

Spirit Unwilling to Depart

Lv Shengzhong

Reading Chen Wenji's painting recalls me vaguely some blurred experience I had.

Nobody in the painting but lonesome objects staying after bustle. Who was once here and how they spent their time? Were they sad or happy or sorrow or angry? Did they walk so far or depart just now? ...It is perhaps not important. Everything has its spirit. Everything with mystical power coagulates pieces of comfortable faces into their own places-- that smelly shoes with big mouth wailing bitterly binding pairs of smelly feet, that deeply grieved and dejected dirty skirt packing an abundant posture, a youth flashing to pass behind the broken rattan chair with red scarf hanging up, the dirty jeans supporting the character human which making a false show of strength but hiding inside some exhausted humbleness.

So I understood Chen Wenji is not good at social activities. For example, even he is someone's good friend, he always keeps a distance, never shows to be closely bound together. But this can not resist his communication with people and attention to people. Just like Chen Wenji does not face directly the men and women who do not appear in the paintings, but he wins the short distance to converse with them attentively.

The artist has detained the past space and time. Looks like an experienced police officer, Chen Wenji protects the scene with duty fulfillment, and does not allow the others to add something superfluous and ruin the effect in the enough evidence. Already enough! Don't need to use any detecting instrument, then saw, heard and smelled completely-- from the wrinkles on rubbed clothes to the scars exposing on the surface of wall, from the printing lead of newspaper on fluorescent lamp to the small jar filling liquid medicine containing menthol, from the rust spots with paint escaped on folding bed to the oily dirt on pants leg, from the broken cane bamboo splint to the thin iron wires distorted many times.

So I comprehended Chen Wenji has few word in daily life. For example, people recommend him to comment on a trivial matter of life, he will smile to pass it ambiguously, as if to be afraid to get into trouble into any worst place. But this does not mean helplessly in argument, or he gives up upholding the justice. Just like Chen Wenji's attitude to every scene in paintings—it may let matters drift before all this occurred, but never willing to give up the most appropriate opportunity in the process extending of events. With intelligence, Chen Wenji grasps the complete conditions which have been possible to supply the exploration any marks like spider's thread, and takes down the ironclad evidence scattering in the situation. Thus does not take talking, he exposes the true, the good and the beautiful of doers in broad daylight. However, this is not any false story in real life. Like facing examination papers which ask the virtuous and select the assemble, if to say you scrutinize it, would rather to say it is scrutinizing you.

The popular experience of analyzing the world does not work here! The certain gauge has perplexed thousands of ingenious plans. You get in thoroughly, there are entities which can be obtained conveniently everywhere outside the painting; you leave out shallowly, the shadows in the painting which can not be caught tie to be riddles unable to settle-- Why is the hard clip clutching tablecloth rubbed hundred times? What is the relation between the barren RMB of One Yuan on the wall surface and the clothing imported? Is it significant that some aging map tacks pouring out of the old envelope seem to be the seeds broadcasting full place? It is more impossible to think of the electric wire with buckle untied falling under the hanging garrulous newspaper.

So I got the idea of that Chen Wenji carries out standing aloof over the world. For example, he accommodates the destiny organizing, and also never goes to seize hardly those things occupied but actually should belong originally to his own. But don't misunderstand the tolerance according to the above, or think the weak is able to be bullied and will sit waiting for death. Just like Chen Wenji operating art is not a camera forced opening shutter. He leaves from the ambiguousness of common custom, re-examines the relics organized on life scenes, residing in outside to observe calmly the meaningless myriad world assembling to be great significance. Then there happens real fictionalized stories filling with incredible contradictory and mystery.

I am standing in front of the Chen Wenji's painting to read off carefully, unexpectedly recalled the past I've kept thinking over for a long time:

Once I was involved along with the life current in a maze with nine bends in a daytime, my shape and shade my voice my sense of hearing vanished in the sounds of people like bubbling in a caldron, until to the late night to people leaving, the mist and dust disappearing and the moon just white. There only left over my empty body to defend the brilliant lonesome after the splendid. Did I want to seek for something lost of mine? And I faced the real clean earth with vast whiteness, calling attentively where the soul is. I could only see millions of footprints moving on the ground, millions of strengths supporting me to enter the mysteriously ultimate. Who would I be with to sing? Who would I be with to dance? Saw it! Heard it! -- And actually, people all gone indeed but souls were not willing to depart.

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