

回应悲剧缪斯的呼唤

托马斯·哈代小说和诗歌研究文集

Shouhua Qi 祁寿华 | 旅美 |

William W. Morgan | 美 |

**VOICES IN
TRAGIC HARMONY:**
Essays On Thomas Hardy's
Fiction and Poetry



外教社

上海外语教育出版社

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一个半心半意哈代迷的坦白

祁寿华

1994年9月23日晚：纽约肯尼迪国际机场。爸爸和妈妈在阔别6年多后，又和我们团聚了。那激动的心，那哽咽着的嗓子，有多少话要说啊！爸爸和妈妈都老了许多，尤其是爸爸，60多岁，头发已经花白了。我们驱车4个多小时回到在宾州中部的家时，爸爸做的第一件事就是用颤巍巍的手从行李箱里拿出我8年前与严维明先生合译的英国维多利亚时期著名作家哈代的小说《一双蓝蓝的眼睛》。

这就像人生偶然有的那种现象：久盼不至以至你已经几乎完全放弃了希望，可它却在不期然的时候突然降临了。换个比喻说吧，我就像是年轻的父亲，为创造一个新的生命做出了自己应该做的一切，等到那个生命就要呱呱坠地来到人世时，我却被关在了产房之外，在那个创作过程的最后一道工序上，无事可做，无能为力，只有等的份了。不巧的是，产房外的那个等，一等就是好几年，太长了，充满了太多的焦虑不安。

书的问世之姗姗来迟，在某种意义上象征了一个年轻学者在与哈代不长不短的边缘中老是落后于时髦风尚的窘境。这种落伍，从他20世纪80年代初在国内做硕士论文，翻译哈代小说一直延续至80年代末在美国高等学府的研究生讨论课上。

等到父母安歇下来，早已过了子夜，我把自己关在小小的书房里，和我的书单独相处一会儿，带着温情抚摸装潢讲究的封面，轻轻抚弄标题和散发出油墨香的行文，热切地一页又一页地翻腾，重温当初翻译时因为语言和文化的差异而为之辗转反侧，度过难眠之夜的那些场面，再次体会终于找到能恰到好处地传达原文意蕴和情调之

中文佳句时的那种喜悦。

翻译该小说的约定是在1985年底左右讲妥的。当时,中国的文化复兴正方兴未艾,各种经典文学作品,不管是中国的还是外国的,都是书店里的热手货。老一代翻译家们翻译的塞万提斯、但丁、薄伽丘、乔叟、莎士比亚等外国文学名著都稍事修订后重新出版了。哈代的著名小说《德伯家的苔丝》等也是在这个时候再版的。乘着这股浪潮,新近崛起的以出版外国文学为主的《译林出版社》的编辑们自然对翻译和出版西方文学名著很感兴趣,正在制订自己的出版蓝图。我当时刚刚完成研究哈代主要小说的硕士论文,就与严维明先生一起建议《一双蓝蓝的眼睛》的题目。编辑们首肯,我和远在另一个城市的严先生就动起手来。

我负责译小说的前言、后20章和写译后记。我们俩当时都在大学里教书,因而,晚上免不了要挑灯夜战。为了使翻译能够接近信、达、雅的理想,我们常常为如何将某个字、词、句等译得更贴切、更能忠实传达原文的意思和精神风貌而琢磨半天。为了统一风格,我们上演了一场小小的《双城记》,让两个城市的邮局着实忙了一阵。临近完稿时,我已经十分疲倦,连稿子看也不想再看一眼了,就动员我的太太、父亲和岳母等帮着誊抄。

等交稿时,1987年到来的钟声已经敲过了。此时,那个热热闹闹的文化复兴似乎冷了不少。随着全国工作的重点转向经济建设,“向钱看”和争取先富起来成为一种时尚,有雅兴且有耐心站在月光沐浴下的阳台上听夜莺歌唱的人越来越少。生活节奏越来越快,通俗文化也越来越时髦,成为主流。很自然的,我们的出版社在征订上遇到麻烦,达不到不至于赔本的6000册的起码要求。就这样,那本书的清样就被锁在出版社的某个柜子里,在见不到阳光的地方一躺就是好几年,真是难产啊。后来,因担忧夜更长梦更多以至书问不了世,我们决定每人出几个月的工资来助产,书才得以见到阳光。

我之“迷恋”上哈代,得追溯至80年代初。我当时在苦苦寻找硕士论文的研究题目,多日拿不定主意,有种说不出的惶恐感。一日读英文版的《德伯家的苔丝》,被其震撼心灵的悲剧美所征服,一连几日都不能平静下来。接着,读了一本又一本哈代的小说,终于找到

了硕士论文的题目,很快就被导师批准。

基于阅读时所体验到的悲剧美,我决定从悲剧美学的角度来研究哈代的主要小说。在搜寻资料的过程中,我去过首都的北京图书馆、北大和北外的图书馆等,也去过南京大学、上海的复旦和上外的图书馆等。在复旦时遇到了一个再也没有想到的经历。在英文系图书馆查到一位名叫代尔·克雷摩著的《哈代悲剧之形式》(1975)一书,这在当时我所能找到的书当中算是最新和最切题的了。热心的图书馆馆员告诉我书在一位研究生手里,并给了我他的宿舍号码等。通过朋友介绍,我敲开他的门,被邀进去后一眼就看见那本书在一个小书架上。可无论怎么说,他都不愿借给我,哪怕就是一两个小时也不行,原因很简单也很坦诚:他也在考虑做哈代的文章,我如看了那本书,他的论文就会失去独创性,就没法写了。令我当时抓耳朵:写论文又不同于抄书,难道别人看了这本书你就不能再有什么独创性了?后来,这位研究生因涉嫌抄袭论文被一位学识渊博、治学严谨的加拿大籍教授发现而被免去作硕士论文资格,我的心也就平衡了一些。我很有信心地做完了论文,拿了学位,并发表了若干篇文章,自以为还算过得去。

1989年1月到了美国伊利诺斯州大学,才知道我“落伍”得有多厉害。第一学期,我有幸做著名的哈代专家威廉·摩根教授的助教,第一次与摩根教授见面时,神聊了一阵后,我很自然要提到自己的硕士论文。出自中国人固有的谦虚的美德,我为自己的孤陋寡闻、信息资料不全等抱歉了一番,并以在复旦的遭遇为佐证。摩根听了哈哈大笑起来,顺手从书架上抽出一本书来:“这就是那本书,拿去看吧!”克雷摩的书是70年代中问世的,我是在80年代中期完成论文的,又过了四五年后才见到它,晚了十多年啦。

摩根对我的硕士论文很感兴趣,不管我怎么谦虚和推脱,他都坚持要我拿来给他一读。一个星期以后,他看完了,把论文还给我时,附上一整页的评语,无非是鼓励一番。用他的话来说,我的研究之“彻底翔实”、论述之“清晰缜密”、行文之“流畅洒脱”,给他留下深刻印象。不过,我对自己落伍之担心还是被印证了:他指出,要在美国发表这个论文是会有些困难的,因为当今美、英学者们对于哈代作

为悲剧家的研究已经不感兴趣了。摩根以他特有的敏感,宽慰我说,“话说回来,你不应为自己的研究与我们的不相一致而不安,因为你的论文完全可以凭其自身的价值而站得住脚的。”

待我进了研究生讨论课的课堂时才更切身感到自己有多“落伍”。我发现,在自己稍一不留神的情况下,西方文学批评的风尚已经发生了革命性的转变。人文主义传统的几乎是金科玉律的那些概念和价值,从主观性、作者属性到作品属性等,即使没有完全土崩瓦解的话,至少也都受到了严重的、致命的挑战。现实主义这面旗帜的认识论的基础被看成是过于浮浅和幼稚的。在我修读的莎士比亚戏剧的一门课里,我信心十足地写了一篇二十来页的题为《论奥赛罗悲剧性格之两面性》的论文,自以为能自圆其说,文笔不算晦涩,颇有几分得意。不料,我刚念完,就受到了围坐在长方形桌子四周的十来位同学们的“围剿”。我的这些同学们都处在后现代派革命的一种难以抑制的亢奋之中,用一张普洛克路斯忒斯式的床,去衡量眼前的一切,与之尺寸稍有不符的,立即斩断了事。不用说等着听我的论文的内容了,冲着题目本身,一看就知道是犯忌了,闻上去一定是黄兮兮的故纸堆的霉味了。我奋力抵抗着,有些招架不住了。早已悄悄把转椅退到墙角一边去看我被“绞杀”的西洋景的教授,看我一息尚存,突然回师桌边,帮助我杀出一条生路、突出重围,并总结性地高赞我的论文是用人文主义方法研究文学的一个卓越典型,云云。当时,我对这一“救命”之恩心里真是感激不尽,事后细想,也不知他那“卓越典型”之语是褒是贬抑或褒贬参半?

在我所修读的19世纪英国小说课上,类似的恶战也经常发生。在习惯于国内课堂(包括研究生课堂)那种斯文的我看上去,这里的教室就是个战场。同学之间、一位全美著名的研究维多利亚时期文学的教授与同学之间,常常是在举行呐喊比赛,谁也压不倒谁。本课讨论的一个主题就是所谓的“沦落女子”,讨论研究起来,可以追溯至《圣经》里的夏娃、《伊利亚特》里的海伦直至哈代笔下的苔丝,确实是个很精彩的题目。我也很同情不少同学的带有强烈女权运动色彩的阐释,可是有些同学热情过度,在我们所读的所有小说里,任何人物,只要是男的,她们就一口咬定此公不是个实实在在的强奸犯就

是个居心不良、图谋不轨的潜在的恶棍，不管小说里有没有提供任何确凿的证据。这难免使我想起了“文化大革命”的那种不分青红皂白、横扫一切的战斗气势，心里不免有些隐隐作痛感。

吵吵嚷嚷辩论了一学期，大家意见远没有一致。其实，我后来也学会了做后现代派的一些游戏，玩起来也算顺手。而且，意见不一致，热烈的争论，本身是件很正常、很好的事，是寻求真理的必经之路。但我当时觉得与哈代的缘分快用完了，就“叛逃”了，做博士论文时转而研究别的题目了。其实，逃到那里，也都逃不脱后现代派思潮的无所不在的影响。

不过，在我的心里，对哈代一直留有一份说不出的感情。这种缠绵是否与我第一次读哈代时所体验到的那种强烈的感情震颤有关呢？或许是因为当年在火炉子南京的夏夜“爬格子”修改《一双蓝蓝的眼睛》时所留下的那些记忆吧？也许是至今我还能闻到刚发表的评论哈代小说的处女作之令我心醉的油墨香气吧？更贴切地说，是哈代笔下所创造出来的世界至今仍然能紧紧地吸引我的想象力的缘故吧。

（作者原注：全心全意的哈代迷也好，半心半意的哈代迷也罢，我1997年鬼使神差地又完成了一部哈代小说《意中人》的翻译，据编辑说已经付印了。我只是希望，这一次既已临盆，就不要再闹出任何难产的麻烦了。）

Forever Behind: A Critical Narrative of a Half-Hearted Hardy Fan

Shouhua Qi

The evening of September 23, 1994. JFK International Airport. After six years of having not seen me and more than 18 hours of trans-pacific and transcontinental flight, across a dozen time zones, my parents finally walked towards me. Hug. Laugh. Tears. And a big lump in the throat. There was so much to celebrate and so much catching up to do. Yet the first thing my father did, with the shaking hands of a 65-year-old who had barely survived the blizzard of the Cultural Revolution, was to dig out of his carry-on bag a book. He thrust it into my hand. It was a copy of Thomas Hardy's *A Pair of Blue Eyes* in an edition I had co-translated eight years before.

It was one of those rare moments in one's life when the thing, long-expected and way overdue, finally arrives. During the years after the completion of the translation, I had been like a young father, who has had everything to do with the creation of a new life, and yet at the time of birth has to wait outside the delivery room. To be shut out of the last stage of such a process is agony. In this case, the waiting happened to be prolonged, the anxiety had been mounting, and there was little else anyone could do to help.

Indeed, the delayed arrival of this book symbolized the rather awkward position of a young scholar. During my 10-year long relationship with Hardy, I seemed to be falling forever behind and not able to

catch on with whatever was the trend. This was the case when I was working on my master's thesis, and translating Hardy in the China of the 1980's where the old literary ideology, though challenged, still dominated. I was to find myself in a more awkward position at graduate seminars in the U. S. of the 90's where interpretive communities were singing a completely different tune.

Although it was very late after we finally got back to our home in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, I locked myself in my little study to have an intimate moment alone with my book, caressing the beautifully designed cover pages, fondling every single word, font, color, and pattern, feverishly flipping through the pages to revisit the scenes which had challenged me the most and caused me many a sleepless night, due to their linguistic and cultural idiosyncrasies. These scenes proved to be the most delightful when they were finally captured with as little loss of beauty as possible in Chinese.

The contract for translating *A Pair of Blue Eyes* was signed near the end of 1985, when China was still caught in the tide of a revival of learning which had begun fervently early 1980's. That was after years of cultural proletarianization. Classics from Western as well as Chinese literature were hot items in bookstores. Cervantes, Dante, Boccaccio, Chaucer, and Shakespeare, translated by an older generation of scholars of foreign literature, were being revised and republished. So were Hardy's major novels like *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.

Riding the crest of this tidal wave, the editors at a prestigious publishing house, specializing in translations of foreign literature, were interested in new projects in Western Classics. Having finished my master's thesis on Hardy, I suggested *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. They liked it, and my partner, a professor of English who was living in a different city, and I plunged into this project with fervor.

I was responsible for translating the preface and Chapters 20 – 40 and writing the translators' note. Both full time college teachers, we

had to burn a lot of midnight oil. To live up to the three cardinal principles of translation upheld in China — faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance, we often labored long over a particular word, phrase, or sentence to catch the spirit and color of the original and recreate it in a very different target language.

To ensure stylistic consistency, we kept the post offices busy for quite some time by sending the manuscript of every chapter to each other for comment and revision, creating a little tale of two cities of our own. At the busiest time, my wife, my father, and my mother-in-law were mobilized to help “climb the squares,” a Chinese expression for the slow process of copying manuscripts.

By the time it was done, it was almost 1987. By then, however, the renaissance seemed to have cooled off. With the economy changing into a market gear, the nation was caught in another fever. More and more people fell all over themselves in hot pursuit of dollar signs. Fewer and fewer people had the patience to chase the stars or listen to the nightingale on the balcony. The pace of life was getting faster, and pop culture was the thing of the day.

Naturally, our publisher had difficulty promoting the sale; the orders from bookstores fell measurably short of the six thousand copies minimally required to break even. Thus, the proof of the book had been locked in the dark limbo of a storage room ever since, despite our repeated efforts with the editors.

Finally, early 1994, finding the waiting too suspenseful for our liking, and worried that a longer night of sleep for the book might bring even more and worse nightmares, we each of us offered to contribute 1000 *Yuan*, the equivalent of two months' salary for a college professor, to resurrect the book. We could not afford to wait for another major revival of learning.

My “infatuation” with Hardy had begun back in 1983 when I was

searching for a topic for my master's thesis. It is one of those moments in one's life when we seem to know exactly what we want to do, and meanwhile are fretful, uncertain, and overwrought with anxiety. It was then that I stumbled upon *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. I came. I saw. And I was conquered.

I fell in love. It was a love mingled with an abundance of pity and fear. Then I checked out another of Hardy's novels. Another. Still another. And I made up my mind. I proposed the thesis, and was approved.

Hardy, of course, seemed a natural fit for a Marxist approach. As John Goode explains, a Marxist approach to Hardy study would be both historically and theoretically relevant though not without its problematics (Kramer 22). A Marxist approach to Hardy in the context of China would seem even more "relevant" for, as is well known, a simplistic or dogmatic Marxist approach had dominated the literary discourse there for quite some time. The landscape of Western literature, classic or modern, had been littered with footprints left by the specter of sinicized Marxist criticism. A poor peasant girl goes to claim kin and is victimized by an aristocratic (though Alec is a pseudo-aristocrat) rake? Nothing fits more conveniently than a reading through the lens of class struggle and materialistic determinism, which is exactly what is done in the translator's note for Zhang Yuru's edition of *Tess*. There is a lot of validity in such a reading. But somehow I was not content.

There was another possible reading of Hardy which could also claim much relevancy in the context of China: sexual politics. Women in China, according to Mao Zedong, were exploited and repressed not only politically, economically, and religiously, but also sexually. At the bottom of the social structure based upon Confucian ideals, a girl had to obey her father, a wife had to obey her husband, and when she became a widow, she had to obey the son. Indeed, the double stand-

ard in sexual politics had operated on two planes. The rich and the powerful — gentry classes, feudal lords, and emperors from the great Tang and Han dynasties to powerful political figures in modern times — could indulge in sensual pleasures, keeping an entourage of concubines, mistresses, and simple girls. The poor and the weak, on the other hand, had to be content with an extremely ascetic life. While the man had the license to sow his wild oats, the woman had to preserve her chastity by observing a very strict moral code of behavior.

The sexual exploitation and repression of woman was symbolized by the high and tight collars she had to wear and by the 1000-year-old political institution of foot-binding which could, it was believed, increase her sexual charm. It was also thought to ensure her female chastity by confining her social circles within the household.

The subject of class and gender repression of woman has been explored by many modern Chinese writers, e. g. Lu Xun, particularly in his short story "New Year's Eve."¹ It had also been utilized politically as a powerful weapon by the Communists during the Chinese Civil War, to call upon the poor and down-trodden to rise up against the ruling class. A dramatic example can be seen in the opera, "The White-haired Girl."²

Thus, reading Hardy, in terms of his treatment of sexual morality in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Return of the Native*, *Jude the Obscure* as well as *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, would be relevant both historically and culturally. It would have a subversive effect on the Confucian hierarchy and double-standard which had been condemned officially since the beginning of the modern era but was still practiced by the rich and the powerful. It had also remained deep rooted in the mass culture, as was manifested in the widespread female infanticide in the rural areas.

Paradoxically, such a reading in the China of the 1980's, though more liberalized than before, would still have to fit itself into the measurements of the orthodox literary ideology. Angel, Henry, and their

preferences, and the murderous social environment surrounding Tess, Sue, and Jude would by necessity have to be explained, explicitly or implicitly, as testimonies of bourgeois and petty bourgeois hypocrisy. This hypocrisy, it has to be pointed out, was either absent or had been eliminated in the socialist New China, just as the tragedy of the white-haired girl could only happen in the old China before 1949. Ironically, reading Hardy for its moral and political subversiveness would be impractical both historically and culturally.

Deviating from the orthodox course for literature study, I decided to take a less political path. I wanted to be faithful to the overflow of powerful emotional responses I experienced in reading Hardy's novels. I saw in Hardy's tragedies — the unfolding dramas of the trios of Tess, Angel, and Alec; Eustacia, Clym, and Wildeve; Elfride, Stephen, and Henry; and Jude, Sue, and Arabella — the destruction of beauty. In every single one of these tragedies, the scales were tipped against the main characters by a blind force which draws its life from a multiplicity of sources — personal, social, and supernatural — and indulges in sporting with the fates of these characters.

The inquiry into my emotional responses eventually evolved into the main contention of my master's thesis: Hardy's major novels can produce pity and fear and effect the proper purgation of these emotions, as conceptualized by Aristotle, through a successful reconciliation of the tragic ideal, traditionally identified with classic tragedies, with the modern novel which is biased genetically towards realism.

While working on the thesis, I traveled to universities in Beijing, Shanghai and other big cities to gather whatever secondary sources were available pertaining to my topic. At Fudan University in Shanghai, I happened upon the index card for Dale Kramer's *Thomas Hardy: The Forms of Tragedy* (1975). Excited, I checked with the librarian who kindly informed me that the book was in the hands of another graduate student in the English Department.