

主编 徐真华

全球化背景下的外国语言文学研究丛书

“清浊本为邻”..

对叶芝诗歌中衰老与灵肉主题的探讨

“FAIR AND FOUL ARE NEAR OF KIN”:

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN BODY AND SOUL
IN W. B. YEATS'S POETRY OF AGING

周 芳 著

广东省“211工程”三期重点学科建设项目

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总序

外国语言文学学科的发展是与国运衰微、西学东渐、现代大学勃兴紧密联系在一起的。随着 1840 年鸦片战争的爆发,东西方文明在古老中国不断冲突、碰撞、磨合以及融汇,其剧烈之程度在中国对外交往史中前所未见。西方列强的坚船利炮使东方老大帝国的羸弱暴露无遗。清政府内洋务派为了挽救清廷的统治危机,主张引进、仿造西方的武器装备和学习西方的科学技术,兴办洋务,创设近代企业,将发展重点放在“器物”层面,“师夷长技以制夷”。1894 年,中国在甲午海战中惨败,民族危机空前深重,引起思想文化教育界强烈震动,“中学为体,西学为用”受到空前挑战,“制度”革新摆上核心日程,变法维新运动持续高涨。

此时,时代需要中国与西方之间的“翻译者”,从一开始,外语就承担了读懂历史变迁、推动民族奋起自强的重任。中国一批最早接受西方思想的知识分子,如魏源、郑观应等,为译介西书和传播西方的政治体制、科学知识,发挥了很大的作用。1862 年,被誉为近代第一所国立外国语学院京师同文馆应运而生,恭亲王奕訢等人在给清政府的奏折上阐明了建馆的意图:“欲悉各国情景,必先谙其言语文字,方不受人欺蒙。”作为清代最早培养译员的洋务学堂和从事翻译出版的机构,同文馆为推动中国近代化作出了积极而重要的尝试。此后,得益于外语的译介作用,西学在中国的发展步伐不断加快。曾负笈海外的严复翻译了一批重要的西方著作,他的译著(如亚当·斯密的《原富》、斯宾塞的《群学肄言》、孟德斯鸠的《法意》,尤其是赫胥黎的《天演论》,以“物竞天择”、“适者生存”、“优胜劣汰”的生物进化理论阐发救亡图存的观点)启蒙与教育了一代国人,产生了振聋发聩的影响。戊戌变法之年,中国第一所国立综合性大学——京师大学堂创立伊始,即开设英、法、德、俄、日五个语种的课程。1902 年,京师大学堂复学,且随即合并了京师同文馆,次年更名为译学馆。随着现代高等教育在中国的兴起,外语专业作为一门独立学科在我国建立并逐步发展。揭橥“民主”和“科学”两面旗帜的“五四”新文化运动,为外语学科的发展增添了动力和活力。

适值“三千年未有之大变局”，以促进中国近代化为宗旨的海外留学热潮激情涌动。1872年到1875年间，由近代中国留美第一人容闳提议，清政府先后派出四批共120名幼童赴美国留学。这些留美幼童是中国历史上最早的官派留学生。此后，旨在寻求真知的官派和自费留学逐波激荡。这些留学生归国后分布在政界、军界、实业界、教育文化界等各个领域，不少人成为中国近代历史上的知名人物。及至民国时期，一批既饱览西学又具有深厚国学根底的“海归”执掌大学外文系或者从事外文教学研究工作。作为“睁眼看世界”的文化精英，他们学习和借鉴西方先进的理念、模式和方法，制订学术范式，建立课程体系，名师俊彦辈出，学术声誉远播。从当年北京大学、清华大学、西南联大等高校外文系的一流学术阵容可见一斑。在外文界，前辈不懈开拓进取，后学奋力继承创新，学术薪火相传，在短短数十年内为外语学科奠定了较为厚实的基础。1949年以后，由于国内、国际形势的嬗变，外语学科的持续发展受到很大干扰和破坏。1978年中国实行改革开放政策，长期以来对外封闭的坚冰开始消融，外语学科又受到重视，得以焕发新的生机和活力。

近30多年来，科学技术迅猛发展，社会思潮与思想观念更趋丰富多元，学科既深度分化又高度综合，这些变化既拓展了外国语言文学的外延，又深化了其内涵。尤其是20世纪90年代后，全球化趋势深入发展，国与国之间的相互依存明显增强，对人类社会的影响涉及经济、政治、教育、社会及文化等各个领域，为外国语言文学创设了新的发展环境和条件。在这个进程中，我国外语界就全球化背景下外国语言文学的使命和责任、外语教育规划、外语学科发展路径、外语人才培养模式等理论和实践问题进行了积极的探索，为推动我国经济社会发展、促进中外文化交流、培养高素质国际化人才作出了重要贡献。在全球化背景下，我们面临进一步提升高等教育国际化水平、繁荣发展哲学社会科学、扩大中国学术的国际影响力和话语权、增强国家文化软实力、增进国际理解的艰巨任务。哲学社会科学要繁荣发展，既要“请进来”，也要“走出去”，对本国传统文化精髓，既不狂傲自大，也不妄自菲薄；对外国优秀文明成果，既不全盘照搬，也不一概否定。在纵横捭阖的大时代面前，我国学术发展更需要世界眼光、国际视野和“海纳百川、有容乃大”的广阔胸怀。面对新形势、新任务，外语院校和外语系学科有独特和不可替代的优势，有责任、有义务、有能力推进内涵发展、质量提升、品牌建设，服务于整个国家学术的发展，服务于国家外交战略能力的大幅提升。

国学大师、清华研究院“四大导师”之一陈寅恪先生曾经说,“读书必先识字”,他自己就精通梵语、英语、法语、德语、巴利语、波斯语、突厥语、西夏语,还修习过中亚古文字和蒙古语。时至今日,要了解古希腊、古埃及、古印度、古巴比伦文明的历史,要感受罗马帝国的辉煌和文艺复兴的灿烂,要领略工业革命和西方哲学的魅力,要把握当前国际社会发展的律动和人类进步的脉搏,外国语言文学仍然是一种十分重要而必不可少的工具、载体和媒介。在全球化背景下,普世价值往往更易超越民族、文化、宗教、局域认知等,通过外语这座桥梁得以交流和沟通、发扬和传播,从而提升人类社会的福祉。

高等学校的根本任务是培养人才。为适应全球化和高等教育国际化的需要,外语院校和外语学科一项很重要的使命和责任,就是要践行“立足平凡、追求卓越”的教育理念,创新人才培养模式,着眼于培养全球化、高素质公民。这种人才,具有较高的公民素养,“不能仅仅是语言、翻译方面的专家,更要在此基础上成为对象国研究和区域研究的专家,成为外语精湛、专业突出、高素质的复合型、复语型的国际化人才”(教育部副部长郝平)。简而言之,全球化、高素质公民的内涵可以用“中国灵魂、世界胸怀、现代意识”十二个字来表述,它包含了人与自我、人与国家、人与世界三个命题。第一,大学生要追求自我完善,务求“格物、致知、诚意、正心”,修身自持,赋予个体生命实际意义。第二,大学生要理性爱国,正确理解与认同传统文化,自觉参与现代中国的社会—文化转型进程。第三,大学生要用全人类而非单一国家民族的眼光关注诸如气候变化、核扩散、大规模传染病等国际性难题,不断提高跨文化交际能力,对外具有独立的品格和开放的心态。

在全球化语境下,外国语言文学需要遵循学科发展规律,顺应国家政策安排,不断加强自身建设,逐步提升学科的影响力和话语权。推进外国语言文学基础理论研究,密切追踪国外学术前沿,注意学习和借鉴,但不能满足于“跟随”和“阐释”,要力争取得有突破性的、具有国际影响的原创性外文理论成果。充分发挥外语学科优势,整合相关学科资源,开展全球问题、国际区域和国别问题的长期跟踪研究,为国家外交战略服务。积极主动对接国家和地方战略需求,就外语教育教学和对外交往的重大理论和实践问题,鼓励个人自由探索,支持学科集体攻关,为党和政府提供高水平的决策咨询服务。比如,广东外语外贸大学在广东省政府的鼎力支持下组建的广东国际战略研究院,近年来就国际金融危机、中国—东盟自贸区成立、日本地震海啸等重大问题对广东的影响及对策,组织外语专

家和相关学科学者进行专题研究,向有关方面提交了高质量的调研报告,对政府施政和企业决策产生了积极的影响。“走出去”,是繁荣发展我国哲学社会科学的重要环节。外语院校和外语学科可充分发挥自身独特优势,健全高端国际型人才培养体系,重点培育一批高水平、专业化的翻译团队,培养造就一批造诣高深的翻译名家,翻译并向海外推介一批中国文化经典和学术精品。要适应学科分化与综合的趋势,加强外语与经济、管理、法律、文化、军事、信息技术等学科的交叉和融合,在保持传统语言文学学科优势的基础上,努力催生出一批能与国际学术界直接对话、具备学术话语权的新特色交叉学科。加强与港澳台外语界的交流与合作,积极参与国际学术活动和学术组织,积极参与和推动国际学术组织有关政策、规则、标准的研究和制定。

以“工程”、“项目”和“课题”等名义对高等学校发展实行管理和调控,是我国高等教育体制的重要特色。目前,少数外语院校进入国家“211工程”建设高校行列,外国语言文学学科也拥有一批国家级重点学科、教育部人文社科重点研究基地、教育部特色专业建设点、国家精品课程、国家教学名师等,这些总体上构成了外语学科领域的学术制高点。2008年,广东外语外贸大学“全球化背景下的外国语言文学研究”入选广东省“211工程”三期重点学科建设项目,其系列专著凝聚了“语言·文学·文化”、现代技术与语言教学评估、跨文化交际与管理、翻译研究与实践等研究方向,来自政府的支持为广外外语学科的创新提供了新的机会和平台。出版“全球化背景下的外国语言文学研究丛书”,一来可作项目成果的初步展示,二来以此就教于同行专家学者。

慢工出细活,厚积才能薄发。全球化背景下外国语言文学学科的发展,与中国改革开放与现代化建设事业一样,依然任重而道远。

是为序。

徐真华^①

2011年6月

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前言

“变老”诗歌总能打动、感动我。这也许源自于我对季节变更的敏感。当秋风让空气变得清凉,当冬叶开始凋零,当春天将生命重新传递,当夏虫开始歌唱,我感到季节的脚步在心头踏过。

季节的变更让人兴奋,我们从中感到生命的喧嚣和律动,也感到了宇宙的年轻和永恒。生命季节的更替却让人失落。它使人意识到个体生命的有限和短暂以及人生的不可逆转。当生命的秋天来临时,人们是多么无可奈何!他们悲哀、叹息、吟唱,他们绵延不绝的感叹化成诗人笔下一首首扣人心弦的诗歌。

我开始注意并喜爱叶芝是因其感叹“变老”的诗歌——“驶向拜占庭”。诗人在“变老”面前的坦率、无可奈何以及蜕变为“金色小鸟”的想象,让人感到一种异样的美,如腐叶上的花朵、黑云间的光亮、泪水中的欢笑。我更全面地阅读他的诗歌,并了解其他诗人的“变老”诗歌后,意识到叶芝的“变老”诗歌在“变老”诗歌传统中占有独一无二的地位。这不仅仅因为其数量众多、主题多样,更因为叶芝“变老”诗歌中不屈的精神。这种在“变老”面前不屈的精神不仅在中国数量众多的“变老”诗歌中很少见,在西方的“变老”诗歌中也是卓尔不群的。这种不屈的精神表现为直视“变老”、勇于自嘲、不懈地与自我、与世俗观念进行抗争,表现为改造自我、拥抱矛盾、在“变老”面前发出胜利者的欢笑。这种不屈的精神让叶芝最终超越并战胜了“变老”,将“变老”变成了“新生”。叶芝不仅在生活中焕发出新的活力并取得了人格上的完善——从个性格软弱、优柔寡断的人蜕变成了一个率性果断、充满力量的“雄狮”,在艺术上也取得了辉煌的成就。他最好的诗歌创作于50岁以后,旺盛的创造力一直持续到生命的最后(叶芝74岁去世)。伴随着性格上的完善,叶芝在生命后期也取得了艺术风格上的完善。他成功完成了诗歌风格的转变,将早期梦幻、伤感的诗风转变成了他追求的清新、硬朗、含蓄的风格。

正是叶芝这种“化腐朽为生命”的不屈精神让我决定研究叶芝的“变老”诗歌、呈现其中的闪光点、追溯其闪光的源头，并介绍给读者。我期望我的研究能给正在变老和即将变老的人们指出一条不同的“变老”之路，一条叶芝曾为之奋斗并因此而辉煌的道路，一条超越“变老”的道路。

我在本书的写作过程中得到了老师、同学、亲人的很多帮助，在此谨一致谢！虽然我孱弱的文字远不能表达我的谢意：

首先我要深深地感谢我的导师，中山大学外国语学院教授区锜。他的智慧和仁慈照亮了我写作的道路，使我思想的种子得以萌芽、生长、开花、结果。

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Introduction

Aging, the process of decay that heads steadily towards annihilation, has aroused numerous reflections and songs —“The human angst over aging is as old as history”, as Deats said (Deats and Lenker 13). The various responses to aging can be roughly categorized into three groups: lamentation, resignation (happily or stoically), rage and defiance. ①

Lamentation is probably the most natural human response to aging, as the woe of man in the Holy Scripture shows:

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and Let my cry come unto thee. Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the way when I call answer me speedily. For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread (Psalms 102: 1 – 4).

The drying of blood, the withering of passion, the decline of appetite, the evaporation of days ... in front of life's decline, man feels powerless and helpless. A deep and full-hearted lamentation flows most naturally from an aging man.

Generally, after the initial lamentation, people either resign with the fact of aging or defy it. Among those who resign, the attitudes are divided. Some people welcome aging as a stage of happiness and blessing. This happy resignation is represented by Plato and Cicero. Plato, through the mouth of Cephalus, says: “To the man who is conscious of no sins, sweet hope, as Pindar beautifully says, is the kind nurse of his old age ...” (qtd. in Cole and Winkler 231) The sweet hope that attended Plato in his old age is the hope for the immortality of the soul, as is indicated by the word “sweet”. Cicero accepts old age as the necessary life process — “Whatever befalls in accordance with Nature should be accounted

① Wayne Booth in his *The Art of Growing Older: Writers on Living and Aging* organizes the works on aging under the title of “Loss and Lamentations”, “Cures, Consolations, Celebrations” and “Further Harvest”. My categorizing generally accords with his.

good" (52). The fact that old age cools down physical desire becomes for Cicero a source of pleasure — "the fact that old age feels little longing for sensual pleasures not only is no cause for reproach, but rather is ground for the highest praise" (51). Cicero's pleasure, like the "sweet hope" of Plato, comes from the expectancy for the immortality of the soul, as is confirmed by his happy resignation with the "error": "And if I err in my belief that the souls of men are immortal, I gladly err, nor do I wish this error which gives me pleasure to be wrested from me while I live ..." (53).

With modern writers such as Hermann Hesse and Ralph Waldo Emerson, the happy resignation with aging is demonstrated as a willingness to accept reality. Hesse believes that the meaning of life resides in the submission to nature. When old age possesses us, we must say "yes" to it:

One must say yes to it. Without this yea, without submission to what nature demands of us, the worth and meaning of our days — whether we are old or young — are lost and we betray life (56).

The reluctance to accept what nature has designed for us is a betrayal, a denial of the worth of life. Instead of arguing for the value of submission to old age, Emerson uses the traditional metaphor of life voyage to express his willingness to accept the destined fate of old age and death:

It is time to be old,
to take in sail: —
The god of bounds,
Who sets to seas a shore,
Came to me in his fatal rounds,
And said: "No more!" (56)

Whether holstered by the belief in the immortality of the soul or ancient wisdom, Plato, Cicero, Hesse and Emerson accept old age happily and willingly. Some people, unlike the above-mentioned examples, resign with old age with bitter stoicism. The stoic resignation is best represented by Thomas Hardy. Not like Plato or Cicero, who welcome aging as a blessing, Hardy regards aging as an occasion of loss but decides to accept it as well, as the poem "I Look into My Glass" demonstrates:

I look into my glass,

And view my wasting skin,
And say, "Would God it came to pass
My heart had shrunk as thin!"

For then, I, undistrest
By hearts grown cold to me,
Could only wait my endless rest
With equanimity. (Hardy 81)

....

Words such as "wasting skin", "shrunk as thin", "cold", "endless rest" indicate that old age is an unpleasant occasion and unwelcome. Though old age engenders bitterness, Hardy only prays that God would make his heart shrink as well so that he could endure and wait his "endless rest with equanimity". This determined endurance against the hard fact of aging makes Hardy a typical example of stoic resignation.

If lamentation and resignation are seen as passive responses to aging, then rage and defiance are the more rebellious responses. The ancient voice of anger is represented by Ovid — "O Time, thou great devourer, and thou, envious Age, together you destroy all things; and, slowly gnawing with your teeth, you finally consume all things in lingering death!" (Cole and Winkler 29) Ovid's anger is revealed by his addressing time directly and the usage of the vehement words such as "devourer", "destroy", "gnawing", etc. William Shakespeare is another angry voice against time and age. Like Ovid, his anger is revealed through the vehemence of language. For example, in Sonnet 63, he describes time as having "injurious hand"; in Sonnet 60 time is depicted as a tyrant who destroys the glorious and the beautiful — "nothing stands but for his scythe to mow". Shakespeare's rebellion is also betrayed by his attempt to preserve youthful beauty in his poetical lines, which is the theme of many of his sonnets — "His beauty shall in these black lines be seen, /And they shall live, and he in them still green" (sonnet 63).

Modern poet Dylan Thomas, by urging his father to rage against dying, has shown himself as the ally of Ovid and Shakespeare:

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light. (Ellmann and O'Clair 926 – 927)

Philip Larkin is another modern voice of anger and rebellion, which is best represented by his later poems^①, as the following lines that are taken from one of his later poems "Send No Money" show:

Standing under the fobbed
Impendent belly of Time
Tell me the truth, I said,
Teach me the way things go.
All the other lads there
Were itching to have a bash,
But I thought wanting unfair:
It and finding out clash. (Larkin *Collected Poems* 146)

This poem was written in the month of the poet's fortieth birthday. The sarcastic metaphor of the "impendent belly of time", the imperative "tell me the truth", the terse colloquialism such as "lads", "itching to have a bash", all suggest a disillusioned impatience and a simmering anger with the bleak reality that is overcast by aging.

The most insistent and pungent denunciation of aging comes from W. B. Yeats. As he himself admits: "My first denunciation of old age was made in 'The Wanderings of Usheen' (end of Part 1) before I was twenty and the same denunciation comes in the last pages of the book^②" (qtd. in Ellmann 276). Though the dominating tone of Yeats's response to aging is denunciation, the actual response is more diversified. Lamentation, happy or reluctant resignation, rage and rebellion, almost all the major human responses to aging find expression in Yeats. As the quotation suggests, Yeats is also persistent in the concern of aging, which is another form of response. He expressed his first concern about aging before he was twenty, and this concern penetrates his

① Roughly speaking, Philip Larkin's poems of aging that were written before he was forty are referred to as the early poems which are characterized by Hardy-esque stoicism and poems written after he was forty are referred to as the later poems which are characterized by impatience and anger.

② "The book" refers to *The Collected Poems of Yeats*.

writing career. Altogether, Yeats has produced around sixty poems of aging^①, taking up about fifteen percent of his total poems (which is three hundred and ninety-two according to Daniel Albright's edition). His concern of aging is found in his prose and plays as well. When introducing the plays for the new season offered by the Irish Theatre in 1900, Yeats referred to his plays as dramatizing the conflict between the world of the faery on the one hand, and on the other hand, the human world where "even the most famous of the beautiful sink into querulous old age" (qtd. in Oppel 33).

The uniqueness of Yeats's response to aging lies not only in the diversity and the persistence, but more importantly, in what is behind the diversity and the persistence. Unlike Plato or Cicero, who views aging as a blessing, Yeats sees aging as the occasion of loss — loss of physical power, loss of passion, loss of creative power, etc. In front of the irretrievable loss, Yeats lamented and also attempted resignation. But lamentation and resignation are temporary. His concern for power both as a man and as a poet urges him to fight. The poems that usually begin as lamentation over aging will gradually develop into defiance and struggle. The struggles that run through Yeats's poetry of aging grant prominence to Yeats's response to aging.

The struggles in Yeats's poetry of aging are manifested apparently as the struggles between body and soul. On the one hand, in front of the decay and the impending annihilation, Yeats, who has a strong religious inclination, cannot resist the temptation from the world of the soul. On the other hand, body, or life in the physical world, though mutilated by loss and sufferings, is the source of power for both the man and the poet. Aging impairs the power, the affirmation of body and life promises a renewal. The impulse to tend the soul and the impulse to cling to body and life struggle back and forth and

① In this book, Yeats's poems of aging refer to poems that are lamentations and contemplations of other people's or the speaker's own aging, or other emotional responses to aging, such as old man's frenzy, self-mockery, contemplation of the past and the present, and contrast between the old and the young. Some poems that are the memories of the old speaker are also considered poems of aging because they are the indirect responses to aging, such as some of the poems in "A Man Young and Old" series and "A Woman Young and Old" series.