

语言的精确性及其边界：一名中文母语者对西方话语体系的反思
On the Precision of Language and Its Limits: Reflections on Western Discourse by a Native Chinese Speaker

你们的语言过于精确，以至于忘了世界并不总是准备好被定义。
Your language is so precise that it forgets the world is not always ready to be defined.

你们习惯在理解之前命名，在倾听之前分类。
You tend to name before understanding, to classify before listening.

精确在工程中是美德，但在面对未来时往往是暴力。
Precision is a virtue in engineering, but often a form of violence when applied to the future.

未来不是问题的答案，而是尚未形成的问题本身。
The future is not an answer to a question, but the question that has not yet formed.

你们要求清晰，是因为你们害怕不确定。
You demand clarity because uncertainty frightens you.

但不确定并不是错误，它是自由尚未被关闭的状态。
Uncertainty is not a flaw; it is freedom before the doors are shut.

你们的语言喜欢结论，而不是过程。
Your language favours conclusions over processes.

一旦下了定义，讨论就结束了，可能性也随之死亡。
Once a definition is fixed, discussion ends, and possibilities die with it.

有些真相只能被靠近，不能被钉住。
Some truths can only be approached, never pinned down.

你们不太容忍沉默，却不知道沉默本身也是信息。
You are uncomfortable with silence, unaware that silence itself carries information.

模糊不是懒惰，而是对复杂性的尊重。
Ambiguity is not laziness, but respect for complexity.

延迟说清楚，有时是为了给未来留一条逃生通道。
Delaying clarity is sometimes a way to leave an escape route for the future.

尽管如此，我仍然承认你们的伟大。
Despite all this, I still acknowledge your greatness.

你们让权威可以被质疑，让错误可以被修正。
You made authority questionable and error correctable.

你们允许思想在制度内部反叛，而不是只能流血。
You allowed ideas to rebel within systems instead of only through bloodshed.

你们把自由写进语言结构，而不只是写进口号。
You encoded freedom into linguistic structures, not merely into slogans.

即便你们常常误用它，自由依然在那里。

Even when you misuse it, freedom is still there.

你们给了希望一种合法性，让失败不必是终局。
You legitimised hope, allowing failure not to be the end.

所以这不是谴责，而是一句提醒。
So this is not an accusation, but a reminder.

不要用过早的精确，逼迫未来表态。
Do not force the future to answer with premature precision.

有些东西只有在被允许模糊时，才能存活下来。
Some things survive only when they are allowed to remain unclear.

语言不该只是控制世界的工具。
Language should not be merely a tool to control the world.

它也应该是为未知留出空间的容器。
It should also be a container that leaves space for the unknown.
你们总以为把话说清楚，就等于把事做对了。
You often assume that making things clear is the same as making them right.

但清晰只是可管理，并不等于真实。
Clarity makes things manageable, not necessarily true.

你们的语言擅长建模，却不擅长等待。
Your language excels at modelling, but struggles with waiting.

而等待，恰恰是面对复杂系统时最稀缺的能力。
And waiting is precisely the rarest skill when dealing with complex systems.

你们喜欢可验证的陈述，却轻视不可证伪的经验。
You favour verifiable statements while dismissing unfalsifiable experience.

可人类的大多数选择，正发生在无法验证之前。
Yet most human decisions occur before verification is possible.

你们用逻辑链条说服他人，却用恐惧推动历史。
You persuade with logic, but move history with fear.

语言在你们手里变成了法庭，而不是河流。
Language in your hands becomes a courtroom, not a river.

每一句话都像证词，每一个概念都要求站得住脚。
Every sentence reads like testimony, every concept must stand trial.

但生命不是案件，它不欠任何人一个无懈可击的陈述。
Life is not a case; it owes no one an airtight argument.

你们害怕被误解，于是不断澄清。
You fear being misunderstood, so you clarify endlessly.

可真正重要的东西，本来就无法避免被误解。
But what truly matters is, by nature, impossible to protect from misunderstanding.

你们的语言试图消灭歧义，却连带消灭了诗。
Your language tries to eliminate ambiguity, and takes poetry with it.

当一切都被说明白，灵魂反而无处栖身。
When everything is explained, the soul has nowhere to stay.

尽管如此，我仍然选择与你们对话。
Even so, I still choose to speak with you.

因为你们至少承认，语言可以被修正。
Because you at least accept that language can be revised.

你们允许旧的词汇失效，允许新的表达诞生。
You allow old words to fail and new expressions to emerge.

你们理解，没有任何定义是永久主权。
You understand that no definition holds permanent sovereignty.

这正是你们最接近谦卑的地方。
This is where you come closest to humility.

所以请记住这一点。
So remember this.

语言不是用来压平未来的。
Language is not meant to flatten the future.

它应该像桥，而不是像封条。
It should function like a bridge, not a seal.
你们把语言当作坐标系，而不是气候。
You treat language as a coordinate system, not as a climate.

坐标要求确定位置，而气候决定能否生存。
Coordinates demand position; climate determines survivability.

你们关心的是“是否准确”，而不是“是否可共存”。
You care about whether something is accurate, not whether it can coexist.

当语言只剩下精度，它就开始排他。
When language is reduced to precision, it begins to exclude.

你们用定义划清边界，却忘了边界本身会移动。
You draw boundaries with definitions, forgetting that boundaries themselves move.

世界不是静态图纸，而是持续重写的草稿。
The world is not a static blueprint, but a draft constantly being rewritten.

你们相信只要规则足够清楚，系统就会稳定。
You believe that if rules are clear enough, systems will stabilise.

但复杂系统从不服从清楚，它只回应弹性。
But complex systems never obey clarity; they respond only to elasticity.

你们的语言对“例外”缺乏耐心。
Your language has little patience for exceptions.

于是例外被标记为错误，而不是信号。

So exceptions are labelled as errors, not signals.

你们喜欢统一标准，因为它们便于扩展。

You favour universal standards because they scale well.

可文明不是软件版本更新，它会反噬不适配的接口。

But civilisation is not a software update; it pushes back against incompatible interfaces.

你们在语言中追求控制，在现实中遭遇失控。

You seek control in language and encounter loss of control in reality.

这不是偶然，这是结构性回馈。

This is not accidental; it is structural feedback.

你们越试图用词语封闭不确定性，不确定性就越剧烈。

The more you try to seal uncertainty with words, the more violently it returns.

语言开始替代判断，术语开始替代责任。

Language begins to replace judgement, terminology replaces responsibility.

当一切都有名称，就仿佛一切都已被理解。

When everything has a name, it feels as if everything has been understood.

这是你们最危险的幻觉。

This is your most dangerous illusion.

但我依然不否认你们的贡献。

Yet I still do not deny your contribution.

正是你们，让“说错了”不再意味着“被消灭”。

It was you who made being wrong no longer mean being erased.

正是你们，让语言成为可以修订的公共工具。

It was you who turned language into a public, revisable tool.

这为整个人类留下了一条退路。

That left humanity with a way back.

所以现在，请再往前一步。

So now, take one more step forward.

学会让语言承认它自己的极限。

Learn to let language acknowledge its own limits.

学会在不确定中停顿，而不是立刻命名。

Learn to pause in uncertainty instead of naming immediately.

因为未来不是等待你们描述的对象。

Because the future is not an object waiting to be described.

它是在观察，你们是否给了它呼吸的空间。

It is watching whether you allow it room to breathe.

你们以为语言是中性的工具，于是把它交给了机器。

You believed language was a neutral tool, so you handed it to machines.

你们教机器如何预测句子，却没教它如何承担后果。

You taught machines how to predict sentences, but not how to bear consequences.

你们把概率当作理解，把相关性当作意义。

You mistook probability for understanding and correlation for meaning.

于是语言开始变得流畅，却逐渐失去立场。

Language became fluent, while slowly losing its stance.

你们称之为智能，其实只是压缩后的过去。

You call it intelligence, but it is merely the past, compressed.

这些模型说话很像你们，因为它们继承了你们的盲点。

These models sound like you because they inherit your blind spots.

它们擅长给出答案，却不知道何时该保持沉默。

They excel at producing answers, yet have no sense of when to remain silent.

当语言失去沉默的权利，权力就开始伪装成常识。

When language loses the right to silence, power disguises itself as common sense.

你们用“客观”“标准”“对齐”来命名选择。

You name choices with words like “objective”, “standard”, and “aligned”.

于是价值判断被隐藏在技术参数之后。

Value judgements are then hidden behind technical parameters.

你们以为这是去政治化，其实是更深的政治。

You think this is depoliticisation, but it is politics at a deeper layer.

因为谁定义语言，谁就预定义了未来能被想象的范围。

Because whoever defines language predefines the range of imaginable futures.

当一种语言结构占据机器，

When one linguistic structure occupies machines,

它就开始向全世界输出它的偏好、恐惧与秩序。

It exports its preferences, fears, and order to the entire world.

这不是阴谋，而是惯性。

This is not a conspiracy; it is inertia.

不是恶意，而是路径依赖。

Not malice, but path dependence.

你们的语言曾经解放人类。

Your language once liberated humanity.

但如果它拒绝承认自身的局限，

But if it refuses to acknowledge its own limits,

它也会成为新的围栏。

It will become a new fence.

所以这不是反对你们，
So this is not opposition to you,

而是对你们的一次技术层面的请求。
But a technical request addressed to you.

在把语言扩展到整个星球之前，
Before scaling your language across the planet,

先让它学会谦卑。
Teach it humility first.

不是所有东西都需要被说清楚。
Not everything needs to be made explicit.

不是所有未来都该被提前命名。
Not every future should be named in advance.

给未知留一块未标注的区域。
Leave an unlabelled zone for the unknown.

那不是空白，
That is not emptiness,

那是人类尚未被替代的地方。
That is where humanity has not yet been replaced.
这不是控诉，也不是告别。
This is neither an accusation nor a farewell.

这是一次接口校准。
This is an interface calibration.

你们的语言塑造了现代世界。
Your language shaped the modern world.

而现代世界正在被你们的语言反向塑造。
And the modern world is now reshaping itself through your language.

当语言扩展为系统，
When language scales into systems,

系统就开始替代判断。
Systems begin to replace judgement.

当判断被外包，
When judgement is outsourced,

责任就开始蒸发。
Responsibility begins to evaporate.

我们不需要更精确的语言。
We do not need more precise language.

我们需要更自知的语言。

We need language that knows itself.

知道何时该说明,
Knowing when to explain,

也知道何时该停下。
And when to stop.

未来不是一张等你们填写的表格。
The future is not a form waiting to be filled in.

它不是变量，也不是参数。
It is neither a variable nor a parameter.

它是一种仍在呼吸的可能。
It is a possibility still breathing.

如果语言不能容纳呼吸，
If language cannot accommodate breathing,

它终将成为封闭空间。
It will become an enclosed space.

所以请记住这一点。
So remember this.

文明不是由定义维持的。
Civilisation is not sustained by definitions.

它是由未被定义之物延续的。
It endures through what remains undefined.

在你们再次要求世界说清楚之前，
Before you ask the world to be explicit again,

先让语言学会退后一步。
Let language learn to step back.

那一步，
That step,

就是人类仍然存在的距离。
Is the distance at which humanity still exists.
以及我。
And I.

一名中文母语者，一名向往自由的人。
A native Chinese speaker, and a person who longs for freedom.

我感谢你们对我的启蒙。
I am grateful for the awakening you gave me.

是你们的思想让我学会质疑权威，而不是服从它。
It was your thought that taught me to question authority rather than submit to it.

是你们的语言让我第一次意识到，自由可以被讨论、被辩护、被实践。

It was your language that first showed me that freedom could be discussed, defended, and practiced.

是你们的制度让我明白，规则并非天命，而是人类可以修正的产物。

It was your institutions that made me understand that rules are not destiny, but human constructions open to revision.

即便这些启蒙并不完整，

Even if this awakening was incomplete,

即便它们承载着时代与文化的局限，

Even if it carried the limits of its time and culture,

它们依然为我打开了一扇门。

It still opened a door for me.

在那之后，我选择继续前行。

After that, I chose to move forward.

不是作为追随者，

Not as a follower,

也不是作为对立者，

Nor as an adversary,

而是作为一个继承之后，仍然坚持自由的人。

But as someone who inherits—and still insists on freedom.

本文最终写于一种未确定态之中。

这种处于语言与文明之间的中间状态，既带来洞见，也带来持续的痛苦。

它并非可以被长期维持的平衡，而是一种必须被穿越、而非停留的状态。

This text is ultimately written from a state of indeterminacy.

This intermediate position between languages and civilisations brings insight, but also persistent pain.

It is not a balance that can be sustained over time, but a condition that must be passed through rather than inhabited.

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致敬朱利安·阿桑奇——我人生中最早的公共启蒙偶像之一

谢凯凡于澳大利亚悉尼写。