

# 母土／異國

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很多台南人並不頂喜歡都會台北，就其原因倒也不是台北城內有甚麼大缺失，而是對純台南人而言，不論氣候、人情味、生活節奏、美食等所謂的台南「氣口」（台南味）之狀態；簡言之：只因為家鄉台南氣息太美好，這是任何其他地方所無可取代的。所以近年來以販賣台南式生活味的文創民宿，「台南謝宅」吸引來自各地華人的來訪、來住，當然也包括對上味的台北人。

台南、台北，當然有其差異；小小的台灣島內是有些不同的細微差異。如果特別強調其差異也會出現所謂「國境內的異國」的思辯。

由共同經驗累積而成共同記憶，這樣的文化習慣，是建構每個個體的基礎根源。當你習慣了母文化的生活，從吃喝拉撒，到舉目所見，周遭總總的一切：樣樣一樣或樣樣都不一樣，總是能輕易地被分辨出來。

《不可見》是藝術家鄭亭亭，利用同色系的主體、背景，捏造出看似一體，實則分離的異像空間。如此的混相在邀請讀者參與進入一種視覺的冥想，也似乎在暗喻著：文化間的異與同，明顯或沉隱全賴看觀者的個人體驗與感受所判斷。

正因為如此，文化也會成為隔絕我們與他者的源頭；但假如你從未離開過自己的母文化，其實你並不容易察覺自己與他者的差異有多大。所有的誤差都是在把你抽離母土後，換處別人的地盤那一刻—突然湧現！那種水土不服、渾身不對勁、處處掣肘絆腳，反正就是有一大堆事情都很卡卡的。

《那些我們永遠不會知道的事》，鄭亭亭拍攝亞洲留學生，把從家鄉所帶來的物件移處於現在倫敦的家中，當事人再使用母語說明物件與主人間的關係。作者走進這個卡卡的斗室中，隻身留學的生活空間都單薄異常，幾乎揭露不出任何明顯的形貌，主人翁的容貌也不清，家鄉物是唯一的聚焦所見，旁側的母語只與了解該言語的特定觀眾對話，大部份的觀眾只能茫然地張望這失根的聯繫。

人生地不熟倒也不全然是件壞事，像異國風情：源至異鄉、異國、異文化的新鮮感。人生地不熟的反向正思就是大開眼界，你的好奇心被新鮮事物挑逗開來，你的眼睛、耳朵、鼻子都變得異常靈敏地敏感起來，在從沒見過的異文化中漫遊，「為什麼？」「這是什麼？」與「喔！原來如此」「啊！這個就是」，不斷地在你的心腦耳鼻眼間—反覆；發現新奇找到解答，永不止歇的QA自問自答：這些事絕對是異文化的刺激所帶來的。所以聰明的商人最喜歡販賣「異國情調」的餐廳、個性小店、民宿等，在國境內創造偽異國氛圍來吸引消費者上門。

雖說如此，但只有沒見過世面的人才會天真地認為，跨文化之行旅是容易的，好萊塢電影裡的主人翁，不論到世界上的任何一個偏僻的角落（或甚至於外太空），都會有一位看寫說流利英文的在地人自動跳出來，帶領他處理人生地不熟的窘境。



《揪威阿ㄤ爛得馬優起》，鄭亭亭在西班牙的馬略卡島駐村時所創作的作品，以藝術家不熟悉的西班牙文本為對象，用母語去直譯這些生活中的語言、文字、口語、生活習慣；在一頭霧水中，文化差異性的命題不言而喻。

跨文化的旅行之不易，於是最常見的假全球化問世了，你在世界各地都可以快速地解決鄉愁，那就是跨國企業所生產，暢銷全球的世界品牌，讓你就算到了不同的國度／文化，都可以吃到同樣口味的漢堡、穿同樣的鞋、包包或是開同樣的車，熟悉的品牌當然既是共同經驗、也是共同記憶，但她與母土可是很大的不同。

《有水果的靜物》，將知名的國際品牌商標雕刻在蔬菜水果上，從泥土裡長成的農產品應該是本土成份品級最高的，但鄭亭亭將本土蔬果，以暴力之刀惡狠狠地強畫上，跨國企業所生產暢銷全球的世界品牌，不就是對跨國企業品牌霸權，談諧又有力度的控訴。

今日世界真的是平的了嗎？的確網際網路某種程度平整化了異國／異文化間的障礙，英文順理成章地擔綱了地球村居民的共通語言。但語言阻隔的問題從沒有停歇過。

《我以貌取人》，鄭亭亭到圖書館搬回不同語言的書籍，完全不看書的封面與內頁，只看堆積如塔的書堆側面，這下原本代表知識來源的書籍成了無字天書，沒有了文字的內容，那不管是百年經典、文豪巨作、發人深省的名著，或也許是無聊的明星八卦、濫情的羅曼史、全都不重要了，只剩下外表的書是甚麼？記得曾聽過有富人豪宅是以書牆壁紙裝潢自家的文化重量，薄如紙的書牆當然不等於知識品味的厚度，但鄭亭亭的立體書塔卻標示了知識的障礙，強化了異文化間的不可藝玩的刻板印象。

鄭亭亭運用物件本質、攝影圖像、語言文字，交錯呈現出的系列作品。就是環繞著母文化／異文化間的差異。母家、母土、母國既是庇護所，也是限制。離家遠行既是嘗新、也要展開視野。以這為主題來創作是安全對賭冒險；封閉迎戰開拓。

文化隔閡著迥異間的衝突；國境內也可能有異國；異國間也可能藏著鄉愁；從傳教士開始，到西方帝國主義藉著船堅炮利壓榨了所謂的第三世界。爾後才有東方主義的覺醒；以及多元文化與後殖民主義抬頭；文化間的交流現今雖然密切，但對話的互動仍有待努力。在解讀與誤讀之間來回—相異文明才得以慢慢地溝通，也唯有更了解他者之異文化，才有可能回過頭來理解自身之母文化；尊重、理解與溝通後，文化認同的歸屬感得以建立；當然也才有文化主體性茁壯的可能。

長久以來台灣藝術家對此議題是比較冷漠的，似乎與台灣媒體間忽視國際新聞的態度如出一轍；在面對所謂文化霸權入侵，極力保護自我母文化的同時；我們對異來文化總是重歐美而輕亞非，在盲從與歧視的矛盾對比間，我們似乎忘了今日台灣的母文化本就是由荷蘭、南島、原住民、中華、日本等相雜的混血文化；理當不卑不亢地迎接不同的異文化，對應發展出健康面對新世代挑戰的大格局。



# Motherland and Foreign Country

Albert J. L. Huang

Many People from Tainan really don't like Taipei City that much. They don't really think Taipei is all bad, but from a purely Tainan point of view, Taipei lacks that special Tainan flavor, which is composed of climate, the warmth of its people, rhythm of life and great food. Simply put, the native atmosphere of Tainan is so wonderful that nothing could ever replace it. For these reasons the Tainan Old House Inn, a guest house marketing itself as Tainan style and therefore a part of Taiwan's cultural industry, has attracted many Chinese visitors from different places including, of course, Taipei.

Naturally Taipei and Tainan have their differences, as even on a small island such as Taiwan one will find subtle variations, and if we emphasize these differences, the possibility of a foreign country within a country arises.

Collective memories are the result of common experiences, and cultural habits establish the foundation and origin of all individuals. Acculturation starts from life's daily routines and extends to every visual impression and situation in one's homeland, which results in being able to tell sameness or difference from among a multitude of things.

In her photography series *Invisibility*, Ting Ting Cheng chooses objects and backgrounds in the same tonal range to create photographic spaces where everything seems unified, but are actually composed of distinct visual elements. This blending invites the viewer to participate in a visual meditation which suggests that similarities and differences between cultures are solely determined by the individual observer's personal experience.

This is precisely how culture becomes the source of isolation between ourselves and others. If someone has never left their own culture, they tend not to be aware of how great cultural differences can be. Errors arise when one is removed from their motherland—problems suddenly appear at the moment one enters the region of others, and the inability to acclimatize, feelings of disharmony and multiple setbacks form an impenetrable logjam.

For her series *Things We May Never Know*, Cheng photographs Asian students in their London apartments along with items brought from their hometowns. The student's native language is used to explain these items and their significance. Entering the small ill-equipped room in the photograph, Cheng takes note of how sparse the home of a foreign student can be. The face of the resident and surrounding details are obscured, as the sole focus is the object brought from home. An explanation in the student's native language is printed alongside the image and is directed at those viewers who are able to read the language; the majority of viewers who cannot are left to gaze in confusion at the text and image which have lost their connection.



Unfamiliarity with a place is not always a bad thing, as this unfamiliarity is novel and therefore part of a foreign place or culture's charm. Furthermore, unfamiliarity produces reversals in our usual way of thinking that can be truly eye opening. When our curiosity is piqued by something new, our eyes, ears and noses all become acutely sensitive. While traveling we repeatedly ask "why?" or "what's this?", and realize "oh, so that's why" or "I see, this is a...." Foreign cultures stimulate this unending process of novelty, discovery and finding explanations, and for this reason, smart business people imitate exotic settings, drawing customers with one-of-a-kind boutiques, guest houses and restaurants offering foreign cuisines.

While this unfamiliarity may be exciting, only naïve people think cross-cultural travel is easy. In Hollywood movies, regardless of what far corner of the planet (or even off the planet) the main character may venture to, a local with perfect command of English always pops up to help him or her deal with difficulties.

Ting Ting Cheng made *Jo Vull Aprendre Mallorquí* while attending a residency in the Addaya Art Centre in Alaor, Mallorca. In this project she uses Chinese characters to phonetically transcribe everyday greetings, conversations and texts in the local Mallorquí language. The confusion that this creates makes cultural difference a self evident theme in the series.

Because traveling in different cultures isn't easy, a misleading form of globalization has arisen, making it possible to quickly allay feelings of nostalgia for home anywhere with top-selling global brands produced by multinational corporations. You can eat a hamburger that tastes the same, wear the same shoes, carry the same bag, or drive the same car no matter in which country or culture you happen to find yourself. This brand familiarity creates collective experiences and memories, but they are very different from experiences and memories of one's motherland.

For *Still Life with Fruits*, Cheng carves the logos of globally-recognized brands into the skin of fruit and vegetables. Agricultural products, because they are grown out of the soil, should have the highest proportion of local components, but Ting Ting Cheng savagely brands them with global logos using a knife. In doing so, she not only pokes fun at the domination by multinational corporations, but also strongly denounces their practices.

Is the world really flat? To a certain extent, the Internet has smoothed over obstacles between different countries and cultures. While English has taken the leading role as the common language of the global village, language barriers still exist.



For *I Judge a Book by Its Cover*, Cheng went to a library and borrowed books in various languages. She doesn't present the covers or contents of any of the books, but only stacks them up in such a way that reveals their foreedges. Treated this way, books, which are conventionally regarded as sources of knowledge, become devoid of words and therefore unintelligible. Cheng uses these books as content without relying on the words within them. Regardless of whether they are written by great authors, hundred-year-old classics, thought-provoking titles, silly tabloid gossip or sentimental romances, Cheng deems what is written in the books as unimportant, using only their outer surfaces. Where does that leave us? I remember once hearing about a wealthy person decorating his mansion with wallpaper made to resemble shelves of books. Of course thin and flimsy paper is not the same as the weightiness of knowledge, but Ting Ting Cheng's three dimensional book towers express the obstruction of knowledge and strengthen rigid stereotypes between cultures that should be made light of.

Ting Ting Cheng mixes the essential qualities of objects, photographic images and language to create her work, which revolves around differences between her own and foreign cultures. One's homeland, native country and parents' home all provide refuge, but also pose limitations. Traveling affords new opportunities and broadens one's vision. Using these themes in her work, she pits isolation against opening up to new adventures.

Barriers between cultures make conflicts and differences more prominent. Just as foreign countries may exist within our own country, we may find signs of our homeland in a foreign country. From the time when missionaries started spreading their message abroad, western imperialism was able to suppress the third world due to advanced ship building, fortification and weapon technology. It wasn't until much later that there was an awareness of Orientalism, spreading notions of multiculturalism and post colonialism. Although exchanges between cultures are much more frequent today, we are still awaiting more comprehensive efforts at creating and sustaining interactive dialog. Only by continually revisiting interpretations and misinterpretations can people of different cultures slowly begin to communicate, and only by understanding different cultures can we possibly look back and understand our own culture. Respect, understanding and communication is needed before cultural identity and belonging can be established, and of course the possibility of a sturdy cultural subjectivity.

For a long time Taiwanese artists have been relatively indifferent to this topic, which seems to be exactly the same as the Taiwanese media's neglect of international news. When dealing with so-called cultural hegemony and protecting our own culture from foreign cultural incursions, we are always quick to point out European and American cultures, while Asian and African incursions are downplayed. When caught between blindly following and discrimination, we seem to forget that Taiwanese culture is a mixture of influences from the Netherlands, Austronesian cultures, Taiwan's aboriginal people, China and Japan, and that welcoming different cultures is the only healthy approach for effectively facing the future.



# 語言遊戲

喬安娜·翟琳斯卡

—— 我們只說一種語言。。。

(沒錯,但是)

—— 我們從不僅只說一種語言。。。

(德希達,《他者的單語主義:起源的異肢》)<sup>1</sup>

衆所周知,法國哲學家德希達不僅對形而上及語言學的思辯迭有貢獻,更能泰然自若的,以英文和法文進行那些著名的研討與演講。在其《他者的單語主義:起源的異肢》一書的開頭,德希達用一種近乎令人驚詫的告白,寫道:「我只會一種語言。我的單語情境駐留著,我稱其為我的居所;它給我感受如此,我停留其中,而它也深居在我之內。... 它也就是我。」<sup>2</sup>這裡德希達指的,並非自身對語言的不諳,而是指,我們在跳脫語言學家所謂的「第一」語言時,所將遭遇的困難,甚至是,使用此「第一」語言時所將遭遇的困難——一般咸認,「第一」語言使用起來,理當感覺更為「自然」。我們從孩提開始接觸「第一」語言;那是來自他人的禮物(即使接收的確切時刻我們已不復記憶),之後才漸漸變成自己的一部分。事實上,德希達於前述引言裡所表達的,是語言本身的外異性;語言在此作為一種嘗試,用來突破自身的唯我主義,並與他人連結,進行溝通、交融。正如德希達書中所承認的:「... 這個我今生命定它要說的語言,將永遠不為我所擁有。」<sup>3</sup>對文字大師德希達來說,語言總是捉摸不定、難以駕馭,而在這一認知裡,不僅有種極度的勇氣,或許也有種極度的悲悽——亦即,雖然語言溝通的本質是共有共享的,不過卻很吊詭的,是項孤寂的活動,注定要讓我們為之結舌,無「話」可說。

鄭亭亭的攝影創作,似乎正是來自於對這個語言吊詭的認知,像一幀貼切的插畫,示現了一種「通曉多語的單語主義」。我們可以說,攝影作為一種汲汲追求再現的媒材,非常適合用來探索語言溝通的結構本質。鄭亭亭高明的穿梭在各種外語的視覺與口頭再現之間:時而提供我們印刷精美的外國文字;時而把書籍疊成一落,吸引目光,卻不露出任何文字;或是重新錄製了她在西班牙駐村時,學習當地語言的發音過程。作品交融了英文、西班牙文、加泰羅尼亞方言、韓國話,以及中文,鄭亭亭帶領觀眾踏上目眩神迷的旅程,進入一個由當代全球化世界所形成的巴別塔。諷刺的是,卻是要在全球品牌那些據稱超越一切的象徵主義裡——正如《有水果的靜物》系列裡出現的 Nike 勾勾,或是 LV 經典印花——我們才看到了某種今日跨文化溝通的可能。

面對鄭亭亭的作品,觀者或許會感到茫然、困惑,試著想要理解所有的語言,而其中那個我們原先賴以為準的「第一」語言,也霎時成了「外來」的。儘管她的意象充滿了語言之謎,卻同時發展出一種專屬的語言,透過形式與設計上的精鍊、粉彩的色調與細緻的柔焦手法,進行傳達。從這個角度來看,鄭亭亭的攝影本身即是低科技的「溝通工具」,得以與無所不在的媒體機件——例如,行動電話——一較長短,並據此玩弄、處理個人及全球因溝通不良所帶來的焦慮。實際的層面上,藝術家先在作品中凸顯出溝通程序必然的失效,接著藉由仔細操作,超越挫敗以及任何理解的意圖,終至達到通曉世事的境界。或許,我們可以更進一步的說,透過作品,鄭亭亭勾勒出一種謙遜的「誤解倫理學」,讚揚那總是無可避免的讓我們到處淪為老外的單語主義——不管我們多麼的四海為家、舌粲蓮花。

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1. 譯文取自《他者的單語主義:起源的異肢》,張正平譯,2000,台北:桂冠,頁10。2. 同上註,頁1。3. 同上註,頁2。



# Language games

Joanna Zylinska

The French philosopher Jacques Derrida offering

-- We only ever speak one language...

(yes, but)

-- We never speak only one language...

(Jacques Derrida, *The Monolingualism of the Other*)

The French philosopher Jacques Derrida, known not only for his prolific contribution to philosophical debates on metaphysics and language but also for his legendary seminars and lectures, delivered with equal aplomb in French and English, opens his book, *The Monolingualism of the Other*, with what may sound like a surprising confession: 'I am monolingual. My monolingualism dwells, and I call it my dwelling; it feels like one to me, and I remain in it and inhabit it. It inhabits me. ... It is me'. What Derrida means by this is something else than a lack of language skills on his part. It is rather the recognition of the difficulties involved in going beyond what the linguists call our 'first' language, but also the difficulties involved in even using this 'first' language, which is supposed to feel more 'natural'.

Our first language comes to us when we are children; it is a gift we receive from others (even if we cannot exactly remember the moment of its reception) and then gradually make our own. Indeed, what Derrida is signalling in the quote above is the foreignness of language as such, if by language we understand an attempt to break through the solipsism of the self and reach out to the other -- to commune and communicate with him or her. Derrida admits as much himself when he says: 'it will never be mine, this language, the only one I am thus destined to speak'. There is something profoundly brave but also perhaps profoundly tragic in this recognition by the great wordsmith Derrida that language always escapes him -- that, paradoxically, linguistic communication which is by its nature communal is nevertheless a lonely activity. It is something that is bound to leave us speechless, literally lost for words.

Ting Ting Cheng's photographic art practice seems to emerge precisely from the recognition of this linguistic paradox, offering as it does an apt illustration of what we could describe as 'polyglot monolingualism'. Arguably, due to its representational ambitions, photography is a medium ideally placed to explore the constructed nature of linguistic communication. Cheng skilfully navigates between the visual and oral representations of foreign languages: she offers us beautifully printed



captions in foreign alphabets, teases us with book pages we are unable to read, and offers re-mediated recordings of her own linguistic efforts while on a residency in Spain. In her work English, Spanish, Mallorqui, Korean and Mandarin intermingle, offering viewers a dizzying journey into the Tower of Babel the contemporary globalised world has become. Ironically, it is in the supposedly transcendent symbolism of the global brands -- the Nike swoosh, the Louis Vuitton LV monogram (as evidenced in her 'Still Life with Fruits' series) -- that some kind of cross-cultural communication can occur today.

Faced with Cheng's work, viewers may find themselves puzzled, lost, struggling for comprehension, with all languages -- including that original 'first' language that was supposed to serve them as a stable anchor point -- also suddenly becoming 'foreign'. Yet, in introducing linguistic confusion, Cheng's images simultaneously develop a language of their own, conveyed through the elegance of their form and design, the pastel colours, the subtle use of soft focus. In this way, her photographs become low-tech 'communication devices' in their own right, which successfully compete with ubiquitous media gadgets such as mobile phones. They also function as receptacles for playing out and managing the anxieties of individual and global miscommunication. Indeed, in Cheng's work aspects of failure inherent in the communication process are brought to the fore and then carefully worked through, beyond frustration and beyond any desire to comprehend and thus master the whole world. We could perhaps go so far as to say that, through her art work, Cheng outlines a modest ethics of misunderstanding, celebrating our monolingualism that always, inevitably, makes us foreigners in the world, no matter how well-travelled and linguistically skilled we are.

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