

Geometric Sadness (or Notes on Biosphere 3)

Text / btr

Translation / Mike Fu

I remember things that have not yet come to pass, the White Queen says to me about her dreamscape. The dreams come from meteorites of tomorrow, slamming into her like an oracle.

At first she could keep her mouth shut, say nothing. In truth, she'd long already sunk into silence. If only I'd have known she was like this, so enamored with wordplay: enticing Alice with jam, saying that it could be eaten every other day, but "to-day" was never "any other day"; saying the "future" (*avenir*) would be coming soon (*à venir*), so thus it already exists in the present. But she finally discovered that her words had been too hard, too conclusive, and also too old-fashioned. The borders of these words were too clear. Words made the world dry, stagnant, perishable. She finally came to prefer the periodic table of elements over language.

She decided to learn from the bees, learn how to emit *AUM*, a sound traveling from deep in her throat to the tip of her tongue, containing within all possible sounds, like an incantation from God, or the secret of the universe; she decided to learn from lightning, learn how to tear the sky into pieces, revealing time that had not yet come to pass. The White Queen firmly believed if you could just reflect back all the light in the visible spectrum, you would see a swath of white. That would be a new beginning, a world full of possibility, a "world . . . so recent . . . in order to indicate [many things] it was necessary to point²."

She called the place she dreamt about "Biosphere 3," a capsule of a world made up of four interconnected rooms. When describing the dreamscape, she used a nonsensical language, words sticking together sometimes, other times like pointillist brushstrokes, only understandable as a whole. For a time she seemed hypnotized, speaking phrases from a deep subconscious, closer to poetry or music.

A good mime. A mime starring *mimosa*. *Mi-Mo-Sa*. Lips touching and parting, followed by a smile. The sound of growing and sleeping magnified by silence, becoming whispers of life. "Touch and close" is not just a defense mechanism, but also a manner of flirtation, suggesting an invitation to touch. Secrets flowing like juice: it's the moisture flowing out from the pulvinus that causes the *mimosa* leaves to close, after all. Movement is the key. Whether moisture, air, or consciousness. Perhaps they might meet and become water vapor, gushing forth in an endless stream from some skin-like surface, like breath you can see, delineating a wandering buffer zone for a clearly defined plane.

In Biosphere 3, change continually appears in gentler and slower ways. Like a clock with its second hand and minute hand removed: you stare at the hour hand, unable to determine whether or not it's moving. Unable to tell whether it's moving or staying still based

几何的感伤(或生物圈三号记事)

文 / btr

我记得一些还没发生的事，白皇后开始向我述说梦境。梦是来自未来的陨石，如神谕般击中她。

她本可以闭口不谈。事实上，她已经沉默很久。要知道她曾如此着迷于文字游戏：用果酱诱感爱丽丝，说果酱是隔天才能吃的，但“今天”始终不是“隔天”；说“未来” (*avenir*) 便是即将到 (*à venir*)，因而它已然存在于现在。但她终于发现，词语还是太坚硬、太确凿也太古板了。词语的边缘太清晰。词语让世界干燥、停滞、寂灭。她终于更偏爱元素周期表而非语言。

她决定向蜜蜂学习，学习如何发出“*AUM*”，一种从深喉传到舌尖、包含了所有音域的声音，如来自上帝的咒语，或宇宙密码；向闪电学习，学习如何把天空撕裂成碎片，显露尚未到来的时间。白皇后深信只要把可见光谱的光全部反射回去，你便会见到一片白。那是另一个新生伊始的、充满可能性的世界，需要“用手指指点的世界²”。

她把梦中所见的地方称为“生物圈三号”，一个由彼此连通的四个房间构成的胶囊般的世界。她叙述梦境时使用了一套梦呓式的语言，词语有时彼此粘连，有时像点彩派的笔触，需要从整体把握。她一度显得如同被催眠，说出一些更接近诗和音乐、仿佛来自潜意识深处的句子。

是一出默剧。含羞草演出的默剧。*Mi-Mo-Sa*。嘴唇相触再分开，接着微笑。生长与睡眠的声音被沉默放大成生命的私语。“触碰-闭合”不仅是一种防御机制，也是一种调情法，暗示着对触碰的邀请。秘密像液汁般流动：正是叶枕内的水分流向别处，才使含羞草的叶片闭合的吧。重要的是流动。无论是水分、空气还是意识。也许它们会合而为水蒸气，源源不断地从某个类似于皮肤的表面涌出，像看得见的呼吸，为界限分明的平面描出一片游移不定的缓冲区。

在生物圈三号，变化以更微妙更缓慢的方式持续显现。就像秒针和分针被拆除后的钟：你凝视着时针，无法确定它是不是在走。无法依据显而易见的动静来判断当下究竟在动还是静。一如从海面高处俯瞰海上行驶着的船和它们的白色浪痕，你会以为世界凝固成了一幅油画；直到飞机开始降落，直到越来越接近它们，画才开始成为“活画” (*tableau vivant*)。你甚至可以用同样的方法让一张照片动起来：只要靠得足够近，语焉不详的细节便会取代确凿的定影，予人动的印象。

生物圈三号内置了这种静中之动的宇宙观。空气、光和缓慢反应的化学物质是看不见的杰克逊·波洛克，日复一日在魔镜般的铜板上

绘下宇宙变幻的寓言。而假如说这面高清电视尺寸的铜板上播放着宇宙之隐喻的话，那堆有一亿年历史的蛤蜊化石便是一种转喻。它们是时间本身如星系般从墙边伸出银色的舌。又或者，那是未来的入口？

但未来让我感伤。未来像陶瓷一样脆弱。陶瓷碎片的罅隙正变得越来越大，如一场难以逆转的离散。“我们并没有生态危机。而是生态圈有**人类危机**。”³ William Rees 如是说。对于未来我唯一能确信的是，我将不在那儿，不在那个末日之后的时间灵簿狱 (limbo) 里。在那儿，土地干裂如恐龙的碎骨化石；消逝已久的闪电上长出青苔；而陨石带来宇宙深处的讯息，成为唯一的宗教。我们需要一次新的撞击，需要一个新的上帝，需要一次闪电和一场雨。

你曾经感觉忧郁吗？白皇后突然换了一种语调，用问题突袭毫无防备的我。我本能地摇了摇头。你感觉到我们所处的星球正在膨胀吗？嗯，怪不得同一时间出门，上班也会迟到啊。我试图用笑话瓦解她的忧郁，但她似乎依旧沉浸在自己的思绪里。也许不是在膨胀，而是在坠落。

我循着她的目光望向窗外：生物圈一号的太阳正朝地平线坠去，下缘泛出的炫目的金黄色光芒使得它与地平线的切线变得不那么确定，仿佛对几何学的某种徒劳抵抗。就在那一瞬间，我第一次感到了一种几何的感伤。

1 见刘易斯·卡罗尔《爱丽丝镜中奇遇》(Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There, 1871) 第五章“Wool and Water”。

2 语出加西亚·马尔克斯《百年孤独》(范晔译, 南海出版公司2011年6月第一版), “世界新生伊始, 许多事物还没有名字, 提到的时候尚需用手指指点点。”

3 “We do not have an ecological crisis. The ecosphere has a human crisis.” —William Rees

on obvious motion. Just like looking down from on high at a boat in motion and white waves in its wake, you'll believe that the world has turned into a painting; only until the airplane begins its descent, only until you draw closer and closer will the painting start to become a *tableau vivant*. You could even use the same method to make a photograph come alive: so long as you stand close enough, details that were not so apparent replace the solid and the fixed, bestowing upon a person the impression of movement.

This kind of motion within stillness has been put in Biosphere 3. Air, light, and slowly reacting chemical substances are an unseen Jackson Pollock, day after day painting fables of the universe's changes on a magic mirror-like copper plate. And if this copper plate, the size of an HDTV, were broadcasting the universe's metaphors, then the hundred million year old clam fossils would be a kind of metonymy. They're the silver tongues of time itself, extended from the wall like galaxies. Or else, it's the entrance to the future?

But the future makes me sentimental. The future is fragile as porcelain. The crevices between porcelain fragments are now growing larger and larger, a scattering that's hard to reverse. “We do not have an ecological crisis,” William Rees has said. “The ecosphere has a human crisis.” As for the future, the only thing I'm confident about is that I won't be there. I won't be in that limbo of time after doomsday. At that point, the ground will be dry and cracked like the fragmented fossils of the dinosaurs; moss will grow on the long gone lightning; and meteorites carrying messages from the depths of the universe will become the only religion. We need a new impact, need a new God, need a flash of lightning and a spell of rain.

Have you felt melancholic before? The White Queen suddenly changes her tone, ambushing me with this question. Instinctively I shake my head. Can you feel how the planet we're on is expanding? Yeah, no wonder I get to work late even though I leave at the same time. I attempt humor to disrupt her melancholy, but she still seems immersed in her own thoughts. Maybe it's not expanding, but descending.

I follow her gaze and look out the window: the sun of Biosphere 1 is dipping down to the horizon now, the bottom edge glowing a dazzling gold, allowing for its tangent with the horizon to become rather indistinct, as if in futile resistance to geometry. In that sliver of a moment, I feel a kind of geometric sadness for the first time.

1 See “Wool and Water,” chapter 5 of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*, 1871.

2 From *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez: “The world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point” (trans. Gregory Rabassa).