

石至莹的《帕洛马尔》

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一. 草

前面这根草和后面这根草有什么差别？左边这根草和右边这根草有什么差别？远处的那些草和近处的那些草有什么差别？中间这些草和其他草之间又有什么差别？

我面对我眼前的这片草地，我试图分辨出每一根草之间的不同之处。但是同时，我开始反问我自己：这种分辨不是很矫情吗？这种思考重要吗？这种做法有意义吗？我开始有点瞧不起我自己。

草与草之间极其相似，我很快就忘记了他们的差别，我也很快对这种行为感到疲乏，最后我放弃了这种努力。我用手握住一把草，看了看他们的根部。草实在太茂盛了，以至于完全没有缝隙看见下面的泥土，也看不到我担心的爬虫。这太好了！

我一直想寻找到一个属于自己的空间，只有我的存在，所以我不停地行走，直到村落已经非常遥远，公路和公路两旁的白桦树也看不见了，直到我发现了一片草地，躺了下来。我的内心开始平静下来，但是几秒钟之后，这种平静被疑问代替：这片草地是属于我的吗？还是属于草自己？我是否应该继续行走？那我要去哪里呢？我是否应该一直躺下去，等待草丛不断向上生长，穿透我的身体，穿过我的手臂和十个手指，最后将我掩盖？我能确定那时候我是依然活着还是已经死亡？

帕洛马尔先生的草坪是一种草，它们作为植物客观地存在着，帕洛马尔先生无法按照数学的方式来统计它们的数量，最后这种计算变得徒劳无益和没有意义；卡尔维诺借用意大利语言描述了帕洛马尔先生眼中的草，它们是卡尔维诺风格的草，具有个体经验与主观情感。卡尔维诺从草开始扩展到宇宙空间，从草的不可数延伸到宇宙的没有边界；石至莹的《草坪》运用绘画语言，重新解构了文学读本中的草，这些草抽离了文本的叙事性和事实的本体，实现从具像——抽象——具像的不断变化；我看了石至莹的《草坪》，熟悉的情绪重现。我以为草是一种答案，但是答案并不存在；我以为草已经远离我的生活，可是它早已蔓延了我的一生。现实与想像，存在与死亡，理性与情绪，未来与不确定性逐渐让我丧失了辨别的兴趣与能力，草和草的区别不再具有任何意义。

他者非我，如何了解我心中的草？我非石至莹，如何了解石至莹心中的草？石至莹非卡尔维诺，如何了解卡尔维诺心中的草？卡尔维诺非帕洛马尔，如何看到帕洛马尔眼中的草？帕洛马尔非草，如何又知道草是草，亦或草非草呢？

二. 陨石，以及其他自然之物

按照字典的解释，陨石是地球以外未燃尽的宇宙流星，这些石质的，铁质的或石铁混合的物质脱离了原有运行轨道，最后以碎块的形态散落在地球或其他行星的表面。

我们对于陨石的认知总是来自二手的信息，包括以上的注解在内。但是面对一颗坚硬冰冷表面创伤的石头，由一石而及整个宇宙，由宇宙而及生命万物，人类产生诸多联想：关于彗星撞地球，关于人类的起源，关于宇宙的边界，关于第十一维度的存在，关于现在日益恶劣的天气与自然环境，关于地球的未来。人类习惯在这种联想中附加上自我的内心情感，得到心灵的安慰和寄托。这种凭空附加的非物质体会，这种人类对未知的好奇与敬畏，对未来的期望与担忧是否印证了在自然面前，人类的渺小和生命的脆弱？

我曾经问石至莹，这些陨石是哪一颗星球的陨石。我推测是火星的表面，可是对于石至莹来说，哪个星球，并不需要那么具体化，它可能是火星，可为什么就不可能是地球呢。这不是重点，重点在于，按照石至莹

的理解，陨石作为物质，本体已经包含了很多意义，我们无须再多做加减。自然之物拥有自身的能量与智慧，我们需要做的只是安静地面对它们并感知这种力量。“我希望能安静地，用心真诚地去面对，就象我在与人交谈的时候，我喜欢看着对方的眼睛，我也是这样真诚地面对绘画，面对我所绘画的对象。我在和它们交流。”

除了陨石，石至莹的绘画内容也大都与自然之物有关，这与《帕洛马尔》的内容是密不可分的。但是，小说的内容已经和石至莹的作品关系疏离。如果客观世界的实际物质是物的存在，那么《帕洛马尔》已经是一面镜子，读者阅读的是这些物体的第一次镜面成像而已。经过不同语言的翻译和译者自身的文字习惯，中文的《帕洛马尔》给石至莹展示的是第二次成像了。石至莹喜欢阅读《帕洛马尔》，书中描述的一些细节，经过石至莹的思想转换，呈现在观众面前的草，海，月亮和陨石等，已经是第四次成像。像与像的相互映照，如同镜子与镜子的相互反射，观看石至莹的作品，观众如同进入一个充满镜子的房间，孰是客观的物体，孰是虚幻的像，孰是像的成像？主体与客体，真实与虚幻，虚幻与虚幻，让观众的视觉与精神体验方寸大乱。

三. 无中生有

石至莹的作品，有一个非常明显的特点：颜色单一而清淡。在《草坪》，《海》《小物经》中，所有的对象都褪去了原有的色彩，最后只剩下黑白灰三种颜色。“我听说刚出生的婴儿在最初的两个月看东西的时候对黑白特别敏感，对其他色彩的灰阶的反映就不是非常明显。婴儿能感知的东西是最真实的。再说，在我的作品中，即使只有黑色白色和灰色，但是不代表他们是单调和没有层次的。”

哪种颜色是物体的真实颜色，我们看到草是绿的，那草的确就是绿的吗？海就真的是蓝色的吗？按照物理学的理论，颜色是物体对可见光选择吸收的结果，颜色的产生首先涉及的是光与物质通过吸收、透射、散射和反射等相互物理作用。人类，果蝇，青蛙和蜻蜓所接受到的光的波长是不一样的，所以我们面对的虽然是同一个世界，这个世界的颜色或同一物体的颜色可能都是不一样的。哪一个才是物体的真实？我们接触的原来一直只是一种假象？与其如此，不如我们面对黑白灰色的草与海洋，陨石，甚至生活的日常物件：一双鞋子，一本书，一听鹅肝罐头，我们的感觉可能更加真实，或者我们更接近真实。

四. 天上·人间

卡尔维诺说，他原来的计划是写两个人物，犹如白天和黑夜，天空与大地。后来，两者合为一体，那就是帕洛马尔先生。石至莹的作品，用细腻的笔触书写了两个世界：天上和人间。在天与地之间，石至莹一直在寻求一种灵魂与精神的轻盈，这也是她希望自己的作品带给观者的感受。

“应该轻得象鸟，而不是象羽毛。”——我想借用卡尔维诺在《未来千年文学备忘录》中引用的 Paul Valery 这句话——石至莹说。

Palomar by Shi Zhiying

Text by Zoe Zhang

I. Grass

What's the difference between the blade of grass ahead and the one after? And the blade at the left and the right? Or that in the distance and nearby? Or the blade in the center and the

others?

Facing the lawn in front of me, I tried to tell the differences between each blade of grass. But at the meanwhile, I began to ask myself, was that a mawkish thing trying to distinguish them? Was my thinking really that important? Did it make any sense? Well, I began to disdain myself.

A blade of grass was almost the same as another; soon I forgot their differences, and got bored of my conduct, and at last, I gave up. I held a bunch of grass and took a look at their roots. Grass was really too flourish for me to find any crevice to see the mud under it, or the crawler I feared. That was great!

I was looking for a space of my own all the way, only me there, so I kept walking until the village had already been left far behind, and the road and the silver birches along it disappeared from my sight. Until later, I found a piece of lawn, and I lay down. My heart calmed down, but only a few seconds later, the serenity was substituted by questions: did this lawn belong to me? Or to the grass itself? Should I keep walking? And where would I go? Should I just lie here forever and wait for the grass growing all the way up, piercing my body, my arms and ten fingers, and finally burying me? Could I be sure whether I was alive or dead then?

The grass on Mr. Palomar's lawn was of one kind, and it lived there objectively as a plant. Mr. Palomar could not count its quantity in mathematical way, and eventually the calculation would turn out to be useless and meaningless. Calvino employed Italian language to describe the grass in Mr. Palomar's eyes, and it was the grass bearing Calvino's style and his personal experience and subjective emotion. Calvino started with grass and later expended to the cosmic space, from the uncountable nature of grass to the boundlessness of the cosmos. While Shi Zhiying's *Lawn* utilized drawing language and deconstructed the grass in literature. This grass dissociated from the textual narrativity and the ontology of reality, and realized the everlasting change from figurative – abstract – figurative. I viewed Shi Zhiying's *Lawn* – the reoccurrence of familiar sentiments. I thought grass was an answer, but the answer did not really exist; I thought grass was now far from my life, but it had already spread on my entire life. Reality and imagination, to be or not to be, sense and sentiments, and future and uncertainty had already deprived me of the interest and ability of distinguishing things; the differences between one blade of grass and another no long made any sense.

Others are not me, so how could they understand the grass in my mind? I'm not Shi Zhiying, so I could never know the grass in her heart. Shi Zhiying is not Calvino, so how could she see the grass in his heart? Calvino is not Palomar, so how could he know the grass Palomar saw? Palomar is not grass, so how could he know that the grass is or is not grass?

II. Meteorites, and other natural things

According to the explanation in the dictionary, meteorites are the unburned meteors from the outer space. These stony, irony things or mixtures of stone and iron escaped from their orbits

and scattered onto the surface of earth or other planets in the form of fragment.

Our cognition of meteorites is always from second-hand information, including the annotation above. However, when facing a cold hard stone with trauma on its surface, and thinking from a stone to the whole universe, from the whole universe to every living thing, human beings are evoked with many association: about meteorite's collision with the earth, about the origin of mankind, about the boundaries of the universe, about the existence of the 11th dimension, about the relationship between the ever deteriorating climate and natural environment, about the future of the earth. Human beings are accustomed to add their own inner feelings onto such association, to get the consolation and bailment of their soul. Does such immaterial experience added without any foundation, such curiosity and reverence human beings hold about the unknown, and the expectation and anxiety for future verify the tininess of human beings and the fragility of life in the face of nature?

Once I asked Shi Zhiying from which planet these meteorites came. I guessed they were from the surface of the Mars, but to Shi Zhiying, it did not need to be a certain planet. It might be the Mars, but why couldn't it be the earth? It's not where the stress falls; the important thing is, to Shi Zhiying's understanding, as a certain material, meteorite itself has already got much connotation, and we do not need to add or subtract anything anymore. Natural things have their own power and wisdom, and all we need to do is to face them quietly, and sense this power. "I wish I can face things quietly, attentively and sincerely; like when I talk with some one, I would look into his/her eyes. I also treat painting and the objects I paint sincerely. I'm communicating with them."

Most of Shi Zhiying's paintings have something to do with natural things besides meteorites, and it's inseparable from the content of "*Palomar*". However, the content of this novel has already alienated from Shi Zhiying's works. If the real substance in the objective world is the existence of material, then "*Palomar*" has already become a mirror, and what the readers get is only the first mirror imaging of these objects. After being translated from another language and added with the translator's own language style, the thing that the Chinese version of "*Palomar*" shows to Shi Zhiying is already the second imaging. Shi Zhiying likes to read "*Palomar*", and some details described in the book are transformed by her thought, and then the grass, the sea, the moon and the meteorites presented to the viewers are already the fourth imaging. The mutual reflection between one image and another is just like that between one mirror and another. Viewing Shi Zhiying's works, the viewers are like stepping into a room full of mirrors, and which is the objective material, which is the illusory image, or which is the imaging of an image? Subject and object, reality and illusion, illusion and illusion; all confuse and disorient the viewers visually and spiritually.

III. Something out of nothing

There is a very distinctive characteristic in Shi Zhiying's works: the colors are simplex and light. In her works such as "*Lawn*", "*Sea*" and "*The Classic of Tiny Things*", the original colors of all the objects faded, leaving only black, white and grey. "I heard the new born baby was very sensitive to black and white in their first two months, but not so sensitive to the gray

scale of other colors. What the baby can sense is the truest thing. What's more, even if there are only black, white and grey in my works, they are not monotonous or flat."

Which color is the true color of an object? We see the grass is green, and the grass is really green? And the sea is really blue? According to the theory of physics, colors are the results of the absorption of visible light by objects, and the generation of colors is on the first place related to the physical interaction between light and objects through absorption, transmission, scattering and reflection. The wavelengths of light that human beings, drosophilae, frogs and dragonflies receive are different, so although we face the same world, the colors of the world or the same object we see could be different. Which is the true face of an object? What we are contacting all the way through is only false appearance? If so, why don't we just face the black-white-grey grass and oceans, meteorites, or even daily items? A pair of shoes, a book, a can of foie gras, etc. Maybe we could feel more real, or get closer to realities.

IV. Heaven · Earth

Calvino said, he originally planned to write two figures, like day and night, sky and earth. But later the two became one and that was Mr. Palomar. Shi Zhiying's works depict two worlds with delicate strokes: heaven and earth. She is ever looking for the lightness of soul and spirit between heaven and earth, and that's the impression she wants to deliver to the viewers through her works.

"One should be light like a bird, and not like a feather." – "And I would like to employ the sentence Calvino borrowed from Paul Valery in his *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*." said Shi Zhiying.