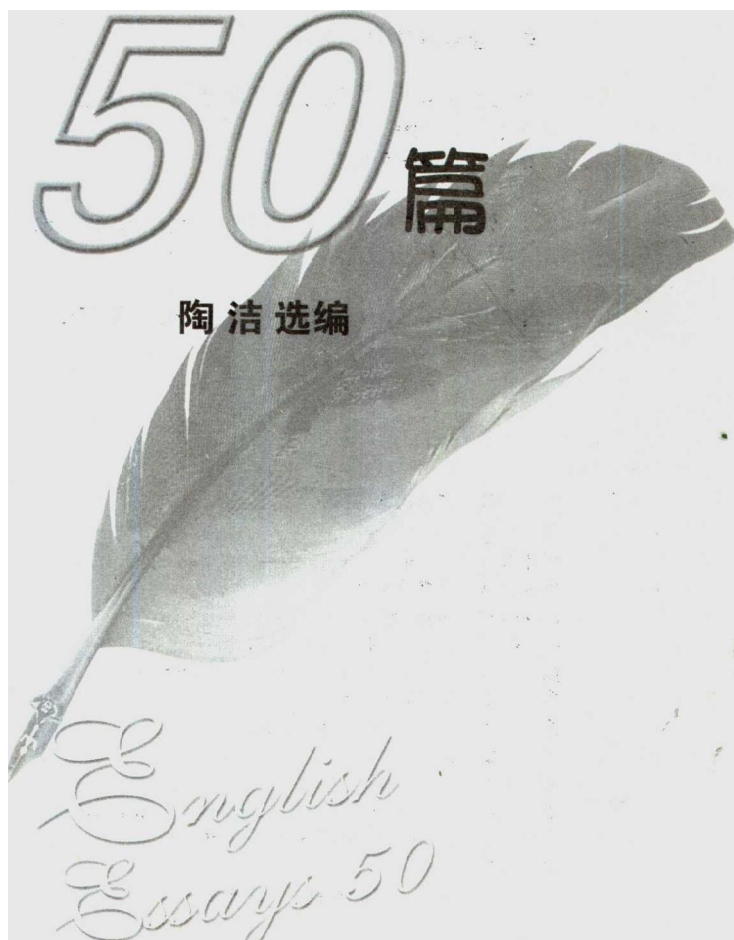


英语美文

50 篇

陶洁 选编



English
Essays 50

1 On His Seventieth Birthday

G. B. Shaw *

Of late years^① the public have been trying to tackle me in every way they possibly can, and failing to make anything of it^② 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 state.

...

According to the capitalists, 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 wage^③—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 up^④ they don't understand.

We say in criticism of capitalism: Your system has never kept its promises for one

★ 萧伯纳 (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)、《卖花姑娘》(1913)、《伤心之家》(1919)、《圣女贞德》(1923)、《苹果车》(1929) 等。萧伯纳擅长幽默与讽刺 以文笔尖锐泼辣、语言优美著称 获 1925 年诺贝尔文学奖。

萧伯纳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 年参与发起以主张“渐变”代替革命在英国实现社会主义的费边社。1931 年 萧伯纳访问苏联, 1933 年访问

1 在七十寿辰宴会上的讲话

[英国] 萧伯纳

石幼珊译

近年来，公众舆论一直千方百计想要把我整垮。此计不成，又反过来把我捧成一个伟人。谁碰上了这种事都是极为倒霉的。现在，显然又有人企图在干同样的事了。因为这个缘故，对于庆祝我 70 岁生日的活动，我完全拒绝发表任何意见。但是，当我的老朋友工党请我到这里来时，我知道不会出问题。因为我们发现了一个秘密，那就是，世界上没有什么伟人。我们还发现另一个秘密，那就是，世界上没有什么伟大的民族，也没有什么伟大的国家。

.....

资本主义者说，他们将向全世界保证，在这个国家里，每人都能得到一份职业。他们并不主张那是一份收入很好的职业，因为假如收入很好，一个人只要做一星期的工，就能节余足够的钱，下星期就不用工作了。因此，他们要使每个人全时工作才挣得仅能维持生计的工薪，另外，他们还要分得一份作为资本的积累。

他们说，资本主义不仅为工人提供了上述保证，而且由于确保巨大的财富集中在一个人数很少的阶层的人手里，所以，不论这些人自己愿意与否，他们都会将钱储蓄起来，用于投资。这就是资本主义，而我们政府的政策却常常和资本主义相抵触。政府既不为人提供工作，又不让他们饿死，而是给他们一点救济——当然，首先得肯定受施者已经为这点救济付足了钱。政府给资本主义者津贴，又订出了各种各样正在破坏自己体制的规章。政府一直在做这样的事。我们告诉他们这是破坏，他们却不懂。

我们批评资本主义时说道：你们的制度自公布以来，就从未有哪一天实践

中国。

《在七十寿辰宴会上的讲话》发表于 1926 年萧伯纳获得诺贝尔文学奖之后，当时他的创作正处于顶峰时期。①of late years 即 in recent years 近年来。②make anything of it = make a success of it 此处意为“他们没能搞垮我”。③a bare subsistence wage 勉强糊口的工资。subsistence 生存 维持生活。④break 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 their own system 指“使制度分崩离析”此句为“该制度正在崩溃”。

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 head^①. 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^② of good distribution, has got to go.

A man who holds public property must hold it on the public condition on which^③, 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 system of the distribution of wealth. It has been reduced to a blank absurdity. . . .

. . .

I think the day will come when we will be able to make the distinction between us and the capitalists. We must get certain leading ideas before^① the people. 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 esteem^② 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.

①on one's head 头朝下。stand something on its head 将……颠倒过来。 ②stand in the way 妨碍 挡路。 ③which 指“the public condition”公众的条件 即 社会公众约定俗

过你们的诺言。我们的生产是荒唐的 我们本需要盖许多房屋 却去生产 80 匹马力的汽车。孩子们在挨饿，我们却生产各种极为豪华的奢侈品。你们把生产本末倒置了，不首先生产国民最需要的东西，却恰恰从相反的一端开始……

我们反对这种理论。社会主义理论是明白无误的，它指出，需要注意的是分配制度。我们必须从这个问题入手。如果私有财产妨碍分配制度的实行，那么就必须废除私有财产。

掌握公共财产的人必须按公众的条件来掌握公共财产，就像我拿手杖一样，我不能愿意用它干什么就干什么，我不能用它来敲你的脑袋。我们说，如果分配制度出了差错，那么，宗教、道德、政府等一切都会跟着出问题。因此，我们说，必须从分配着手，并采取一切必要的步骤，这就是我们的社会主义理论的全部意义。

我以为，我们应当记住上述一点，因为我们的任务是要处理好世界财富的分配问题。我告诉过你们，现在还要告诉你们，我认为在我们 4700 万人口中，没有两个人，也许连一个人也没有，会赞同现存的财富分配制度。我甚至要说，你们在整个文明世界中也找不出一个赞同现存财富分配制度的人来。这种分配制度已成为毫无意义、荒谬绝伦的东西了……

……

我认为我们能够将自己和资本主义者区别开的一天终会到来。我们必须将一些指导思想公之于众。我们应该宣称，我们追求的不是旧概念中的再分配，而是收入的再分配。我们指的始终是收入问题。

今天晚上我很高兴。我们的主席说，你们对我的社会地位有很高的评价，也对我有一定的个人感情，我感到非常光荣。我不是一个好动感情的人，但也不能对此无动于衷。我知道这一切的价值。由于这一切，我十分高兴能够在这里说出了一些许多人不能说的话。我已经 70 岁了，一个人一生只能有一次 70 岁，我说这话也就是这一次了。

现在我确信 在我年轻时 思想转变 加入工党 这个转变从一切方面都可以说 我的路走对了。

成的规矩”。 ④before 在这里相当于 “under the consideration of”，意为“有待……的考虑”。 ⑤hold sb in (esteem)：对某人怀有尊敬的感情。

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 ice^① 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 cat^②.

If it be^③ true that nations have the cats they deserve, then the English people deserve well in cats, for there are none so prosperous or so friendly in the world. But even for^④ an English cat 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 Amatheia^⑤ (for by that name did I receive this vision) and though I began this gesture in a respectful fashion, after the best models of^⑥ 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.^⑦ I proceeded (as is right) from caress to speech, and said, "Amatheia, 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

* H. 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)、四卷本《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，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。①cut no ice 口语 不起作用，没有说服为。

2 对猫一席话

【英国】H. 白洛克

张禹九译

前些日子，我走进某火车站酒吧，买了一杯啤酒便独自在一张小桌旁坐下，默想人类灵魂虽属必需却又悲哀的疏离。开始想时还以为万物总有某种相通之处 尚可聊以自慰 不过继而一想 这不解决问题 人心还需要更多的东西。我本来可以通过长期研究发现不像灵魂、人心那么陈腐的另一个词，忽然，命运或某颗福星给我送来了一只毛光如丝的茶色长毛猫。

各国的人都有值得他们称道的猫，如果此话不假，那么英国人则应当好好称道他们的猫，因为世上没有如此顺遂、如此友善的猫。但即便就英国猫而言 我这只猫也格外友善聪明——尤其是友善。它优雅地一跳 跳到我的怀里，舒舒服服地安顿下来，伸出可爱的右前爪，怯生生地碰碰我的胳膊，算是作了介绍，那眼光里充满乖巧然而天真的友爱，打量我，然后暗暗一笑，表示认可了。

经过这般亲近之后，谁也不会胆小到不作某种回答。我作了回答。我甚至冒昧地抚摩阿玛特亚（我正因这名字才有这番幻想）；虽然我以尊重的方式开始作此表示，完全以最佳的对待陌生者的有礼态度为典范，但很快就增加了几分亲热，因为我发现我有了一个朋友而感动不已；是的，即便在这里，西南 99 路的地铁终点站。我继而（做法是得当的）由抚摩转入说话：“阿玛特亚 美丽至极的猫，你为了得到宠爱为何偏偏挑中了我呢？是你看出我是一切有生命之物的朋友，还是你自己也因孤独而痛苦（尽管我相信你离你自己心爱的家很

②these 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 是这个动作发生的背景。③be 在这里表示虚拟语气。④for 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，她用羊奶哺育宙斯（宙斯被他母亲藏在克里特岛，以免受其父的伤害）后来 她被接到天上。⑥after the best model of 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 指伦敦等地的地铁。

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?^①”

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

I am more than flattered, Amatheia,” said I, by way of answer; “I am consoled. I did not know that there was in the world anything breathing and moving, let alone^② 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 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 repose^③ in common living, why^④, 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

①rather = 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？” ②let alone = to say nothing of 更不用说。这是个插入

近)还是因为动物之心如同某些人的心一样有怜悯之情 那么 你的动机是什么?我这样问实在是蠢,天神以任何方式赐给我的任何幸福难道我反而不愿接受了?”

对这些问题,阿玛特亚都以很响的咕噜声作了回答,以欣喜得紧闭的眼睛表示它对这次邂逅相逢感到高兴。

“我无比荣幸 阿玛特亚,我说 算是回答;我得到了安慰。我原先并不知道世上有生命、能活动的东西,当然更不用说有如此完美的茶色猫了,会为了自身起见愿意献出友谊,而且以奥妙的感情从各种有生之物当中寻求某一个同伴。如果你不用言词跟我交谈,我知道是何原因并且表示称赞,因为一切分歧的根源就在于言词,而最意味深长的友爱总是无言的。至少,这是我从一本书里读到的 阿玛特亚 是啊 就在前些日子。但是我承认 我这胜过言词的表示不是这本书告诉我的,我以我脆弱心灵的感激之情继续向你表示的爱抚也不是这本书告诉我的。”

阿玛特亚对此略表谢意——并无轻蔑之意——微微地摇摇头,然后称心如意地安顿下来。

“啊 美丽的阿玛特亚 你发现我赞美你之前已有许多人赞美过你了 当我不再隶属于你时,将要赞美你的还会多得很,有的会用你的语言赞美你。但是不会有人比我更真诚地赞美你。因为,世上没有一个活着的人比我更了解猫的四大魅力就在于它那紧闭的眼睛、漂亮的长毛、默默无言,甚至还在于它那假情假意的友爱。”

阿玛特亚听到“假”这个字时 抬起头 敏感地仰望着我 又伸出右前爪碰碰我的胳膊 然后又安顿下来 咕噜咕噜 好幸福。

“你是安全的啊,我哀伤地说,你面前不存在人终有一死的问题。你自得其乐,对生离死别都无先见之明。惟其如此,猫啊,我才越发欢迎你。因为,如果你们猫类乐于在尘世悠然自得,那么,我们人类也许能通过效法你们,不太多考虑将来,也不过多回忆以往那早已逝去而且永不再回来的一切,从而悠然自得。还有 我要感谢你 阿玛特亚 我可爱的尤普洛卡谟”(相识已有整整五分钟 也未见有何不顺从的表示 所以我变得亲热了些) 你使我想起了我的青年时代,你梦幻般地、瞬息间地把我的青年时代归还给了我。因为,(哦,我的猫啊!)就连不幸的人类也有过一个时代,一个幸福的青年时代。那时候,

语 指那只茶色毛的猫。 ③repose = dignified calmness 指与世无争、不为琐事烦恼而获得的安详。 ④why 在这里是个语气词 相当于“是啊”。

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, Amatheia.^① Yes, we also, we of the doomed race, know peace. But whereas you possess it from blind kittenhood to that last dark day^② 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 save^③ 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 recognition^④—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 sure^⑤ 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 light^⑥—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 hard^⑦. It was the Ancient Enemy^⑧ 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 Paradise^⑨. Nor shall anything part us, Amatheia; you are my

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 让你躺在我的膝上。

②that last dark day = death 是一种委婉的说法。③save = except, whom 的先行词为 those, save 后面的 that 从句大意为“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。”④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“因为”之意。⑤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 Amatheia raised... 等动作之前。⑥an appreciation, a cousinship with the created light 说明 conversion 他能欣赏万物生命。a cousinship with 此处意为“对……感到亲切”。the created light:《圣经》典故 根

万物皆与肉体生活协调一致，睡眠有规律而且睡得久，睡得熟；仇恨或是无从知晓或是成了寻乐的话题；整个生命躺在希望的怀抱中，就像你现在安睡在我膝上一样，阿玛特亚。是的，我们，我们这受诅咒的人类也懂得安宁平和。不过，你们从懵懵懂懂的幼年到幸好极其短暂的那个倒霉的末日，都保持着安宁而不变，而我们把握住安宁的时间却极其短暂。但我不愿以生命必有终结的哀叹使你悲伤。那样做实在是不忠，是以恶行回报你的善意。什么？既然你从伦敦 700 万大众中挑中我是为了给我以好心的安慰，既然你如此突然地表示要和我亲近，那么我能不能把一些人——你只知道他们给你吃让你住而不过问你，此外你对他们一无所知——的苦难对你讲一讲 行不行 至少你不像狗一样把我们看作偶像，因而我越发谦卑地承你的情，感激你的这般赏识——以及其他种种。”

阿玛特亚慢慢地站起来，弓弓背，打个呵欠，带着比刚才更美妙的微笑望着我 然后走来走去 已想好把我的上衣当作它的新床榻 然后安顿下来 又开始咕噜咕噜，好不惬意。

我已经确信，从那空虚无聊的人世中，已有一种根深蒂固的爱来到我身边，并将从此安慰我的灵魂；我已改变了常年的心绪，对万物的生命的看法有了转变，开始有了一种鉴赏，有一种和创世之初的光很亲密的关系——这一切都通过新的慈爱之杯而来——忽然，不知什么东西这时撞翻了凡人嘴边的福乐之杯，并把它撞得粉碎。那是恶魔撒旦把致命的判决放进了我心里，因为我们是更大力量的手中玩物，而有些更大力量是邪恶的。

“你永不离开我 阿玛特亚，我说，我要让你安睡 我们要永无尽期地坐在这里 我抱着你 你梦到乐园的田野。不会有什么把我们分开 阿玛特亚 你

据《创世记》上帝把混沌世界分成白天与黑暗 创造了光亮。⑦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 因而没有过去式。从句的主语是 *whatever it is that dashes the cup of bliss* ... 直译应为“那不管什么撞翻凡人嘴边至福之杯的东西举了起来 把它撞得粉身碎骨。”主语从句中的动词 *be* 及 *dash* 用现在时，表示这是经常有的情况；第二个 *dash* 用过去时，说明叙述者的幸福之杯被粉碎了。此句源出英国作家托伯 Martin Farquhar Tupper, 1810—1889 的《谚语哲学》(1838—1876)。⑧*the Ancient Enemy*:《圣经》中 撒旦伪装成蛇进入伊甸乐园 引诱夏娃及亚当品尝智慧果。他们因违抗上帝的旨意被赶出天堂。从此 撒旦便成了人类的敌人。⑨*Paradise*: 指伊甸乐园。

cat and I am your human. Now and onwards into the fullness of peace.

Then it was^① 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 him^②, and then rub herself against his leg in token and external expression of a sacramental friendship that should never die.

①Then it was = It was then 倒装句 就在这个时候。 ②with what a wealth of singular affection = with a great wealth of singular affection, what 在这里是语气词而不是疑问词。虽然后面跟 did she not gaze 构成问句形式 实际上是个感叹句 意为“难道它没有以极为丰富的充满爱心的神情凝视他……?!”

是我的猫，我是你的人。从今以后一直在完全的和平中。”

就在此时 阿玛特亚又站了起来 轻轻一跳 跳到地上 完美的四肢动作优雅 谨慎 轻盈 美如波浪。它慢慢离我而去 甚至不回头看看我 它心里另有打算；当它优美而庄重地走到它要找的门口时，站在酒吧柜台旁的一个令人讨厌的矮个子说“小猫咪 小猫咪 小猫咪！”接着弯下腰轻轻地搔它的后颈。它抬头注视着他 充满爱意 既纯朴又奥妙 然后它在那人的腿边蹭着 象征了也表明了一种永远不会消亡的神圣的友谊。

3 How to Grow Old

B. Russell*

In spite of the title, this article will really be on how *not* to grow old, which, at my time of life, is a much more important subject. My first advice would be to choose your ancestors carefully. Although both my parents died young, I have done well in this respect as regards my other ancestors. My maternal grandfather, it is true, was cut off in the flower of his youth^① at the age of sixty-seven, but my other three grandparents all lived to be over eighty. Of remoter ancestors I can only discover one who did not live to a great age, and he died of a disease which is now rare, namely, having his head cut off. A great-grandmother of mine, who was a friend of Gibbon^②, lived to the age of ninety-two, and to her last day remained a terror to all her descendants. My maternal grandmother, after having nine children who survived, one who died in infancy, and many miscarriages, as soon as she became a widow devoted herself to women's higher education. She was one of the founders of Girton College^③, and worked hard at opening the medical profession to women. She used to relate how she met in Italy an elderly gentleman who was looking very sad. She inquired the cause of his melancholy and he said that he had just parted from his two grandchildren. "Good gracious," she exclaimed, "I have seventy-two grandchildren, and if I were sad each time I parted from one of them, I should have a dismal existence!" "Madre snaturale^④," he replied. But speaking as one of the seventy-two, I prefer her recipe^⑤. After the age of eighty she found she had some difficulty in getting to sleep, so she habitually spent the hours from midnight to 3 a.m. in reading popular science. I do not believe that she ever had time to notice that she was growing old. This, I think, is the proper recipe for remaining young. If you have wide and keen interests and activities in which you can still be effective, you will have no reason to think about the merely statistical fact of the number of years you have already lived, still less of the probable brevity of your future.

* B. 罗素 Bertrand Russell, 1872—1970) 英国哲学家、数学家、逻辑学家 分析哲学的主要创始人, 对西方哲学产生过深刻的影响。罗素还是一位积极的社会活动家, 世界和平运动的倡导者; 90 高龄时还为反对越南战争和裁减核武器而四处奔走甚至静坐示威。不仅如此 他还是一位出色的散文家 获得过 1950 年的诺贝尔文学奖。罗素一生写过四十多部著作 较为重要的有《数学原理》(1903)、《哲学论文》(1910)、《神秘主义与逻辑学》(1918)、《论教育》(1926 和晚年的三卷本《自传》)。

罗素有关道德、教育、政治、人生哲理及和平主义主张等方面的文章言简意赅 以优

3 论老之将至

【英国】B. 罗素

申慧辉译

尽管有这样一个标题，这篇文章真正要谈的却是怎样才能不变老。在我这个年纪，这实在是一个至关重要的问题。我的第一个忠告是，要仔细选择你的祖先。尽管我的双亲皆属早逝，但是考虑到我的其他祖先，我的选择还是不错的。是的，我的外祖父 67 岁时去世，正值盛年，可是另外三位祖父辈的亲人都活到 80 岁以上。至于稍远些的亲戚，我只发现一位没能长寿的，他死于一种现已罕见的病症：掉脑袋。我的一位曾祖母是吉本的朋友，她活到 92 岁高龄，她一直到死都始终是让子孙们全都感到敬畏的人。我的外祖母，一辈子生了十个孩子，活了九个，一个夭折，此外还有过多次流产。可是守寡之后，她马上就致力于妇女的高等教育事业。她是格顿学院的创办人之一，她力图使妇女进入医疗行业。她总好讲起她在意大利遇到过的一位面容悲哀的老年绅士。她询问他忧郁的缘故，他说他刚刚同两个孙儿女分手。“天哪！”她叫道，“我有 72 个孙儿孙女，如果我每次分手就要悲伤不止，那我就没法活了！”不寻常的母亲。”他回答说。但是，作为她的 72 个孙儿孙女的一员，我却要说我更喜欢她的见地。上了 80 岁，她开始感到有些难于入睡，她便经常在午夜时分至凌晨三时这段时间里阅读科普方面的书籍。我想她根本就没有工夫去留意她在衰老。我认为，这就是保持年轻的最佳方法。如果你的兴趣和活动既广泛又热烈，而且你又能从中感到自己仍然精力旺盛，那么你就不必去考虑你已经活了多少年这种纯粹的统计学情况，更不必去考虑你那也许不很长久的未来。

美的文字、幽默的口吻和富有说服力的论证激励和启发了富有进取精神的读者。

《论老之将至》选自他的散文选《记忆中的画像》(1956)。① cut off in the flower of his youth: died young 的委婉说法。罗素在这里用的是幽默的口吻，跟他建议人们选择祖先的说法相一致。② 吉本 (Edward Gibbon, 1737—1794) 英国历史学家。他最为著名的作品是《罗马帝国衰亡史》。③ 格顿学院：英国剑桥大学的第一所女子学院，建于 1869 年。④ 意大利语，即 an unnatural mother：一个不同寻常的母亲。⑤ recipe: a way of doing or attaining something 诀窍、方法。此处指她为人处世的方法。

As regards health, I have nothing useful to say since I have little experience of illness. I eat and drink whatever I like, and sleep when I can not keep awake. I never do anything whatever on the ground that it is good for health, though in actual fact the things I like doing are mostly wholesome.

Psychologically there are two dangers to be guarded against in old age. One of these is undue absorption in the past. It does not do^① to live in memories, in regrets for the good old days, or in sadness about friends who are dead. One's thoughts must be directed to the future, and to things about which there is something to be done. This is not always easy; one's own past is a gradually increasing weight. It is easy to think to oneself that one's emotions used to be more vivid than they are and one's mind more keen. If this is true it should be forgotten, and if it is forgotten it will probably not be true.

The other thing to be avoided is clinging to youth^② in the hope of sucking vigour from its vitality. When your children are grown up they want to live their own lives, and if you continue to be as interested in them as you were when they were young, you are likely to become a burden to them, unless they are unusually callous. I do not mean that one should be without interest in them, but one's interest should be contemplative and, if possible, philanthropic, but not unduly emotional. Animals become indifferent to their young as soon as their young can look after themselves, but human beings, owing to the length of infancy, find this difficult.

I think that a successful old age is easiest for those who have strong impersonal interests^③ involving appropriate activities. It is in this sphere that long experience is really fruitful, and it is in this sphere that the wisdom born of experience can be exercised without being oppressive. It is no use telling grown-up children not to make mistakes, both because they will not believe you, and because mistakes are an essential part of education. But if you are one of those who are incapable of impersonal interests, you may find that your life will be empty unless you concern yourself with your children and grandchildren. In that case you must realise that while you can still render them material services^④ such as making them an allowance or knitting them jumpers, you must not expect that they will enjoy your company.

Some old people are oppressed by the fear of death. In the young there is a justification for this feeling. Young men who have reason to fear that they will be killed in battle may justifiably feel bitter in the thought that they have been cheated of^⑤ the best things that life has to offer. But in an old man who has known human joys and

①It does not do 即 it is not right. do 作“合适”、“行”讲。 ②clinging 在这里并不同 is 构成现在进行式。这个分词片语是表语, 说明 the other thing. cling to 过分依赖。

至于健康，由于我这一生几乎从未患过病，也就没有什么有益的忠告。我吃喝皆随心所欲，醒不了的时候就睡觉。我做事情从不以它是否有益健康为根据，尽管实际上我喜欢做的事情通常是有益健康的。

从心理角度讲，老年需防备两种危险。一是过分沉湎于往事。人不能生活在回忆当中，不能生活在对美好往昔的怀念或对过世的友人的哀念之中。一个人应当把心思放在未来，放到需要自己去做点什么事情上。要做到这一点并非轻而易举，往事的影响总是在不断地增加。人们总好认为自己过去的情感要比现在强烈得多，头脑也比现在敏锐。假如真的如此，就该忘掉它；而如果可以忘掉它，那你所认为的情况就可能并不是真的。

另一件应当避免的事是依恋年轻人，期望从他们的勃勃生气中获取力量。子女们长大成人之后，都想按照自己的意愿生活。如果你还像他们年幼时那样关心他们，你就会成为他们的包袱，除非他们是异常迟钝的人。我不是说不应该关心子女，而是说这种关心应该是含蓄的，假如可能的话，还应是宽厚的，而不应该过分地感情用事。动物的幼崽一旦自立，成年的动物就不再关心它们了。人类则因其幼年时期较长而难于做到这一点。

我认为，对于那些具有强烈的不受个人好恶所影响的喜好、其活动又都恰当适宜的人们，成功地度过老年绝非难事。只有在这个范围里，长年的经历才真正有益；只有在这个范围里，源于经验的智慧才能得到运用而不使别人感到压抑。告诫已经成人的孩子别犯错误是没有用处的，因为一来他们不会相信你，二来错误本身就是教育所必不可少的一部分。但是，如果你是那种受个人情感支配的人，你就会发现，不把心思都放在子女和孙儿女身上，你就会觉得生活空虚。假如事实确是如此，那么你必须明白，虽然你还能为他们提供物质上的帮助，比如给他们一笔零花钱或者为他们编织毛线外套的时候，绝不要期望他们会喜欢你的陪伴。

有些老人因害怕死亡而苦恼。年轻人害怕死亡是可以理解的。那些担心会在战斗中丧生的年轻人一想到会失去生活能够给予的种种美好事物，就感到痛苦。这种担心并不是无缘无故的，也是情有可原的。但是，对于一位经历

③impersonal interests：不受个人好恶所影响的兴趣。 ④while = although 全句意为“虽然你还能为他们提供物质上的帮助”。 ⑤to be cheated of = to be deprived of。