

英汉对照



陶洁 编选

20世纪英文观止

Masterpieces of

20-Century English Prose

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1 On His Seventieth Birthday

G. B. Shaw

Of late years¹ the public have been trying to tackle me in every way they possibly can, and failing to make anything of it² they have turned to treating me as a great man. This is a dreadful fate to overtake anybody. There has been a distinct attempt to do it again now, and for that reason I absolutely decline to say anything about the celebration of my seventieth birthday. But when the Labor Party, my old friends the Labor Party, invited me here I knew that I should be all right. We have discovered the secret that there are no great men, and we have discovered the secret that there are no great nations or great states.

...

According to the capitalist, there will be a guarantee to the world that every man in the country would get a job. They didn't contend it would be a well-paid job, because if it was well paid a man would save up enough one week to stop working the next week, and they were determined to keep a man working the whole time on a bare subsistence wage³—and, on the other hand, divide an accumulation of capital.

They said capitalism not only secured this for the working man, but, by insuring fabulous wealth in the hands of a small class of people, they would save money whether they liked it or not, and would have to invest it. That is capitalism, and this Government is always interfering with capitalism. Instead of giving a man a job or letting him starve they

are giving him doles—after making sure he has paid for them first. They are giving capitalists subsidies and making all sorts of regulations that are breaking up their own system. All the time they are doing it, and we are telling them it is breaking up⁴, they don't understand.

We say in criticism of capitalism: Your system has never kept its promises for one single day since it was promulgated. Our production is ridiculous. We are producing eighty horse-power motor cars when many more houses should be built. We are producing most extravagant luxuries while children starve. You have stood production on its head⁵. Instead of beginning with the things the nation needs most, you are beginning at just the opposite end. ...

We are opposed to that theory. Socialism, which is perfectly clear and unmistakable, says the thing you have got to take care of is your distribution. We have to begin with that, and private property, if it stands in the way of⁶ good distribution, has got to go.

A man who holds public property must hold it on the public condition on which⁷, for instance, I carry my walking stick, I am not allowed to do what I like with it. I must not knock you on the head with it. We say that if distribution goes wrong, everything else goes wrong—religion, morals, government. And we say, therefore (this is the whole meaning of our socialism), we must begin with distribution and take all the necessary steps.

I think we are keeping it in our minds because our business is to take care of the distribution of wealth in the world; and I tell you, as I have told you before, that I don't think there are two men, or perhaps one man, in our 47,000,000 who approves of the existing distribution of wealth. I will go even further and say that you will not find a single person in the whole of the civilized world who agrees with the existing sys-

term of the distribution of wealth. It has been ^{减少的} reduced to a blank absurdity...

...

I think the day will come when we will be able to make the ^{区别} distinction between us and the capitalists. We must get certain leading ideas before the people⁸. We should announce that we are not going in for what was the old-fashioned idea of redistribution, but the redistribution of income. Let it always be a question of income.

I have been very happy here tonight. I entirely understand the distinction made by our chairman tonight when he said you hold me in social esteem⁹ and a certain amount of personal affection. I am not a sentimental man, but I am not insensible to all that, I know the value of all that, and it gives me, now that I have come to the age of seventy (it will not occur again and I am saying it for the last time), great feeling of pleasure that I can say what a good many people can't say.

I know now that when I was a young man and took the turning that led me into the Labor Party, I took the right turning in every sense.

注释:

乔治·伯纳德·萧(George Bernard Shaw, 1856--1950), 英国戏剧家。早年写过小说但并不成功, 1885 年开始创作剧本, 到 1949 年为止, 共完成剧本 51 部, 其中比较重要的有《鳏夫的财产》(1892)、《华伦夫人的职业》(1894)、《巴巴拉少校》(1905)、《皮格马利翁》(1913)、《伤心之家》(1919)、《圣女贞德》(1923)、《苹果车》(1929) 等。萧擅长幽默与讽刺, 以文笔尖锐泼辣, 语言优美著称, 曾获 1925 年诺贝尔文学奖。

萧的剧作揭露并批判了当时的资本主义社会, 他本人在 19 世纪 80 年代接受了社会主义思想, 但始终持改良主义观点, 反对暴力革命, 并于 1884 年参加发起主张以“渐变”代替革命在英国实现社会主义的费边社。1931 年, 萧访问苏联并在 1933 年访问中国。中国人民更熟悉他的

旧译名:萧伯纳。

《在七十寿辰宴会上的讲话》演说词发表于1926年,萧获得诺贝尔文学奖之后,当时他的创作正处于顶峰时期。

1. 即 in recently years :近年来。 2. make anything of it=make a success of it,全句意为“他们没能搞垮我”。 3. 勉强糊口的工资。 subsistence:生存,维持生活。 4. break up 可以是及物动词也可以作不及物动词,意为“粉碎,使崩溃”等。上句中 breaking up the system 指“使制度分崩离析”,此句为“该制度正在崩溃”。 5. on one's head :头朝下地;stand something on its head:颠倒过来。 6. 妨碍,挡路。 7. which 指“the public condition”,公众的条件,即“社会公众约定俗成的规矩”。 8. before 在这里为“under the consideration of”,有待……的考虑。 9. hold sb in (esteem);对人怀有(尊重)的感情。

2 A Conversation with a Cat

H. Belloc

The other day I went into the bar of a railway station and, taking a glass of beer, I sat down at a little table by myself to meditate upon the necessary but tragic isolation of the human soul. I began my meditation by consoling myself with the truth that something in common runs through all nature, but I went on to consider that this cut no ice¹, and that the heart needed something more. I might by long research have discovered some third term a little less hackneyed than these two, when fate, or some fostering star, sent me a tawny silky, long-haired cat².

If it be true³ that nations have the cats they deserve, then the Eng-

lish people deserve well in cats, for there are none so prosperous or so friendly in the world. But even for an English cat⁴ this cat was exceptionally friendly and fine—especially friendly. It leapt at one graceful bound into my lap, nestled there, put out an engaging right front paw to touch my arm with a pretty timidity by way of introduction, rolled up at me an eye of bright but innocent affection, and then smiled a secret smile of approval.

No man could be so timid after such an approach as not to make some manner of response. So did I. I even took the liberty of stroking Amatheas⁵ (for by that name did I receive this vision), and though I began this gesture in a respectful fashion, after the best models⁶ of polite deportment with strangers, I was soon lending it some warmth, for I was touched to find that I had a friend; yes, even here, at the ends of the tubes in S. W. 99. ⁷I proceeded (as is right) from caress to speech, and said, "Amatheas, most beautiful of cats, why have you deigned to single me out for so much favour? Did you recognize in me a friend to all that breathes, or were you yourself suffering from loneliness (though I take it you are near your own dear home), or is there pity in the hearts of animals as there is in the hearts of some humans? What, then, was your motive? Or am I, indeed, foolish to ask, and not rather to take whatever good comes to me in whatever way from the gods?"⁸

To these questions Amatheas answered with a loud purring noise, expressing with closed eyes of ecstasy her delight in the encounter.

"I am more than flattered, Amatheas," said I, by way of answer; "I am consoled. I did not know that there was in the world anything breathing and moving, let alone⁹ so tawny-perfect, who would give companionship for its own sake and seek out, through deep feeling, some one companion out of all living kind. If you do not address me in words I know

the reason and I commend it; for in words lie the seeds of all dissension, and love at its most profound is silent. At least, I read that in a book, Amatheia; yes, only the other day. But I confess that the book told me nothing of those gestures which are better than words, or of that caress which I continue to bestow upon you with all the gratitude of my poor heart. "

To this Amatheia made a slight gesture of acknowledgement — not disdainful — wagging her head a little, and then settling it down in deep content.

"Oh, beautiful-haired Amatheia, many have praised you before you found me to praise you, and many will praise you, some in your own tongue, when I am no longer held in the bonds of your presence. But none will praise you more sincerely. For there is not a man living who knows better than I that the four charms of a cat lie in its closed eyes, its long and lovely hair, its silence, and even its affected love. "

But at the word affected Amatheia raised her head, looked up at me tenderly, once more put forth her paw to touch my arm, and then settled down again to a purring beatitude.

"You are secure," said I sadly; "mortality is not before you. There is in your complacency no foreknowledge of death nor even of separation. And for that reason, Cat, I welcome you the more. For if there has been given to your kind this repose¹⁰ in common living, why¹¹, then, we men also may find it by following your example and not considering too much what may be to come and not remembering too much what has been and will never return. Also, I thank you, for this, Amatheia, my sweet Euplokamos" (for I was becoming a little familiar through an acquaintance of a full five minutes and from the absence of all recalcitrance), "that you have reminded me of my youth, and in a sort of shadowy way, a momentary way, have restored it to me. For there is an age, a blessed youthful

age (O my Cat) even with the miserable race of men, when all things are consonant with the life of the body, when sleep is regular and long and deep, when enmities are either unknown or a subject for rejoicing and when the whole of being is lapped in hope as you are now lapped on my lap, Amatheia¹². Yes, we also, we of the doomed race, know peace. But whereas you possess it from blind kittenhood to that last dark day¹³ so mercifully short with you, we grasp it only for a very little while. But I would not sadden you by the mortal plaint. That would be treason indeed, and a vile return for your goodness. What! When you have chosen me out of seven London millions upon whom to confer the tender solace of the heart, when you have proclaimed yourself so suddenly to be my dear, shall I introduce you to the sufferings of those of whom you know nothing save¹⁴ that they feed you, house you and pass you by? At least you do not take us for gods, as do the dogs, and the more am I humbly beholden to you for this little service of recognition¹⁵—and something more. ”

Amatheia slowly raised herself upon her four feet, arched her back, yawned, looked up at me with a smile sweeter than ever and then went round and round, preparing for herself a new couch upon my coat, whereon she settled and began once more to purr in settled ecstasy.

Already had I made sure¹⁶ that a rooted and anchored affection had come to me from out the emptiness and nothingness of the world and was to feed my soul henceforward; already had I changed the mood of long years and felt a conversion towards the life of things, an appreciation, a cousinship with the created light¹⁷—and all that through one new link of loving kindness—when whatever it is that dashes the cup of bliss from the lips of mortal man (Tupper) up and dashed it good and hard¹⁸. It was the Ancient Enemy¹⁹ who put the fatal sentence into my heart, for we are

the playthings of the greater powers, and surely some of them are evil.

"You will never leave me, Amatheia," I said; "I will respect your sleep and we will sit here together through all uncounted time, I holding you in my arms and you dreaming of the fields of Paradise²⁰. Nor shall anything part us, Amatheia; you are my cat and I am your human. Now and onwards into the fullness of peace."

Then it was²¹ that Amatheia lifted herself once more, and with delicate, discreet, unweighted movement of perfect limbs leapt lightly to the floor as lovely as a wave. She walked slowly away from me without so much as looking back over her shoulder; she had another purpose in her mind; and as she so gracefully and so majestically neared the door which she was seeking, a short, unpleasant man standing at the bar said "Puss, Puss, Puss!" and stooped to scratch her gently behind the ear. With what a wealth of singular affection, pure and profound, did she not gaze up at him²², and then rub herself against his leg in token and external expression of a sacramental friendship that should never die.

注释:

希·白洛克(Hilaire Belloc, 1870—1953), 英国诗人、史学家和散文作家。早年当过编辑, 第一次世界大战期间为报刊撰写军事评论, 因笔调犀利而出名。他的历史著作如《欧洲和信仰》(1920)、四卷《英国史》(1925—1931)和传记作品都过分强调宗教, 但他的轻松诗集如《酒颂》(1932)和散文作品却极受读者的欢迎, 尤其是《通往罗马之路》(1902)夹叙夹议, 既描述一流浪者赴罗马途中的种种风物见闻, 又评论欧洲的历史和山水, 是一部受人传诵的佳作。

本文题材看似平常, 但却颇见文彩, 以诙谐的口吻借与猫的对话嘲讽了人的自怜自艾和猫的朝三暮四、见异思迁的劣根性。

1. (口语)不起作用, 没有说服力。 2. these two: 指前面的 the soul 与 the heart, when 所引导的从句表现一种突然发生的动作或事件,

而主句 I might have discovered 是这个动作的发生的背景。文末 when whatever it is...good and hard 也是表现突如其来的事件。 3. be 在这里表示虚拟语气。 4. 就英国猫而言。for:就……而言。 5. 亦作 Amalthea; 希腊罗马神话中给宙斯即朱庇特喂乳汁的魔角山羊。一说是位神女的名字,她用羊奶哺养宙斯(宙斯被他母亲瑞亚藏在克里特岛,以免受其父克洛诺斯的伤害)。后来,阿玛西亚被接到天上。 6. 以……为典范。after=in imitation of,以……为模仿对象。 7. 西南 99 路地铁。S. W. 是 southwest 的缩写。tube:英国口语,指伦敦等地的地下铁道。 8. rather=instead. 此句直译应为“我这样提问,而不是接受天神以任何方式赐给我的任何幸福,是不是确实太蠢了?” 9. let alone=to say nothing of,更不用说。这是个插入语,指那只茶色毛的猫。 10. repose=dignified calmness,指与世无争不为琐事烦恼而获得的安详。 11. why 在这里是个语气词,相当于“是啊”。 12. 这三个 when 从句均修饰 age. consonant with=in harmony with:与……协调一致。lapped in hope:沉浸于希望之中。lapped on my lap:我拥抱着你,让你躺在我的膝盖上。 13. that last dark day=death,是一种委婉的说法。 14. save=except,whom 的先行词为 those,大意为“你对那些人一无所知,你只知道他们给你吃给你住,走过你身边不加理睬”。 15. 由于你承认我,我越发感激你。这是一个倒装句,强调 the more; 正常词序应为 I am (all)the more beholden to you. for 在这里是“由于,因为”之意。 16. 这也是一个倒装句;为了强调 already; 正常词序应为 I had already made sure……(我早已肯定),此处用过去完成时表示 make sure 发生在上一段 Amalthea raised…等动作之前。 17. an appreciation, a cousinship with the created light 说明 conversion,他能欣赏万物生命。a cousinship with:此处为“对……感到亲切”。the created light:《圣经》典故;根据《创世记》,上帝把混沌世界分成白天与黑暗,创造了光亮。 18. 这句从句中 when 表示从句里的动作发生得很突然。从句的谓语动词是 up and dashed, up 原为副词,在此作动词,因而没有过去