaces. In the "Jiangnan Trilogy," places like Huajiashe and Puji serve as vessels for the utopian aspirations of generations, becoming experimental grounds for the pursuit of ideals (He, 2023).

In Ge Fei's "The Jiangnan Trilogy," Puji is a meticulously crafted rural utopia that serves as both the main narrative space of the story and a crucial place for the Land family's pursuit and disillusionment of their Peach Blossom Spring dreams across three generations. Lu Kan, Lu Xiumi, and Tan Gongda, all poured their fervent desires and practices for an ideal society into the land of Puji. Lu Kan's utopian dream is inspired by the Peach Blossom Spring depicted in Han Changli's legacy painting. He passionately attempts to realize Tao Yuanming's Peach Blossom Spring in Puji by constructing a covered corridor to connect every household, aiming to protect the villagers from the hardships of nature. However, this dream dissipates with his mysterious departure. Lu Xiumi inherits her father's Peach Blossom Spring dream and incorporates revolutionary ideals into it. She strives to establish an ideal world in Puji characterized by equality, freedom, science, democracy, and common prosperity. Through practical activities like constructing canals, establishing a foot massage association and local autonomous committees, and founding Puji School and a nursery, she endeavors to realize her revolutionary ideals. However, financial constraints, betrayal from subordinates, and betrayal

from friends lead to the failure of her revolutionary utopia, culminating in the destruction of her family. Tan Gongda, in Puji, constructs the dream of a communist new village. He builds reservoirs, excavates canals, and introduces water and electricity, attempting to enable the people of Puji to live a communist life. However, his extreme and forward-thinking communist utopia makes life unbearable for the people of Puji. Eventually, he is imprisoned amid political conspiracies and persecution, and his dream shatters. Puji, as a rural space, encapsulates the utopian dreams of three generations of the Land family. They attempt to establish an ideal world on this land, reconstructing social order. However, these visions and practices ultimately crumble in the face of irresistible real-world factors. Through the story of Puji and the Lu family across three generations, Ge Fei profoundly reveals the dilemmas and challenges humanity faces in the pursuit of an ideal society, while also expressing a deep concern for the human spirit's pursuit and utopian dreams.

In Ge Fei's "Jiangnan Trilogy," Huajiashe is another rural space that carries the utopian practices of several generations. Originally a solitary island, Huajiashe, under the construction of Wang Guancheng, transformed into a Peach Blossom Spring world idealized by literati. However, this seemingly equal and free rural village is fraught with ambition and violence. After Wang Guancheng's murder, the brothers, driven by power, engage in mutual slaughter, and the prosperity of Huajiashe turns to ashes in a massive fire. Huajiashe becomes an experimental island for those who dream of utopia, providing a space for rebuilding systems, redefining ideologies, and reconstructing order. People from different eras explore and practice their personal ideals here. However, due to the impracticality of these ideals and flaws in the implementation process, Huajiashe's plans ultimately fail. Despite the shattered dreams of utopia, Huajiashe, as a rural space, preserves the possibility for literati to realize their personal ideals and bears the practice of isolated individuals pursuing utopian ideals. The historical evolution of Huajiashe witnesses the lonely journey of dream pursuers across generations.

3 Exploring Destiny: House Space

In Ge Fei's novels, the recurring locations of "boundary markers" and the depiction of "desires" actually point to the inner dimension of "home." Through the construction of the spatial structure of houses, the novels portray a yearning and anticipation for a homeland, as well as contemplation on the loneliness of life and individual destiny. This imagination and pursuit of a homeland reflect the human desire for security and a sense of belonging in the process of survival. However, this yearning and anticipation for a homeland are often closely connected to one's destiny, reflecting the inevitability and powerlessness individuals face when confronted with fate.

3.1 Boundary Markers: Satirical Spaces

In "Mountains and rivers dream," Yao Peipei, since childhood, has experienced the tragic fate of being orphaned and trapped in a situation where her family is destroyed. The novel repeatedly mentions the spatial location "Boundary Markers." "Boundary" is a conspicuous sign indicating arrival and emphasizing a specific location. However, the pause at the boundary is only a temporary state. What is more crucial is to gain direction and purpose through the boundary markers. Facing the boundary markers is, in fact, a search for a necessary sense of direction. In Ge Fei's novels, the boundary markers give rise to a poetic sense of sudden and silent movement (Zhao, 2020). Chen Xiaoming lamented after the end of avant-garde literature, saying, "All this will not happen again. The end of an era is the end of a mood, the end of a

style and manner" (Shen, 2019; Jazayeri, 2021). The youthful vigor and impetuosity of setting out on a journey at the age of eighteen, the kind of departure without questioning the purpose and not needing direction, are difficult to repeat a second time. The once prominently featured "mirror" in the novel, those mysterious, bright decorations capable of reflecting everywhere, has been modified by Ge Fei into "boundary markers" indicating direction. History requires guidance, and novels also have an obligation to present a sense of guidance. The poet Song Wei long ago pointed out the paradox in the mirror's reflective function, and Foster's statement is even more profound: "A mirror does not become brighter because a historically significant celebration passes by it." After shedding the cloak of avant-garde, Ge Fei understands this principle well. In the creation around the turn of the new millennium, facing a newly integrated nation and a more perplexing modernity, the "mirror" has quietly been replaced by "boundary markers."

In Ge Fei's "The Jiangnan Trilogy," the "Boundary Markers" serve as a symbolic spatial image. Yao Peipei perceives the relentless nature of fate and the end of life from the character "Boundary," feeling that she has reached the boundary of life with no way to escape. Ge Fei reveals the falsehood and deceit of the "Boundary," emphasizing that it is merely a superficial symbol and does not provide genuine guidance. Revolution, collectivism, roads, and other elements constitute the social space, but they all have problems and deficiencies. People attempt to escape reality through the "Invisibility Cloak," yet the real dilemma lies in the inability to find true belonging and identity. Ge Fei employs a satirical tone in the novel, pointing out that the apparent abundance of our era is superficial and lacks genuine depth and substance. The relationship between individuals and space is mutually influential, and people should perceive and choose spaces that suit them rather than being misled by superficial symbols.

Ge Fei suggests that the revelations written in the fabric of destiny need to be observed, not only in our houses but also within our homes, where the obscured essence of fate awaits insight. Only through this can the vision of "returning to the embrace of time" avoid becoming futile.

3.2 House: The Banners of Desire

"The Banners of Desire" once evolved into a conventional love narrative between men and women, yet the anticipated lover for Zhang Mo does not have a face; instead, it is the scenery of the old house that freezes into a clear image in the imagination (Liu, 2022). The slow tempo inherent in recollection intertwines the words associated with the "old house" thoroughly. The crops on the ground and the flying small creatures, these natural and subtle images, autonomously gather around the house. Another evident force begins to emerge in the novel: the house. Beyond the weighty philosophical propositions and tense suicide incidents, the "house" is repeatedly mentioned, this soft and retractable place, challenging the radical states of the former two. Zhang Mo's mysterious and romantic memories vividly demonstrate that "The Banners of Desire" is, in fact, a story about "home" or, as it can be called, "coming home." For Zhang Mo, what is truly enchanting is not "love" or anything else, but "home." Cultural anthropologist Lévi-Strauss, in tracing the "origin of things," concluded a shared human emotional experience: "'Let's go home,' in any language, is a sacred phrase." Similarly, Ge Fei believes, "Our desires themselves and their realization processes are also being symbolized, becoming the ultimate mystery of survival." Although Ge Fei regards desire as the greatest secret of the present era, the story of desire and survival is no longer the freshest material for novels. "Desire" is at most the surface of the novel, and the narrator cleverly turns Zhang Mo's desire for "home" into a mystery, hidden within the scattered banners of desire in the novel.

There was a time when "coming home" escalated into a form of "desire" or, one might say, a luxury. The novel seemingly breezes through it, but deliberately emphasizes a casual remark: in a conversation with Zeng Shan, Song Zijin suddenly mentions, "He hasn't been home for a full five years" and "You don't know, I can't go back anymore." Consequently, Zhang Mo's desire accurately reflects the corresponding question: in an era where "desire banners" abound, in the current chaotic and mentally unsettled times, where can we return to? Where can emotions find solace? Where is the starting point for us to embark on anew? Unfortunately, limited by the volume of the story and the then-unclear "home" space, "The Banners of Desire" did not have the opportunity to answer these questions one by one. The novel's last scene freezes on Zhang Mo, who, upon arriving at the waiting hall, appears lost in thought and directionless. However, the answer is already clear. "House" is an open space, the material form of "home," but "only when the observer realizes that a 'house' is a 'place of residence' with a series of other features, all limited by the ways in which people use this house in their activities, will this 'house' be understood as a 'house.'" In other words, Zhang Mo's coveted old house is far from being the final answer in the novel about "home" and "homeland." How does a "house" become a "home"? How does a house deeply express the relationship between people and the space they were born and raised in? These are not self-evident questions. Therefore, in his subsequent writings, Ge Fei continues to construct houses in the novel, using them to observe the mountains, experience the spring breeze, explore space, and contemplate the profound correspondence between "house" and "home."

4 Exploring the Solitude of the Soul: Fragmented Spaces

This section delves into the emotional tones of "wind" and "moon" extracted from Ge Fei's novels. It combines the recurring imagery of "attics" and "islands" in Ge Fei's literary creations, examining how the spatial narratives in the novels concretely anthropomorphize "buildings" and "islands." It also explores the transition from the "island" to the "shore" as a means to achieve the resolution of the solitude of the soul.

4.1 Analysis of Attics and Lonely Islands

The story of "Father came down from upstairs" opens the narrative of "Peach Blossom with Face," leading readers into a unique space composed of the courtyard downstairs and the attic upstairs. The attic serves as the private space of Mr. Lu Kan, symbolizing his solitude and madness (Yu, 2022). Ge Fei cleverly utilizes the attic as an extension of the narrative perspective, contemplating the impact of specific spaces on individuals. The attic's enclosure, gloominess, and mystery give rise to a new self in Lu Kan, nurturing his utopian dream. Although Lu Kan's utopian dream lacks novelty, the story, through the spatial imagery of the attic, unveils the subtleties and complexities of the relationship between individuals and their surroundings.

Later, the building draws an open and multidimensional world into people's sight, allowing them to transcend beyond the ground and not merely live in the present. In this open and multidimensional space, failure and pain are accepted, making ascending the building and leaning against it a classic mode of expressing grievances. Although Lu Kan's whereabouts are unknown, the attic remains in place, and the attic's generative power for dreams is also left behind. If the shattered world is a retreat for Lu Kan in one corner of the attic, then for Peipei, the world's incompleteness lies in the fact that she doesn't even have a small building. She only guards her broken body, leaving fragmented traces like an animal on the earth, lodging under the starry sky in the wilderness. The incomplete and discontinuous space throws a strong sense

of loneliness onto Yao Peipei. Loneliness is Peipei's destiny and, at the same time, her secret. She can only entrust it to a light sigh. The "sense of loneliness" becomes the unspoken "secret" in Ge Fei's novel, and Ge Fei shapes loneliness with the spatial state of the "island."

"Huajiashe" is a significant spatial symbol in the "Jiangnan Trilogy," a solitary island suspended in the middle of the water. This spatial symbol represents people's pursuit of ideals and designs, but often encounters difficulty in understanding and realization. Therefore, characters in Ge Fei's works often appear to be madmen, such as Lu Kan, Wang Guancheng, Tan Duanwu, and Wang Yuanqing. After Wang Yuanqing's architectural plan is shattered, he becomes a "madman" in the eyes of the world because he does not conform to the spirit of the times. He willingly gives up his freedom, actively moving into a mental hospital, a modern "abnormal" space, confronting the "normal" society. In Ge Fei's novels, the lonely "island" sometimes switches to a "box." For example, when Lu Kan comes down from the attic, he carries a white wicker box in his hand. Similarly, Little Shanshan's spatial knowledge is provided by a box. Like a box summoning closure and filling, she fills the box and closes herself. These boxes become their islands, but the space of safety and reliability is getting smaller and smaller.

From the moment Lu Kan came down from the attic, it was destined that characters in Ge Fei's novels would constantly encounter islands and boxes in space, those fragmented and discontinuous spaces. In the end, personal islands and boxes are even compressed into a thin piece of fabric—the "invisibility cloak." Only under the cover of this magical garment can life potentially be enjoyed. However, the "invisibility cloak" always has to, in turn, provide evidence for the abundant surrounding world. If one escapes into absolute nothingness, there would be no need for the so-called invisibility. Therefore, islands will not remain permanently rigid; the intricate shores constantly tempt them. In Ge Fei's recent two novels, "Looking at the Spring Breeze" and "Moonset at the Desolate Temple," the tense opposition between islands and the mainland gradually eases, allowing more flexible metaphors to flow into the novels.

4.2 Analysis of Wind and Moon

"Looking at the Spring Breeze" is Ge Fei's work on the search for a homeland, using the clue of "Looking at the Spring Breeze" to showcase the characters' process of seeking a home between the east and west, south and north. In the novel, spring wind has spatial significance, symbolizing life and hope, allowing the unnamed victims to be resurrected. The novel is structured with long paragraphs, highlighting the act of searching and vividly depicting the paths taken in the quest for a home. As the characters search for a homeland, they ultimately return to the village of Ru Li Zhao, constructing a completely new world of life. The vitality of "Looking at the Spring Breeze" lies in the viscosity of the spring wind, allowing us to see vivid moments or eternal scenes in space, witnessing the ancient homeland waiting to come to life in the spring breeze. The terms "looking for wind" and "listening to the moon" in the novel are synonymous, both representing a deep nostalgia and pursuit of a homeland.

"Moonset at the Desolate Temple" is Ge Fei's latest novel, narrating the lives of Chu Yun before and after disfigurement, along with characters like Cui Zi and Lin Yisheng (Wang, 2022). This novel revolves around the moon and, through the form of a concert, allows people to collectively experience moonlight. Here, Ge Fei introduces a mode of silence in the novel, during which space does not require the circulation of language. This way, people might temporarily avoid the estrangement caused by language deformation. Duan Yifu once talked about how "because architectural space seems to reflect the rhythm of human emotions, it is called 'frozen music.' Therefore, can we follow this cognitive logic and reverse music to be

identified as architecture, identified as a space that can be composed and filled?" Perhaps this is the true intention of the novelist Ge Fei. By leading everyone into a unique space with a beautiful and quiet melody, he allows them to experience the semantic direction of eternal emotions within that space. As the melody of Debussy's "Clair de Lune" lingers on the island where the concert is held, the undulating voices of the people fill the air. Readers suddenly realize that Ge Fei's "solitary island" has, at this moment, transformed into a fertile land through music, with clean buildings and a bustling crowd. The island is no longer inhabited by a lone and desolate individual but gathers everyone who gazes and listens in the moonlight: "At this moment, time seems to have stopped, as if all the oppositions and obstacles in the world have disappeared." Bathed in moonlight, the islands seem to be connected.

Gazing at the spring breeze and listening to the moonlight, carefully designed by Ge Fei for the novel, is a subtle exchange of sensations. The space is fluid and unobstructed, allowing Ge Fei and his novel to perform their ghostly tricks. In fact, our ancestors had already left behind phrases for future generations, such as "watching the wind without getting tired" and "listening alone in the moonlight." The significance of the novel lies in the fact that when modern time freezes on the wall clock, and the high-speed era does not allow the gaze probing into history to turn around, there is still an infinitely open space waiting patiently for the subject in the eternal night.

Conclusion

"History does not move in one direction but simultaneously sprouts numerous diverging paths," as Cui Weiping puts it, and Carl Jung also believed, "We stand on the summit of consciousness, naively thinking there's a small path that can directly lead to another peak, but that's a fictional rainbow bridge. To truly reach another peak, we must descend to the point where the roads begin to fork." Ge Fei, the builder of novels, with his clever spatial narrative, reminds us not to forget the native soil and the dwelling places. Our homes are precisely the "point where the roads begin to fork," the inner universe of the subject. Don't forget what our homeland used to be, and don't forget what kind of homeland we once wanted to build. The home is never a retreat; it listens to the stories and destinies beyond time and space in the posture of crawling on the ground, waiting for a moment that is brief but eternal to leap up.

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