



隐痕思与戏团

关于食物未来的一篇科幻小说

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A Science Fiction Short About The Future Of Food

THE GRAPPLERS NO CONSPIRACIOUS

隐康思马戏团

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1/2 背景

垃圾通常被视作一种困扰，它们难以入眼、让人不悦，因其肮脏、杂乱的特性和不合时宜的存在而被当成人类公害。垃圾的存在被认为会污染、破坏、玷秽环境。然而，学者们已经明确指出，研究垃圾并非意在理解其内在特性，或者是其过剩和管理的问题，而是要研究垃圾隐藏在社会系统中，在价值层面上的创造性和破坏性意义。

英国人类学家玛丽·道格拉斯对污垢的研究恰恰反映了这种观点。在《纯净与危险》中，她曾做出如下著名论断：“世界上并不存在绝对的污垢，在脱离了特定的组织系统后，没有任何东西是肮脏的。”⁽¹⁾ 道格拉斯对肮脏的概念，把我们的注意力从污垢的致病性和卫生性，转移到了它构造我们分类系统的能力上。她解释称，污垢通过它相应的价值体系的语境来定义：“有污垢的地方就有体系。污垢是事物系统排序和分类的衍生品，因为排序的过程就是抛弃不和谐因素的过程。”⁽²⁾

正如垃圾是错置空间的物质那样，噪音是错置时间的信息。人们觉得噪音通过发生频率（持续性或间歇性）而破坏声景，并因其令人错愕、不合时宜，又让人陌生的存在而干扰我们。就像垃圾一样，错乱的音调会被贬损成干扰或打断，所以被认为毫无价值。人们一般认为，噪音与信息相对立。例如，在通信系统中，信号不合意图的增添（比如无线电传输中的静电干扰或模拟电视信号接收器的雪花）就被标记为噪音。在金融领域，“噪音”指的是交易或股票市场的轻微波动，是与整体市场趋势无关的消息或数据，“消除噪音”则被投资者用来指代区分噪音和信息的一种能力。

然而，正如克劳德·香农在《通信的数学理论》中的观点，我想强调：噪音是构成信息的素材，同时亦是与信息相抵抗的物质——没有噪音就不会有通信。⁽³⁾ 噪音是传输和转换信息、携带具信息量的反馈并给信号提供解释的物质基础设施的一部分。同样，在金融领域，噪音使交易成为可能。没有噪音，市场的流动性或交易动机将会荡然无存。噪音和信息是一个均衡模型，股票的价格波动已经反映出这二者。

换句话说，与噪音/信息相对立的观点相反，噪音实际是信号的组成部分，并且本身承载信息。法国哲学家米歇尔·塞尔用一个乡村老鼠和城市老鼠的故事展现了这一点，它们在城市宅邸的盛宴被打断了：“两位伙伴听到门口的喧闹声，就忽然奔逃。虽然那只是个噪音，但也是一个讯息，有点像是制造恐慌的信息：是信息的阻断、崩坏、断裂。”⁽⁴⁾ 在这个故事里，塞尔说明了，噪音永远都是信号的一部分，但在我们无法在调音之前区分它们——而在调音之后，噪音就变成了一则讯息。

(1) 玛丽·道格拉斯，《纯净与危险》（伦敦：劳特利奇，1966年），P2

(2) Ibid., P36

(3) 克劳德·香农，“通信的数学理论”，《贝尔系统信息期刊》27（1948年）

(4) 米歇尔·塞尔，《寄生者》，劳伦斯 R. 歌尔译（巴尔的摩：约翰斯·霍普金斯大学出版社），P3

2/2 微小说

菲从放置原初立方体的货架后向前窥探，目光聚焦在一个男人胸前的胸针上。那是个崭新的青铜面具，顶部展开一簇树叶，还有汁液飞溅出来。倾斜的角度刚好能露出面具后那张脸的下巴和太阳穴，主人的性别难以分辨。

毫无疑问，那是“隐康思”的标识。

菲在“立方消耗品压缩场”的过道之间狭窄的爬行空间里移动。她和商店层的其他所有员工一样，大部分时间都待在墙后面，监控和维修传输管道。

“他们一共两个。”瑾慢慢挪向菲，努力憋住喘气声，咧开的笑容像往常一样得意。“宁阿姨在水立方那边看到了另外一个。”

菲这才把注意力从胸针上收回来了：“又一个青铜？”

“不……黄金。”他们的呼吸都中断了片刻，仿佛瑾的话施下了一道咒语。

菲猛地倒吸一口气，让自己重新投入工作，关上维修插销，然后松开气动压力闸门。立方体再次开始传输。“我说，马戏团今晚肯定在上海。”

近五十年来，“压缩场”支撑起了全球食品工业。今天，它们收集临近过期的农产品，然后将其重组。

表面上看，这就好像资源回收般容易，但其背后——或者说，其下方的技术是“博大科学”所创造的奇迹。

每个压缩场管道出口的地下都建设有规模庞大、呼啸旋转的“变体室”，而全世界最大的变体室就建在上海_88境内的长江入海口下方。

变体室地点隐蔽，全天无间断运行，在时间的缝隙中锁定物质。

要将一个细胞从其生命历程的时间线上剥离出来，这在活体生物上还不太可行，但在农产品上的效果却是好得惊人。

只需一点点工程改造，一整斤新鲜食品就能被重塑成十个永不过期的营养物质单位。最终形态接近豆腐，而口味可以在打印时进行人工选择。这个过程强大得令人吃惊。

菲还从未经手过外国的“变体食品”，但人人几乎都听说过有关德国圆柱热狗肠，或者像来自马拉喀什的北非小纳米这样的微食品的故事。

在商店后台员工宿舍区里，许多条传输管道在此纠缠成结，向地下的变体室延伸，此景有如树根撕裂开了大地。

宁正待在老地方，双脚垂悬地跨坐在一根粗管子上，腰别扭地靠着货架。

“您的背怎么样了，阿姨——我能帮上什么忙吗？”菲把她的光

能工具放到身旁的一根管道上，努力让自己显得冷漠。宁讨厌被人关心。

“我的背用不着你管，瑾跟你说了马戏团的人了吗？”

“他说了，一共两个。我自己看到了青铜，还有——”

“还有黄金，菲。她地位很高。而且我现在告诉你，她可不是来买立方体的。”

“你觉得她想邀请我们中间的某个人？”

宁咯咯笑了：“我们中间的某个人，可不。不过我已经无数次看到马戏团途经_88星系了……我已经太老了，做不了那些让他们刮目相看的事情了。”

今时今日，变体食品占全球营养摄入的63%，其生产和流通都有严格的规范和监管。全球90%的公民都在压缩场的服务范围内，并且在三分之二的活跃领土上已经实现了最佳产量。

但情况并非一直如此。

压缩场刚出现时，仅仅作为同时解决食物浪费和短缺的可靠方案向市场推广，而并没有怎么努力去激励大家向这种新形态的饮食模式转变。

当火力全开的地下变体室一个个加速运转的时候，人们……完全忽视了它们。

没办法，如果对个人没有什么说服力的话，哪怕那些客观上对绝大多数人有利的事情，也就没那么吸引人了。

于是，以变体食品为主的饮食推广计划被移交给地方政府，他们推出了各种有针对性的举措：

社群积分奖励计划；
未上市新口味试吃券；
名厨点评和代言。

闭关锁国的不列颠甚至选出了一位完全由变体料加工制作而成的议员。他很受欢迎。

但这些都还不足以掀起变体食物的潮流，因此，博大科学研究所介入进来，推出了一项出人意料的计划：

他们成立了“隐康思马戏团”。

他们的脚步遍及寰宇，蒙面带来非凡私密的晚宴。他们承诺的，是一种无与伦比的体验。但附带两项原则性要求：必须绝对保密，完全匿名。

马戏团的巨型帐篷里面究竟是什么样的？传言自然纷飞不断。但是任何参与过晚宴的人，对此始终三缄其口。

反重力的前菜，能够无限续杯饮料的非欧几何无底筒，还有能

在人出现冻脑反应时，拓宽人眼可识别色谱的神经冰。各种想象无边无际地肆虐蔓延。

而事实上，关于马戏团的传言只有一条是经过验证的事实：受邀资格取决于对变体食品的贡献程度。

几乎一夜之间，马戏团就让世界着了魔，让所有人开始重新思考我们的食品消费习惯。

“主管请前往三号反馈亭，听到请注意。主管请前往——”菲一把关掉呼叫器，广播声安静下来，她侧身穿过贴着挡风胶条的门。门随即紧锁。

“菲主管，谢谢你把那玩意儿关了。”黄金惬意地坐在反馈亭里，青铜在她身旁站着。二人从头到脚仍然遮挡得严严实实——谁也看不到他们的脸。

“对不起，它在这种小亭子里回响的太厉害了，是吧。”

“确实。但每种声音都有属于自己的时和空。”黄金指着她面前的空椅子。

菲小心翼翼地坐下来：“您……您不是来给我们店提供反馈的？”

“不，菲。我来是为了给你这个。”黄金话音刚落，青铜就掀起了他的袍子，露出一份放射着耀眼光的文件，整个亭子瞬间变得像黑暗中的一团烟火。

过了一会儿，反馈亭再次暗下来。菲的眼睛逐渐适应之后，只见青铜走了过来，递给她一个泛着微弱白光的物件。

“这张入场券你可以自己使用，也可以转赠他人。无论如何，你都已经获得了博大科学的认可。我不能告诉你具体原因。”

菲用拇指和食指捻起票，在手中轻轻转动，纸摸上去又厚又粗糙，有如来自异时空。

“现在既然你已经是博大科学之友了，我们会在未来拜访贵城时再次联系你……前提是，你必须得保守这个秘密。”

菲和自己所有同事一样，都无比向往亲眼见证马戏团。可是当她沉浸在对未来快乐的憧憬之时，宁阿姨在她脑海中不停浮现。菲不知道自己到底做了什么才得到了这张票，但不管是什么，她今后有足够的时间来重复这个过程。

可对于宁阿姨来说，远不止是时间问题。

菲在亭子里一动不动地坐着，黄金和青铜轻悄悄地移到了挂着挡风胶条的出口。

“你知道马戏团是什么吗，菲？”黄金在门口停了下来，头也不回地对她说。

“噪音。每个人都能听到，所以如果我们把合适的信息藏在噪音里，最后它们都能够被成功传达。”

THE CIRCUS OF INCONSPICUISINE

1/2 NON-FICTION

Waste is commonly presented as a problem, unsightly and undesirable, experienced as a nuisance through its qualities of dirtiness, untidiness and untimely presence. It is seen to pollute, disrupting and tarnishing the environment with its existence. However, as scholars have made clear, studying waste is not about understanding its inherent qualities, or its excess and management, but rather about the creation and destruction of value which is couched within a societal system.

The British anthropologist Mary Douglas demonstrates this idea through her study of dirt. In *Purity and Danger*, she famously claims that “there is no such thing as absolute dirt, no single item is dirty apart from a particular system of organization in which it does not fit.” (1) Douglas’ conceptualization shifts our attention away from the pathogenic and hygienic qualities of dirt to refocus it on the structuring capacities of our classification systems. She explains that dirt is defined through context relative to

its value system: “Where there is dirt there is system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements.” (2)

Just as waste is matter out of place, noise is information out of time. Noise is seen to tarnish soundscapes through its frequency of occurrence (persistence or intermittency), and interrupts through its unexpected, untimely, or unfamiliar presence. Like waste, misplaced cadences are often rejected as interference or interruption, perceived to be of little value. Noise is often understood as the opposite of information. In communication systems, for example, unintended additions to the signal (like static in radio transmissions or shadows in analog television receivers) are labeled noise. In finance, “noise” is used to describe minor movements in trading markets or stock, irrelevant news or data that is not reflective of overall market trends, “tune out the noise” is a skill described by investors to distinguish between noise and information.

However, following Claude Shannon’s observations in “Mathematical Theory of Communication,” I would argue that noise is both the material from which information is constructed and the matter which it resists—without noise there can be no communication. (3) Noise is part of the material infrastructure that serves to transmit and transform the message, carrying informational feedback which gives context to the signal. Similarly, in finance noise is what makes trading possible; without noise, there will be very little liquidity in the markets or incentive to trade. Noise and information is an equilibrium model whereby the price of a stock already reflects both.

In other words, contrary to the belief that noise stands in contrast to information, noise is in fact constitutive of the signal and in itself carries information. The French Philosopher Michel Serres illustrates the point by recounting the fable of the country mouse and the city mouse, whose feast at the city manor was interrupted: “The two companions scurry off when they hear a noise at the door. It was only a noise, but it was also a message, a bit of information producing panic: an interruption, a corruption, a rupture of information.” (4) In this story Serres demonstrates that noise is always already part of a signal, but it is undifferentiated until we tune into it—then it becomes a message.

(1) Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge, 1966), 2.

(2) *Ibid.*, 36.

(3) Claude Shannon, “Mathematical Theory of Communication,” *The Bell System Technical Journal* 27 (1948).

(4) Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. Lawrence R. Schehr (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), p3.

2/2 FICTION

Peering out from behind the primo-cube shelves, Fei fixed her focus on the brooch at the man's chest. A pristine bronze mask with a spray of leaves and liquid erupting from the crown. Angled just so as to reveal the jaw and temple of a genderless face beneath.

Unmistakably, it was the mark of Inconspicuisine.

Moving in the crawlspace between aisles at the Cubic Consumables Compactorium, Fei—like all the other shop floor employees—spent most of her shift behind the walls, monitoring and repairing supply tubes.

“There's two of them.” Jin had shuffled his way up to Fei, panting a little from all the effort and grinning triumphant as ever. “Aunty Ning saw the other one over by the hydro-cubes.”

Fei finally pulled her attention away from the ornament. “Another bronze?”

“No... Gold.” They both paused for a moment as if Jin's words had cast a spell.

With a sharp inhale, Fei snapped herself back to work, pressing a maintenance latch shut and releasing the pneumatic pressure gate. Cubes began to flow again. “Well, the Circus is definitely in Shanghai tonight.”

For nearly fifty years now, compactoriums have been propping up the global food industry. Today, they take produce on the cusp of expiry and reconfigure it.

On the surface it's as simple as recycling, but the technology behind it—or rather, beneath it—is a miracle of Broadscience.

Great, whirring phasehouses are built and buried under each and every outlet—the largest in the world sits right here beneath the Yangtze estuary in Shanghai_88.

Hidden away and always operating, phasehouses lock matter between time.

Separating a cell from its timeline doesn't go over so well with living things, but the effects on produce have proven to be astonishing.

With just a little engineering, a full catty of fresh foodstuffs can be fashioned into ten units of never-expiring nutritional matter. The final

form resembles tofu with a flavor that can be selected at the point of printing. It's a surprisingly versatile process.

Fei hasn't handled phasefoods from any other countries, but everyone's heard the stories of Germanic cylindogs, and the Nano-cous mini-foods of Marrakesh.

At the rear of the store, inside the staff quarters, a tangle of supply pipes knot together and plunge down to the phasehouse like tree roots tearing fissures in terrain.

Dangling her feet over the drop, Ning was in her usual spot—straddling one of the broader pipes, lumbar region propped awkwardly against a shelf-stack.

“How's your back, Aunty—can I help at all?” Fei placed her heliotoools down on a nearby pipe bank and worked hard to look disinterested. Ning hated concern.

“Never you mind my back, did Jin tell you about the Circus-folk?”

“He did, two of them. I saw the bronze myself.”

“The Gold, Fei. She's important. And I'll tell you now, she's not here shopping for cubes.”

“You think she wants to give one of us the invite?”

Ning chuckled. “One of us, yes. But I've seen the Circus pass through_88 more times than I can remember. Whatever it is that earns their respect, I've long been too old to start doing it.”

Today, phasefoods account for 63% of global nutritional intake, with strict guidelines overseeing production and distribution. Compactoriums are accessible to almost 90% of the world's citizens, and enjoy optimal output in nearly two-thirds of the active territories.

This wasn't always the case though.

When they first arrived, compactoriums were marketed as a sure-fire solution to both food waste *and* food shortages, but very little effort was made to incentivize dietary transition on a personal level.

As the underground phasehouses spooled up hot and ready, people... thoroughly ignored them.

So it goes, doing what's objectively good for the many holds little appeal when it isn't sufficiently compelling for the individual.

Phase-centric diet promotion was handed to local governments, who engaged in all manner of targeted efforts.

Societal-score reward schemes.
Early-access coupons for beta flavors.
Celebrity chef reviews and endorsements.

The isolate-nation of Britain even elected a parliamentary MP constructed entirely out of phasestuff. He was quite popular there.

None of this was enough to truly turn the tide for phasefoods, so the Broadscience institute intervened with a deeply uncharacteristic initiative:

They formed The Circus of Inconspicuisine.

A travelling troupe of veiled hosts delivering dinner occasions of extraordinary exclusivity. They promise an experience unlike anything else on earth, with two concrete caveats: absolute secrecy and total anonymity.

Naturally, there are rumours about what goes on inside the big top, but not a single Circus-goer has ever spoken about their experience with Inconspicuisine.

Anti-gravity antipasti, non-euclidean barrels of truly bottomless beverages, and neural ices that extend one's perceivable color spectrum for however long the brain freeze lasts. Imaginations have been running rampant.

In truth, there's only a single verified fact about the Circus: eligibility is informed by phasefood contribution.

Almost overnight, the Circus captured our attention and convinced us to fundamentally rethink our consumption habits.

“Supervisor requested at feedback-kiosk three. Supervisor requested at—” Fei flicked the beacon off and sidled through the strip-door

as the speaker fell quiet. The door sealed tight.

“Supervisor Fei, thank you for hushing that contraption.” The Gold sat comfortably in the feedback booth, the Bronze just at her side, standing. Both of them still veiled from head to toe—no one sees their faces.

“Sorry, it really echoes in these little booths, doesn’t it.”

“Truly. But there’s a time and place for every sound.” The gold gestured to the empty chair in front of her.

Fei sat gingerly. “You’re... not here to deliver store feedback, are you?”

“No, Fei. I’m here to deliver this.” As if on cue, the Bronze parted his garb, revealing a document so bright that it lit the space like a tiny trapped firework.

A moment later the kiosk was dim again and as Fei’s eyes readjusted the Bronze came forward to hand her the faintly incandescent artifact.

“The ticket is yours to use or share. Whichever you choose, you’ve earned our recognition as a friend of Broadscience. It isn’t my place to tell you why.”

Fei worked the paper between her thumb and forefinger; thick and coarse like something from another time.

“Now that you are a friend of Broadscience, we’ll contact you again on future visits to your city... That is, as long as you can keep a secret.”

Like every one of her colleagues, Fei longed to witness the Circus with her own eyes. But as she allowed herself to imagine the unimaginable joys of Inconspicuisine, thoughts of Aunty Ning kept nagging at her. There was no way to know what she’d done to earn the ticket, but whatever it was she had many more years to repeat the process.

It was much more than a matter of time for Ning.

Fei remained seated in the kiosk as Gold and Bronze quietly motioned toward soft strip-door exit.

“Do you know what the Circus is, Fei?” Gold paused just before the threshold, speaking without turning.

“Noise. Everyone hears it, so if we bury the right messages in there they tend to get through in the end.”

“现在既然你已经是博大科学之友了，我们会在将来拜访贵城时再次联系你.....前提是，你必须得保守这个秘密。”

“Now that you are a friend of Broadscience, we’ll contact you again on future visits to your city... That is, as long as you can keep a secret.”

谭迪诗是香港浸会大学的助理教授。她的课程关注研究城市食物系统。她倡议在未来实现更加道德化的食物发展。2018年，她荣获了Fullbright高级研究奖，并在麻省理工大学开发了食物营教手机APP。

本杰明·霍尔是英国独立工作室Needs More Robots的游戏总监。他曾在香港做了数年的供稿人和艺术总监。目前，他正和Xbox合作，研发一款机械人主题后赛博朋克风游戏，名为Neon Death Pact。

DAISY TAM is an Assistant Professor at the Hong Kong Baptist University where she teaches and does research on urban food systems. An advocate for ethical food futures, she developed her food rescue food application at MIT under the Fulbright Senior Research Award in 2018.

BENJAMIN HALL is the game director at UK indie studio Needs More Robots. For a number of years he was a copywriter and an art director in Hong Kong, but he now works with Xbox to develop Neon Death Pact, a post-cyberpunk game about android affairs.