ISSN 3107-3492 (Print)
ISSN 3107-3506 (Online)

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

文学经济研究学刊

Volume 1，Number 1，June 2026

Information Education Publishing Company Limited
Hong Kong

文学经济研究学刊
Journal of Economic Studies in Literature
Volume 1，Number 1，June 2026

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

文学经济研究学刊

Volume 1, Number 1, June 2026

About: *Journal of Economic Studies in Literature (JESL)* (Print ISSN: 3107-3492; Online ISSN: 3107-3506) is a peer-reviewed academic journal published by Hong Kong Information Education Publishing Company Limited. *JESL* publishes two issues each year in both Chinese and English. There are no Article Processing Charges (APC) for submissions, and all content is fully open access under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0). Please note: the journal does not work with any third parties for manuscript solicitation.

Scope and Topics: *JESL* is committed to advancing research on the economic dimensions of literature and to exploring the theoretical and methodological foundations of this field. It encompasses the construction of critical theories in literary economics; economic thoughts in literature; representations of the monetary economy; technological-economic writing; economic ethics in literary discourse; representations of international trade; gendered economic narratives; war economy narratives; colonial economic narratives; maritime economic narratives; regional and national economic narratives; comparative studies of economic representations in Chinese and foreign literatures; the relationship between literary trends and transformations in political-economic systems; literature and the market; literature and publishing regimes; economic humanistic criticism, etc.

Submission Guidelines: *JESL* follows a corresponding-author responsibility system. In cases of co-authorship, the corresponding author shall serve as the principal investigator and primary academic contact for the submission. Prior to submission, authors must confirm and provide complete author information, including full names, order of authorship (with the corresponding author clearly indicated), institutional affiliations, academic titles/positions, and details of any research funding (if applicable). As a general principle, the number of authors is recommended not to exceed two. Submissions must include both Chinese and English titles, author names, abstracts, and keywords. References should be arranged alphabetically by the authors' surnames, and all citations and documentation must strictly conform to the APA style. Research articles should normally range between 7,000 and 10,000 words, while book reviews should be no fewer than 4,500 words. Manuscripts can be submitted via E-mail to **esljournal@163.com**. To facilitate the review process, please include "Author Name(s) + Article Title" in the subject line of your submission E-mail.

Publishing Office: Tung Wai Commercial Building, No. 109-111 Gloucester Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong SAR, China; Phone: +852 24070405; E-mail: esljournal@163.com; Website: https://www.jesljournal.com.

Contents

目　　录

JESL

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

JESL, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026, pp.1-24.

Print ISSN: 3107-3492; Online ISSN: 3107-3506

Journal homepage: https://www.jesljournal.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.64058/jesl260101rsccf

HIEP Academic Publishing

Reward System, Commercial Crime, and Free Market Anxiety in Eighteenth-Century British Literature

Tao Jiusheng, Wu Libing

Abstract: In eighteenth-century Britain, commercial crime was rampant, and the mercantilist government, seeking to reduce crime and consolidate the emerging political order, instituted a reward system that rewarded citizens for reporting thefts, robberies, and other offenses. In effect, this system commercialized criminal activity and gave rise to a class of "commercial policemen". Characters in *The Beggar's Opera* and *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great* assume the role of these commercial agents, orchestrating "bloody enterprises", manipulating stolen goods markets, and accumulating wealth through the management of criminal gangs. Their operations serve as an allegory for the increasingly pervasive commercial crimes within Britain's free market. Under Prime Minister Walpole's corrupt regime, political processes and commercial activity were deeply intertwined. Corporations, merchants, and the mercantilist government commodified human beings and colluded with prison officials to exploit the populace for profit. These works portray the abandonment of moral sentiments in pursuit of economic gain, reflecting the disorder and instability of the free market and evoking eighteenth-century anxieties over the health of England's free-market economy and body politic.

Keywords: Reward System; Commercial Crime; Free Market Anxiety; *The Beggar's Opera*; *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great*

Received: 10 May 2026 / Revised: 15 May 2026 / Accepted: 01 Jun. 2026 / Published online: 15 Jun. 2026 / Print published: 25 Jun. 2026.

Author Biography: Tao Jiusheng (corresponding author), Ph.D, professor of Faculty of Foreign Languages, Hainan University; Principal Investigator of a Major Project funded by the National Social Science Fund of China; Research interests: English Renaissance literature, interdisciplinary literary studies. E-mail: taojiush@163.com. **Wu Libing**, postgraduate student at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ningbo University. E-mail: bingliwu1207@163.com.

标题：十八世纪英国文学中的赏金制度、商业犯罪与自由市场焦虑

摘要：18 世纪商业犯罪频发，重商主义政府为降低犯罪率及巩固新兴政权，颁布赏金制度，鼓励英国民众通过举报盗窃、抢劫等罪行获得高额赏金，这一制度在某种意义上使犯罪活动商业化，催生了“商业警察”这一群体。《乞丐的歌剧》与《大人物江奈生·魏尔德传》中的人物均担任“商业警察”角色，通过教唆或举报手下劫匪运营其商业犯罪集团，策划“血腥生意”、操控赃物市场以攫取利益、囤积财富，其商业运作方式隐喻自由市场中英国日益猖獗的各类商业犯罪案件。首相沃波尔腐败政权中，英国政治运作与商业活动高度交织，两部作品中的公司、商人与重商主义政府，为谋取经济利益将人商品化，与监狱狱警政商勾结，对百姓的肆意剥削，均展现他们沉迷商业利益而抛弃道德情操的情形，影射英国自由市场的混乱与失序，暗含 18 世纪英格兰社会的自由市场与政治（经济）身体健康焦虑。

关键词：赏金制度；商业犯罪；自由市场焦虑；《乞丐的歌剧》；《大人物江奈生·魏尔德传》

作者介绍：陶久胜（通讯作者），博士，海南大学外国语学院教授，国家社科基金重大项目首席专家，研究方向：英国文艺复兴文学、文学跨学科研究。邮箱：taojiush@163.com。**吴丽冰**，宁波大学外国语学院研究生。邮箱：bingliwu1207@163.com。

With “a large book of accounts before him” (I. i. 1), Mr. Peachum meticulously records, under the reward system, the monetary value of each criminal, as in the entry “For Tom Gagg, forty pounds” [①](I. ii. 12). As a London “commercial police officer” and the head of an underground criminal syndicate, Peachum runs his enterprise in a thoroughly commercialized fashion. He dispatches his subordinates to steal on his behalf and then, “in the common course of business” (I. ii. 18-19), calculates with precision their remaining utility. Once a thief’s profitability is exhausted, Peachum delivers him to the authorities to collect the reward. To prevent his son-in-law Macheath from exposing his operations out of greed for his property, Peachum resolves to “make gratitude give way to interest” (I. xi. 15), consigning Macheath to prison and agreeing with the jailer Lockit, as

[①] John, G. (1986). *The Beggar's Opera*, New York: Penguin Books, p. 43. All subsequent quotations from this work will be cited parenthetically by act, scene, and line number, and will not be otherwise noted.

customary, to "go halves in Macheath" (II. x. 3). Similarly, the "Great Man" Jonathan Wild assembles a large band of accomplices to carry out systematic robberies and establishes an "office" (130)[①] for the recovery of stolen goods. There he resells the plunder to its original owners at "the value only (or a little more) of their goods" (130), thereby constructing a "so thriving" (130) commercialized regime of organized crime. Within this ostensibly free market—sustained by deception and predation—the jeweller Heartfree, distinguished by his being "good-natured, friendly, and generous to a great excess" (69), falls victim to Wild's fraud and machinations and is unjustly imprisoned. In contrast to Wild's "insatiability" (75), Heartfree steadfastly maintains his commitment to "reason" (115) and "conscience" (127) even while incarcerated, and ultimately secures vindication, returning to the honest conduct of his trade. Heartfree's adherence to reason and conscience thus functions as a moral corrective to the anxieties surrounding the eighteenth-century English free market.

The foregoing discussion concerns episodes related to the reward system, commercialized crime, and anxieties about the free market in *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay and *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great* by Henry Fielding. Colin Nicholson (2004, p. 10), in his study of *The Beggar's Opera*, examines the ideology of monetary supremacy in the play and argues that it traces the transformation of money from a medium of exchange into the sovereign power and quasi-deity of the commodity world. James Thompson (1996, pp. 140-141), analyzing the criminal economy depicted in *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great*, contends that the thieves' economic activities constitute a zero-sum game in which money circulates continuously without generating any real surplus value. While these studies illuminate the conception of money and the nature of criminal economy in the respective works, they do not situate commercial crime within the historical context of the British reward system and the emergence of so-called "commercial police". In fact, both texts were composed at a moment marked by the rapid expansion of Britain's free market economy and the eruption of the Financial Revolution. Although the rise of this new economic order generated immense national wealth, it also intensified social problems of crime and corruption. In response to the increasingly severe threat to property, the reward system emerged as an institutional solution. Its implementation not only fostered a profit-driven class of "commercial police" but also accelerated the marketization of London's underground criminal networks. The criminal underworld portrayed in these two works should therefore not be read merely as a depiction of social marginality. Rather, it functions as a metaphorical microcosm of Britain's newly consolidated economic system in the eighteenth century. Against the historical backdrop of the reward system and the rise of commercial policing, this chapter examines how *The Beggar's Opera* and *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great* deploy the figure of the organized crime syndicate to allegorize the proliferation of commercial crimes within the free market economy. In doing so, they expose the extent to which

---

[①] Fielding, H. (1962). *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great*, New York: The New American Library, p. 130. All subsequent quotations from this work will be cited parenthetically by page numbers and will not be otherwise noted.

corporations, merchants, and government officials, absorbed in the pursuit of commercial gain, abandon moral sentiments, thereby registering a profound anxiety about the health of body politic and national economy in eighteenth-century Britain.

1. Reward System and Commercial Policing in Eighteenth-Century England

From the late seventeenth to the early eighteenth century, the economic transformation of Britain generated profound imbalances in wealth distribution and fostered a culture of luxury and conspicuous consumption, conditions that provided fertile ground for the proliferation of crime. The rise of the eighteenth-century free market economy and the deepening of the Financial Revolution enabled the rapid ascent of the gentry and the commercial bourgeoisie, who amassed substantial fortunes. By contrast, the lower orders faced rising prices, the loss of access to land, and persistently meagre wages. The widening gap between rich and poor created structural conditions conducive to criminal activity. The theologian John Wesley recorded in his journal the destitution of the urban poor in eighteenth-century England, observing that some "lay in their cells, others in their garrets, half starved with cold and hunger, added to weakness and pain", yet he "found not one of them unemployed who was able to crawl about the room" (qtd. in Porter, 1982, p. 102). Against this backdrop, many impoverished laborers were driven to crime as a means of survival. In 1723, for example, three men apprehended for robbery on the road from Kennington to Clapham pleaded that their actions had been "occasion'd through want and necessity", having been reduced by misfortune in trade and left "destitute of Friends and Employment" (Beattie, 1986, p. 234). Subsequent investigation confirmed that extreme poverty and the inability to support their families had compelled them to take such desperate measures. Historians such as Peter King have argued that much of the crime in London during this period was a product of an "economy of makeshifts", in which what authorities defined as criminal behaviour was often regarded by offenders as a practical response to "poverty, scarcity, crisis, and underemployment" (Shore, 2003, pp. 138-139). Crime, in this sense, functioned as an improvised strategy of survival within a precarious social order. At the same time, some commentators contended that the accumulation of wealth among the upper ranks stimulated a broader culture of luxury and consumption. Consumerism and refined modes of living became markers of status and identity. This ethos not only accentuated social differentiation but also aroused aspirations among the lower orders for forms of material enjoyment beyond their economic means, thereby encouraging some to pursue lifestyles incongruent with their circumstances through illicit means. Henry Fielding attributed the dramatic increase in robberies in his own day to what he perceived as a growing tendency among ordinary people to abandon their prescribed social stations. In his view, many were no longer content to exchange "honest labour" for modest wages; seduced by the spectacle of luxury and the attractions of fashionable consumption, they aspired to modes of life that exceeded their social condition, and when the fruits of legitimate industry proved insufficient to sustain such ambitions, some lapsed into idleness and beggary, while others, endowed with greater cunning and daring, turned to theft, fraud, and robbery (Fielding, 1988, p. 77).

For a considerable period, Britain lacked a formalized police force, and the maintenance of public order relied primarily upon systems of communal self-regulation, a structure marked by evident institutional deficiencies. Prior to the eighteenth century, crime control in Britain was generally conceived as a local and communal responsibility, implemented through medieval collective practices such as the “hue and cry” and the “posse comitatus”, as well as through the service of unpaid “watchman and constables” who rotated in office and exercised only limited law-enforcement authority (Spitzer and Scull, 1977, p. 19). In practice, however, the effectiveness of the hue and cry was severely circumscribed. By the eighteenth century it appeared to operate principally against isolated, unarmed, and conspicuous strangers. Its success depended on “a quarry being comparatively incapable of travelling with any speed to a refuge which might confer anonymity” (Rock, 1977, p. 242). While it might still prove effective in sparsely populated rural areas, in and around London the sheer density and mobility of the population made it difficult to distinguish a suspect from the mass of passers-by. The magistrate John Fielding (1755, pp. 22-23) observed that at a greater distance from London it might be “absolutely impossible for any villain in the country to escape justice”, yet near the capital the hue and cry would lose its effect, not only because of the “vast variety of passengers on the road, mounted and dressed alike”, but also because once the offender reached London, seeking him there by such means would prove entirely fruitless. Simultaneously, the powers of constables were severely limited, their authority to make arrests confined to narrow jurisdictions within a highly fragmented urban administrative structure, which in the City of London alone comprised as many as 676 independent precincts, leaving local law enforcement frequently isolated and without support (Rock, 1977, p. 238). The historian E. P. Thompson (1971, pp. 120-121) has noted that local enforcement institutions frequently existed in a condition of extreme isolation, so that when force was required from elsewhere it might take “two, three or more days” to arrive. The absence of a formal state police system further emboldened criminal gangs, with many large criminal organizations openly defying the law for extended periods and engaging in unchecked violence. Henry Fielding (1988, p. 145) remarked that constables could scarcely be blamed for refraining from hazardous intervention, since within certain districts a rogue’s alarm might quickly summon “twenty or thirty armed villains” to his assistance. In this context, the structural inadequacies of Britain’s policing arrangements not only facilitated the growth and diffusion of organized crime but also rendered comprehensive reform of the national system of law enforcement increasingly urgent.

For much of the late seventeenth century, the British government implemented reward system to protect citizens’ property and to respond to the increasing prevalence of property crimes. John Locke (1988, pp. 350-351), in his *Two Treatises of Government* (1689-1690), asserted: “The great and chief end therefore, of Mens uniting into Commonwealths, and putting themselves under

Government, is the Preservation of their Property". Adam Smith (1982, p. 5) similarly emphasized: "The first and chief design of every system of government is to maintain justice; to prevent the members of a society from incroaching on one anothers property, or siezing what is not their own. The design here is to give each one the secure and peaceable possession of his own property". Protection of property, therefore, constituted the very foundation of government and its authority. Against this intellectual backdrop, the government of William III enacted the *Act for the Encouragement of the Apprehending of Highwaymen* in 1693, aiming to address the escalating property crime and consolidate the nascent regime. The Act noted that "the highways and roads within the kingdom of England and dominion of Wales have been of late time more infested with thieves and robbers than formerly, for want of due and sufficient encouragement given and means used for the discovery and apprehension of such offenders" (Browning, 1953, p. 478). Accordingly, it stipulated that "all and every person and persons who shall apprehend and take one or more such thieves or robbers, and prosecute him or them so apprehended and taken until he or they be convicted of any robbery committed in or upon any highway, passage, field or open place, shall have and receive from the sheriff or sheriffs of the county where such robbery and conviction shall be made and done, without paying any fee for the same, for every such offender so convicted the sum of forty pounds within one month after such conviction" (ibid.). Over time, the scope of crimes eligible for such rewards was steadily expanded to include "burglary, housebreaking, horse-stealing, highway robbery and the like" (Rock, 1977, p. 242). Beyond these statutory rewards, the government occasionally issued proclamations offering additional rewards, primarily targeting highway robbery or murder in the metropolis, sometimes amounting to as much as £100, and scaled upward in proportion to the size of criminal gangs (Langbein, 2003, p. 149). The *Gentleman's Magazine* reported that in May 1732, four offenders executed at Guildford generated a total reward of £400 paid by the Treasury (ibid., p. 150). At the time, this represented an extraordinary sum, given that a craftsman's annual income averaged approximately £20, while a laborer earned less than £15 (ibid.). Therefore, the considerable financial incentives offered by the system of statutory rewards significantly encouraged public involvement in crime prevention, cultivating a culture of social self-discipline within English society.

The emergence of the British reward system gave rise to a substantial class of profit-driven "commercial police", who sought to generate economic gain through the detection, manipulation, or even fabrication of crime. In late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England, it was widely assumed that the primary motive of private individuals was the pursuit of "self-interest". Guided by this understanding, the government designed a system of statutory rewards that combined "incentives and deterrents—rewards and punishments, bribes and threats"—so to harness human greed and fear to maintain social order, thereby reducing reliance on the abstract notion of "public spirit" (Spitzer & Scull, 1977, p. 19). However, the designers of the reward system did not foresee that grounding crime control in a logic of profit would create a class of operators who treated the law itself as a means of personal enrichment. While statutory rewards offered substantial sums for the capture and conviction of criminals, the process was complex, costly, and required significant expenditures to investigate cases and cultivate the favor of officials, leaving the actual reward received by the apprehender considerably reduced (McMullan, 1995, p. 136). Confronted with these high operational costs, profit-driven commercial police frequently adopted more "economical" strategies for profit, such as "extorting money for not acting, or by practising the 'fit-up'" (ibid., p. 137). A tract published in 1737 further revealed that, under the lure of high rewards, prosecutors might "perjure themselves to accuse innocent Persons, when they are sure to get forty or fifty Pounds for each Convict" (qtd. in Langbein, 2003, p. 151). During this period, "the young, the inexperienced, the low life, the poor, and the newcomer to the city", were particularly vulnerable to being falsely accused of robbery or other crimes due to their limited knowledge of legal processes (McMullan, 1996, p. 92). Historical accounts record that commercial police such as John Waller and Bartholomew Harnet repeatedly accused inexperienced youths of robbery in order to secure statutory rewards (Langbein, 2003, pp. 152-156). As Ruth Paley observes, "the major effect of the provision of £40 rewards was to provide an incentive not to the detection of crime but to the organization of thief-making conspiracies" (ibid., p. 152). Consequently, crime control in eighteenth-century England increasingly evolved into a commercial enterprise. The statutory rewards system, originally intended to safeguard public security, became a mechanism driven by personal gain, cultivating conditions in which injustice and abuse of power could flourish.

The commercial police simultaneously played the role of receivers of stolen goods, incorporating numerous criminals into their own criminal organizations and constructing vast commercial crime empires. In late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England, the government also sought to regulate property crimes by targeting the receiving of stolen goods (Howson, 1958, p. 36). In 1691, a statute explicitly defined receivers as "accessories after the fact", making them liable to branding, whipping, or seven years' transportation (ibid., p. 37). Then in 1706, the law increased the penalty for receiving stolen goods to death and offered a £40 reward for informants. Defoe remarked that these measures dealt a severe blow to England's fencing networks, as "the Receiving Trade was spoil'd all at once. And when the poor Adventurer had, at the Hazard of his Neck, gotten any Purchase, he must run that Hazard over again to turn it into Money" (ibid., p. 36). Yet commercial police with keen entrepreneurial instincts were able to exploit the legal restrictions on fencing to their advantage. They provided criminals with secure channels for disposing of stolen property, thereby recruiting large numbers of thieves into their networks and directing them to continue thefts. When subordinates became "spent" or lost their utility, these commercial police could turn them over to the authorities to collect statutory rewards, effectively creating a commercial criminal enterprise capable of generating continuous profits from both fencing and reward collection. Jonathan Wild, the eighteenth-century London "commercial police" and crime boss, exemplified this business model. Wild astutely observed that "the original owners of stolen property were often willing to pay more for its recovery than a fence would be able to offer for its resale" (McMullan, 1995, p. 129). Thus, Wild established a "lost property house" to receive stolen goods and return them to their original owners for a fee, thereby legitimizing illicit gains. (ibid., pp. 130-131) When his subordinates had outlived their usefulness, Wild would exploit the reward system by turning them over to the authorities to collect the £40 rewards, all while maintaining the appearance of a public-spirited law enforcer. As Gerald Howson observes, Wild organized his network into a quasi-corporate structure of thieves and, although he claimed credit for detecting and prosecuting offenders, in practice he "procured such only to be hang'd as concealed their Booty, or refused to share it with him" (Howson, 1958, pp. 238-239). Thieves themselves, such as Morris Evans, acknowledged that their entrapment in the profession stemmed from the control and coercion exercised by commercial police, as they were compelled to commit theft across parishes and streets under threat of prosecution for "former Crime" or of having evidence brought to "swear away our Lives wrongfully" (ibid., p. 40).

The commercial police's criminal enterprise undoubtedly fueled judicial officers' revenue-generating activities, creating a symbiotic relationship between private policing and the criminal justice system. Since the seventeenth century, positions such as city magistrates and their subordinate permanent officials were commonly obtained through purchase, with the value of office fluctuating according to the government's fiscal needs (Howson, 1958, pp. 28-29). Those who secured posts as governors, prison administrators, city marshals, or other officials often treated their positions as forms of "personal property" (Rock, 1977, p. 252). The government generally tolerated these officeholders reimbursing their initial expenditures and covering administrative costs through "bribery and extortion", incentivizing officials to seek profit immediately upon assuming office (ibid., p. 253). For instance, Kent's so-called "trading justices" deliberately provoked neighborhood disputes to extract fees through binding and loosing "recognizances", or imposed fines on the public for offenses such as profane swearing, thus securing a steady flow of revenue from judicial proceedings (Landau, 1984, pp. 185, 198). An anonymous eighteenth-century commentator lamented that revenue-driven magistrates "turned the exercise of their authority into an iniquitous traffic, encouraging and sharing the extortions and scandalous profits of their agents" (Sidney & Webb, 1924, p. 328). Consequently, the commercial police's reward-driven creation of crime provided magistrates, prison officials, and other officeholders with a continuous source of profit. John McMullan (1996, p. 89) notes that these activities were actively supported by city recorders, assize judges, and local clerks of assizes, all of whom benefited economically from private policing: "the former because they authorized the formal distribution of rewards to the parties making claims and the latter because they often charged multiple fees of the arrested felons and because they had wide discretionary powers in the distribution of award monies". Therefore, "the so-called 'economy of blood for blood' was a deliberately tolerated and shielded policing business, and it linked the underworld of London crime, the private trade in police services and the administration of criminal justice into a mutual toleration and protection society" (ibid., p. 93).

The growing corruption within Britain's policing system highlighted the urgent need for a sound, centralized police force, prompting elites such as Henry Fielding to take the initiative in establishing a new model of policing that combined investigative and preventive functions. In the eighteenth century, crime control in Britain relied primarily on unpaid volunteer constables and profit-driven commercial police operating under the reward system; the former proved largely ineffective, often regarded as synonymous with "corruption", while the latter, motivated by financial gain, frequently encouraged crime, exacerbating social disorder. By 1748, deeply concerned about the prevalence of criminal activity, Fielding launched his own reforms, aiming both to "eliminate existing crime and to prevent fresh outbreaks of crime in the future" (Collins et al., 2000, p. 14). To this end, Fielding assembled a group of capable thief-takers into what became known as the Bow Street Runners, assigning them to patrol the streets on a regular schedule, disrupt criminal gangs, confiscate stolen property, and apprehend offenders, thereby creating an early police system integrating both detection and prevention (Alpert & Stroshine, 2005, p. 21). During this period, Fielding actively leveraged emerging print media for crime detection and prevention. In the journal he founded, *The Covent Garden Journal*, he extensively disseminated knowledge of criminal penalties and published information about highway robbers, thereby promoting public moral education and strengthening law enforcement (Nemeth, 2018, p. 8). In 1754, John Fielding succeeded his brother as magistrate and further systematized these reforms. By exploiting new social resources—improved postal services, road networks, coaching trades, and the rapid expansion of print and information technology—he expanded the reach and effectiveness of crime intelligence and prevention (McMullan, 1996, p. 97). John McMullan observes that "the Fieldings' objective, like that of many subsequent police reformers, was to establish a preventive police force capable of securing society through a systematic understanding of its components and population movements. Their strategy was to contain illegality within a robust framework of surveillance and social control, thereby ensuring the prevalence of productive labor rather than crime or vagrancy" (ibid., p. 98). This surveillance apparatus corresponds to Foucault's idea of a "societal discipline", whose function is to "fix, arrest, or regulate movements… clear up confusion; dissipate compact groupings of individuals wandering unpredictably… and establish calculated distributions" (ibid.). The Fieldings' pioneering efforts laid a crucial foundation for the development of England's policing system, and their integrated model of detection and prevention was subsequently affirmed and disseminated by the government in later reforms.

2. Commercial Crime Syndicates and Metaphor of Free Market Commercial Crime in the Works

The Beggar's Opera is saturated with vocabulary drawn from the sphere of commerce, revealing the profound impact of Britain's commercial expansion on eighteenth-century society. The eighteenth century witnessed the rapid growth of trade and overseas commerce, during which Britain emerged as a preeminent "trading nation", whose people took pride in identifying themselves as a "polite and commercial" society (Porter, 2000, p. 388). Henry Fielding (1988, pp. 69-70) likewise praised the transformative power of commerce, asserting that "nothing hath wrought such an Alteration in this Order of People, as the Introduction of Trade. This hath indeed given a new Face to the whole Nation, hath in a great measure subverted the former State of Affairs, and hath almost totally changed the Manners, Customs, and Habits of the People, more especially of the lower Sort". During this period, the merchant, as an agent of commerce, was celebrated as "an agent of progress and civilization" (Dabydeen, 1983, p. 9). Society's identification with and pride in commerce also permeated literary production. In the play, Gay portrays Peachum, the mastermind of London's underworld, as a businessman who meticulously manages his criminal enterprise through his "book of accounts" (I. i. 1), carefully calculating the bounties he can extract from his criminals. Peachum's management of his accounts closely aligns with the strict bookkeeping principles emphasized by Daniel Defoe in *The Complete English Tradesman* (1725), where Defoe (1732, p. 14) argues that a tradesman's account books function as a "repeating clock", enabling him to assess his condition in the world, determine when to proceed or withdraw, and secure not merely the comfort but potentially the very survival of his trade. This representation reflects Gay's recognition of, and engagement with, the rational principles of commercial society. As the scholar David Nokes (1987, p. 138) observes, the play possesses a distinctly commercial tone: the word "business" appears fifteen times, "money" nineteen times—alongside variants such as "fees", "guineas", "price", and "garnish"—while "account" occurs nine times, and other financial terms, including "interest", "perquisite", "profit", "debt", and "credit", run throughout the text. Nokes therefore suggests that the work might more appropriately be titled *The Businessman's Opera* (ibid., p. 138). It is thus evident that Gay both acknowledged and responded to the rise of commercial Britain, incorporating the rational logic of commerce into his dramatic construction. As Colin Nicholson (2004, p. 4) notes, by the conclusion of the Nine Years' War (1688-1697), England had undeniably become a trading nation, and the concept of "Trade" rapidly entered political discourse to such an extent that virtually all writers engaged with its significance.

Both Peachum and Wild, in their pursuit of private gain, do not hesitate to manufacture what may be called a "bloody business", thereby dramatizing the pessimistic doctrine of human selfishness articulated by Thomas Hobbes and Bernard Mandeville, and alluding to those economic actors who, in their quest for exorbitant profit, deviated from the normative principles of the free market. In *Leviathan* (1651), Hobbes (1904, pp. 63, 83). argues that human beings are by nature self-interested and driven by insatiable desires; in their competition for "Riches, Honour, Command, power", they will, in pursuit of their ends, "kill, subdue, supplant, or repel the other", producing a condition in which society descends into "a warre…of every man, against every man" Mandeville (1732, p. 27) similarly adopts a pessimistic view of human nature, maintaining that "all untaught Animals are only sollicitous of pleasing themselves, and naturally follow the bent of their own Inclinations", without regard for the benefit or harm their pleasures may bring to others. This philosophical conception of selfish and acquisitive humanity finds concrete embodiment in both works. *In The Beggar's Opera*, Peachum coolly schemes to secure "a handsome execution for the next Sessions", expressing open contempt for "a lazy rogue, by whom one can get nothing 'till he is hanged" (I. iii. 1-2). Likewise, in *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great*, Wild bluntly declares that, "out of this gang I will prefer to my favour the boldest and most iniquitous (as the vulgar express it); the rest I will, from time to time, as I see occasion, transport and hang at my pleasure; and thus (which I take to be the highest excellence of a prig) convert those laws which are made for the benefit and protection of society to my single use" (66). The profit-driven manufacture of such "bloody business" by Peachum and Wild vividly reenacts a Hobbesian model of the economic actor within the eighteenth-century British market economy. At this historical juncture, certain morally unrestrained individuals, in their pursuit of extraordinary profit, departed entirely from the ethical standards of the civilized merchant. Exploiting the regulatory gaps of a relatively unrestrained market, they openly manipulated the stock market, disrupted the grain trade, and expanded gambling and prostitution as lucrative enterprises. As the scholar Bram Dijkstra observes, the eighteenth century was an age that established self-interest as the central axiom of human experience. As Bram Dijkstra argues, the English middle classes of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were "caught up in a feverish pursuit of gain from commercial enterprises which seemed capable of unlimited expansion" (Dijkstra, 1987, p. 7), inhabiting a world shaped by Hobbes and Locke, by competition and individual responsibility, and by the apotheosis of movement, change, and acquisitive selfhood.

Peachum institutes a meticulous division of labour within his underground criminal organization, thereby alluding to the emergence of specialization as a defining principle amid the expansion of Britain's free-market economy. In the early eighteenth century, as Britain's commercial and trading activities intensified, certain economic thinkers and members of the mercantile community increasingly recognized the importance of cooperative specialization. In the second part of *The Fable of the Bees* (1729), Bernard Mandeville (1733, p. 336) employs the example of watchmaking to illustrate the advantages of social division of labour, observing that the craft had attained a "higher degree of perfection" than would have been possible had the entire process remained the work of a single individual. Mandeville (1733, p. 336) further contends that the abundance, precision, and elegance of clocks and watches are chiefly attributable to the subdivision of the art into multiple branches. Building upon this foundation, Adam Smith (1952, p. 3) systematically articulated the theory of the division of labour through his celebrated example of pin manufacture in *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith notes that if each stage of production were carried out independently by a single worker, an individual might produce no more than one to twenty pins per day. By contrast, in a small manufactory employing ten workers engaged in specialized and coordinated operations, daily output could reach approximately 48,000 pins, equivalent to 4,800 pins per worker (ibid.). Without such specialization and training, each worker would scarcely have been capable of producing even a fraction of that number. Smith therefore concludes that the division of labour, wherever it can be introduced, "occasions, in every art, a proportionable increase of the productive powers of labour", and accordingly encourages enterprises to adopt specialization as a means of significantly enhancing productive efficiency (ibid., p. 4). In *The Beggar's Oper*a, Peachum deftly transposes this principle of labour division into the sphere of criminal enterprise, establishing in London's underworld a company composed of thieves with distinct roles and characteristics, including the resourceful Crook-fingered Jack, the furtive Wat Dreary, the clumsy Harry Padington, and the rash yet industrious Mat of the Mint (I. iii. 4-22). Members of the group operate in different districts of London to carry out theft, while Peachum, together with the jailer Lockit, oversees the disposal of stolen goods. In this manner, a clearly differentiated and tightly integrated criminal chain is formed, extending from the commission of theft to the fencing of illicit property. Vincenzo Ruggiero contends that Peachum's gang derives its principal profits from its extensive recruitment of underworld figures and its establishment of a division of labour predicated on the separation of planning and execution, resulting in an abstract "Fordist" mode of cooperation characterized by standardization, functional differentiation, routinization, and a paramount emphasis on efficiency (Ruggiero, 2003, p. 46). Consequently, Peachum's criminal gang epitomizes what historian Paul Langford identifies as the increasingly "organized" and "commercial" character of criminal activity during this period (Langford, 2000, p. 20).

The commercial criminal activities conducted by Peachum and Wild constitute a form of unproductive labour that generates no new value; as such, they represent a profound misallocation of labour power and a departure from the classical theory of the factors of production. Since the seventeenth century, a number of English economic thinkers had come to recognize that wealth was primarily "the fruit of human labour", arguing that mere ownership of natural resources was insufficient to secure national prosperity and that even a large population constituted only potential wealth unless effectively mobilized and activated through productive labour (Lis & Soly, 2012, p. 469). As William Petty (1691, p. 17) famously asserted, "labour is the Father and active principle of Wealth, as Lands are the Mother". Petty accordingly advocated that state policy should prioritize ensuring that labour resources were directed toward the creation of practically useful and economically valuable goods—that is, productive labour. Within this intellectual framework, individuals who refused to integrate themselves into the emerging economic order or to engage in gainful employment were increasingly denounced as "social enemies". This term encompassed not only those who violated the law, but also those who offended against moral norms through "idleness, drunkenness, and prodigality" (Villadsen, 2024, p. 176). What united these figures was that, in different ways, they effectively "stole" their own labour power, thereby undermining the very foundations of social production (ibid.). Indeed, the refusal to work came to be regarded as more dangerous to society than property-centred crimes such as theft. In *The Beggar's Opera*, Peachum incites subjects who might otherwise have engaged in productive labour to steal wealth on his behalf, and angrily resolves to "dispose of" those unwilling to pursue thievery. He condemns Slippery Sam for having "the impudence to have views of following his trade as a tailor, which he calls an honest employment" (I. iii. 19-22). Through this episode, the play exposes the extent to which Peachum's economic criminality disrupts the processes of legitimate social production. It is particularly noteworthy that although Peachum, like a merchant, employs a considerable number of individuals, the labour performed by his organization generates no surplus value but merely appropriates the wealth of others; it is therefore a paradigmatic instance of unproductive labour. As Adam Smith (1952, p. 142) observes in *The Wealth of Nations*, "There is one sort of labour which adds to the value of the subject upon which it is bestowed: there is another which has no such effect. The former, as it produces a value, may be called productive; the latter, unproductive labour".

The work employs the commercialized operations of an underground criminal syndicate as a mirror through which to allegorize the corrupt practices by which certain economic agents and corporations in eighteenth-century Britain manipulated the rules of the free market. In *The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great*, Jonathan Wild establishes in London a criminal "company" composed of thieves, where he first dispatches his subordinates to steal goods on his behalf and then, through his "office" for the recovery of lost property, resells the stolen items to their original owners at "the value only (or a little more) of their goods" (130). Although Wild himself is the mastermind behind the losses, he manages to present himself to the public as a respectable and public-spirited guardian of property, capitalizing on his office's supposed ability to recover stolen items and thereby expanding its "business". His appropriation of wealth through the manipulation of public trust thus serves as a microcosm of the ways in which certain market actors in Britain's emerging free-market economy exploited and distorted commercial rules for private gain. From the late seventeenth to the early eighteenth century, the Financial Revolution and the rise of the free market not only accelerated Britain's economic development but also gave rise to a wave of commercial crime. As economic historian Edward Chancellor (1999, p. 48) observes, the London market of this period was rife with conduct that frequently crossed "the line between commendable self-interest and arrant fraud: sham companies were launched for the enrichment of projectors, share prices were manipulated, and false rumours were circulated". During this period, three seasoned financiers of Exchange Alley—George Caswall, Elias Turner, and Jacob Sawbridge—joined forces with John Blunt, who had previously profited from insider dealings in a Welsh mining scheme, to form a commercial criminal syndicate that replaced traditional theft with financial manipulation (Levenson, 2020, p. 106). Under Blunt's leadership, Caswall and his two associates revived the long-defunct Sword Blade Company, using the charter of this shell corporation to issue shares and to launch a highly speculative yet alluring scheme to convert army debentures into company stock, thereby manipulating the market and extracting private capital (ibid., pp. 106-108). Daniel Defoe vehemently denounced them as "a true triumvirate of modern thieving", castigating them as Britain's leading capital swindlers (ibid., p. 106). Notably, the Sword Blade Company would later become closely associated with the South Sea Company, whose manipulation of market mechanisms culminated in the most devastating financial bubble in British history and inspired a proliferation of speculative bubble companies that emulated its model.

Like many of his contemporaries, John Gay was himself a victim of commercial speculation in the emerging free market. In his work, he channels his personal experience of deception through the voices of his characters, thereby reflecting the broader anxieties that eighteenth-century British society harboured toward the new market economy. In 1720, Gay earned £1,000 from his poetry collection *Poems on Several Occasions* and, at the height of the South Sea stock speculation, invested the entire sum in shares of the South Sea Company (Nokes, 1995, p. 310). Having purchased at the top of the market in late June, he soon found himself exposed to catastrophic losses. In reality, the South Sea scheme was fundamentally illusory. Although the company had secured a trading monopoly in parts of South America, none of its founders possessed practical experience in trade with South America or even the West Indies, and Spanish dominance in the region severely limited meaningful commercial prospects (Levenson, 2020, pp. 117-119). Consequently, in the decade following 1712, investors who exchanged government debt for South Sea equity failed to obtain substantial returns from the company's trading ventures (ibid., p. 121). The central objective of the company's leading director, John Blunt, was to raise the price of stock by any available means; he repeatedly declared that "advancing by all means the price of stock was the only way to promote the good of the company" (Chancellor, 1999, p. 67). Through collusion between company insiders and government officials, South Sea stock soared dramatically in early 1720, only to collapse within months, triggering mass panic selling and inflicting devastating losses on Gay and thousands of other investors. In *The Beggar's Opera*, Polly and Lucy, deceived by Macheath, lament, "I'm bubbled" (II. xiii. 1-2). Gay's pointed use of the term "bubble" exploits both its newly charged financial meaning in the context of the Financial Revolution and its specific historical association with the South Sea Bubble, thereby articulating his own indignation at having been duped in a vast speculative fraud. During the crisis, friends repeatedly urged Gay to liquidate part of his holdings in order to secure a steady income of £100 per year for life (Nokes, 1995, p. 311). Yet Gay remained deaf to such counsel, resolutely pursuing his dream of becoming a "great capitalist". As Samuel Johnson later observed, he "dreamed of dignity and splendour, and could not bear to obstruct his own fortune" (qtd. in Melville, 1921, p. 52). Thus, although Gay vented his resentment at being deceived by the South Sea Company through the voices of his dramatic characters, his earlier speculative enthusiasm reveals a fundamentally ambivalent attitude toward the free market economy, characterized by both reliance upon and skepticism toward its promises.

The work portrays the rampant disorder of commercial crime in the eighteenth-century English free market, thereby underscoring the indispensable role of law in safeguarding both market freedom and social justice. At the very beginning of the play, Gay has one of his characters declare, "through all the employments of life … all professions be-rogue one another" (I. i. 1-4). With this, Gay exposes the pervasive fraud embedded within British commercial society and gives voice to his indignation at the disintegration of free-market order. During this period, stimulated by the Financial Revolution, speculative "bubble" companies proliferated across England at an astonishing rate. Adam Anderson, a clerk of the South Sea Company, later recalled of the year 1720 that "any impudent imposter needed only to hire a room at some coffee house … having advertised it in the newspapers the preceding day, and he might, in a few hours, find subscribers for one or two millions (in some cases more) of imaginary stock" (qtd. in Levenson, 2020, p. 185). Estimates suggest that such bubble companies collectively absorbed approximately £1.5 million, ruining countless speculators while enabling their fraudulent promoters to amass enormous profits (Mackay, 1932, p. 55). The ensuing disorder of the English free market confirmed Adam Smith's insistence upon the centrality of justice to the maintenance of commercial society. Smith (1982, p. 16) maintained that: "the more improved any society is and the greater length the several means of supporting the inhabitants are carried, the greater will be the number of their laws and regulations necessary". Drawing upon his observations of Britain's economic and social realities, Smith argued that any sound legal system must fulfill four fundamental objectives: first, the preservation of justice; second, the orderly administration of government so as to promote prosperity and the creation of wealth; third, the augmentation of public revenue; and fourth, the organization of armed forces for national defense (Norman, 2018, p. 75). Among these aims, Smith regarded justice as the essential precondition for social stability. Without it, Smith (1966, p. 125) warned, "the great, the immense fabric of human society … must in a moment crumble into atoms". The ideal free market, therefore, is grounded in a system of "natural liberty" secured by the rule of just laws, under which, as Smith affirms, "every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free to pursue his own interest his own way, and to bring both his industry and capital into competition with those of any other man, or order of men" (Smith, 1952, p. 300).

3. Political-Commercial Collusion and Eighteenth-Century British Anxieties over the Health of Body Politic and Economy in the Works

Gay puts into the mouths of thieves a caustic satire on the "dishonest" dealings of politicians, thereby exposing the ignoble collusion between government officials and joint-stock companies during the South Sea Bubble and their covert expropriation of public wealth. In *The Beggar's Opera*, the leader of London's underworld gang, Peachum, indignantly denounces the moral corruption of British statesmen, declaring that "the Statesman, because he is so great, / Thinks his trade as honest as mine" (I. i. 7-8). The line unmistakably alludes to the conduct of public officials during the South Sea Bubble, who, in pursuit of private gain, promoted the South Sea scheme while clandestinely profiting at the expense of the populace. In 1720, in order to secure political support, the South Sea Company distributed large allotments of company stock to members of Parliament, senior government officials, and even members of the royal household, amounting in total to the staggering sum of £574,000 (Soll, 2014, p. 179). As these shares did not in fact exist in tangible form, the bribe functioned in a manner analogous to a "modern executive stock-option scheme": should the share price rise, recipients could redeem their allotments and realize substantial profits (Chancellor, 1999, p. 65). Having received such fictitious shares or options, these influential beneficiaries possessed a powerful incentive to drive up the price of South Sea stock, regardless of the potential cost to the nation. Yet perceptive contemporaries discerned the latent dangers of the scheme and sought to halt its progress (ibid.). The Member of Parliament Robert Walpole sternly warned that the project encouraged the pernicious practice of stock-jobbing by "diverting the genius of the nation from trade and industry" and by luring the unwary "to their ruin by a false prospect of gain, and to part with the gradual profits of their labour for imaginary wealth" (qtd. in Churchill, 1965, p. 110). Similarly, Archibald Hutcheson demanded to know whether it was not "the Duty of a British Senate to take all necessary Precautions, to prevent the Ruin of many Thousands of families" (qtd. in Chancellor, 1999, p. 91). Nevertheless, corrupt officials remained deaf to such admonitions, and instead of fulfilling their obligation to safeguard the public interest, they openly endorsed the South Sea scheme, thereby conveying to speculators the impression that South Sea shares were a secure and profitable investment (Chancellor, 1999, p. 9). Their support fostered a deceptive aura of guaranteed prosperity and ultimately drove countless ordinary citizens into financial ruin. In this light, the clandestine collusion between government officials and the joint-stock company in plundering national wealth appears even more despicable than the ostensibly "honest" depredations of Peachum and his band of thieves.

Henry Fielding associates the figure of the "Great Man" with corruption and avarice, thereby alluding to the conduct of the prime minister Robert Walpole, who was styled a "Great Man" in his own time, and satirizing his protection of South Sea offenders and his abuse of political power for private gain. After the collapse of the South Sea Bubble in 1720, Walpole was entrusted with the formidable task of managing the financial and political aftermath. Yet in order to preserve the government's public image and consolidate his own authority, he deliberately suppressed the transaction records of the South Sea Company and shielded numerous corrupt officials and financial magnates who might otherwise have faced prosecution. The following year, Walpole successfully assumed office as First Lord of the Treasury and effectively became Britain's first prime minister. His accession did not alleviate governmental corruption; rather, it intensified its spread. During his long tenure, Walpole exercised comprehensive control over state affairs, and his administration was widely associated with bribery, nepotism, and the sale of offices (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 507). The political theorist Isaac Kramnick observes that during Robert Walpole's tenure, he consistently relied on the patronage of the Crown to consolidate his authority. Walpole not only exercised influence over royal appointments, compelling officeholders and their families to pledge loyalty to his leadership in the House of Commons, but also manipulated the patronage system to intervene in elections by distributing offices to the relatives, friends, and dependents of successful candidates, thereby bringing their political influence firmly under his control (Kramnick, 1968, pp. 111-112). Walpole's protection of financial criminals and exploitation of political resources for private gain provoked widespread public resentment, and the epithet "Great Man" gradually acquired a sharply ironic resonance. As the scholar John Wells notes, even a cursory reader of contemporary pamphlets and periodicals would have recognized that, throughout roughly the two decades preceding the publication of *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great*, the term "Great Man" in England had become virtually synonymous with Walpole (Wells, 1913, p. 14). In *The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great*, Fielding models his protagonist on the criminal mastermind Jonathan Wild, crafting a character defined by greed and depravity. He asserts that the hallmark of greatness is "insatiability" (77), and declares that "greatness consists in bringing many mischiefs on mankind" (22). Through this portrayal, Fielding draws a parallel between Walpole's corrupt manipulation of political resources and Wild's monopolistic control over the stolen goods market, thereby exposing the corruption and moral bankruptcy of the "Great Man" Walpole. As Fielding (1743, p. 59) declares in the preface to *Miscellanies* (1743), his true target is precisely these "Bombast Greatness" who, under the cloak of power and hypocrisy, enlarge their private interests while insidiously preying upon the public good.

The collaborative relationship between the gaoler Lockit and the merchant Peachum symbolises the collusion between administrative authority and financial interests in eighteenth-century Britain, thereby illuminating the political logic by which Robert Walpole's government sustained its rule through alliances with the moneyed interest. In *The Beggar's Opera*, Peachum, the head of the London criminal syndicate, represents the financial interest group of the urban underworld, while Lockit, as prison-keeper, embodies the legal and administrative apparatus that incorporates illicit economic activity into an ostensibly lawful order. United by what they call their "mutual interest" (II. x. 58), the two cooperate openly in tolerating and managing crime for private gain. Through this dramatic configuration, Gay exposes the intimate entanglement of government and financial interests during Walpole's ascendancy. Upon assuming office in 1721, Walpole, intent on consolidating his political authority, chose to ally himself with powerful financial groups, despite the potential threats that financial innovation posed to Britain's constitutional structure and social order. In doing so, he perpetuated and strengthened the new economic regime that had emerged from the Financial Revolution. During his tenure, Walpole publicly endorsed the national debt system, chartered financial corporations, and public credit, while both his public conduct and private dealings served to enhance the prestige and influence of the men of money and to confer official legitimacy upon their path to social and political power (Kramnick, 1968, pp. 49-50). The preferential policies and institutional protection that Walpole extended to the financial interest enabled it to exert sustained influence over British politics in the first half of the eighteenth century (ibid., pp. 50-51). Yet Walpole's reliance upon the financial system to buttress his regime provoked intense public resentment. The influential periodical *The Craftsman* depicted him as "a giant from whom hung huge bank bills, exchequer notes, lottery tickets, and tallies, but only a small bag of money" (ibid., p. 21). Elsewhere, the same publication denounced him as "the greatest monster of power and wickedness, that ever infected the face of the earth" (ibid.). Even his supporter Sir John Perceval, an independent Whig, lamented what he termed Walpole's "meanness", namely the degradation of a first minister's office in strenuously defending "dunghill worms", however unjust their cause, against men of honour, birth, and fortune (qtd. in Langford, 1989, p. 22). In this light, the play employs the London underworld as a mirror reflecting the systemic corruption of metropolitan high society, articulating Gay's indignation at Walpole's collusion with the financial interest.

In *The Beggar's Opera*, John Gay pointedly equates "money" with a cleansing agent, thereby exposing the doctrine of monetary omnipotence fostered by Britain's new financial order. Peachum bluntly declares, "But money, wife, is the true fuller's earth for reputations; there is not a spot or a stain but what it can take out" (I. ix. 8-10). The metaphor suggests that in the commercial society of eighteenth-century Britain, money had acquired the power not merely to purchase goods but to erase moral blemish and confer respectability. As the scholar Sven Armens (1954, p. 56) observes in his study of the play, "an examination of almost any part of this play shows conclusively that money has become the standard by which town society judges all values". The Financial Revolution of the eighteenth century unleashed unprecedented flows of liquid wealth—national debt instruments, stocks, and other forms of credit—into British society, thereby unsettling a long-standing social hierarchy grounded in landed property. Power gradually shifted from the traditional landed elite to the emerging financial interest, and money increasingly became the principal measure of individual identity and status. The Scottish economic thinker James Steuart (1966, pp. 203, 208) noted that in feudal society, the lower orders were compelled by subsistence needs to depend upon landed magnates; however, the immense wealth generated by modern commerce and industry enabled ordinary people to emancipate themselves from this dependency, with power consequently devolving from the aristocracy to the emerging moneyed interest. As Swift observed, "that power which according to the old maxim, was used to follow land, is now gone over to money" (qtd. in Kramnick, 1968, p. 209). The Tory statesman Henry St John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke likewise lamented that no phenomenon of recent years was more striking and astonishing than the elevation of people to the highest posts of power and authority "who had not, either from their obscure birth, or their low talents, or their still lower habits, the least occasion evey; to dream of such elevation" (qtd. in Kramnick, 1968, p. 76). In Bolingbroke's view, England's decline stemmed in large part from the displacement of a traditional order that had esteemed virtuous and learned natural leaders by a new ethos proclaiming that "he with the most money was the best man" (qtd. in Kramnick, 1968, p. 76). Thus, eighteenth-century Britain appeared increasingly enthralled by the cult of money. Popular maxims circulated widely: " It is money that sells all, money buys all, money pays all, money makes all, money mends all, and money mars all"; "Tis Money makes the Man"; "All Things are to be had for Money"; "Money, th' only Pow'r ... the last Reason of all Things"; "Money answers all Things" (qtd. in Dabydeen, 1983, p. 3). Such aphorisms reveal the pervasive faith in the omnipotence of money that accompanied the dramatic expansion of wealth in the age of the Financial Revolution.

The work depicts a highly commodified world, exposing the distortions and alienation produced by a market economy unrestrained by moral sentiments. From the late seventeenth to the early eighteenth century, under the combined influence of Enlightenment ideals of liberty, innovations in national finance, and the rapid expansion of commerce, England's economic life increasingly assumed the contours of a free market. Yet once detached from the moderating force of moral sentiment, this free-market economy encouraged unbridled speculation and fraud in the pursuit of profit, while human relations themselves were progressively reduced to mere commodity-money exchanges. As the scholar David Nokes (1995, p. 437) observes in his study of *The Beggar's Opera*, the play repeatedly invokes the language of trade and currency and reveals a marked tendency "to treat people and relationships in commodity terms", thereby capturing the atmosphere of commercial transaction and economic calculation—at once dynamic and fraught with the risk of corruption—that permeated urban life. Within the drama, Peachum, a merchant figure unrestrained by moral scruple, regards the lives of the criminals under his control as liquid assets to be realized at a profit. In his account book he meticulously records their respective "market values", noting, for example, "Tom Gagg, forty pounds" (I. ii. 12). For Peachum, all social relations can be abstracted into calculable and tradable economic units; even his daughter's marriage appears as nothing more than a transaction to be exploited for gain. Through such characterization, the play lays bare the alienation inherent in a free-market system deprived of moral regulation, while articulating the anxieties that Gay and his contemporaries harboured toward Britain's evolving commercial order. The Scottish Enlightenment thinker Adam Ferguson (1767, p. 29) candidly acknowledged that in commercial society individuals, in pursuit of profit, may treat others as they do their "cattle" or their "soil", valuing them solely for the returns they yield. Likewise, Adam Smith (1966, p. 119) observed that "every man is, no doubt, by nature, first and principally recommended to his own care", emphasizing the natural primacy of self-regard in human conduct. In the absence of moral sentiments capable of moderating this self-love, the free market readily descends into excess and disorder. As the writer William Pugh lamented, liberty when degenerating into licentiousness resembles "a rich cordial drunk immoderately, which intoxicates the brain, injures the best constitution, and will at length utterly ruin it" (qtd. in McGowen, 1987, p. 656).

The expansion of Jonathan Wild's criminal enterprise reenacts the corrosive spread of luxury as a social disease, revealing Henry Fielding's anxiety over the threat that a tide of extravagance posed to the health of the body politic and national economy. Eighteenth-century British society was undergoing profound transformation, as the nation rapidly developed into "a commercial empire, a great military power, and an advanced capitalist society founded on new and sophisticated banking and credit institutions that were altering both the way" (Bowers, 1995, p. 577). Yet while the rapid expansion of commerce contributed to the growth of national wealth, it also fostered conspicuous consumption, rising criminality, and growing instability within urban society. The ostentatious extravagance of the rich encouraged certain "irrational" members of the labouring classes to abandon disciplined and productive work in favour of speculative, parasitic, or even criminal pursuits in imitation of elite lifestyles. As Adam Smith (1966, p. 88) observes in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in striving to attain the "envied situation" of the wealthy and the great, candidates for fortune "too frequently abandon the paths of virtue", even resorting to crime and antisocial conduct in pursuit of imagined greatness. An anonymous pamphlet entitled *The Evils of London and Westminster* (1751) sharply declared that "Luxury, Prodigality, Idleness, and every Species of Wickedness" had spread "like a Deluge over the Face of the whole Kingdom", and that this "dangerous Malady" was preying upon "the Vitals of the Body Politic" (Anon., 1751, pp. 3-4). Fielding (1988, pp. 77-78) likewise perceived that the contagion of luxury could spread from rich to poor, eroding the moral fibre of the nation and corroding the health of its body politic. Fielding believes that, the prevailing culture of extravagance had already undermined the habits and discipline of Britain's labouring population, weakening the productive capacity of society as a whole (ibid., p. 77). In this sense, luxury was not merely a private moral failing but a social pathology with grave public consequences. In *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great*, large numbers of men "willing to live in luxury without labour" (89) join Wild's gang, embarking upon "so great and glorious an undertaking as that of robbing the public" (90). Through this portrayal, Fielding exposes the corrosive effects of luxury upon the work ethic and social order, while articulating his profound concern for the integrity of the kingdom's body politic. Fielding (1988, p. 228) warns English society that the unbridled spread of this affliction would inevitably transform ordinary citizens from "useful members of society" into "burthensome" liabilities, for "having nothing but their Labour to procure a Support for themselves, they must of Necessity become burthensome".

Fielding presents the conscience and reason embodied in the character of Heartfree as a remedy for the maladies afflicting the eighteenth-century body politic and national economy, thereby echoing Adam Smith's free-market theory, particularly his emphasis on the virtues of sympathy and the hypothesis of the impartial spectator. In *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great*, Fielding deliberately constructs the honest jeweller Heartfree as the moral antithesis of the rapacious and depraved Wild. Though cruelly deceived and wrongfully imprisoned through Wild's machinations, Heartfree steadfastly preserves his conscience and reason while in confinement, maintaining that there is "one thing the loss of which I should deplore infinitely beyond that of liberty and of life also—I mean that of a good conscience" (125). By adopting reason (115) in response to the vain and illusory objects of human desire, he avoids becoming enslaved to them. At the novel's conclusion, Wild ascends the gallows, whereas Heartfree is vindicated and resumes his honest trade. This narrative resolution underscores Fielding's earnest hope that commercial society might be sustained by moral self-regulation and rational restraint. It resonates with Smith's ideal of the economic agent who disciplines his conduct through sympathy and through the imagined perspective of an impartial spectator. Smith (1966, p. 26) accords central importance to sympathy as a mechanism for regulating behaviour: the spectator's effort to enter into the sentiments of the person principally concerned gives rise to the "soft, the gentle, the amiable virtues", such as candour, civility, justice, and benevolence; conversely, the agent's effort to moderate his passions to a level with which the spectator can sympathize engenders the sterner virtues of self-denial, self-government, and command of the passions. At the same time, Smith remains acutely aware that an "indulgent and partial spectator" may distort moral judgment (ibid., p. 217). Smith therefore advances the concept of the rational "impartial spectator", insisting that only by measuring one's conduct against this internalized, disinterested standpoint can the individual "humble the arrogance of his self-love, and bring it down to something which other men can go along with" (ibid., p. 120). In this sense, Heartfree embodies Smith's vision of the economic agent who unites rational calculation with moral virtue, pursuing commercial interests under the guidance of conscience and reason. As Fielding (1899, p. 144) remarks in his *An Essay on Conversation*, "real greatness" consists in "the union of a good heart with a good head".

Eighteenth-century Britain not only witnessed the rapid expansion of national commerce and trade but also confronted the erosion of public rationality and moral restraint that accompanied the dramatic accumulation of capital. Commercial crime and speculative ventures proliferated. As the historian P. G. M. Dickson (2016, p. 35) observes, many Britons of the period harboured deep anxieties about the social disorder generated by economic instability and the immoral practices it engendered. These sweeping transformations exerted a profound influence on literary production. The works of John Gay and Henry Fielding, among others, register a sustained unease toward the emerging economic system. Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and Fielding's *The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great* both take London's criminal underworld as a distorted mirror of commercial society. By invoking what might be termed a self-judging "impartial spectator", these works reflect the turbulence and disarray of Britain's commercial order and implicitly call for a restoration of rationality and moral integrity. Gay places visibly identifiable criminal groups—thieves, prostitutes, and other denizens of the underworld—at the centre of the stage, while simultaneously inviting those less visible "criminals" seated in the audience—politicians, industrial capitalists, slave traders—to recognize their own reflection in the spectacle. In a similar vein, Fielding portrays Wild's manipulation of the reward system as a form of entrepreneurial criminality, reenacting within the free market the speculative and fraudulent practices of "irrational" economic agents. In doing so, both works reposition the public from passive spectators to critical observers of their own "irrational" and "immoral" economic conduct. It is important to note that Gay and Fielding themselves were active participants in the early development of Britain's market economy. Their writings therefore do not constitute a simple denunciation of the free-market system. Rather, through literary representation they seek to prompt reflection on how economic self-interest might be reconciled with the preservation of social order and moral restraint. In this respect, the two authors may be seen as anticipating—and in some measure contributing to—the classical economic theories later articulated by Adam Smith: an ideal vision of the free market grounded in rational moderation and moral sentiment.

Fund program: This study is sponsored by Major Project of National Social Science Fund of China "Economic Thoughts in English Literature" [22&ZD289] and Key Project of National Social Science Fund of China "Trade Empire Construction in English Literature of the Age of Great Discovery" [21AWW008].

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Tao Jiusheng ID https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1467-9306;
Wu Libing ID https://orcid.org/0009-0000-9583-7089

References

Alpert, G. P., Dunham, R. G., & Stroshine, M. S. (2005). *Policing: Continuity and change*. Waveland Press.

Anon. (1751). *The Vices of the Cities of London and Westminster*. G. Faulkner & R. James.

Armens, S. M. (1954). *John Gay: Social Critic*. King's Crown Press.

Beattie, J. M. (1986). *Crime and the Courts in England, 1660-1800*. Clarendon Press.

Bowers, T. N. (1995). "Tropes of Nationhood: Body, Body Politic, and Nation-State in Fielding's *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*." *ELH* (3): 575-602. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1353/elh.1995.0022

Browning, A. (1953). *English Historical Documents, 1660-1714*. Eyre & Spottiswoode.

Chancellor, E. (1999). *Devil Take the Hindmost: A history of Financial Speculation*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Churchill, W. S. (1965). *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples: The Age of Revolution, Volume III*. Dodd, Mead.

Collins, P. A., Ricks, T. A., & Van Meter, C. W. (2000). *Principles of Security and Crime Prevention*. Anderson Publishing.

Dabydeen, D. (1983). "Commerce and Slavery in Eighteenth-Century Literature." *Kunapipi* (3): 2-23.

Defoe, D. (1732). *The Complete English Tradesman: In Familiar Letters*. Printed for C. Rivington, at the Bible and Crown in St. Paul's Church-Yard.

Dickson, P. G. M. (2016). *The Financial Revolution in England*. Routledge.

Dijkstra, B. (1987). *Defoe and Economics: The Fortunes of Roxana in the History of Interpretation*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Ferguson, A. (1767). *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*. A. Millar & T. Cadell; A. Kincaid & J. Bell.

Fielding, H. (1743). *Miscellanies, Volume I*. Printed for the author and sold by A. Millar, opposite to Catharine-Street, in the Strand.

Fielding, H. (1962). *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great*. The New American Library.

Fielding, H. (1988). M. R. Zirker (Ed.), *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers and Related Writings*. Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.

Fielding, J. (1755). *A Plan for Preventing Robberies Within Twenty Miles of London*. Printed for A. Millar, in the Strand.

Hobbes, T. (1904). *Leviathan*. Cambridge University Press.

Howson, G. (1958). *Thief-Taker General: Jonathan Wild and the Emergence of Crime and Corruption as a Way of Life in Eighteenth-Century England*. Transaction Books.

John, G. (1986). *The Beggar's Opera*. Penguin Books.

Kramnick, I. (1968). *Bolingbroke and His Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole*. Harvard University Press.

Landau, N. (1984). *The Justices of the Peace, 1679-1760*. University of California Press.

Langbein, J. H. (2003). *The Origins of Adversary Criminal Trial*. Oxford University Press.

Langford, P. (1989). *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727-1783*. Oxford University Press.

Langford, P. (2000). *Eighteenth-Century Britain: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Levenson, T. (2020). *Money for Nothing: The South Sea Bubble and the Invention of Modern Capitalism*. Head of Zeus.

Lis, C., & Soly, H. (2012). *Worthy Efforts: Attitudes to Work and Workers in Pre-Industrial Europe*. Brill.

Locke, J. (1988). *Two Treatises of Government*. Cambridge University Press.

Mackay, C. (1932). *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*. L. C. Page.

Mandeville, B. (1732). *The Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Public Benefits*. Printed for J. Tonson, at Shakespeare's Head over against Katharine Street in the Strand.

Mandeville, B. (1733). *The Fable of the Bees, Part II*. Printed and Sold by J. Roberts in Warwick-Lane.

McGowen, R. (1987). "The Body and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England." *The Journal of Modern History* (4): 651-679. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1086/ 243281

McMullan, J. L. (1995). "The Political Economy of Thief-Taking." *Crime, Law & Social Chang* (2): 121-146. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/bf01298527

McMullan, J. L. (1996). "The New Improved Monied Police: Reform, Crime Control, and the Commodification of Policing in London." *British Journal of Criminology* (1): 85-108. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.bjc.a014079

Melville, L. (1921). *Life and Letters of John Gay*. Daniel O'Connor.

Nemeth, C. P. (2018). *Private Security: An Introduction to Principles and Practice*. Taylor & Francis.

Nicholson, C. (2004). *Writing and the Rise of Finance: Capital Satires of the Early Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge University Press.

Nokes, D. (1987). *Raillery and Rage: A Study of Eighteenth-Century Satire*. Harvester Press.

Nokes, D. (1995). *John Gay: A Profession of Friendship*. Oxford University Press.

Norman, J. (2018). *Adam Smith: Father of Economics*. Basic Books.

Petty, W. (1691). *Political Arithmetick*. London: Printed for Robert Clavel at the Peacock, and Hen. Mortlock at the Phenix in St. Paul's Church-yard.

Porter, R. (1982). *English Society in the Eighteenth century*. Penguin Books.

Porter, R. (2000). *The Creation of the Modern World: The Untold Story of the British Enlightenment*. W. W. Norton.

Rock, P. (1977). "Law, Order and Power in Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth-Century England." *International Annals of Criminology* (1-2): 233-265. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003445277001433

Ruggiero, V. (2003). *Crime in Literature: Sociology of Deviance and Fiction*. Verso.

Shore, H. (2003). "Crime, Criminal Networks and the Survival Strategies of the Poor in Early Eighteenth-Century London." In S. King, & A. Tomkins (Eds.), *The poor in England 1700-1850* (pp. 137-165), Manchester University Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.7765/ 9781526137869

Sidney & Webb, B. (1924). *English Local Government from the Revolution to the Municipal Corporations Act*. Longmans, Green.

Smith, A. (1952). *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Smith, A. (1982). R. L. Meek, D. D. Raphael, & P. G. Stein (Eds.), *Lectures on Jurisprudence*. Liberty Fund.

Soll, J. (2014). *The Reckoning: Financial Accountability and the Rise and Fall of Nations*. Basic Books.

Spitzer, S., & Scull, A. T. (1977). "Privatization and Capitalist Development: The Case of the Private Police." *Social Problems* (1): 18-29. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/ 800464

Steuart, J. (1966). *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy*. Oliver and Boyd.

Thompson, E. P. (1971). "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century." *Past and Present* (1): 76-136. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/ past/50.1.76

Villadsen, K. (2024). *Foucault's Technologies: Another Way of Cutting Reality*. Oxford University Press.

Wells, J. E. (1913). "Fielding's Political Purpose in *Jonathan Wild*." *PMLA* (1): 1-55. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1632/456674

Yilmaz, H. (2013). "It Is a Wild Wild World: (Political) Satire in Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* (11): 503-508. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5901/ mjss.2013.v4n11p503

JESL

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

HIEP
Academic Publishing

JESL, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026, pp.25-50.

Print ISSN: 3107-3492; Online ISSN: 3107-3506

Journal homepage: https://www.jesljournal.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.64058/jesl260102rarml

Market Mechanisms in the Formation of Modern Authors' Rights in Eighteenth-Century Britain

Yin Bo, Tao Jiusheng

Abstract: The development of capitalism in eighteenth-century Britain gave rise to an increasingly prosperous book market. The juridical subject of property rights, the professional producer operating in the marketplace, and the original genius of aesthetic discourse gradually converged to constitute the basic form of modern authorship. The establishment of modern authors' rights simultaneously entailed a transformation in the relations of production within the literary field: authors increasingly shifted from serving a small number of aristocratic patrons to addressing a large body of anonymous purchasers, while literary production moved from a system of patronage to a marketized mode of production. Both the form and content of literature became deeply permeated by market logic. The development of emergent genres such as literary periodicals and the novel not only enabled literature to adapt formally to an expanding readership but also allowed it to participate more extensively in modern economic life and in the formation of economic discourse.

Keywords: Modern Authors' Rights; Book Trade; Marketization of Literary Production; Eighteenth-Century British Literature

Author Biography: Yin Bo is a Ph.D. candidate at the School of International Studies, Zhejiang University. His research interests include British and American literature and interdisciplinary literary studies. E-mail: yinpaul@outlook.com. **Tao Jiusheng**

Received: 03 May 2026 / Revised: 16 May 2026 / Accepted: 27 May 2026 / Published online: 15 Jun. 2026 / Print published: 25 Jun. 2026.

(corresponding author), Ph.D., Professor, School of Foreign Languages, Hainan University; Chief Expert for the Major Project of the National Social Science Fund. His research interests include English Renaissance literature and interdisciplinary literary studies. E-mail: taojiush@163.com。

标题：十八世纪英国现代作者权生成的市场机制

摘要：18 世纪英国资本主义经济发展催生出日益繁荣的图书市场，法律上的财产权主体、市场中的职业生产者与美学上的原创天才逐渐结合，共同构成了现代作者身份的基本形态。作者权确立的同时意味着文学领域生产关系的转变，作者服务的对象逐渐从少数贵族赞助人转向大量匿名的购买者，文学生产从赞助体制过渡到市场化生产阶段。文学的形式与内容深受市场逻辑的渗透，文学期刊和小说等新兴文类的发展，不仅标志着文学在形式上更能适应不断扩大的读者市场，也使文学更深入地介入现代经济生活及思想话语的生成。

关键词：作者权；图书贸易；文学生产市场化；18 世纪英国文学

作者简介：殷博，浙江大学外国语学院博士研究生，研究方向：英美文学、文学跨学科研究。邮箱：yinpaul@outlook.com。**陶久胜**（通讯作者），博士，海南大学外国语学院教授，国家社科基金重大项目首席专家，研究方向：英国文艺复兴文学、文学跨学科研究。邮箱：taojiush@163.com。

On 4 June 1741, Alexander Pope brought a lawsuit against the bookseller Edmund Curll, alleging that Curll's *Dean Swift's Literary Correspondence* (1741) had included, without authorization, letters exchanged between Pope and Jonathan Swift (Rose, 1994, p. 211). The lawsuit, however, was not prompted simply by the unauthorized publication of the letters. For years, Pope had sought to shape his literary image and consolidate his reputation in the book market by editing and publishing his private correspondence. Yet within the culture of gentility at the time, the voluntary disclosure of private letters could readily be regarded as vain and unbecoming. He therefore needed to create the appearance that the letters had been stolen and had entered the print market against his wishes. Pope first arranged for some of the letters to be published in Dublin, beyond the jurisdiction of English law, and subsequently issued an authorized and edited version in his collected works under the pretext of correcting the pirated edition and preserving the integrity of the texts (Rose, 1994, pp. 217-218). Significantly, in the lawsuit he invoked the *Statute of Anne* (1710), commonly regarded as the world's first modern copyright law. His immediate purpose was, of course, to prevent Curll from continuing to sell the letters and to secure the economic returns of the authorized edition. More importantly, however, Pope v. Curll revealed that authors had begun to regard their works simultaneously as personal property subject to their control, as a medium through which to manage their public reputation, and as commodities entering market exchange. The case thus encapsulated the historical transformation of authorship in the eighteenth century. It also demonstrated that modern authors' rights, the book market, and the production of literary texts were not separate domains but mutually formative and jointly evolving elements in the marketization of literary production.

The formation of modern authors' rights, the rise of the reading public, and the development of genres such as the novel and the periodical have been extensively discussed, gradually revealing the close relationship between literary institutions and market mechanisms.[①] Existing scholarship, however, has generally approached these issues from a single perspective and has seldom treated modern authors' rights, professional writing, the book trade, and changes in literary form as distinct components of the same historical process. This article therefore argues that the author was first established as the owner of the work through copyright law and the discourse of property, and subsequently transformed in the marketplace into a professional producer who sold writing to an anonymous readership. Once literature was incorporated into a sustained system of commodity production and consumption, the market not only transformed authors' identities and means of subsistence but also increasingly penetrated the internal workings of literature, promoting the development of genres such as literary periodicals and the novel and shaping literature's representation of individualism, the credit economy, and commercial society. Modern authorship, professional writing, and the evolution of literary forms should therefore be understood as interrelated historical outcomes of the marketization of literary production in eighteenth-century Britain.

1. The Book Trade and the Rise of Modern Authors' Rights

Since the late twentieth century, structuralism and poststructuralism have subjected traditional author-centred criticism to sustained critique and deconstruction. Influenced by Saussurean linguistics, structuralism conceives of language as a system of signs constituted through differential relations, in which the meanings of words and sentences are determined by structural relations internal to the linguistic system rather than by the speaker's subjective intention. The author thus becomes merely "a position within the structure": not an individual who creates meaning ex nihilo, but one who combines and rearranges elements within pre-existing structures. In "The Death of the Author" (1968), Roland Barthes criticizes traditional criticism for interpreting the work as an expression of the author's personality and experience and for treating the author as the ultimate source of textual meaning (Barthes, 1977, pp. 142-143). For Barthes, writing entails the disappearance of the originating voice: the text is not a direct emanation of the author's interiority but a "multi-dimensional space" woven from multiple languages, cultural codes, and pre-existing

---

[①] The volume edited by Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi demonstrates that the modern "author" is a historically specific institutional construct jointly shaped by literary conceptions, the print market, capitalist individualism, educational institutions, and copyright law (Woodmansee and Jaszi, 1994c). The works of Ian Watt and Iona Italia, meanwhile, reject explanations that attribute the rise of the novel and the periodical solely to the internal evolution of literature, instead recontextualizing these genres within the socioeconomic structures and print market of eighteenth-century Britain (Watt, 1979; Italia, 2005).

texts (Barthes, 1977, p. 146). To assign an author to a text is, in effect, to impose upon it an ultimate signified and thereby restrict the openness of its meanings. If Barthes liberated the text and the reader, Michel Foucault, in "What Is an Author?" (1969), pursued the question further by examining the discursive function of the "author." Foucault argues that an author's name differs from other proper names because it "remains at the contours of texts—separating one from the other, defining their form, and characterizing their mode of existence" (Foucault, 1977, p. 123). In other words, the author-function serves to group a body of texts together, distinguish them from other texts, and shape both their modes of reception and their cultural status. Foucault also reminds us that authorship was initially associated with systems of punishment and only subsequently with property and copyright law (Foucault, 1977, pp. 124-125). Before the emergence of modern copyright, discourse was not primarily regarded as property but as an "act"—one that might be sacred or profane, lawful or unlawful. The attribution of a text to an identifiable author, therefore, was initially intended not merely to celebrate originality but to assign responsibility. To explain how the author-centred model criticized by Barthes and the "author-function" identified by Foucault acquired such a secure position within modern literary and epistemic systems, it is necessary to return to the historical conjuncture at which copyright law, the literary market, and aesthetic discourse intersected, and to examine the "birth" of the author. It was precisely in the eighteenth century, with the establishment of copyright law and the formation of the literary market, that the "author" became both a legal subject and an owner of property, ultimately developing into a stable discursive function. In this respect, the eighteenth century constituted a crucial threshold in the transformation of early modern regimes of textual regulation and ownership into the institutional and conceptual structures of modern authorship.

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, the Stationers' Company monopolized the national book trade and fostered an embryonic conception of authors' rights. In early modern England, royal prerogative provided the legal basis for granting the right to print books. The extreme legal assumption at the time was that all written works were subject to the Crown's disposal (Feather, 1994, p. 192). In other words, the legal right to print a work did not initially arise from the notion that "the author owns the work," but from royal authorization. In practice, the Stationers' Company, incorporated by royal charter in 1557, served as an intermediary between the Crown and the book trade and virtually monopolized the printing and trading of books in London and, indeed, throughout England. An ordinance issued during the reign of Elizabeth I underscored the purpose for which the Company had been established: because "ariseth great disorder by publication of vnfruitefull, vaine, and infamous bookes and papers," the Stationers' Company was required to ensure that all publications received the approval of official censors and that "nothing therein should be either heretical, seditious, or vnseemely for Christian eares" (Quoted in Pollard, 1915, p. 13). To meet the demands of censorship, the Company established a system of book registration, later known as the Stationers' Register, under which only registered books were permitted to be printed and published.

John Feather's research demonstrates that the function of this guild registration system gradually began to change. Numerous contemporary records indicate that registration was being transformed from an instrument of censorship into an instrument of property: between 1563 and 1654, the stationer John Sampson was fined twenty pence by the Company for printing another person's "copy"; between 1558 and 1559, the stationer William Copland was likewise punished for "piratical printing" (Feather, 1994, p. 197). It is therefore evident that texts had begun to be regarded as private property protected against infringement by others. A substantial body of subsequent guild records further attests to the propertization of texts: they could be inherited, bestowed as gifts, bought and sold, or used as collateral (Feather, 1994, p. 197). The property rights in texts during this period, however, did not belong to authors; rather, they constituted an internal form of property within the Company's monopolistic system. Authors, theatrical companies, provincial booksellers, and other non-members, even when they were substantively connected with a text, could not directly establish rights in the Stationers' Register.

Within the guild's monopolistic control of the book trade, even authors themselves had yet to develop a clear, modern conception of "authorship." In tracing the history of the term "anonymous," Jeffrey Masten observes that it was not until the late seventeenth century that the word acquired the meaning "bearing no author's name; of unknown or unavowed authorship." Around the seventeenth century, it more commonly denoted "a person whose name is not given, or is unknown" and was not yet associated with the authorship of texts (Masten, 1994, p. 361). On this basis, Masten characterizes Renaissance drama as "pre-anonymous" and "plural and collaborative" (Masten, 1994, p. 363). "Pre-anonymous" indicates that Renaissance plays were not anonymous works in the modern sense, since the modern author-centred textual institution did not yet exist. Many plays first appeared as theatrical performances whose audiences did not know the identity of the playwright; even when subsequently printed and published, they often appeared without an authorial attribution. "Plural and collaborative" refers to the fact that dramatic composition itself was an ongoing collaborative process in which playwrights, actors, musicians, theatre managers, and even licensing officials participated in the production of dramatic texts. Gerald Bentley's research shows that, of the 282 plays mentioned in *Henslowe's Diary*,[①] nearly two-thirds were written by more than one person; even when a title page bore only a single name, it often served to "simplify the actual circumstances of composition" (Bentley, 1986, p. 199). It is therefore evident that authorship in Renaissance texts was dispersed rather than centralized as a locus of rights. The publishing system of the period was concerned with controlling the printing, reproduction, and sale of texts, rather than with determining who, as an author, possessed a natural right to an original work. Martha Woodmansee further observes that, in early modern Europe, the writer was regarded merely as one

[①] Henslowe's Diary comprises the account books and memoranda left by the Elizabethan theatre manager Philip Henslowe, recording the performances, revenues, purchases of plays, payments to playwrights, and operations of London's commercial theatres from the 1590s to the early seventeenth century.

among the many craftsmen involved in the production of a book, "not superior to, but on a par with other craftsmen" (Woodmansee, 1994a, p. 15). At the time, books, like other manufactured objects, were understood as practical instruments, and their production involved scholars or writers, papermakers, typefounders, compositors and printers, proofreaders, and bookbinders, among others (Woodmansee, 1994a, pp. 15–16). Contemporary society, including writers themselves, would have understood the writer "as master of a craft, master of a body of rules, or techniques, preserved and handed down in rhetoric and poetics, for the transmission of ideas handed down by tradition" (Woodmansee, 1994a, p. 16).

The expansion of the British book trade in the eighteenth century and the dissolution of the guild monopoly marked a decisive shift away from the early modern regime of royal privilege and guild-based textual property towards the modern concept of authors' rights. The early monopoly of the Stationers' Company derived from royal prerogative, and the Licensing of the Press Act of 1662 repackaged this privilege in the form of parliamentary legislation. When the Act lapsed in 1695, however, the British book trade descended into disorder, and members of the Company could no longer prevent "outsiders" from printing the "copies" over which they claimed exclusive control. Seeking to restore its monopoly over the book trade, the Stationers' Company began to appropriate the emerging discourses of free trade and Enlightenment thought, introducing authors' rights into its arguments. The Company reframed its own demand for monopoly privileges as an appeal for the human rights of creators and denounced pirate booksellers for violating authors' interests. If authors were legally regarded as possessing perpetual property rights in their texts, then the Stationers' Company, as the purchaser of original manuscripts, would naturally inherit perpetual rights in those texts as well. In an attempt to balance the growing anti-monopoly sentiment in society against the demands of the powerful Stationers' Company, Parliament enacted the Statute of Anne in 1710. In contrast to the earlier guild system, the statute expressly defined copyright as a limited privilege: books already in print were granted a protection term of twenty-one years, while new books received a term of fourteen years, renewable for a further fourteen years if the author remained alive when the initial term expired (Rose, 2009, p. 119). Its full title, "An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by Vesting the Copies of Printed Books in the Authors or Purchasers of such Copies, during the Times therein mentioned," both affirmed the legal definition of the author as the original proprietor of the work and eased the Stationers' Company's difficult transition by establishing fixed terms of protection. As Mark Rose observes, before the enactment of the statute, "authors could not be said to 'own' their works" (Rose, 1994, p. 213). In early modern England, "it was common to think of a text as an action rather than as a thing": a text could praise a patron, disseminate religion, satirize corruption, or move its readers, but it might also incite rebellion or propagate heresy (Rose, 1994, p. 213). It was not until the eighteenth century, amid the growing prosperity of the book trade and the enactment of the Statute of Anne, that texts began to be conceived as aesthetic commodities capable of being bought and sold. As early as 1704, the novelist Daniel Defoe had called for legislation protecting authors' interests: if an author could be punished for the unlawful content of a book, then the author should likewise be entitled to profit when the book possessed value (Defoe, 1704, pp. 20-21).

Intense commercial competition in the eighteenth-century British book market drove the continual evolution of the country's copyright system, while legal discourse increasingly began to address questions that had previously belonged to aesthetics and literary theory. Because the Statute of Anne granted already published books a twenty-one-year term of protection, the Company's exclusive rights in many texts began to expire during the 1730s, leading to the proliferation of reprints of canonical works on the market. The Stationers' Company consequently turned to the courts in an attempt to establish authors' "common-law copyright." Common law is not law codified and enacted by Parliament at a single moment, but a body of legal principles developed by the English courts through accumulated precedents, customary practices, and judicial interpretation. Statute law, by contrast, refers to written law enacted and promulgated by Parliament. The booksellers argued that authors' rights in their works had not been created by the Statute of Anne, but constituted natural property rights under common law. Since authors produced works through their labour, they naturally owned them; booksellers, having purchased authors' texts, therefore naturally inherited the same rights. During the second half of the eighteenth century, London booksellers became embroiled in a series of legal conflicts with reprinters. In the 1769 case of *Millar v. Taylor*, the Court of King's Bench ruled three to one in favour of the London booksellers, recognizing a common-law literary property right vested in authors and holding that this right could endure in perpetuity; In *Donaldson v. Becket* (1774), however, the House of Lords rejected perpetual copyright and affirmed that copyright must be limited in duration (Rose, 1988, p. 53). Following Donaldson, canonical works by Shakespeare, Milton, and others, long controlled by London booksellers, became "public resources," and large numbers of inexpensive editions entered the market. These legal controversies brought the question of authors' rights to the forefront and led London booksellers inadvertently to "invent" the modern conception of authorship. Drawing upon a Lockean theory of property, they maintained that labour conferred upon individuals a natural property right in the products of their work; literature, as the product of an author's labour, should therefore constitute the author's inalienable natural property. Their opponents, by contrast, emphasized the nature of the "text": if a literary work were material, an author could naturally claim complete ownership of the manuscript; if literature belonged to the realm of ideas, however, it could receive only a limited term of protection, like a patent (Rose, 1988, p. 61). Mark Rose argues that the judgment in Donaldson should still be understood within an anti-monopoly economic context: although the London booksellers failed to achieve their legal objective, they succeeded in disseminating the image of "the author as proprietor" (Rose, 1988, pp. 69-70).

The rise of modern authors' rights in eighteenth-century Britain was closely bound up with the development of the book trade, while the convergence of possessive individualism and an aesthetics of originality gave shape to modern authorship. From the late seventeenth century onward, the rapid expansion of the book trade and the gradual growth of the reading public encouraged the professionalization of writers, making it possible for authors to earn a living solely from the literary market. Mark Rose regards Alexander Pope as a profoundly transitional figure: on the one hand, he continued to uphold the traditional identity of the gentleman, repeatedly emphasizing honour, decorum, and reputation; on the other, he increasingly resembled a modern literary entrepreneur, adept at managing his works, cultivating a favourable public image, and deriving substantial profits from the literary marketplace (Rose, 1994, p. 216). The previously discussed case of *Pope v. Curll* clearly reveals the influence of possessive individualism upon the book trade: like other independent individuals, the author was understood as the proprietor of both himself and the products of his labour. Pope's literary theory likewise exemplifies this transitional character. Although a conservative neoclassicist, he also anticipated certain Romantic theories of genius and originality. In *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), he emphasizes that the poet's task is not to manufacture novelty but to present, in a more appropriate and elegant form, "What oft was Thought, but ne'er so well Exprest" (Pope, 1961, p. 273). Yet Pope's theory also contains a distinctly "Romantic" conception of uniqueness, for he suggests that a truly great poet may at times "From vulgar Bounds with brave Disorder part, / And snatch a Grace beyond the Reach of Art" (Pope, 1961, pp. 257-258). Martha Woodmansee argues that, before the eighteenth century, the author was generally conceived either as a "craftsman" who arranged language according to inherited rules or as a passive "recipient" of external inspiration or the Muse; writers therefore possessed no exclusive ownership of their works (Woodmansee, 1984, pp. 426-427). By contrast, this emerging Romantic conception maintained that genuine genius did not merely reproduce what already existed but introduced new elements into the realm of thought. This theory can be traced back to Plato's account of poetic creation, which holds that poets do not compose through a specialized, systematically organized, and teachable "art," but acquire poetic power through divine inspiration from the Muse (divine power) (Plato, 1996, pp. 13-14). Here, the author is already understood as an original creator whose irreplaceable and distinctive creativity constitutes the source of the work's value. It was precisely the development of commercial interests and an aesthetics of originality that facilitated the emergence of modern authors' rights in the legal sphere. Copyright legislation not only established and protected authors' rights and commercial interests but also actively shaped modern authorship: the author was constructed as the legitimate proprietor of the work and the source of creative thought, while the work was constituted as a marketable commodity embodying the author's labour.

Modern authorship was ultimately consolidated by the Romantic literary movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Mark Rose argues that the establishment of the concept of "authors' rights" required three preconditions: first, the book market had to develop on a scale sufficient to sustain commercial cultural production, before the author could be regarded as someone who earned a living through writing; second, an aesthetics of originality had to emerge, enabling the author to be understood as an original creator of ideas; and third, a Lockean theory of property had to gain widespread acceptance, according to which individuals could transform natural objects into private property through labour, while authors, by applying their intellectual labour to language and ideas, thereby acquired legitimate rights in their works (Rose, 1988, p. 56). Britain in the mid- and late eighteenth century clearly fulfilled all three conditions identified by Rose: the book market continued to flourish, copyright law underwent continual development, and Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) was even regarded in mainstream literary history as the first professional writer (Osteen and Woodmansee, 1999, p. 5). Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759) exemplifies the emergence in Britain of a Romantic aesthetics of originality. Young declares: "let not great examples, or authorities, browbeat thy reason into too great a diffidence of thyself: Thyself so reverence, as to prefer the native growth of thy own mind to the richest import from abroad" (Young, 1918, p. 24). Rejecting the neoclassical imitation of classical models, this passage insists that poets should rely upon their own exceptional gifts rather than create in the reflected glory of the ancients. Young also explicitly connects "originality" with "ownership," asserting that "his the sole property of them ; which property alone can confer the noble title of an author" (Young, 1918, p. 24). Woodmansee observes that Young's theory exerted its greatest influence in Germany because German writers in the late eighteenth century, while attempting to earn a living through writing, faced the threats posed by the old system of privilege, political fragmentation, and widespread piracy, and therefore urgently required a theory capable of demonstrating that authors owned their works (Woodmansee, 1984). By the early nineteenth century, the ascendant Romantic conception of authorship further emphasized that what authors owned was neither general ideas nor materials in the public domain, but their distinctive expression, style, imagination, and individual acts of intellectual creation. William Wordsworth actively sought to enlist the power of law in support of his Romantic conception of authorship. In his earlier years, Wordsworth opposed the limited term of protection prescribed by the Statute of Anne and advocated perpetual copyright for authors; when this effort failed, he subsequently supported proposals to extend the copyright term (Woodmansee, 1994b, pp. 4-5). Wordsworth maintained that, unless the law provided long-term protection, it would suppress the authorial spirit and compel writers to devote their talents to inferior occupations (Wordsworth, 1974, p. 312).

2. From Patronage to the Marketization of Literary Production

Literary activity in early modern England was not yet a purely commodity-based economic practice but rather a form of gift exchange deeply embedded in aristocratic networks of power. In *A Dictionary of the English Language*, Samuel Johnson defined "patron" as "one who countenances, supports or protects" (Johnson, 1825a, p. 293) and "patronage" as "support, protection." ((Johnson, 1825a, p. 293). Patronage was first and foremost an economic and social institution, typically structured around the relationship between an impoverished man of letters and a wealthy aristocrat.

Authors depended heavily upon patrons for annuities, gifts, or financial support for publication, while patrons could also facilitate their entry into the royal court, aristocratic households, the Church, or government service. Sir Philip Sidney exemplified the ideal literary patron of the Elizabethan period. He received the dedications of approximately twenty-five works and used patronage to promote his poetic ideals (Parry, 2002, p. 123). Sidney was particularly renowned for supporting the poet Edmund Spenser: his generous assistance ensured the publication of *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579), and he also advanced Spenser's career by recommending him for the position of secretary to the newly appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland (Parry, 2002, p. 123). At a time when authors' rights had not yet been established and the book market remained underdeveloped, writers depended upon patrons rather than market exchange for their livelihood, and literary works functioned more as gifts than as commodities. According to the anthropologist Marcel Mauss, the gift economy entails a threefold obligation: the obligation to give, to receive, and to reciprocate (Mauss, 2002, pp. 16-17). Within patronage relations, aristocratic status required the display of generosity, while accepting an author's dedication amounted to acknowledging the author's request for dependency and reciprocating through appreciation, favour, or protection. As the cultural critic Lewis Hyde observes, "It is the cardinal difference between gift and commodity exchange that a gift establishes a feeling-bond between two people, while the sale of a commodity leaves no necessary connection" (Hyde, 1983, p. 56). Unlike the commodity economy, which emphasizes rational calculation and separates individuals from one another, the continuous circulation of gifts leaves enduring traces of social relations and ultimately helps constitute a cultural community. In practice, the English public sphere after the Reformation was rife with personal and social antagonisms as well as factional conflict, and the public circulation of a book exposed its author to social criticism, religious censorship, and political suspicion. Early dedications therefore repeatedly invoked the author's need for a patron's protection against such attacks as "malicious tongues," "backbiting," and "serpents" (Parry, 2002, p. 118). Close association with a prestigious patron could undoubtedly deter many reckless accusers. Early literary patronage, therefore, involved more than financial support: the patron's reputation also constituted an important source of legitimacy for the work.

Although early modern English literature remained broadly embedded in relations of patronage, the market and the reading public increasingly became important targets and motivations of literary production. English literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could still scarcely detach itself from patronage structures in the broad sense, and authors continued to depend upon aristocrats for financial support, symbolic capital, and social legitimacy. With the development of printing, the growing power of the Stationers' Company, and the commercialization of the theatre, however, authors began to confront a large reading public composed of anonymous, dispersed, and paying consumers. Innovations in printing expanded the circulation of texts: literary manuscripts no longer circulated exclusively within the royal court and aristocratic households but reached a much wider readership through booksellers' distribution networks. Although authors' rights had not yet been established and writers could not directly profit from copyright or book sales, once a text entered the marketplace, it inevitably had to accommodate the tastes of purchasers. The coexistence of literary patronage and the book market—and the tensions between them—was reflected in the dedication and the address to the reader that framed many early modern texts: whereas the former was often filled with tributes to aristocratic patrons, the latter revealed the author's desire to attract readers' purchases, attention, and approval. In George Turberville's poetry collection *Epitaphs, Epigrams, Songs and Sonnets* (1576), for example, the author dedicated the work to the Countess of Warwick in order to secure a source of legitimacy, while in his address to the reader he turned towards a general audience, describing his poems as "the unripe seedes of my barraine braine," intended to entertain the reader's weary mind (qtd. in Marotti, 1991, p. 8). The theatre more clearly exemplified a situation in which both aristocrats and the public constituted audiences, with princes and nobles as well as paying spectators serving as the "patrons" of drama. Shakespeare, for instance, was a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, whose patron was the Lord Chamberlain, a court official under Elizabeth I; when the newly enthroned James I became the company's patron in 1603, it was accordingly renamed the King's Men. In practice, despite royal or aristocratic patronage, Shakespeare's company and many other theatrical companies of the period relied primarily upon audiences at public theatres and other market-based spectators. Elizabeth I even shrewdly arranged for the public to finance the touring expenses of the Queen's Men through ticket purchases, while the company undertook political propaganda on behalf of the Queen and her ministers (Westfall, 2002, p. 41).

With the advent of the eighteenth century, the sustained expansion of Britain's population and economy created a large and prosperous book market. Throughout the century, Britain—and England in particular—experienced significant population growth: England's population rose from approximately 5.118 million in 1696 to about 6.149 million in 1756, 7.206 million in 1781, 8.671 million in 1801, and approximately 13.254 million by 1831 (Suarez, 2009, p. 3). Although demographic expansion cannot be directly equated with an increase in the number of readers, it nevertheless indirectly indicates the growth of the potential book-buying public. Britain's population growth occurred alongside economic development: between 1680 and 1820, British gross domestic product increased by approximately 246 per cent, far exceeding that of its continental European competitors (Suarez, 2009, p. 4). Britain also underwent sustained urbanization. In 1700, approximately 17 per cent of England's population lived in towns of more than 5,000 inhabitants; by 1800, this proportion had risen sharply to 28 per cent (Suarez, 2009, p. 5). Population growth, economic expansion, and urbanization collectively broadened the social basis of literary consumption, enabling literary works to be produced and sold to a readership that was larger, possessed greater purchasing power, and was more spatially concentrated. Admittedly, literary works remained highly expensive in the early eighteenth century, and the Stationers' Company was still able to maintain high prices by virtue of its monopolistic position. In 1774, however, the House of Lords ruled in *Donaldson v. Becket* that copyright was limited in duration, rejecting the booksellers' claim to perpetual copyright in older works. Canonical works by Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, and others, which had previously been monopolized by major London booksellers, abruptly lost legal protection. New printers and retailers entered the market, prompting a proliferation of inexpensive reprints and allowing canonical literature to circulate at lower prices. J. E. Elliot supplements the material evidence of eighteenth-century book consumption by examining auction catalogues from the second-hand book market (Elliot, 2010).① Elliot observes that fixed-price auctions emerged in the mid-eighteenth-century book market. Unlike conventional competitive auctions aimed at collectors, fixed-price auctions involved booksellers offering their stock to the general public at low prices determined in advance (Elliot, 2010, pp. 361-364). This suggests that readers of limited means did not necessarily have to pay monopoly prices, since comparatively inexpensive literary materials had already become available through auctions and the second-hand book trade. The market also began to offer multivolume literary anthologies, such as the 109-volume octodecimo edition of *Poets of Great Britain*, published between 1776 and 1782 (Elliot, 2010, p. 369). Such collections allowed readers to purchase selected volumes at lower prices rather than pay for an expensive complete set. Macroeconomic and demographic expansion, combined with copyright reform and innovations in market circulation, thus paved the way for the commodification of literature, gradually transforming it into a form of mass cultural consumption.

With the emergence of professional men of letters, literary production increasingly came to operate according to market principles: writers became merchants, and works became commodities. In 1832, reviewing the newly edited *Boswell's Life of Johnson* (1831), Thomas Carlyle presented Samuel Johnson as the pivotal figure in literature's transition from aristocratic patronage to market support. Carlyle observed that, when Johnson first entered the literary world, "Literature, in many senses, was in a transitional state"; "It was in the very act of passing from the protection of Patrons into that of the Public; no longer to supply its necessities by laudatory Dedications to the Great, but by judicious Bargains with the Booksellers" (Carlyle, 1852, p. 329). Carlyle described Johnson's letter rejecting the patronage of the Earl of Chesterfield as the "Blast of Doom" that proclaimed the demise of the patronage system (Carlyle, 1852, p. 330). During this period, authors were largely liberated from dependence upon the aristocracy and came instead to rely on booksellers, readers, and copyright income for their livelihoods. In this sense, writers began to assume the character of "merchants." Although they neither possessed capital nor controlled the channels of publication as booksellers did, they increasingly understood their writing through a commercial logic. Writers had

① Elliot's original purpose was to use evidence from second-hand book auction catalogues to challenge the "cheap literature hypothesis" in traditional cultural history: namely, the claim that the 1774 decision in *Donaldson v. Becket* flooded the market with inexpensive editions of canonical works, thereby generating a middle-class reading public and shaping the British national literary canon. At the same time, the article also provides substantial evidence that literary works were becoming more affordable.

to sell their words, manage their reputations, and cultivate their readerships. In 1715, for example, the poet Alexander Pope placed a commercial advertisement in a newspaper for an engraved portrait of himself. The advertisement stated that the print was available for purchase between the Temple Gates, "where his Translation of Homer, and all his other Pieces may be had." (qtd. in Egan, 2016, p. 1). This provides compelling evidence that literary authors did not enter the market passively but actively managed their public images and participated directly in commercial promotion and market operations. The expanding middle class became the principal consumers of books. For these readers, books were constructed not merely as luxury objects for domestic display and private collection, but as cultural instruments for disseminating politeness and taste and for signalling class identity. In response to this tendency, eighteenth-century booksellers began to package books as distinctive and recognizable commodities. The commodified book was no longer simply a vehicle for content but a visualized, fashionable, and even class-coded object of consumption. Booksellers became involved in every aspect of book production, emphasizing features that "included recognizable title page and typographical styles and the pre-retail binding of books in a house design" (Raven, 2009, p. 86). As one commentator observed in 1776, "we seem to live in an age when retailers of every kind of ware aspire to be the original manufacturers, and particularly in literature" (qtd. in Raven, 2009, p. 87).

The marketization of literary production also had its irrational underside, and "Grub Street" became the central geographical symbol through which Augustan writers satirized "low-end writing." Grub Street was originally a street in one of London's poorer districts. Its exceptionally low rents and proximity to the centre of London's printing industry attracted large numbers of impoverished writers who were unable to enter mainstream literary circles. Over time, "Grub Street" developed into a pejorative cultural symbol denoting vulgar, inexpensive, and mass-produced commercial literature, as well as the "hack writers" willing to write almost anything in order to earn a living. In *The Distrest Poet* (1736), the celebrated eighteenth-century satirical artist William Hogarth depicts a typical scene of Grub Street life: dressed in rags, a poet sits deep in thought in a cramped and dimly lit attic, attempting to compose a poem that might earn him enough money for bread; his wife mends clothes nearby, while a creditor demanding payment for milk stands at the door.[①] Johnson bluntly observed in his *Dictionary* that the street was "much inhabited by writers of small histories, dictionaries, and temporary poems; whence any mean production is called grubstreet" (Johnson, 1825, p. 849). The radical commercialization of literature in the eighteenth century generated a range of disorders: hack writers could produce propaganda for either the government or the opposition, or manufacture scandal, satire, and entertainment specifically for the market. The quantitative growth of writing provoked anxieties about literary quality, prompting fierce satire and criticism from Augustan writers such as Pope and Swift. In the introduction to *A Tale of a Tub* (1704),

---

[①] For the painting, see the online resource of the Metropolitan Museum of Art: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/403258

Swift associates Grub Street with cheap collections of jokes, comic tales, and popular entertainment, satirizing a mode of writing that sought readers' attention not through genuine learning or literary value but through vulgar tastes, commercial gimmicks, and rapid consumption (Swift, 1930, p. 6). His other work, *The Battle of the Books* (1704), may likewise be read as a satire on the commercialization of Grub Street literary production. Its most famous analogy represents the conflict between ancient and modern literature through the figures of the bee and the spider: modern commercial literature resembles the spider, spinning entirely from itself and producing something enclosed, dark, and self-centred; the ancients, by contrast, resemble bees, gathering materials from nature and tradition and bringing sweet honey to humankind. In *The Dunciad* (1728-1743), Pope satirizes literary profiteers in still more caustic terms: they are "dunces" branded by the Goddess of Dulness, an "industrious tribe" driven by "Glory, and gain" ("Glory, and gain, th' industrious tribe provoke"), yet possessing "Less human genius than God gives an ape" (Pope, 2009, pp. 151, 134).

Women's participation made the literary market more dynamic: "as readers, writers, topics and targets in literature, women and female concerns leapt into the forefront of literary culture" (Benedict, 2004, p. 5). Throughout the eighteenth century, literacy rates in Britain rose steadily, with female literacy increasing particularly rapidly and far outpacing that of men. By 1759, the literacy rate among adult British men had stabilized at approximately 60 per cent; it rose only slightly thereafter, reaching about 66 per cent by 1830. By contrast, female literacy increased from approximately 25 per cent at the beginning of the eighteenth century to 40 per cent by mid-century, and by 1830 nearly half of all women were literate (see Suarez, 2009, pp. 9, 11). Even more striking was the rapid growth in publications by women: 913 identifiable female authors are known to have written during the long eighteenth century (see Grundy, 2009, p. 146). Given the constraints imposed upon female identity at the time, women frequently published anonymously or under male personae, suggesting that the actual number must have been considerably higher. Women were particularly closely associated with the emerging novel. According to Judith Stanton's estimate, women constituted the majority of the most prolific novelists; among the most successful novelists, whether success is measured by reputation or by the number of editions and reprints, women and men were represented in roughly equal numbers (qtd. in Grundy, 2009, p. 147). In his account of the rise of the novel, Ian Watt identifies the ample leisure time available to eighteenth-century women as an important factor in the expansion of the market for novel reading. Watt argues that the gendered division of labour excluded women of the middle and upper classes from politics, commerce, and estate management, while the increasing specialization of labour and expansion of market exchange also substantially reduced women's domestic work. Inexpensive reading and literary discussion, both of which could take place within the home, consequently became important forms of leisure (Watt, 1979, pp. 47-50). Richard Sheridan's play *The Rivals* (1775) satirizes the contemporary phenomenon of women's fascination with sentimental fiction: in Act I, Scene II, the "reading" Lydia sits in her room surrounded by books and repeatedly asks after various sentimental novels, while her maid Lucy, having just returned from the circulating library in Bath, produces a succession of novels from beneath her cloak and from her pockets (Sheridan, 1988, p. 14). The female market also attracted the attention of periodical literature, giving rise to numerous periodicals either written with women's participation or directed specifically at female readers. Many periodical titles began to incorporate gendered designations such as "ladies' magazines, museums, companions," while the editor of *Ladies Journal* (1727) promised that the periodical would concern itself with "nothing . . . but the lighter Affairs of the Ladies', such as Love and Gallantry" (qtd. in Italia, 2005, p. 4).

The emergence of serial publication in the nineteenth century marked a new stage in the marketization of British literary production: even while a novel was still being written and its text had yet to assume a definitive form, it was already deeply embedded in commercial mechanisms. Lee Erickson argues that the rise and decline of literary forms cannot be explained solely in terms of aesthetic developments internal to literature but must instead be examined in relation to publishing technologies and the book market (Erickson, 1996, p. 3). Erickson observes that poetry, once highly favoured by publishers, fell into disfavour during the 1830s, while prose and literary periodicals became the new dominant forms of the market, suggesting the existence of an "economy of literary forms" jointly constituted by reader demand and authorial production (Erickson, 1996, pp. 3-8). As literary production became increasingly marketized, forms capable of sustaining readers' interest and lending themselves to wide circulation or serialization acquired greater economic competitiveness. Writing became increasingly profitable and professionalized over the course of the nineteenth century, and periodicals gradually emerged as the dominant mode of publication. Compared with separately published volumes, periodicals generated more stable and predictable profits, entailed a lower cost for each individual purchase, could be more readily incorporated into readers' everyday lives, and encouraged repeated consumption through regular publication. As the pre-eminent representative of nineteenth-century British serial fiction, Dickens combined the roles of novelist, editor, periodical proprietor, and literary entrepreneur, and possessed an intimate knowledge of both the commercial operation of periodicals and the compositional principles of serialized literature. As he himself remarked, he had become, in the art of serializing fiction, "by dint of necessity and practice, rather cunning" (qtd. in Grubb, 1942, p. 143). In 1860, when Charles Lever's *A Day's Ride* was to appear in the periodical *All Year Around*, Dickens, its editor, wrote to the author: "The only suggestion I have to make (and that arises out of the manner of publication) is, that we ought to get at the action of the story, in the first No. and that I therefore would, by a little condensation there, and a little enlargement of the quantity givei in the first week, get at the invitation to dinner, as the end to the first weekly part" (qtd. in Grubb, 1942, pp. 141-142). Gerald Grubb identifies six central dimensions of Dickens's habitual method of serialization: the arrangement of chapter structure, the manner in which characters are introduced, the sustained development of readerly interest, the careful positioning of major scenes, the preparation of plot developments at an early stage, and the rapid pacing of the narrative (Grubb, 1942, p. 143). It is evident that, for Dickens, each instalment of a serialized novel had to function as an effective narrative unit in order to become a commercially successful unit of sale. Literary production was thus closely aligned with commercial demand: because readers paid regularly to purchase each issue of a periodical, every instalment had to provide a sufficient quantity and intensity of literary content.

3. The Marketization of Literary Form and Content

The commercialization of literary production precipitated transformations in literary form, and eighteenth-century British drama, after evolving from neoclassicism to bourgeois tragedy, ultimately entered a period of relative decline. From the late seventeenth to the early eighteenth century, the generic conventions of French neoclassicism came to constitute an almost universally accepted dramatic authority across Europe. Brander Matthews observes that French neoclassical theory only superficially inherited the ancient Greek tradition and was in fact composed of a set of restrictive and largely negative precepts: a properly regulated tragedy had to consist of five acts, adhere strictly to the three unities, avoid prose, adopt elevated and solemn subject matter, and feature princes, nobles, and other socially exalted figures as its principal characters (Matthews, 1903, p. 2). As theatre revenues became increasingly dependent upon paying audiences, however, theatre managers had to ensure that plays were both intelligible and emotionally compelling to spectators of different social ranks. Accordingly, within a theatrical market grounded in box-office receipts and public consumption, tragedy no longer derived its significance primarily from the noble status of its protagonists but instead established audience identification through middle-class moral sensibilities, domestic relations, and economic life; human worth thus came increasingly to be understood as a form of intrinsic moral value rather than as a function of social rank. Eighteenth-century drama consequently underwent a major transformation from conventions of status and hierarchy to an emphasis on inward moral value, a process that Laura Brown describes as a shift from "heroic action" to "moral action" (Brown, 1981, p. 145). George Lillo's *The London Merchant* (1731) may be regarded as a paradigmatic example of eighteenth-century drama centred on "moral action." As Lillo observes, "it is more truly august in proportion to the extent of its influence and the numbers that are properly affected by it...Plays founded on moral tales in private life may be of admirable use by carrying conviction to the mind with such irresistible force" (Lillo, 1965, pp. 3-4). It was precisely on this basis that Lillo departed from neoclassical convention by making a London merchant and his apprentice the protagonists of tragedy, thereby refracting the collective anxieties generated by social unrest during a period of transformation in eighteenth-century economic thought (Tao Jiusheng and Yin Bo, 2025, p. 1). Laura Brown likewise argues that, although eighteenth-century drama adopted a new form of bourgeois morality, it could express that morality only through the flat characters, restricted scope, and inherited conventions of Restoration drama (Brown, 1981, pp. 180-181). The novel, by contrast, was not constrained by so powerful and rigid an established tradition and was therefore able to develop psychological representation and expansive social narrative with greater freedom; it consequently displaced drama and gradually became the principal literary form for representing bourgeois private experience and everyday life (Brown, 1981, pp. 185-186).

The rise of newspapers and periodicals coincided with the increasing commercialization of the eighteenth-century literary market, and their forms and contents were shaped to a considerable extent by market structures. Subscription publishing constituted an important mode of publication in the early eighteenth century: readers subscribed and paid in advance on the basis of a proposed publication plan, thereby financing the production of a work and subsequently receiving a limited-edition copy (Benedict, 2004, p. 9). As the number of middle-class readers increased, however, "speculative" publishing directed towards a broader readership became increasingly profitable. Booksellers consequently required a form that combined relatively low production costs with the capacity to attract repeated consumption, and periodical publication emerged in response to this demand. Periodical publication initially took the form of newspapers. The British newspaper press expanded continuously throughout the eighteenth century, covering not only political and economic news but also such cultural materials as literary extracts and reviews, and thereby giving rise to the two principal forms of periodical literature: the essay-periodical and the magazine.[①] In the early eighteenth century, periodical literature was disparaged by mainstream culture as disposable writing rapidly produced by professional writers for financial gain. Even conventional modern literary histories have failed to take periodical literature seriously: genres are commonly classified according to the internal structure, subject matter, or style of texts, so that the individual essay is often treated as a literary genre, whereas the periodical itself is regarded merely as a form of publication and distribution. Iona Italia (2005), however, argues that the periodical cannot be understood simply as a neutral publishing format, since an article produces entirely different meanings and reading experiences when it appears in a separately published volume, a single-sheet weekly, or a substantial monthly magazine. Italia observes that eighteenth-century essay-periodicals had already developed a recognizable body of literary conventions, most notably the widespread adoption of "fictional personae" (Italia, 2005, p. 13). *The Tatler* (1709 – 1711) and *The Spectator* (1711 – 1712) are exemplary in this respect: the former created the elderly gentleman Isaac Bickerstaff as its editor, while the latter invented the silent yet morally authoritative "Mr Spectator." These fictional personae enabled authors to criticize social failings without appearing conceited or hypocritical; while enhancing the entertainment value of the periodicals, they also established a narrative centre capable of sustaining readers' interest and preserving stylistic continuity across

[①] The "essay-periodical" was generally published once or several times a week, with each issue centred on a relatively substantial principal essay and sometimes supplemented by a small amount of domestic and foreign news and advertising. It usually consisted of only two folio sheets and was often independently written and edited by a single author, thereby possessing a relatively distinctive and unified narrative voice. The "magazine," by contrast, was generally published monthly, was considerably longer, and contained highly heterogeneous materials, including reprinted articles, political news, scientific matters, readers' correspondence, literature, book reviews, and various forms of commercial information (Italia, 2005, p. 3).

successive issues. The widespread imitation of this model by later periodicals (Italia, 2005, p. 15) demonstrates that the essay-periodical had developed a recognizable set of literary conventions and therefore cannot be regarded merely as an external vehicle for the circulation of essays. In this sense, the commercial market not only provided the conditions for the distribution of periodicals but also participated in the creation of the periodical as a genre. Regular publication required periodicals to supply new material continuously, while intense competition compelled each publication to establish a stable style and identity amid a crowded newspaper and periodical market. It was within this commercial environment of continuous production and sale, and of repeated competition for readers, that the periodical gradually acquired its own narrative structure and developed from a mode of publication into a literary genre.

The rise of the novel was shaped by the ascendancy of the eighteenth-century bourgeoisie and the growing influence of individualism, ultimately developing into a modern form of prose fiction centred on the everyday experience of ordinary individuals. Iona Italia argues that the periodical and the novel shared a number of important historical characteristics, "most notably its historical youth, relatively low price, dubious respectability, widespread availability and particular association with female readers" (Italia, 2005, p. 7). The flourishing of newspapers and periodicals in the eighteenth century not only cultivated stable reading habits among the public but also promoted an accessible and lucid prose style suited to a mass readership. The eighteenth-century reading public was no longer confined to aristocrats and clerics with a classical education; merchants, artisans, servants, and women increasingly entered print culture. Prose may therefore be understood as a "middle style" situated between forms of expression dependent upon classical learning and the language of the street, and thus particularly well adapted to the needs of the broad middle ranks. As middle-class readers increasingly desired stories about characters whose circumstances resembled their own and who inhabited the same social world, the novel emerged in response. Ian Watt defines the distinguishing feature of this new prose form as "formal realism" and unites both the social conditions and the epistemological foundations of its emergence under the principle of "individualism." Watt defines formal realism as the novel's presentation of itself as a full and authentic account of individual experience: it must provide readers with the particular identities of its agents, together with the specific times and places in which events occur, and these details must be conveyed through a prose language centred on reference to reality (Watt, 1979, pp. 34-35). Why, however, should the experiences and private choices of ordinary individuals merit such almost epic particularity? Watt's answer lies in the rise of individualism, encompassing not only economic individualism but also a Protestant individualism that emphasized personal salvation (Watt, 1979, pp. 66-67). The prosperity of the market economy brought an increasingly specialized division of labour, accompanied by a loosening hierarchical structure and a relatively open political environment. Individuals were thereby detached from traditional communities and became the basic units responsible for determining their own economic, social, political, and religious roles. Defoe is widely celebrated as the "father of the English novel," and *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) not only exemplifies the narrative method of formal realism but also gives concentrated expression to the rise of individualist thought. Defoe's own formulation perhaps reveals still more clearly the influence of the marketization of literary production upon the emergence of the novel. Writing, he declared, "is become a very considerable Branch of the English Commerce. The Booksellers are the Master Manufacturers or Employers. The several Writers, Authors, Copyers, Subwriters, and all other Operators with Pen and Ink are the workmen employed by the said Master Manufacturers" (qtd. in Watt, 1979, p. 59).

The eighteenth-century British Financial Revolution not only brought about profound changes in the representation of value but also became intertwined with the legitimacy of novelistic fiction and the psychology of readerly reception, since both financial investment and novel reading depended upon a form of imaginative trust. Following the establishment of the Bank of England in 1694, a financial system centred on public debt and company shares expanded rapidly, drawing increasing numbers of investors into the market and generating a sustained speculative boom in London's financial world. The development of the credit economy produced epistemological anxieties, as wealth became increasingly detached from land, gold and silver, and tangible property, and instead assumed the form of paper value embodied in bonds and shares and sustained by expectation and trust. The South Sea Bubble of 1720 exposed the fragility of this credit economy, bringing questions of reality and fiction, trust and suspicion, to the forefront. Catherine Ingrassia argues that financial investment and novel reading are closely analogous imaginative activities: the value of a financial instrument lies not at the moment of purchase but in a future yet to arrive, while readers of novels must likewise suspend disbelief, initially extending trust to the narrative before investing their emotions and desires in the act of reading (Ingrassia, 1998, pp. 2, 6-7). Similarly, Sandra Sherman contends that the novel and finance are structurally homologous and may be understood as a cross-generic "discursive continuum" (Sherman, 1996, p. 4), together constituting a historical discourse concerned with fictionality, credibility, authenticity, and responsibility. In this sense, both the investor's anticipation of future value and the reader's acceptance of fictional narrative depend upon a mechanism of credit through which judgement is made before sufficient evidence is available. The credit economy fostered a new semiotic consciousness, gradually accustoming people to the distance between signifier and signified. Novel reading demanded a comparable mode of thought: readers knew that the story did not consist of direct facts from actual life, yet remained willing to acknowledge that it possessed a certain truth and significance. "Fiction" thereby gradually acquired a legitimate status distinct from falsehood: although it was not fact, it could nonetheless function as an effective representation of reality. Within this epistemological transformation, the novel's formal realism acquired a broader basis of acceptance, while fiction was progressively established as a relatively stable generic category. Mary Poovey further argues that one of the most important functions of imaginative writing, including poetry and fiction, was to "mediate value": "help people understand the new credit economy and the market model of value that it promoted" (Poovey, 2008, pp. 1-2). When the credit economy rendered "value" abstract and unstable, imaginative writing translated this new form of value, through character, plot, and narrative, into social experience that readers could apprehend and evaluate. It may therefore be concluded that imaginative forms such as the novel not only emerged from a society organized around credit but also shaped the ways in which people understood and judged credit.

A substantial number of eighteenth-century British writers had commercial backgrounds, and their literary works inevitably incorporated commercial elements and economic commentary. With the marketization of literary production and the emergence of professional authors, many writers were able to sustain themselves through the book market. Beyond entering market exchange through writing, numerous eighteenth-century authors had themselves engaged in commerce. Richard Steele exemplifies the merchant-author: *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, which he helped to establish, were themselves successful cultural commodities, and he was also appointed to participate in the management of the highly profitable Drury Lane Theatre (Aitken, 1968, pp. 47-48). Significantly, Steele actively pursued commercial speculation. He once applied for a patent for a vessel designed to transport live fish, which kept them fresh during long-distance journeys through the continuous circulation of air and water (Aitken, 1968, pp. 157-158). It may have been Steele's commercial experience that prompted him to create Sir Andrew Freeport, the merchant member of the "Spectator Club," as a morally upright, exceptionally intelligent, and patriotic modern businessman. Through Sir Andrew Freeport, Steele and Addison articulated the economic views of the emerging commercial class: wealth should derive from industry and productive activity rather than idleness; commodity prices should be reduced through the division of labour rather than through the suppression of wages; and a nation's true strength lay not in military conquest but in the industriousness of its people and the free circulation of trade (Gras, 1945, p. 159). The literary figure of Freeport marked the beginning of a more positive, rational, and sympathetic representation of merchants in British literature, a shift inseparable from both the marketization of literary production and writers' own experience of trade. Daniel Defoe is perhaps the most representative example of a figure who combined the roles of merchant and man of letters. He began his commercial career in the wholesale hosiery trade and the importation of wine and later ventured into overseas shipping, property development, and brick-and-tile manufacture (Novak, 2003, pp. 76, 94, 139). The critic Maximillian E. Novak observes: "As a businessman, he was essentially a gambler, excited by new deals, new prospects" (Novak, 2003, p. 83). Defoe was adept at identifying new consumer demands and commercial opportunities, yet he frequently relied on borrowing and credit to expand several ventures simultaneously; as a result, he repeatedly fell heavily into debt, declared bankruptcy, and was even confined in a debtors' prison. The influence of Defoe's commercial experience upon his fiction extended beyond the appropriation of subject matter, shaping at a deeper level the ways in which he organized plots and constructed verisimilitude. In *Robinson Crusoe*, *Roxana: The Fortunate Mistress* (1724), *Moll Flanders* (1722), and several other novels, economic activity becomes a central mechanism driving narrative development: characters continually calculate their property, accumulate capital, exchange commodities, seek markets, and transform their social positions through labour, marriage, crime, and colonial enterprise.

The marketization of literary production prompted literary texts to intervene more directly in debates over economic questions and thereby contributed to the formation of the free-market discourse of classical political economy. The rapid development of the eighteenth-century market economy not only created a flourishing book market but also radically transformed the economic environment itself, as economic thought shifted from traditional mercantilism towards free-market principles. With the expansion of transoceanic trade and the continuing advance of colonial expansion, exotic commodities such as tea, porcelain, sugar, and tobacco poured into Britain in vast quantities, rapidly arousing enthusiasm for consumption across different social classes. As Neil McKendrick observes, "There was a consumer revolution in eighteenth-century England. More men and women than ever before in human history enjoyed the experience of acquiring material possessions" (McKendrick, 1985, p. 1). The vogue for luxury consumption alarmed both advocates of the moral economy and mercantilists: the former regarded it as injurious to religious virtue, while the latter viewed imported luxuries as a drain on the wealth of the kingdom. Bernard Mandeville responded to contemporary anxieties about consumption in his poem *The Grumbling Hive* (1705), which depicts a hive pervaded by deception, luxury, and private desire, yet prosperous and powerful precisely because of these vices; when the bees suddenly become honest and frugal, economic activity instead declines. Mandeville subsequently added commentary and several prose essays to elaborate his economic thought, and when the work was expanded and published as *The Fable of the Bees* (1714), it rapidly provoked widespread controversy. The work's most distinctive feature is that its economic ideas initially appeared not in the form of a systematic economic treatise but as an animal fable and a rhymed poem. By condensing social and economic theory into accessible and memorable verse, Mandeville endowed these propositions with an apparently self-evident and axiomatic quality. His arguments generated intense public debate, eliciting responses from writers such as Pope, Johnson, and Fielding, as well as thinkers including Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, and Voltaire (Clery, 2022, p. 55). Adam Smith, a foundational figure in classical economics, condemned Mandeville's thought in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) as representative of "licentious Systems" (Smith, 1984, p. 306). In the later *The Wealth of the Nation* (1776), however, Smith accepted a similar principle in a more moderate form: social order and the public good may arise not from individuals' moral intentions but unintentionally from self-interested actions. Literature, then, did not merely represent market society but participated directly in the conceptualization and legitimation of modern market logic. Free-market discourse did not emerge entirely within an autonomous discipline of political economy; rather, it gradually took shape through the interaction and contestation of fable, satire, periodical writing, and economic argument. As Tao Jiusheng observes, one of the central tasks of research into the history of economic thought in British literature is to examine how, once economic discourse entered literature, writers employed economic narratives to represent and respond to the economic ideas of particular historical periods (Tao Jiusheng, 2024, pp. 60-61).

The concept of the literary canon took shape in the eighteenth century, and it was the interaction between booksellers' publishing activities and the literary market that forged the British literary canon. Although notions of a literary canon had already existed in early modern England, such judgements generally remained "private conceptions," embodied in the personal records of men of letters or the private collections of aristocrats (Bonnell, 1990, p. 55). When patronage remained dominant, defences of poetry rarely attended to the reading experience of an external public, and literary value was assessed primarily within the community formed by writers and their aristocratic patrons. By the eighteenth century, however, the expansion of the print market and the professionalization of authorship had stimulated the rapid development of such mediating activities as literary criticism, compilation, and literary history, gradually shifting the centre of literary evaluation towards reader reception. Texts from the past began to be systematically edited, reprinted, and reviewed before being introduced to successive generations of readers, and canonization consequently became an act of cultural reproduction conducted within an extensive book market. Booksellers functioned as the largely invisible selectors in the process of literary canonization. In addition to publishing, printing, and retailing books, they undertook advertising, commissioned new work, and organized editorial projects, thereby determining which works merited investment and would ultimately be presented to the market. Booksellers' selection and market response shaped one another. The 1774 decision in *Donaldson v. Becket* released the copyright of traditional literary works, prompting numerous booksellers to organize large-scale programmes for reprinting British literature. Thomas Bonnell argues that *The Poets of Great Britain* (1776-82) and *The Works of the English Poets* (1779-81) "Defined for the first time in uniform print were the poets, the works -in effect, canons of English poetry, worthy of honor, study, and preservation" (Bonnell, 1990, pp. 53-54). Bonnell draws particular attention to the claims of comprehensiveness used to promote these two collections: the former announced itself as containing "all the British Poets from the time of Chaucer to Churchill," while the latter claimed to include "all the English Poets of reputation, from Chaucer to the present time" (Bonnell, 1990, p. 58). An edition that genuinely included every poet was clearly neither practically nor commercially feasible; once publishers declared a series "complete," however, they effectively demarcated the boundaries of English poetry and constituted the included writers as the normative tradition. Moreover, the material and visual forms of the collections themselves operated as mechanisms for producing canonical value. Through a uniform appearance and arrangement, works previously dispersed across different periods and genres were organized into an apparently continuous and coherent literary tradition. Even before reading the individual texts, readers received a judgement from the books' physical appearance: these authors belonged to the same cultural rank, and their works collectively formed a unified body worthy of preservation. The book market, therefore, was not merely a site for the exchange of economic interests but also a space in which cultural value was produced. In pursuing commercial profit, booksellers used the publication of literary collections to transform market selection gradually into a literary tradition endowed with aesthetic authority.

The expansion of eighteenth-century British commerce gradually freed book production and sales from court, Church, and aristocratic control, making them increasingly dependent on broader social demand. Population growth, urban development, and rising literacy rates enabled and encouraged growing numbers of people to purchase books. At the same time, improvements in printing technology, the expansion of book-distribution networks, and the increasing vitality of the second-hand book trade substantially enlarged both the speed and geographical range of book circulation. Books consequently ceased to be cultural resources controlled by a small minority and became commodities offered for sale to the public. Within this context, the relationships among authors, works, booksellers, and readers underwent significant transformation. Authors were first established in law as the proprietors of their works and subsequently became professional producers who sold their writing in the marketplace. Once literature was incorporated into a continuous system of commodity production and consumption, the market not only altered authors' identities and modes of subsistence but also began to intervene in the construction of literary form, literary content, and hierarchies of literary value. Natalie Roxburgh and Anna Auguscik propose the concept of the "Literary Marketplace," arguing that the eighteenth-century literary market was not merely a market for commodity exchange but also a market of value judgements (Roxburgh and Auguscik, 2016, p. 41). Its various participants pursued distinct economic interests while also holding divergent conceptions of literary value. For booksellers, the value of a work was manifested primarily in its price, profitability, and sales prospects; for authors, although economic income was indispensable, social reputation was equally important (Roxburgh and Auguscik, 2016, p. 41). Throughout the eighteenth century, writing for financial gain was still frequently regarded as compromising literary dignity. Pejorative labels such as "Grub Street" and "hack writer" reflected contemporary contempt for professional authors. A fundamental contradiction within modern conceptions of literary value thus gradually emerged: authors were materially dependent upon the market, yet also needed to demonstrate that their creative genius was not governed by it. By the nineteenth century, literature and economics, two domains that had previously been closely intertwined, began to be differentiated, while Romantic ideology constructed aesthetic value and monetary value as two mutually opposed forms of value (Osteen and Woodmansee, 1999, p. 4). Although literature has never in practice been able to detach itself from the publishing market and commercial mechanisms, this ideal of literary autonomy has persisted to the present and has profoundly shaped modern understandings of the relationship between literature and economics.

Fund program: This study is sponsored by Major Project of National Social Science Fund of China "Economic Thoughts in English Literature" [22&ZD289] and Key Project of National Social Science Fund of China "Trade Empire Construction in English Literature of the Age of Great Discovery" [21AWW008].

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Yin Bo ID https://orcid.org/0009-0000-6429-0228;

Tao Jiusheng ID https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1467-9306

References

Aitekn. G. A. (1968). *The Life of Richard Steele, Vol. 2*. Greenwood Press.

Barthes, R. (1977). "The death of the author." In S. Heath (Trans.), *Image, music, text*. Fontana: 142-148.

Benedict, B. M. (2004). "Readers, Writers, Reviewers, and the Professionalization of Literature." In T. Keymer and J. Mee (Eds), The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1740-1830. Cambridge University Press.

Bentley, G. E. (1986). *Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time, 1590-1642*. Princeton University Press.

Bonnell, T. F. (1990). "Bookselling and Canon-Making: The Trade Rivalry over the English Poets, 1776-1783." Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture (19): 53-69.

Brown, L. (1981). *English Dramatic Form, 1600-1760*. Yale University Press.

Carlyle, T. (1852). "Boswell's Life of Johnson." In *The Modern British Essayists*, Volume 5. Carey & Hart: 317-340.

Clery, E. J. (2022). "Literary and Economic Exchanges in the Long Eighteenth Century." In P. Crosthwaite, P. Knight, & N. Marsh (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Economics*. Cambridge University Press: 50–66.

Defoe. D. (1704). *An Essay on the Regulation of the Press*. Internet Archive. https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_4zJcAAAAQAAJ

Egan, G. (2016). *Fashioning Authorship in the Long Eighteenth Century: Stylish Books of Poetic Genius*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Elliot. J. E. (2010). "The Cost of Reading in Eighteenth-Century Britain: Auction Sale Catalogues and the Cheap Literature Hypothesis." *ELH* (2):353-384.

Erickson, L. (1996). *The Economy of Literature Form: English Literature and the Industrialization of Publishing, 1800-1850*. The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Feather, J. (1994). "From Rights in Copies to Copyright: The Recognition of Authors' Rights in English Law and Practice in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." In M. Woodmansee & P. Jaszi (Eds), *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature.* Duke University Press: 191-210.

Foucault, M. (1977). "What is an Author?" In D. F. Bouchard (Ed. & Trans.) & S. Simon (Trans.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Cornell University Press: 139-164.

Gras, N. S. B. (1945). "Sir Andrew Freeport, a Merchant of London." *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* (5): 159-162.

Grubb, G. G. (1942)."Dickens' Pattern of Weekly Serialization." *ELH* (2): 141-156.

Grundy, I. (2009). "Women and Print: Readers, Writers and the Market." In M. F. Suarez & M. L. Turner (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume V, 1695-1830*. Cambridge University Press: 146-160.

Hyde, L. (1983). *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*. Vintage Books.

Ingrassia, C. (1998). *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit*. Cambridge University Press.

Italia, I. (2005). *The Rise of Literary Journalism in the Eighteenth Century*. Routledge.

Johnson, S. (1825a). *A Dictionary of the English Language, Vol. 2.* G. and J. Offor.

Johnson, S. (1825b). *A Dictionary of the English Language, Vol. 2.* G. and J. Offor.

Lillo, G. (1965). *The London Merchant*, edited by W. H. McBurney. Edward Arnold LTD.

Marotti, A. F. (1991). "Patronage, Poetry, and Print." The Yearbook of English Studies (21): 1-26.

Masten, J. A. (1994). "Beaumont and/or Fletcher: Collaboration and the Interpretation of Renaissance Drama." In M. Woodmansee & P. Jaszi (Eds), *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature.* Duke University Press: 361-382.

Matthews, B. (1903). "The Drama in the Eighteenth Century." *The Sewanee Review* (1): 1-20.

Mauss, M. (2002). *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. M. Douglas. Routledge.

McKendrick, N. (1985). "Introduction." In N. McKendrick, J. Brewer, & J. H. Plumb (Eds.), *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England*. Indiana University Press: 1-6.

Novak, M. E. (2003). *Daniel Defoe: Master of Fictions: His Life and Works*. Oxford University Press.

Osteen, M, and M. Woodmansee(1999). "Taking account of the New Economic Criticism: an historical introduction." In M. Woodmansee, and M. Osteen(Eds.), *The New Economic Criticism: Studies at the intersection of literature and economics*. Routledge: 1-42.

Parry, G. (2002). "Literary Patronage." In D. Loewenstein and J. Mueller (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature*. Cambridge University Press: 117-140.

Plato. (1996). *Ion, Hippias Minor, Laches, Protagoras*, translated by R. E. Allen. Yale University Press.

Pollard, A. W. (1915). *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates and the Problems of the Transmission of His Text*. Cambridge University Press.

Poovey, M. (2008). *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain*. The University of Chicago Press.

Pope, A. (1961). "An Essay on Criticism." In E. Audre and A. Williams (Eds.), *The Poems of Alexander Pope, Volume 1, Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism*. Yale University Press: 233-326.

Pope, A. (2009). *The Dunciad: In Four Books*, edited by V. Rumbold. Routledge.

Raven, J. (2009). "The Book as a Commodity." In M. F. Suarez & M. L. Turner (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume V, 1695-1830*. Cambridge University Press: 85-117.

Rose, M. (1988). "The Author as Proprietor: Donaldson v. Becket and the Genealogy of Modern Authorship."

Representations (23): 51-85.

Rose, M. (1994). "The Author in Court: Pope V. Curll (1741)." In In M. Woodmansee & P. Jaszi (Eds), *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature.* Duke University Press: 211-229.

Rose, M. (2009). "Copyright, Authors and Censorship." In M. F. Suarez & M. L. Turner (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume V, 1695-1830*. Cambridge University Press: 118-131.

Roxburgh, N., & Auguscik, A. (2016). "The Eighteenth Century and the Literary Marketplace." In J. Straub (Ed.), Handbook of Transatlantic North American Studies. De Gruyter: 40-58.

Sheridan, R. B. (1988). The Rivals, The Critic, The School for Scandal, edited by E. Rump. Penguin Books.

Sherman, S. (1996). *Finance and Fictionality in the Early Eighteenth Century: Accounting for Defoe*. Cambridge University Press.

Smith, A. (1984). *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Liberty Fund.

Suarez, M. F. (2009). "Introduction." In M. F. Suarez & M. L. Turner (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume V, 1695-1830*. Cambridge University Press: 1-36.

Swift, J. (1930). *A Tale of a Tub: Writtern for the Universal Improvement of Mankind*. Columbia University Press.

陶久胜（2024）：“文学经济学批评话语下英国文学经济思想史研究基本范式”，《外国文学研究》（4）：59-73.

[Tao Jiusheng. (2024). "Research Paradigm of the History of Economic Thoughts in English Literature Under Literary Economic Criticism Discourse." *Foreign Literature Studies* (4): 59-73.]

陶久胜、殷博（2025）：“《伦敦商人》与十八世纪英国经济思想转型焦虑”，《外国语文研究》（3）：1-18。

[Tao Jiusheng, Yin Bo. (2025). "The London Merchant and the Anxieties Surrounding the Transformation of Eighteenth-Century British Economic Thought." *Foreign Language and Literature Research* (3): 1-18.]

Watt, I. (1979). *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. Penguin Books.

Westfall, S. R. (2002). "'The Useless Dearness of the Diamond': Theories of Patronage Theatre." In P. W. White and S. R. Westfall (Eds.), *Shakespeare and Theatrical Patronage In Early Modern England*. Cambridge University Press.

Woodmansee, M. & Jaszi, P. (Eds.) (1994c). *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature.* Duke University Press.

Woodmansee, M. (1984). "The Genius and the Copyright: Economic and Legal Conditions of the Emergence of the 'Author'." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*(4): 425-448.

Woodmansee, M. (1994a). "On the Author Effect: Recovering Collectivity." In M. Woodmansee & P. Jaszi (Eds), *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature.* Duke University Press: 15-28.

Woodmansee, M. (1994b). "Introduction." In M. Woodmansee & P. Jaszi (Eds), *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature.* Duke University Press: 1-13.

Wordsworth, W. (1974). "To the Editor of the Kendal Mercury." In W. J. B. Owen (Ed.), *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, Volume 3*. Clarendon Press: 309-312.

Young, E. (1918). *Conjectures on Original Composition*. Manchester University Press.

JESL

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

JESL, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026, pp.51-71.

Print ISSN: 3107-3492; Online ISSN: 3107-3506

Journal homepage: https://www.jesljournal.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.64058/jesl260103cernc

HIEP
Academic Publishing

丁尼生诗歌中的殖民经济与民族共同体意识重构

杨国静（Yang Guojing）

摘要：作为维多利亚王朝和不列颠殖民统治的文学代言人，丁尼生的诗歌深刻折射出当时的政治经济状况，以及他对时代困局的回应。对殖民经济体制及其后果的再现和反思，构成其文学创作的重要动机之一。丁尼生早期作品对忧郁思乡与盼归的书写，不仅渗透着对庞大殖民经济棋局中那些倦怠棋子的深切同情，也体现出他对经济扩张所引发的族共同体解离危机的警醒和焦虑，他的中后期作品通过《洛克斯利田庄》等长诗，不仅抒发对殖民经济体制的盛世忧思，同时更是致力于通过重写亚瑟王传说，实现其凝聚与重塑不列颠民族共同体意识的企图。

关键词：阿尔弗雷德·丁尼生 殖民经济 思乡 民族共同体 亚瑟王诗歌

作者介绍：杨国静，教授，上海财经大学人文经济思想与战略研究院院长，主要研究领域包括英美文学、批评理论、文学与经济跨学科研究。邮箱：yang.guojing@shufe.edu.cn。

Title: Colonial Economy and the Reconstruction of National Community Consciousness in Tennyson's Poetry

Abstract: As the literary spokesperson of the Victorian era and British colonial rule, Tennyson's poetry profoundly reflects the political and economic conditions of his time as well as his response to the predicaments of the era. The representation and critique of the colonial economic system and its consequences constitute a major motivation

Received: 01 May 2026 / Revised: 20 May 2026 / Accepted: 05 Jun. 2026 / Published online: 15 Jun. 2026 / Print published: 25 Jun. 2026.

behind his literary work. His melancholic writings of homesickness and boudoir yearning not only convey deep sympathy for weary pawns entangled in the vast chessboard of the colonial economy but also reveal his alertness to the ongoing disintegration of national community brought about by economic expansion. In his middle and later works, he continues to express his anxious meditation on the colonial economic system in long poems such as "Locksley Hall" and commits himself to rewriting the Arthurian legend in an attempt to reconsolidate a sense of British national community.
Keywords: Alfred Tennyson; colonial economy; homesickness; national community; Arthurian poems
Author Biography: **Yang Guojing**, Professor, Director of the Institute for Strategic Studies of Humanities and Economics, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, Shanghai, China. His research interests include British and American literature, ethical criticism, disability studies, interdisciplinary studies of literature and economics. E-mail: yang.guojing@shufe.edu.cn.

作为 19 世纪下半叶最具影响力的英语诗人之一，丁尼生（Alfred Lord Tennyson, 1809-1892）向来被视为维多利亚王朝和不列颠帝国统治的文学代言人，他的作品也常常被视为英国维多利亚时代的真实全景照。这样的定位部分得益于他在近半个世纪的"桂冠诗人"生涯里，围绕重大政治历史事件创作出大量的应制性作品，不过更为重要的是，他的创作深刻反映出维多利亚时代的政治和经济状况，以及他为解决时代困局提供的个人方案。本文将以丁尼生诗歌中无处不在的思乡与盼归母题为切入点，梳理他对帝国殖民经济体制下民族身份危机的盛世忧思，以及他试图以亚瑟王传说重新凝聚不列颠民族共同体意识的努力。

一、作为殖民经济时代忧郁症候的思乡与盼归

丁尼生的崇高艺术成就主要得益于他对自身所处时代各种深层问题的沉思，在他那些严肃的作品中，读者们可以清晰感受到他对盛世假面之下种种危机的深重忧虑。正如丁宏为（2009, p. 61）所言，丁尼生对他所生活的外部世界有着"极其负面的表述"，而且其烈度"丝毫不低于卡莱尔、狄更斯和阿诺德等同时代主要作家的那些黑色的文字"。与卡莱尔、阿诺德等以理性的批判传世不同，丁尼生的负面表述主要存留于诗作的感性空间。至少在英语诗歌中，他的诗作可能是自浪漫主义以来最为阴郁的之一。无论是《玛丽安娜》《女郎

夏洛特》《食莲人》《尤利西斯》《提托诺斯》等短篇佳作，还是《公主》《悼念》《莫德》等长篇巨制，都渗透着浓郁的阴郁色调，而“思乡”母题则是造就此色调的主要根源之一。

在丁尼生早期作品中，《食莲人》所表达出来的思乡情尤其耐人寻味。诗歌最初收录于1832 年版《诗合集》中，是对荷马史诗《奥德赛》所载“食莲人”故事的再创作。根据原书第九卷的记载，奥德修斯在自特洛伊返乡途中，经过食莲人的国度。这里的人表面上十分和善，他们以一种名叫“枣莲”（Lotos）的树果招待奥德修斯和他的水手。然而，吃过果子的人却失去记忆，不思归返。丁尼生的诗歌生动地再现了水手们进食枣莲后的状态：

……只要收下了放到
嘴里尝一尝，耳边的汹涌波涛
听来已像遥远、陌生海岸上的
悲泣和怒号；同伴的话声杳渺，
像来自坟墓；人清醒却似睡了，
怦怦的心跳像音乐在他耳中想着。

他们坐在岸边黄澄澄的沙上，
在西坠太阳和东升月亮之间；
这有多甜美：能梦见故土家乡，
梦见妻子儿女和家奴；但永远
像已倦于海上生活，倦于划船，
倦于荒芜的大海、动荡的水波。
“我们不再回故乡，”有人发声喊。
人人立即一起唱：“我们的岛国
远在大海的那头；我们不愿再漂泊。”（丁尼生, 1995, pp. 60-61）

有趣的是，丁尼生的诗歌对原文做出一个意味深长的改编：《奥德赛》中的冲突主要存在于叙述者奥德修斯和水手之间，故事中的水手在吃下枣莲后便不思过往，“完全忘却回家乡”（荷马, 2003, p. 155），以至于奥德修斯不得不“不顾他们的哭喊，强迫他们回船”，强行将他们“缚在桨位下面”，离开这个魅惑人心的恶岛。但是，《食莲人》的叙述者转换为食莲的水手（诗歌的“合唱”部分尤为明显），冲突主要展现于水手们深切的思乡情和对无尽苦旅的控诉。在这里，吞食枣莲的目的不是忘记过往，而是水手们与亲人和故土梦里相见的唯一手段。相反，四方漂泊则是最深重的苦难，让人生看不到任何希望：

我们已受够了操劳和漂泊的熬煎，

在恣意汹涌的浪涛中被掀到右舷、掀到左舷，

而翻滚在海水里的怪兽噗着满是泡沫的喷泉。

让我们一同起个誓，并从今后矢志不移：

要定居在这个处处是山谷的枣莲之地，

像并不操心人间事的天神在山上闲倚。

……

终于在长春花的床上歇歇累透的双手双足。

错不了，错不了，酣睡比劳作甜美，在岸上

远胜过在深海大洋之上凭木浆苦苦斗风浪；

休息吧，水手兄弟们，我们不愿再漂泊四方。（丁尼生, 1995, pp. 67-68）

由此，通过创造性改写，丁尼生将《奥德赛》中浑浑噩噩的水手，改造成一群领悟到返乡愿望已然成空、绝望中不愿继续承受舟楫劳顿之苦的觉醒者，从而让《食莲人》展现出与原作截然不同的情感张力。这样的觉醒者形象在丁尼生的创作中并不孤单，1864 年发表的《伊诺克·阿登》提供了一个更为现实主义的案例。诗歌讲述了一个类似《鲁滨逊漂流记》的故事，与后者的圆满结局不同，主人公伊诺克的经历令人唏嘘：在“百年之前”

的一处英格兰乡村，他与好友腓力自幼一起长大，两人都爱上儿时玩伴安妮，但伊诺克幸运地赢得了安妮的芳心。随着工业经济时代的到来，从事传统农渔产业的伊诺克生活日渐困顿。于是，他不顾妻儿的苦苦哀求，加入远航商队的海员队伍。在遭遇沉船之后，他孤身一人开始漫长的荒岛生涯。在伊诺克失踪十余年之后，安妮最终接受了腓力的求婚，开始新的生活。最终，当艾诺克获救并返回故里后，却发现爱妻已经改嫁，自己的儿女们也在新家庭里幸福地生活。伊诺克决定不再打扰他们的生活，一个人在孤独中悲惨终老。

毫无疑问，伊诺克深爱自己的家庭，他之所以不顾妻儿的坚决反对冒险远航，正是因为他意识到自己的小农产业正遭遇工业经济的体系化挑战，担心他们从此食不果腹，甚至不得不乞讨为生（丁尼生, 1995, p. 264）。相反，尽管远航中国的贸易商船面临重重风险，但是它的巨大经济收益毋庸置疑。伊诺克坚定地相信此行能彻底改变自己的命运：

……对，去两三趟——

需要几趟就几趟。最后有了钱，

回来做一艘较大商船的船长，

挣来足够的钱过较好的生活，

使他所有亲爱的孩子受教育，

让余生在亲人之间安宁度过。（丁尼生, 1995, p. 265）

置身 18 世纪中叶的英格兰，伊诺克的美好规划完全合乎情理。当时的英国尚未成为全球最具影响力的国家，但是与纷乱的欧洲大陆不同，君主立宪政体的早早确立保障了它近一个世纪的相对稳定，此间经济高速发展，海外殖民快速推进。依靠东印度公司这类半军事化经济殖民组织，此时的英国已经在全球海洋贸易中占据绝对的主导地位（18 世纪中叶至 19 世纪初，仅东印度公司的贸易量就占据当时世界贸易近一半的份额）。随着贸易量的快速增长，大量的远洋商船穿梭在各大航道之上，海员人手的紧缺成为常态，远洋经济贸易也因此成为英国最为赚钱的行业之一。同时，随着殖民经济的快速拓展，大量青壮年以驻军或管理人员身份被派驻海外。特别是像伊诺克这样的底层民众从这类新生行业中看出逆天改命的契机，从而不惜抛弃故土和亲人，远涉重洋。然而，常年的海上航行和奔走他

乡，也让他们像困守荒岛的伊诺克一样，即便置身天堂般的异乡美景，依然对故土魂牵梦萦：

在赤道另侧、日照较少的岛上；

孩子们的咿咿呀呀、安妮、小屋、

上坡的街道、磨坊和巷间树荫、

孔雀形紫衫和孤零零的镇公所、

他赶的马、他卖掉的船、凉凉的

十一月拂晓和沾露的幽暗山丘

……

年复一年来又去。想看看亲人，

想在神圣的故乡旧里漫步的

愿望尚未泯灭……（丁尼生, 1995, pp. 285-286）

虽然《伊诺克·阿登》描画的是 18 世纪中叶的情景，但是对于主人公的思乡情，丁尼生同时代的读者们不仅能感同身受，甚至可谓殆有甚焉。众所周知，19 世纪中期正是英国综合国力最为鼎盛的时期。伴随全球殖民体系的确立，大英帝国的经济和社会迎来空前繁荣，成为名副其实的“日不落帝国”。但是，在其烈火烹油的盛世景象之下，帝国版图之内也危机四伏：在其英国本土上，基督教信仰危机和严重的阶级分化带来阿诺德所谓的“无政府状态”，而在南非、印度和加勒比海地区等殖民领地，民族主义意识的觉醒导致殖民经济的社会治理成本越来越高昂。动荡不安的政治局势、残酷的经济掠夺、不断高涨的民族抗争，乃至殖民统治内在的非正义性对人性的持续扭曲与拷问，都让长期驻守海外的殖民者产生深重的疲惫感和倦怠，加重他们对英格兰故土的思乡。虽然在世纪末的吉卜林那里，这种倦怠和思乡情得到更为丰富的表达，但是丁尼生作品的这一情感底色同样极其鲜明。

与食莲人和伊诺克的思乡和疲惫相对应的，是那些留守故乡之人同样深切的盼归和绝望之情。在《伊诺克·阿登》中，安妮在送别伊诺克时便已预感苦难的到来，声称自己

“再也见不到你的这张脸”（丁尼生, 1995, p. 286）。在此后的十余年时间内，她独自拉扯三个年幼的孩子，维持全家的生计，又不得不承受幼子的夭折和生活的日益窘迫。虽然腓力一直在默默无私地相助，但是邻里间早已流言四起；在无数个不眠之夜里，安妮都不得不面对“我的伊诺克可还在？”的无比凄惶（丁尼生, 1995, p. 280）。诗歌《玛丽安娜》塑造出又一位被遗弃女子的孤苦情状：她孤身一人生活在“围有水沟的农舍里”，房屋残破腐朽、花床覆满青苔、草棚长满荒草，毫无希望的她只能日复一日盼望心上人的归来，却又绝望地意识到这一天绝无可能：

她只说，“我的生活多凄惨，
　　这人不来了，”她说道；
她说道，“我感到厌倦、厌倦，
　　我巴不得死了倒好！”（丁尼生, 1995, p. 7）

玛丽安娜本是莎士比亚《一报还一报》中的角色，丁尼生借用原作中她被情人抛弃之后的绝望口吻。不过，借用也就到此为止，这首诗歌没有任何影射原作的痕迹，而只是聚焦于一位孤苦无助的弃妇对周边环境和日月晨昏的观察，而所有的环境描写与其说是莎士比亚笔下的维也纳，毋宁说是维多利亚时代的英国乡村。换句话说，绝望的玛丽安娜是丁尼生对维多利亚时代众多留守妇女的真实描摹。由于远洋贸易或殖民远征，她们的丈夫常年无法回归，让她们对美满婚姻和幸福家庭的渴望化为泡影。诗歌共有七个十二行的诗节构成，而此处引用的四行诗句以略有变动的形式出现在每个诗节的结尾，以一种副歌的形式形成一咏三叹的效果，让女性的绝望力透纸背。同样的绝望也是丁尼生另一名作《女郎夏洛特》的核心主题。这首作品取材于丁尼生极其钟爱的亚瑟王传说，说的是阿斯特拉的艾琳（Elaine of Astolat）深爱着兰斯洛特（Lancelot），但后者却只钟情于亚瑟王的妻子格尼维尔（Ginevere），导致她最终抑郁而终的故事。丁尼生没有直接提及艾琳，而是以无名女郎相称：她孤居河流中央的沙洲城堡夏洛特，目睹两岸行人和河中帆船穿梭往返于王城卡默洛特，那里有她心上人的足迹以及关于她的各种传说。然而，她自己却不得不日夜困守孤堡，与织机为伴，等待永远不会再来的兰斯洛特。最终，她躺入小舟，“让宽阔的河载着她远去”：

他们听见的歌忧郁圣洁，

一会声音高，一会声音低，

唱到她血液渐渐地冷却，

唱到她完全丧失了视力——

望着城堡卡默洛特。

她随波逐流地一路漂去；

没漂到岸边第一幢房子，

已在自己的歌声中去世——

去世了，女郎夏洛特。（丁尼生, 1995, p. 81）

诗歌将繁华忙碌的外部世界和孤岛困守的女郎相对立，一边展现行旅匆匆的外部世界，那里充满大船丝帆，各行各业的男男女女，一边展现无人顾念的女郎坐守寂静的绣房，在窗后镜前叹息翘首，凝视投射于镜中的影像，那里虽然真实地映射出外部的繁华，却与她毫无关联。她在绝望中空耗时光，直到生命临近终点时才决定迈出孤岛。然而，那与其说是一次勇敢的行动，毋宁说是绝望的挣扎：在她的小船靠近"岸边第一幢房子"之前，她便已经带着遗憾离开了人间。这首作品虽然描画的是一幅中世纪的田园图景，但是它所传达的情感同样能深深触动 19 世纪英国读者的心灵。对于那些情人、丈夫或父伯兄弟因为经济殖民而远驻他乡的女性读者来说，无名女郎的悲惨境遇也正是她们自身遭遇的真实写照。

二、帝国扩张与共同体身份焦虑

当然，物理意义上的思乡和盼归不过是帝国时代的显性症候，在丁尼生诗歌的阴郁底色之下，潜隐着他对所处时代更深刻的忧思，那就是殖民经济体制带给英国社会和人口结构的重大冲击，以及随之而来的深重的共同体身份焦虑。这也正是他的英国同胞们不得不共同面对的重大挑战：不论是行走在不同肤色与面孔之间的海外驻守人员，还是目睹着身边的城市和乡村日益国际化的境内居民，他们都在一边享受着帝国体制带来的丰厚经济回报，一边承受着身份认同难以安放的焦躁与不安。

众所周知，在维多利亚女王统治时期内，英国的全球影响力达到顶峰。经济繁荣的一个直观指标便是人口的快速增长。据测算，英格兰人口在 12 和 13 世纪已经达到 400—600 万的规模，然而，在黑死病和严重饥荒的双重打击下，该地区人口在 14 世纪中叶锐减至 220—310 万，直到 1750 年，英格兰的人口才恢复到约 574 万，达到与 14 世纪危机前持平的水平（Jefferies, 2005, pp. 2-3)。进入 19 世纪后，本岛地区人口开始激增：在 1801—1850 年间，英格兰地区的人口几乎翻了一番，由 830 万上升至 1680 万，而此后的 50 年，该地区的人口几乎又翻了一番，截止 1901 年，英格兰地区的人口已经高达 3050 万（Jefferies, 2005, p. 3)。同时，英国也是全球第一个进入“人口转型”（即由高出生率、高死亡率向低出生率、低死亡率转变）的国家。一方面，自 1750 年开始，英国政府通过推行天花免疫接种、灭蚊等一系列防疫行动，使得死亡率在 18-19 世纪之交明显降低（Harris, 2005, p. 488)，另一方面，英国本土人口出生率在 1860 年代达到峰值后，在此后半个世纪的时间内下降了一半（Pooley, 2013, p. 83)。鉴于同一时期内的总人口依然保持强劲增长，不难理解，19 世纪的英国人口结构必然发生了深刻的内在变化。

自 5 世纪初以来，盎格鲁—撒克逊白人作为英格兰地区主体民族的地位至今没有动摇。根据 2021 年人口普查数据，当前英裔白人占总人口依然高达 73.5%。然而，至少自 18 世纪末开始，随着大规模黑奴贸易、远洋贸易和全球殖民的推进，英国社会的民族构成开始成为一个问题。一方面，伴随着黑奴贩卖在内的殖民贸易开展和全球暴力征服，大量英国青壮年男性主动或被动四方漂泊或移居海外。仅在澳大利亚一地，截止 1850 年代，移民定居者便已达 40 万人，其中绝大多数是因罪流放或从事淘金业的英国白人。此外，还有大量民众纷纷前往加拿大、新西兰、加勒比地区寻找机会。与此同时，由于四处殖民，大量英国的官员、士兵和公务人员被派往印度、非洲、加拿大和加勒比海地区驻守，成为庞大的经济殖民机器的一部分。虽然殖民地暴力冲突往往在规模和影响上不及拿破仑战争（1803-1815）和克里米亚战争（1853-1856）这种列强之间的争夺，但是由于多数发生在非洲、亚洲和加勒比海等帝国边陲区域，且常常源于经济剥夺和非正义性，它们带给参战官兵的身心创伤同样极为巨大。另一方面，为数众多的欧洲大陆、非洲、亚洲和拉美民族开始登陆英格兰。随着英国成为全球贸易中心，大量异族人口被输入到英国本土，出现在伦敦、曼彻斯特、利物浦等工贸大都市的街头。据 1841 年统计数据显示，当时生活在英国的异族人口为 44780 人，其中仅在伦敦地区便有 19148 人（Great Britain Courts, 1844, p. 51)。他们当中有随早期贩奴活动登陆英国的非洲黑人以及他们的后裔，有受雇于东印度公司、往返英国和亚洲各国的亚洲商务文员，还有来自各殖民地和全球贸易伙伴国家的学生、学者。随

着大量异族人口的涌入，英国传统文化遭受到外来政治经济体制和宗教文化习的深切侵扰，社会结构也变得日益复杂和动荡。

事实上，移民涌入至少自18世纪下半叶已经成为英国社会的重要关切。例如，18世纪后期著名歌曲创作者狄布丁（Charles Dibdin）一边着力塑造爱国、忠诚的本土海员形象，为经济殖民张目，一边却恶毒诋毁异族水手和工人，担忧他们对英国社会的破坏：

有这么一种疯狂的怪人吗？他们的头脑

容不下理性的入侵？

他们的思想如此放荡，

冲开波浪，劈裂狂风——

他们身穿布毯长袍，头戴草制冠冕，

对疯狂的臣民施行疯狂的法律！

如果这能让你理直气壮，

快，恶魔们，快滚回你们的囚牢！（Dibdin, 1845, p. 141）

从狄布丁的外貌描写不难推断，这群“身穿布毯长袍，头戴草制冠冕”的异族很可能来自南亚或者东亚，他们被视为一群完全没有理性、举止放荡、行为乖戾的化外之民，是破坏英国社会的恶魔，只配生活在他们自己的地狱般国度里。这种敌意并非来自狄布丁的个人怨愤，而是有着深厚的时代特征——这些爱国水手歌曲正是在时任英国首相的小皮特（William Pitt, the Younger）授意下创作而来的（Land, 2009, p. 5）。同样的情绪也在同时代众多作家那里得到广泛回应，例如，约翰逊（Samuel Johnson）便在他的《爱国者》（“The Patriot”）一文中系统地阐述了异族和移民对培育爱国主义精神的负面影响，表达出对他们撕裂英国社会的忧虑（1968, pp. 91-99）。潘恩（Thomas Paine）《人的权利》（*Rights of Man*, 1791）的发表进一步加剧了这种忧虑：该书所倡导的人生而平等并享有自由、财产、安全以及反抗压迫等权利的观点在保守主义盛行的英国引发广泛论争，其中的焦点之一便是担忧潘恩的平权思想和国际主义倾向会严重伤害英国的社会经济结构和文化传统（Paine, 1791）。对此，摩尔（Hannah More）曾在《乡村政治》（“Village Politics”）一文中借两位乡

村手工业者之口，对《人的权利》宣扬的核心观念进行逐条批判，揭露这些外来观念可能的危害（1840, pp. 58-63）。另外，尤其值得一提的是马尔萨斯（Thomas Malthus）《人口原理》（*An Essay on the Principle of Population*）一书在 1798 年的出版。这部具有革命意义的著作第一次质疑了人口增长必然带来经济财富和国力积累的传统观念，指出不加控制的人口增速必然超过生存手段的增速，引发食物匮乏、灾荒乃至社会发展的停滞和倒退（Malthus, 1872）。该书观点深刻呼应了英国社会面对近两个世纪的人口快速增长所引发的忧虑，并促生了 1800 年的《人口普查法案》，由此建立的十年一次人口普查制度贯彻至今。虽然该书没有专门讨论外来人口对英国社会带来的冲击，但是它频繁拿英国与经济欠发达的非欧洲国家做比较，事实上加大了英国社会对异族涌入的焦虑，激化了普通民众的仇外情绪。例如，在论及中国的巨量人口时，马尔萨斯引用耶稣会士马若瑟（Joseph Henri Marie de Prémare）在 18 世纪初的观察，指出中国虽然土地肥沃、农业发达，但是由于过度鼓励生育，导致其三分之一的人口“难以获取充足的稻米维生”，以至于很多母亲不得不亲手杀死或遗弃多生子女，到处都存在着卖儿鬻女、盗匪横行的现象（Malthus, 1872, p. 105）。且不说马若瑟对清朝康雍时期的观察是否全面和公允，对于 18 世纪末的英国读者来说，马尔萨斯对前者的引用显然会强化他们对“野蛮”外族的偏见，加剧他们对外族入侵的焦虑。相对于马尔萨斯深重的异族偏见，柯勒律治（Samuel Taylor Coleridge）对于帝国治下的异族苦难深表同情。在他发表于 1795 年的一篇演讲中，他对仅在东印度群岛地区就导致八百万人丧命的殖民经济体制大加挞伐：

> 有公开信息宣称，我们与东印度群岛的贸易往来已经造成八百万人丧命。作为这类最肮脏、最令人心痛罪恶的回报，我们得到了黄金、钻石、丝绸、平布和印花布，供贵妇和妓女们享用。茶被用来制作有害的饮品，瓷器被用来饮茶，硝石被用来制造火药，以便我们再用这些火药屠杀提供这些物品的可怜住民。我们投身到可怕的罪行之中，却没有换回来任何必需乃至有用的东西。至于此类可怕话题在非洲和西印度群岛上的情况，我眼下不打算多谈。一想到它们，我就垂头丧气，它们给我们的民族性格留下了不可磨灭的污点——耗尽大海之水，也无法洗净，所有阿拉伯的香水，也无法使它散发芳香。（Coleridge, 1971, p. 226）

柯勒律治对大英帝国以异族鲜血铺就远洋贸易之路的做法深表怀疑，认为它并没有带来任何真正必需的东西，相反，它却成为英国人民族性格上洗不掉的污点。对于柯勒律治而言，这样的污点固然源于不公正的经济贸易让英国人产生的沉重负罪感，同时也源于国际化的商品交换正在改变英国人的社会风气和消费习惯。黄金、钻石成为贵妇和妓女的生活点缀，茶和瓷器成为昂贵的日用品，这些外来物品助长了英国国内的奢靡风气，扭曲了柯勒律治极为珍视的英国民族性格。

进入 19 世纪之后，越来越“国际化”的人口构成让英国社会益发焦虑，仇外情绪进一步加剧。在此过程中，爱尔兰人、犹太人和来自亚非地区的有色人种成为主要的仇视对象，甚至众多的进步学者都受到这股仇外情绪的裹挟。例如，著名散文家兼政论家科贝特（William Cobbett）曾声称“黑人是一个头脑糟糕的种族，他们生来就是受奴役和被主宰的命”（1804, p. 25）。他也毫不掩饰对爱尔兰民族的鄙视心态，在《乡村经济》（*Cottage Economy*）中，他将爱尔兰人的主食土豆称为“懒根”（lazy root），强调“它也是邋遢、污秽、不幸和奴役之根”，认为土豆在英格兰的种植导致贫民的增加，并庆幸英格兰最终转向谷物为主的农业经济（1824, p. 62）。同时，他将最恶毒的话语瞄准生活在英国的犹太人：声称自己对犹太人的憎恶与自己的先祖没有区别，认为犹太人嘲弄基督教和基督徒的道德观念，靠高利贷和诈骗谋生（1830, p. 730）；他警告英国的贵族与绅士阶层警惕犹太金融资本的兴起，认为这些“犹太橘子男孩”正在通过购置地产将伦敦变成“犹太人的脓包”（1823 March, p. 565），甚至主张基督教国家没有犹太人的葬身之所，应该将“他们的尸骸扔进大海”（1823 October, p. 217）。[①]同样，尽管狄更斯被广泛视为维多利亚时代的良心，他的文学作品也和科贝特的政论文章一样，流露出一种不安的异族恐惧。在《小杜丽》（*Little Dorrit*）和《艾德温·德鲁德之谜》（*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*）等中后期作品中，这种倾向尤为明显。有学者指出，这两部小说都暴露出对来自东方经济和个人威胁的焦虑。它们都试图从与外国人的社会和经济联系入手，来呈现情感和经济债务以及扭曲的家庭关系，由此传达出一种微妙的身份危机意识，即“尽管积累财富看上去是英国人格外在行的行为，消费外国财富却触发强烈的仇外反应，因为它威胁到——至少说在想象中——对英国人自身身份的褫夺”（Tromp, 2013, p. 32）。

[①] 科贝特的反犹太倾向导致科贝特学会不得不在 2021 年取消旨在庆祝其名作《骑马乡行记》（*Rural Rides*）出版 200 周年的庆祝活动，参见 Napier, Andrew. “The Cobbett Society Reacts to Celebration Event Cancellation.” *www. Hampshirechronicle.co.uk*, 14th March 2021, retrieved 23rd August 2024.

由此可见，在进入 18 世纪后的近一个半世纪里，英国的民族心理发生了十分复杂的变化。一方面，得益于先发资本主义制度和工业革命的优势，英国快速地由一个欧洲边陲岛国崛起为全球首屈一指的强大帝国，强大的综合国力、相对稳定的政治形势和日益改善的生活水平让英国民众产生强烈的民族自豪感和自信心。另一方面，与政治、经济和军事实力能够在短时间内得到快速提升不同，一个民族共同体性格的形成往往有赖于特定的地域环境和漫长的时间滋养。在由边陲岛国向全球帝国快速迈进的过程中，大量外来文化和人口的涌入对英国的主体文化和传统必然形成较大的冲击，让作为主体民族的盎格鲁—撒克逊人对自身经济文化传统的脆弱性倍感焦虑。相应的，他们对外来民族和文化产生怀疑、排斥乃至仇视的态度也就在所难免。这种共同体身份焦虑是我们理解丁尼生诗歌中无处不在的思乡与盼归母题不容忽视的重要变量。

三、民族共同体意识的凝聚与重塑

毋庸置疑，丁尼生对思乡母题的偏爱可以从他相对阴郁悲观的个性特征、早年严重的情感创伤经历、以及他对济慈、华兹华斯等浪漫主义诗学先驱的效仿等维度得到解释。不过，它更加折射出丁尼生在面对分裂的民族共同体意识时的内心焦虑，以及他试图以诗歌创作重新凝聚英格兰民族共同体意识的努力。

作为一位几乎与整个 19 世纪同行的长寿作家，一位任期长达 42 年的皇家桂冠诗人，丁尼生和他那个时代的绝大多数普通人一样，在很长的时间里持有强烈的帝国主义情怀。他的大量诗歌作品，特别是他作为桂冠诗人创制的应制作品，都流露出作家作为帝国子民的自信心和自豪感，表达出对帝国治下繁荣和和平的歌颂，以及对殖民经济体制的拥护。例如，在惠灵顿公爵逝世之际，他对这位击败拿破仑、为大英帝国奠定百年和平（“Pax Britannica”）的民族英雄推崇备至，声称要“以一个帝国的哀伤”埋葬这位伟大的公爵，而他的伟大不仅在于他个人的历史功绩，更在于他是每一个英国人的完美代表：

不止一次，这粗犷岛国的历史证明，

责任之路便是荣耀之路：

走在这道路上的人，只会渴望

追求正义，并学会压制

对自我的爱，在旅途结束前，

他会看到坚强的蓟花绽放，

开出鲜亮的紫色，比所有

娇艳的花园玫瑰更为鲜红。（Tennyson, 1970, vol.2, p. 218）

在丁尼生看来，正是一代代惠灵顿公爵这样的民族楷模让英国走向荣耀之路，成为全球霸主。他们充满责任感，不辞辛劳，终生奉献于拓展帝国影响的伟大事业，他们追求正义、节制自我，不断用自由和知识创作一个更美好的人间。同样，在应维多利亚女王加冕五十周年庆典创作的诗歌中，他一边赞颂女王摆脱了惯见于帝王的暴政作风，“处处优雅、温和、伟大的女王风范”，声称她所取得的成就让同样长期在位的亨利三世、爱德华三世、乔治三世等先王们黯然失色；一边赞美她是帝国和谐统一的象征，带来了“不断拓展的商业”、“不断昌明的科学”和“不断扩张的帝国”（Tennyson, 1970, vol.7, pp. 9-10）。进入 19 世纪后期，帝国统治的体制性弊端日益凸显，特别是在印度民族大起义（1857 年）和第一次布尔战争（1880 年）的严重冲击下，帝国的殖民经济体制岌岌可危。即便如此，丁尼生依然表达出对该体制的支持。1886 年，被爱德华七世（时任威尔士亲王）称为旨在“促进商业发展并加强女王陛下帝国各地现有联系纽带”（Mathur, 2007, p. 57）的“印度暨殖民地博览会”在伦敦举办。在为纪念此次活动创作的诗歌中，显然已经意识到帝国体制危机的丁尼生写道：

我们曾经将过往的荣耀分享，

兄弟们，难道最终必须分离？

我们难道不分善恶

依然要将彼此切割？

不列颠万千声音呼喊：

“孩子们，要彼此焊连，

融入一个帝国的整体，

为了同一个不列颠全心全意!

同一生命，同一旗帜，同一舰队，同一王座！”

英国人，坚守你们的荣耀！（Tennyson, 1970, vol.6, pp. 346-347）

不难看出，面对印度及其他殖民地的离心离德，丁尼生的话语间无比痛心。他呼吁所有的殖民地应该和不列颠本岛同心同德，融入到同一个帝国的有机体之中，在同一面旗帜下捍卫大英帝国的共同荣耀。这类充满主旋律色彩的作品一定程度上反映出维多利亚时代英国民众的某种普遍心理，但是，正如前文所言，丁尼生绝非帝国的廉价喉舌，他对帝国主义的内在危机有着相当清晰的认知。在评价 1886 年前后的丁尼生时，巴克利指出，此时的丁尼生早已不再有他那一代人的盲目乐观，而是秉持“一种彻底幻灭的立场”（Buckley, 1969, p. 8）。也就是说，尽管在部分应制性作品中，他依然呼吁一种超越地域、种族和民族的帝国共同体意识，但是，在那些更具个性化的创作中，他显然更加忧心忡忡于那些随帝国扩张而来的各种社会症候，其中就包括民族共同体意识的碎裂和分化。他的大量中后期作品表达了对这一困局的忧思，以及试图借助文学创作重建英格兰民族共同体意识的努力。

长诗《洛克斯利田庄》（“Locksley Hall”）第一次清晰地表达出丁尼生对殖民体制弊端的反思。该作品发表于 1842 年，丁尼生沿用了一种类似于艾布拉姆斯（M. H. Abrams）所谓“宏大浪漫主义抒情诗”（greater Romantic lyric）的结构，并以戏剧独白的方式呈现了叙述者早年的创伤性情感经历，以及他个人对未来的展望。虽然诗歌的主体部分聚焦于叙述者的个人成长，但是却时刻传递出置身时代洪流之中的焦躁不安感：他被“突然投入到这样的时代”，茫然不知如何安身立命。他发现这个世界“每扇门都已被黄金封好，只能用金铸的钥匙开启”，到处充斥拜金逐利之人，到处炮火隆隆，烟尘四起，将士们远离家乡，将战争和征服带向每个角落。在这样的时代，战火的伤痛无法用崇高的荣誉来抚慰，只能用“金币的叮当声”来缓解；贸易和殖民没有给世界带去和平和正义，只是让被征服的列国如丧家之犬一般，“冲着他人的脚跟嘶吼”（Tennyson, 1970, vol. 2, pp. 42-43）。在展眼未来时，说话人预见了一幅更为可怖的场景：

我曾深入未来，直到人类眼睛所及的远地，

看见世界的图景，以及未来的一切奇迹；

看见漫天充斥商贾，魔法角帆下队队船舶，

紫色黄昏中的导航者，卸下珍贵的包裹；

听见漫天流荡的叫喊，滴落一片阴森的露水，

各国雄赳赳的舰队在深蓝远海里彼此竞追；

遥远的南方暖风劲吹，带来世界各地的低语，

随同各民族的旗帜，在雷暴之中飞舞。（Tennyson, 1970, vol. 2, p. 44）

说话人承认，商贾横行的大海、喧嚣嘈杂的叫喊、往来穿梭的各国舰队，特别是随南风而来的遥远语言以及世界各地的旗帜都曾经让自己激情万丈，然而，如今他所看到的却是“一切秩序都在腐烂，所有事物都已脱节”；那些过去一直被标榜为社会进步标识的东西，到头来不过是部分人积聚财富的勾当，甚至缓步向前的科学带来的也不是可预期的美好生活，而是“一个饥饿的民族，宛若一头近逼的猛狮”（Tennyson, 1970, vol. 2, p. 44）。

如果说 1842 年的丁尼生只不过心怀不祥预感的话，那么在他 1886 年发表的续篇《洛克斯利田庄，六十年后》（“Locksley Hall Sixty Years After”）中，他则彻底参透了时代的“物质主义和重商主义”的本质，承认自己“年轻时的种种希望到头来毫无根基”（Marshall, 1963, p. 222）：

难道我们与科学同行，在时间中收获荣耀，

却无视城市孤儿失落黑暗的灵魂，任他们摸索在城市的泥淖？

在阴暗的小巷中，进步因麻痹的双足而滞留，

犯罪和饥饿将我们成千上万的少女逼上街头。（Tennyson, 1970, vol. 6, p. 298）

尽管法国大革命最初的暴力和血腥深深震撼了 19 世纪初的英国社会，但是来到 19 世纪末，前者所呼吁的科学、进步、民主思想已经相当深入人心，而在这样的时代背景下，丁尼生直言不讳地质疑这些进步理念，十分耐人寻味。他在诗歌中，他以辛辣的口吻嘲讽"地球终将是一个没有战争的世界，一个单一种族，一种单一语言——"（Tennyson, 1970, vol. 6, p. 293）的帝国主义雄心。同时，对于那些为了这个虚幻的雄心献祭自己生命的年轻人感到无比惋惜。在著名的《轻骑兵队的冲锋》（"The Charge of the Light Brigade"）中，丁尼生聚焦克里米亚战争（1853-1856）期间英军的一场惨败。1854 年 10 月 25 日，由于英军主帅萨姆塞特（FitzRoy Somerset）的错误指挥，英军轻骑兵部队 600 名将士在布卢登内尔（James Brudenell）带领下向敌军炮兵阵地发起正面冲锋，致使部队身陷绝境，近半伤亡。诗歌中，丁尼生高度赞颂士兵们视死如归的英雄气概，不过，更为重要的是，言语之间他对士兵们葬身异国他乡的死亡谷地深表痛惜，同时也表达了对这场帝国主义国家之间不义战争的谴责：

"向前冲，轻骑兵！"
可有人丧气？没有。
尽管士兵们知道
　　是错误命令。
他们可不能抗命，
他们可无法弄清，
只能奉命去牺牲。
　　骑兵六百名
　　冲进死亡的谷地。（丁尼生, 1995, pp. 168-169）

由此不难发现，对殖民扩张及其后果的反思一直是丁尼生中后期创作中的一条暗线。受制于历史局限、特别是他的公共身份，他在很多时候将英国的殖民扩张视为文明进步的必然，然而，他又敏锐地意识到殖民扩张带给英国民族身份的巨大冲击，并对如何重构英

帝国民族身份认同倍感困惑和焦虑。就此而言，泛滥 于丁尼生作品之中的“思乡”主题显然带有某种象征性色彩，即对某种文化更原初的文化基因的回望。丁尼生对古希腊以来西方历史记忆中的反复重写毫无疑问折射出他的这一动机，而他数十年如一日对亚瑟王传说的频繁“回顾”更是集中体现他对不列颠民族共同体历史记忆的招魂。

众所周知，亚瑟王是中古传说时期不列颠最富传奇色彩的伟大国王。他的形象经过自远古凯尔特传说到中世纪骑士野史的漫长发育，并经《不列颠诸王史》（成书于 12 世纪）、《亚瑟王之死》（成书于 15 世纪）等巨著总成之后，千百年来一直是不列颠民族最引以为傲的文化遗产之一。经过千百年来不断的充实、转述和改写，围绕亚瑟王和他的圆桌骑士们形成极为丰富的故事集群，除了亚瑟王主线故事之外，围绕王后格尼维尔以及兰斯洛特、特里斯坦、高文、梅林等诸位骑士的故事同样精彩，此外还有王者之剑和圣杯追索的故事、卡米洛特王庭和阿瓦隆仙境的传说等，都早已成为不列颠民族的共同记忆。这些故事的影响事实上早已超出英伦诸岛，在欧洲大陆上广为流传。尽管如此，亚瑟王传说毫无疑问是最具“英国性”的故事集群，是不列颠民族探求身份认同的一个重要锚点。正如琼斯指出：“亚瑟王的神话在许多方面创造了中世纪文明。它也帮助创造了我们所知的英国。英国人或许创造出亚瑟王，但是亚瑟王反过来使英国作为一个伟大国家的理念合法化。”（Jones）

从这一点看，丁尼生对亚瑟王传说的改写便具有别样的厚重内涵。众所周知，从 1832 年发表《女郎夏洛特》开始，到 1891 年《国王田园诗》（*Idylls of the King*）完整版的面世，丁尼生对亚瑟王相关故事的兴趣一以贯之，对它们的创造性改写几乎从未停歇。这其中当然存在丁尼生对中世纪浪漫情爱、宫廷传说与骑士历险等故事的个人偏好，也是他对维多利亚时代亚瑟王传说在民间升温的积极回应，但是，更为重要的是，它是丁尼生个人宏大艺术规划的一部分，那就是他试图将亚瑟王传说作为他所生活的维多利亚时代的一个寓言。这一点单纯从 1891 年完整版《国王田园诗》的结构便可见一斑。丁尼生这部史诗的主体部分共有十个相对独立的故事组成，由亚瑟王这一角色串接所有故事，然而诗歌的起篇题献给阿尔伯特亲王，终篇又在敬献维多利亚女王的《致女王》中结束。这样安排的意图可谓不言自明：如果说这部史诗的主体部分通过亚瑟王的加冕、征伐、婚姻和牺牲以及加雷斯与林内特、梅林和薇薇安、兰斯洛特和艾琳等人的故事，集中展现一个承载忠贞、正义、虔诚、道德、奉献等种种骑士美德的理想君王，那么，丁尼生在这部史诗的首尾处分别致敬阿尔伯特亲王和维多利亚女王的做法则直接宣告他的创作动机，那就是将维多利亚时代的英国比作亚瑟王治下完美的骑士王庭。正是敏锐地洞察出丁尼生的这一动机，时任英国首相的格拉德斯通（William E. Gladstone）早在 1859 年《国王田园诗》第一部分初版之际，

便激动地宣称“它是民族的；它是基督教的”（转引自 Jump, 1967, p. 250）

当然，这样的比附并非单纯出于身为桂冠诗人的应景奉承，而是隐含着丁尼生对前文反复提及的一个问题的思考和回应，即殖民扩张时期的民族共同体身份认同危机。正因为此，丁尼生在诗歌中将阿尔伯特亲王赞誉为“我王的理想骑士”，认为他是亚瑟王种种美德的化身（Tennyson, 1891, pp. 7-9）；而在《致女王》中，他更明确地将这种“理想骑士”的精神视为挽救民族共同体身份危机的一剂良药：

在那片正北方向，我们近来听到

羞辱我们的一种腔调“管好你们自己；

这种忠诚太过昂贵！朋友们——你们的爱

不过是一份重担：松开绑绳，就此离开。”

这可是帝国的语调？这是我们统治者们

该有的坚定？……

……

……对国王的忠诚

就是对远方子弟的忠诚，他们深爱

我们的海洋帝国和她那无边际的家园

正在不断扩张的英格兰，她的王座

立于我们广阔的东方，一座岛屿，一座岛屿

不接受她的伟大：如若她知晓

并为之恼怒，那我们就都得倾覆。（Tennyson, 1891, pp. 358-359）

丁尼生对于帝国内异样的声音十分敏感乃至焦虑，这首《致女王》和前文提及的《洛克斯利田庄》及其续篇表达出同样的思想。诗歌中的“正北方向”指的是加拿大，《致女王》最初单独发表于 1872 年，这与 1867 年 7 月 1 日英国议会通过《1867 年英属北美法》，将英

国在北美四块殖民地合并为加拿大自治领相去不远。《1867 年英属北美法》的通过标志加拿大联邦的起点，虽然此时的加拿大远非真正的独立，但是显然是继美国独立之后，对英帝国的北美殖民体系的又一次重击。对于殖民地的离心离德，丁尼生痛心疾首，对此，他苦口婆心地指出，对国王的忠诚就是对远方子弟的忠诚，并劝慰人民热爱“不断扩张的英格兰”。当然，相比于单薄的《致女王》中的宣示与直陈，《王国田园诗》的主体部分毫无疑问更含蓄然而也更有力地回应了两者内蕴的共同问题：如何在殖民体系行将瓦解的时代维系或重构民族共识。正如同时代的阿诺德倡导文化教育的力量，丁尼生也试图通过汲取亚瑟王传说的民族精神力量，来重构和强化不列颠民族身份认同意识，对冲帝国殖民时代民族共同体意识的必然淡化乃至崩解的风险。

基金项目：本文为国家社科基金重大项目“英国文学的命运共同体表征与审美研究”（19ZA293）的阶段性成果。

Funding: This paper is an interim result of the Major Project of the National Social Science Fund of China (NSSFC) “The Representation and Aesthetics of Community in English Literature” (Grant No. 19ZA293)

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Yang Guojing ID https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1972-0966

References

Buckley, Jerome (1969). *The Victorian Temper: A Study in Literary Culture*. Harvard UP.

Cobbett, William (1824). *Cottage Economy*. Charles Clement.

Cobbett, William (1804). “Review of the Measures Relating to the Army.” *Political Register* (4): 100-126.

Cobbett, William (1830). “To Big O.” *Political Register* (23): 728-735.

Cobbett, William (1823). “To Mr. Hume.” *Political Register* (9): 562-565.

Cobbett, William (1823). “To the People of Kensington, Chelsea and Fulham.” *Political Register* (4): 193-231.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1971). *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol. 1. Lectures 1795. On

Politics and Religion. Princeton UP.

Dibdin, Charles (1845). *The Selected Songs of Charles Dibdin*. G. H. Davidson & Water Street.

丁宏为（2009）：“‘最悲惨的时代’——丁尼生的黑色诗语”，《国外文学》（4）：61-68。

[Ding Hongwei (2009). “‘Wretchedest Age’: Tennyson’s Dark Verse.” *Foreign Literatures* (4): 61-68.]

Great Britain Courts (1844). “Review of *A Treatise on the Law Relating to Alien and Denisation and Naturalisation*.” *The Jurist* (Feb. 17): 51-52.

Harris, Bernard (2005). “Health by Association.” *International Journal of Epidemiology* (2): 488-490.

荷马（2003）：《奥德赛》，王焕生译。人民文学出版社。

[Homer (2003). *Odyssey*, trans. Wang Huansheng. People’s Literature Publishing House.]

Jefferies, Julie (2005). “The UK Population: Past, Present and Future.” In Roma Chappell (Ed.), *Focus on People and Migration*. Palgrave MacMillan: 1-17.

Johnson, Samuel (1968). “The Patriot.” In J. P. Hardy (Ed.), *The Political Writings of Dr. Johnson*. Barnes & Noble: 91-99.

Jones, Jonathan (2024). “King Arthur Forged Our Britain.” *The Guardian* 23 Mar, 2016. Web. 28 Oct.

Jump, John Davies (1967). *Tennyson: The Critical Heritage.* Routledge.

Land, Isaac (2009). *War, Nationalism, and the British Sailor, 1750-1850.* Palgrave MacMillan.

Malthus, Thomas Robert (1872). *An Essay on the Principle of Population.* Rpt. Ed. Reeves &Turner.

Marshall, George O. (1963). *A Tennyson Handbook.* Twayne.

Mathur, Saloni (2007). *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display*. U of California P.

More, Hannah (1840). *The Works of Hannah More.* Vol.1. Harper & Brothers.

Pooley, Siân (2013). “Parenthood, Child-rearing and Fertility in England, 1850-1914.” *The History of the Family* (1): 83-106.

Tennyson, Alfred (1891). *Idylls of the King.* Thomas Y. Crowell &Co.

丁尼生（1995）：《丁尼生诗选》，黄杲炘译。上海译文出版社。

[Tennyson, Alfred (1995). *Poems*, trans. Huang Gaoxin. Shanghai Translation Publishing House.]

Tennyson, Alfred (1970). *Works of Alfred Tennyson*, vol. 2, 6, 7, edited by Hallam Tennyson. Greenwood.

Tromp, Marlene (2013). “The Pollution of the East: Economic Contamination and Xenophobia in Little Dorrit and The Mystery of Edwin Drood.” In Marlene Tromp, Maria K. Bachman & Heidi Kaufman (Eds.), *Fear, Loathing, and Victorian Xenophobia.* Ohio State UP: 27-55.

JESL

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

JESL, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026, pp.72-81.

Print ISSN: 3107-3492; Online ISSN: 3107-3506

Journal homepage: https://www.jesljournal.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.64058/jesl260104khpes

HIEP
Academic Publishing

厨房、惯习与大众教育

——威斯克戏剧《厨房》中的经济场域研究

刘明录（**Liu Minglu**）

摘要：在当代英国戏剧家阿诺德·威斯克的戏剧中，厨房的形象改变了，它不仅是提供食物的场所，还是一个缩微的经济场域，工作于其间的各类人员为各自的利益展开了不见硝烟的斗争，他们的惯习行为反映出不同的阶级地位和身份认知，是一场权力的游戏，决定他们所扮演的游戏角色的是资本的占有状况。威斯克借助于厨房这一经济场域剖析了工业资本主义社会语境下工人阶级受到资产阶级剥削和压迫的根源，以及工人阶级抗争的困境，是他将艺术与大众教育相融合的一次深入尝试。

关键词：厨房；经济场域；惯习；工人阶级;大众教育

作者介绍：刘明录，教授，广西师范大学外国语学院，研究方向为中外戏剧，电子邮箱为 lml6616@126. com。

Title: Kitchen, Habitus and Popular Education: A Study of the Economic Field in Arnold Wesker's Play *The Kitchen*

Abstract: In the plays of contemporary British playwright Arnold Wesker, kitchen has changed its image, which is no longer just a place to provide food, but also a microcosm of the economic field, where various persons engaged in a silent struggle for their own interests. Their habitual behaviors actually reflect their different class positions and identity cognition, which is a game of power, and the possession of capital determines

Received: 05 May 2026 / Revised: 13 May 2026 / Accepted: 01 Jun. 2026 / Published online: 15 Jun. 2026 / Print published: 25 Jun. 2026.

their roles in the game. Wesker uses the economic field of the kitchen to analyze the root causes of the exploitation and oppression of the working class by the bourgeoisie under the context of industrial capitalism, as well as the dilemma of the working class's resistance, which is an in-depth attempt to integrate art with mass education.

Keywords: Kitchen; Economic field; Habitus; Working class; Popular education

Author Biography: Liu Minglu, Professor, College of Foreign Studies, Guangxi Normal University. His research focuses on Chinese and foreign drama. E-mail: lml6616@126.com.

引言

在当代英国左翼戏剧家、"愤怒的青年"作家群成员之一的阿诺德·威斯克（Arnold Wesker）的戏剧中，厨房是一个非常明显的意象，因为其一部剧作即是以"厨房"（The kitchen）作为剧名。在他的成名三部曲即《根》（*Root*）、《大麦鸡汤》（*Chicken Soup with Barly*）、《我在谈论耶路撒冷》（*I'm Talking about Jerusarem*）等作品中，厨房依然是频繁出现的意象，彰显了厨房在他的戏剧中的重要性。在普通人看来，厨房是一个生活场所，是为人们提供食物的地方。然而，威斯克戏剧中的厨房与众不同：一方面，他戏剧中的厨房是饭店中的集体厨房，而非私人小厨，其间工作人员甚多，厨房的劳动过程有如一条商品生产流水线，肩负着为资本家赚取利润的任务。另一方面，威斯克戏剧中的厨房是写实性的厨房，整个食品生产过程以实景的方式呈现，这也与一般戏剧中的厨房不同，因为戏剧中的厨房既是生活空间，也是舞台空间，象征意味强烈，但舞台空间有限，因此通常只能以某些物件作为象征。例如在威斯克同时代的剧作家品特的厨房中，通常是以煤气炉和水槽喻指厨房，极少像威斯克一样采用写实的手法来展示厨房空间。对于此，威尔切认为威斯克"通过在舞台上完整再现人类活动而不附带基本情节的创作手法，打破了戏剧结构的大部分规则。"（Wilcher，1991，p. 23）

由于威斯克被冠予了左翼戏剧家身份，因而学者们对于其戏剧分析多偏向于社会批判功能的主题解读，例如卡莱马以马克思主义文学批评的视角，分析《厨房》中阶级矛盾的成因和影响，指出战后的社会经济状况并没有给生活和工作条件欠佳的下层阶级带来美好的未来（Karaman，2021，p. 54）。此外，学者们还试图探讨他的日常生活行为与戏剧主题之间的联系，例如学者约翰·泰勒就指出："把威斯克的戏剧和他本人分开来实际上是不可能的，把他的戏剧艺术与他的政治观点分开来也是不可能的。"（Taylor，1962，p. 147）另一位学者格兰德·列明也指出："在所有的当代剧作家中，威斯克一定是卷入自己的作品最多的剧作家之一。"（Leeming，1972，p. 11）然而，虽然威斯克的戏剧主题较为明朗，但却鲜有学者关注到其厨房戏剧空间的特色及其在表达戏剧主题中的作用。

场域（Field）是法国社会活动家布迪厄（Pierre Bourdieu）提出来的一个术语，本是源自 19 世纪中叶的物理学概念。布迪厄将其引入社会学领域，他认为所谓的"场域"就是指运用关系式思维思考社会空间的不同"游戏领域"，并理解其间隐含的权力运作机制。场域由不同位置之间形成的客观关系网络构成，不同的位置对应不同的资本和权力，差异性位

置之间形成了竞争和对抗的客观关系，包括主次关系、支配关系和对应关系等等（汪民安，2007，p. 21）。若按布迪厄的说法，威斯克戏剧中的厨房以实现利润为目标，围绕经济利益而开展工作，其间各个位置存在着差异性，因而其实就是一个经济场域，蕴含着由于不同利益关系而生成的各种对抗和竞争关系，展示了权力运作和控制机制，反映了战后英国资本主义体系中存在的种种社会问题。

一、厨房中的资本与权力关系

《厨房》一剧创作于 1957 年，其剧情并不复杂，讲述的是在英国一家大型饭店的厨房中，工人们从早到晚的一天工作历程。整部戏剧大约涉及到了 30 名人员，包括饭店的老板、厨师长、副厨师长、厨师、洗碗工、切菜工、餐厅招待等各种身份的人物。工人们早上 7 点到达厨房，炉子生起，食物生产的流水线启动，于是一天的繁忙工作便开启了。

在此过程中，威斯克一方面以声音作为主要表意手段呈现了厨房中的工作状况：开始观众只能听到零星的叫菜声，其间夹杂着工人们谈论自己的生活琐事的声音；不久就进入了用餐高峰期，此时整个厨房传来的都是叫菜的声音。

尼古拉斯：三份法国沙拉。
莫利：（对盖斯通）六份排骨。
盖斯通：六份排骨。
莫利：（对迈克尔）四份浓肉汁菜汤。
迈克尔：四份浓肉汁菜汤。
弗兰克：两份烤鸡加嫩煎菜。
格温：（对弗兰克）两份烤鸡加嫩煎菜。[①]（Wesker，1961，p. 42）

在第一幕戏中，相似内容的对话多达 100 多句，在第二幕戏中，这样的情节也反复出现。显然，这样单调的、循环不断的叫菜声和回应声是会令读者或观众产生厌倦的情绪的。然而，这可能正是大型饭店厨房的工作实景，读者或观众可以想象，如果连自己都对这样的场景感到厌烦，那么工作于其中的工人们的厌倦情绪就可想而知。对于威斯克使用的这一戏剧手法，学者黄梅认为：“威斯克吸纳了某些布莱希特式或现代主义的表现手法，反映厨房忙忙忙碌碌工作状况的场景，很大程度上有赖于背景、道具和表演来制造气氛，揭示意义。”（黄梅，1982，p. 98）威尔切则认为“将一家大型餐厅幕后的人类活动戏剧化是一种勇敢的尝试，它致力于将大规模食物准备和服务的‘纪实现实主义’以类似于‘表现主义’的形式再现”（Wilcher，1961，p. 24）。威斯克之所以要以写实的表现手法展现这一单调的工作过程，究其原因，就是想让观众或读者自己体会其中的单调烦琐和枯燥无聊。为此，利明和特鲁勒斯进一步指出：“正是这种对厨房中日常事务的‘质地’的基本忠实描绘，提

[①] Wesker, Arnold (1961). *The Kitchen*. London: Random House. 以下引文只标注页码，引用文字由文章作者翻译。不再一一说明。

供和释放了更广泛的政治意义，并同时使其成为工业资本主义社会的戏剧隐喻。”（Leeming and Trussler，1971，p. 31）

另一方面，在剧中，威斯克也呈现了厨房员工与餐馆老板及管理者之间的冲突：由于工作环境极其恶劣，工作强度极高，时常有工人当场晕倒，工人们自然会产生抱怨；而作为餐厅的老板，则是要想方设法维持生产的进行，对不服管教的员工进行压制；老板马兰戈会不时地进入厨房进行巡视，而厨师长也会对整个厨房的工作进行监督。一旦发现对生产不利的苗头，他们就会立即采取措施消除隐患。此外，这种冲突也来自于员工之间，或者是员工与家属之间，他们由于各种不同的原因也时而发生矛盾。当然，这种矛盾往往是由于工作过程而产生的。例如当女招待奥维莱特由于嫌弃厨师彼得的工作速度过慢，准备亲自动手制作食物时，她与彼得发生了冲突。

> 彼得：你等着我，不行吗？我是做菜的，你是要菜的。
>
> 奥维莱特：可你忙不过来。
>
> 彼得：这是我的地方，那儿才是你的地方。
>
> 奥维莱特：好，你等着，你以为你是什么人啊？
>
> 彼得：（从她手中夺下盘子摔碎）放开!放开！这是我的王国，这是我的活动地盘。
>
> 奥维莱特：你这个德国佬！你这个德国狗杂种！（p. 76）

厨房本是制作食物的场所，人们对其早已习以为常，但通常只会关注其间的设施和制造的食品，极少会注意到其间存在的等级关系，但实际上，等级关系在厨房中一直是存在的。在一个家庭厨房中，谁在厨房中忙碌，谁只需享用食物而不需要下厨其实也反映了家庭中的支配关系。相比家庭私厨，大型饭店的厨房有着更加复杂的人际关系，其等级意味更加鲜明，可谓是整个社会体系的缩影。在上述对话中，女招待奥维莱特与厨师彼得虽然同为工人，但他们经济利益和领地意识也是不同的，女招待奥维莱特的帮忙看似好心，但却有侵犯彼得的工作领域之嫌，会威胁到他的工作岗位，所以引发了彼得的怒火。经济场域是指在分配结构上资本或权力处于不同处境和存在差异性位置的某个经济空间，其间存在着对抗和竞争的客观关系，包括支配关系、屈从关系和对应关系等。威斯克戏剧中的《厨房》完全满足这一条件，实际上也可视为一个经济场域。

一方面，厨房中存在着不同的资本或权力以及差异性的关系。在厨房中，层级关系是非常明显的，一是作为资产阶级代表的饭店老板占有着生产资料，对于厨房中的人或事拥有支配权，在权力关系中位于顶端，剧中的马兰戈就是这一阶层的代表。有时，马兰戈会亲自点菜，他要的菜会超越客人们的订单顺序，以优先的方式呈现，显示出他在饭店的权威地位。二是作为饭店管理者的管理人员，具体而言就是厨师长和副厨师长。他们虽然没有资本，但由于老板赋予的管理权力，对于厨房中的人或事也有一定的支配权，处于权力关系的中端，剧中的汉斯、弗兰克等人就属于这一阶层。三是作为流水线上的工作人员，包括厨师，洗碗工、切菜工、餐厅招待员等，他们由于没有生产资料，受老板和管理人员管控，只能依靠自己的体力和技能获取报酬，居于生产关系中的底层。剧中的厨师彼得、

他的女朋友莫尼卡、新来的员工凯文等普通员工就属于这一阶层。《厨房》一剧中的厨房规模较大，每天要为 2000 以上的客人提供食物，整个食品生产流程需要大家通力合作才能顺利完成，表面上看来，所有的饭店成员都是食品生产线上的一个支点，是不必进行任务区分的机器人，然而实际上，每位员工都是活生生的个体，有自己的喜怒哀乐，也有自己的利益取向，将工人们视为机器的一部分成为了他们非常痛恨的一个方面。厨师彼得与女招待之间虽然同属于工人阶层，他们也会发生矛盾，更不用说处于不同阶层的工人与管理者以及老板之间会产生冲突。

另一方面，若是从资本占有的角度判断，则厨房中只存在着两个阶层，一个是掌握着饭店资本、代表着资产阶级的餐厅老板，另一个是缺乏资本，只能出卖劳动力的无产阶级。根据场域理论，不同权力或资本对应于一个位置，因此场域中的每一个位置意味着各个不同的资本或利益，那么，老板与员工之间不同的资本占有状况决定了他们之间的关系是对抗的关系。在剧中，当一个参加过第一次世界大战的老兵流浪汉闯进了厨房时，富有同情心的彼得看不惯厨房员工只给他一勺罐头汤的敷衍行为，悄悄地给他拿了两份肉排，却被发现了，于是他遭到了厨师长以及老板的责问。

厨师长：别以我们忙不过来，我就不会解雇你。工作三年算不了啥，三年你买不下这个位置。听见了吗？明白了没有？别以为我不能叫你滚蛋。（p. 69）

这时，老板马兰戈走了过来，了解到事情的原委后，他说道：

马兰戈：你这是拆台。我看你是在拆我的台，这儿是我的财产，可你却拿去送人。
彼得：但是……（p. 69）

在这里，厨师长作为老板任命的管理人员，享受着比普通工人更高的待遇，是被分化了的工人阶级成员，但跟老板也是服从关系。为了维持自己在厨房中的地位和利益，他在行动上会充分考虑餐厅老板的利益，站在老板的一边，因而他对彼得发出了解雇威胁。而老板也认为彼得的行为给他的财产造成了损失，对其进行了斥责，他们显然是没有生产资料的彼得的对立面。剧中人的不同态度就是由于资本占用的关系不同而造成的。因为一方面，作为生产资料的占有者，老板需要的是通过剥削工人的劳动价值以取得利润，他们会最大限度地维持自己的利益。另一方面，工人需要获得工资以养家糊口，即使环境无比恶劣，他们也没有选择，只能适应工作，才能获得最大数额的薪水。但是，工人们也不愿意被资本家过度地压榨和剥削，他们想要自由，想要更好的工作环境，也很少会为老板着想。老板和工人由于生产资料占有关系的不同，在这一经济场域中代表着不同的利益关系，处于不同的位置，他们的矛盾和冲突显然不可避免。

二、厨房中阶级惯习的冲突与身份认知

“惯习”（habitus）与人们熟知的“习惯”（habit）是两个不同的概念，分别代表社会

和个人两个层面。“惯习”是社会性的，“习惯”则是个体性的。布迪厄指出：“惯习是可持续、可转换的倾向系统，倾向于使被结构的结构发挥具有结构能力的结构的功能，也就是说，发挥产生实践与表述的原理的作用。这些实践与表述看似影响了事物的发展结果，但实际上并非是有意识的目标谋划，也不依赖于达成这些目标所必需的操作手段。”（布迪厄，2017，p. 213）在他看来，虽然场域展示的是客观关系，但是场域中的行动者都是有思维、有知觉、有精神属性的人，而非冰冷的、没有生命的物质存在，不同的场域有着不同的性情倾向系统，即区别于其他场域的惯习。对于惯习的形成，布迪厄认为其“主要是来自于行动者长期的实践活动——一旦经过一定时期的积累—经验就会内化为人们的意识去指挥和调动行动者的行为—成为行动者的社会行为、生存方式、生活模式、行为策略等行动和精神的强有力的生成机制。”（宫留记，2007，p. 4）他指出：“每个行为者，无论其是否知晓，是否愿意，都是客观意义的生产者和复制者，因为其行动和作品都是一种并不由他产生也并不被他有意掌握的操作方式的产物。”（布迪厄，2017，p. 227）按照布迪厄的说法，人们日常的活动看似自主行为，其实是受到了社会的制约和影响的结果。它具有主观性，但也是社会性的和集体的，同时具有客观性。人们的行动是由他们在社会关系中所处的位置决定的，是社会关系决定了人们的社会实践。

在该剧中，各个阶层人群都不自觉地按自己的阶层惯习行动。一方面，作为饭店的老板，也就是投资者，获得生产利润是最基本的目标，而因为占有生产资料的缘故，他们通常会以高高在上的傲慢态度来对待自己的员工，斥责、威胁等话语是其惯用的语言。这在剧中的对话中多有体现。例如在剧末，当彼得在厨房中挥刀砍断了燃气管道时，老板马兰戈走了进来，他的一番斥责透露出明显的阶级差别意识，他说：“你使我的世界全停顿了，上帝给了你许可吗？除了上帝，再没有任何人可以这样干，知道吗？没有任何人！”（p. 78）“为什么人人都要跟我捣乱，破坏我的事业？弗兰克？我给你们活儿干，给你们工钱，对吧？”（p. 78）马兰戈只认可上帝的意见，视自己为天选之民，认为除了上帝其他任何人都不能干扰他的事业；而上帝是神，不属于人类社会，也就是说在现实生活中没有人能够对他这一阶层的人发号施令。他的话语中体现出强烈的阶级优越性。同时，他在对话中区分开“我的世界”和“你的世界”把自己的工作称为“事业”，而把工人的工作叫做“活儿”，其间则体现出强烈的身份认知意识。他认为是自己付给工人们工钱，工人们是因为他而得以生存，应该对他心存感激，完全忽视了工人是因为劳动付出才获得的工钱。“为什么人人都要跟我捣乱”这一句话里潜意识中表达出他内心认可的阶级对立，读者不难体会出其间的理直气壮和理所当然，这是工业资本主义社会中资产阶级所体现出来的惯习。

而作为工人阶级，受社会会条件的制约，他们也有自己的阶级利益，从而也有其固有的惯习。一方面，作为员工，他们需要从资本家的工厂中获得支撑生活的薪水，因而不得不努力工作。另一方面，作为人的本能，他们当然希望自己能够获得较为宽松的工作环境和较高的薪水。因而，他们展现出了不满的一面。例如保尔的理想是“让我休息，给我安静，把这个疯狂的厨房弄走了”（p. 57）。但是他的理想是永远不可能实现的，因为要是没有这个厨房，他也需要去别的类似于厨房的地方工作，以获得生存的基本供给。又如戏剧一开头所指出的：“厨房中的员工本能上讨厌餐厅中的员工，他们又都一起讨厌顾客。”（p.

5）厨房中的员工与餐厅的员工同属于一个企业，顾客是他们的上帝，他们为什么会产生“讨厌”这种情感呢？究其原因，是因为餐厅中的员工催促厨房中的员工进行劳动，准备饭菜，而这一切的根源又是由于顾客的到来，彰显了工人们对于工作的厌倦。底层的工作由于环境恶劣和报酬低下往往导致了许多的不幸，例如厨师彼得早年父母双亡，他交往了三年的女朋友莫尼克最终因为房子的原因离开了他。当彼得行为失控，在厨房中挥舞菜刀砍向厨房的煤气管的时候，既是他受到失恋的打击精神失常的结果，也是他在发泄对于社会的不满。彼得的行动看似个人行为，但实质上中断了厨房的流水线流程，象征着他对于资本主义社会秩序的反抗。然而，“无论什么时候，都是游戏者之间力量关系的状况在决定某个场域的结构。”（布迪厄，1998，p. 136）力量弱小的工人彼得是无法与资本家抗衡的，他的行为很快就被制止了，在将他送走之后，工厂很快又恢复了生产，标志着他的反抗的失败。

同时，剧中的工人阶级还表现出另一种消极的情绪，那就是他们虽然对自己的环境不满，但并不愿意进行抗争。他们当中的大多数人心中所想的正如该饭店老板在剧中所言：“生活就是这样的，不是吗？难道还有什么选择吗？”（p. 29）生活在资产阶级统治下的工人阶级是极其无奈的，缺少生产资料的他们可以做出的选择极其有限，区别只是在于在不同的企业接受剥削，现实生活在他们的心中留下了巨大的阴影和创伤。一方面，工人们不得不为了生存努力工作，另一方面，他们又对于工作环境和收入不满，但缺少反抗的勇气，甚至在自己的利益受损时，还会迅速从自己的立场出发采取孤立的行动，造成群体的分裂。例如在剧中，糕点师保尔说起了一个关于他的公共汽车司机邻居的经历。这个邻居有两个孩子，平时跟他的关系很不错，但当有一次知道他也参与了工人的游行时，他却竟然这样说：“你知道什么？真该给这帮人的头上扔炸弹，要知道咱们拖家带口不容易，这帮人真该被炸死。”（p. 58）这位公共汽车司机之所以会这样说，究其原因，是因为工人们的游行阻碍了交通，使得他的公共汽车难以开动，影响了他的家庭收入和开支计划。本来，司机也是工人阶级的一员，从身份认知的角度来看理应团结一致以反抗资产阶级的压迫，但一旦他们的个人利益受到损害，就会展示出不同的态度，甚至是采取背叛的行动，造成群体的分裂，显示出短视的一面。用剧中人保尔的话来说就是“叫人感到恐惧的是这里有一堵墙，在我和像他这样的千百万人之间有一堵高大的墙”（p. 58）。“墙”的隐喻意义是指人与人之间的隔阂，这里尤其是指工人阶级个体之间由于不同的利益追求造成的隔阂。罗纳尔德·海曼认为：“威斯克的戏剧的不平凡之处往往体现在人们采取行动和争吵的某个分裂时刻。”（Hayman，1979，p. 15）正是通过个别工人的反向行动，威斯克揭示了工人运动中存在的这样一个事实：只要自己的些小利益受到损害，某些人就会采取不利于革命斗争的短视行动，损害阶级的团结，弱化革命斗争的效果，这就是剧中工人阶级的惯习之一。在该剧中，资产阶级和工人阶级不同的惯习揭示了冲突的根源以及工人阶级运动的困境。

三、厨房中的权力游戏与大众教育

威斯克戏剧中的厨房其实就是一个权力的游戏场。表面上看来，厨房中的冲突较为复杂，既包含了饭店老板与员工之间的冲突，也包含了员工与员工之间的冲突。然而，若是

深入了解这些冲突背后的根源，不难发现这些冲突都与人物所处的社会关系的位置相关联，厨房是一个实实在在的权力游戏场。

布迪厄认为惯习是行动者内化的“历史性结构”，由家庭出身、教育轨迹等塑造，影响其在游戏中的策略选择（布迪厄，1998，p. 136）。在剧中，厨师彼得由于被女朋友抛弃，粗暴地举起菜刀，砍断了燃气管道，表面上看来，他的行为是受到了特定事件的影响，然而，若依布迪厄所言，他看似不合理的行为背后又显得非常合理。彼得出身于工人阶级家庭的身份，以及他父母双亡的特别家庭生活状况决定了他很难拥有巨大的财富，也不可能接受到优渥的精英教育，也就决定了他在厨房中只能是一名普通的员工，因而，在金钱至上的资本主义社会中，他的女朋友转身投入他人怀抱也就是理所当然，其悲剧性的行为和结果早就注定。

而剧中的饭店老板马兰戈由于拥有大量的资本，他在权力游戏中总是居于有利的地位。布迪厄认为资本是影响权力关系的重要因素，他指出：“在既定的具体场域中，资本总是灵验有效，既是争夺的目标，又是斗争的武器，它的所有者能够在该场域中占尽先机、施加权力、运用影响。”（布迪厄，1998，p. 136）资本的形式并非完全固定的，各种资本之间可以互相转化，使得资本占有者总是处于有利地位。例如经济资本可以转化为文化资本，也可以转化为教育资本、权力资本。一方面，马兰戈的经济资本在社会中首先转化成了权力资本，使得他有了对于工人们发号施令的权力，因而他在厨房中所要做的事就是巡视和检查，他可以随便的责备或是责骂厨房中不合他心意的员工，也可以超越任何人的点菜顺序先给自己点菜。另一方面，他的经济资本也可能转化成了社会资本，由于拥有巨额财富，他可以通过各种手段结交权贵，使得他在社会网络中拥有较好的人脉，在冲突中总是处于有利的地位。当然，马兰戈看起来具有一定的食品生产专业知识和管理经验，这也是由于他的经济资本让他拥有了接受良好教育的机会，经济资本转化为教育资本。于是，他在厨房中处理其间发生的各种事情时，傲慢的语言和行为就非常容易让人理解了。“斗争是通过争夺符号资源和物质资源进行的，在权力争夺中，个体、群体、机构、家庭等常常利用经济资源或文化资源以维护和强化自己在社会秩序中的地位。”（斯沃茨，2006，p. 157）由于占有生产资料，资产阶级获得了权力，而权力又反过来助力于资产阶级控制和统治无产阶级。通过剧中的故事，威斯克揭示了资本主义语境下资产阶级在与工人阶级的冲突对立中屡屡获胜的原因。

威斯克指出：“对于莎士比亚而言，世界就是一个舞台，而对于我而言，世界就是一个厨房。”（p. 5）作为戏剧家，威斯克和莎士比亚都通过戏剧舞台来表现世界，但他们的舞台设置理念是不同的。莎士比亚的戏剧舞台空间形式多样，展现了丰富多彩的现实世界。而在威斯克的戏剧中，他的戏剧舞台空间往往是一个厨房，其焦点往往只是活跃于厨房中的人们。显然，在威斯克眼中，厨房就是社会的缩影，其间的社会关系是整个社会生产关系的代表。亨利・古德曼认为：“威斯克是一个具有 20 世纪 30 年代传统特征的政治剧作家，他把戏剧舞台当作新左派的阵地和讲坛。”（Goodman，1961，p. 216）通过厨房中简单的冲突情节，威斯克展示出他创作时期英国资产阶级统治下社会中的生产和生活状况。彼时，二战刚刚结束，在西方世界中，资产阶级占有生产资料，在生产关系中处于有利地位。“社

会行动者拥有和储存各种资本—不是仅仅为了拥有和储存它们—而是为了在社会斗争中显示其权力威力—并通过使用而进一步将它们再生产和不断增值。”（宫留记，2007，p. 89)资产阶级将手中的生产资本，不断地转化为教育资本、社会资本、权力资本，控制着社会生活的方方面面。而工人阶级由于没有生产资料，也就缺少了进行资本转化的机会，他们本来就弱小，又由于缺乏资本导致的局限性容易发生阶级内部冲突，削弱了力量，难以打破既定的场域结构，只能按照阶级的惯习采取行动，处于社会的底层。

然而，工人阶级群众中还有很多人没有认识到自己的处境，也缺乏革命斗争的意志。彼时，作为人们心目中公认的“社会主义者、工人阶级的儿子、为实现社会主义事业而奋斗的先锋战士、能诊断社会顽疾、传播社会主义福音的预言家”（Wilcher，1991，p. 4），威斯克对于当时的工人阶级的状况充满忧虑。约翰·奥尔指出：“威斯克致力于为英国城乡中的下层阶级发声，他的戏剧是战后英国戏剧中最有力的政治宣言。”（Orr，1989，p. 265）由于深感提升无产阶级的革命意识、对无产阶级进行教育的重要性，威斯克和一些志向相同的艺术家建立了“第 42 中心”（Center 42）机构，实施其政治理念，领导中心开展各项活动。其目的在于“确定成员共同的社会主义价值观”，“消除艺术方面的神秘感和优越感，并让艺术家与观众有更多的接触机会。”（Wilcher，1991，p. 9）威斯克一直坚持认为应该让艺术和艺术家深入大众的生活，以对他们观念和意识产生影响，从这一意义上来说，厨房其实就是威斯克将艺术与大众教育紧密融合的一个深度尝试。《厨房》中的写实性艺术表演形式打破了戏剧舞台空间展示的常规，意图在于以独特的形式引发民众对于革命前景和自身前途的关注，揭示了资产阶级与无产阶级冲突的原因，也展示了无产阶级在革命斗争中遇到的困境，以及各个阶层人群的身份认知，反映了威斯克对于工人阶级革命斗争的深入思考。

威斯克戏剧《厨房》中的厨房空间既是生产食物的场所，也是舞台空间，还是一个经济场域。在厨房中，由于资本占有的状况不同，居于其间的人员各自采取的行动、语言表现和身份认知也不同。处于统治地位的餐厅老板由于占有生产资料，其作为经济资本可以与文化资本、教育资本和社会资本相互转化，因而在权力游戏中总是处于有利地位。他视自己为天选之民，傲慢无礼，以追逐利润作为第一目标，把压迫和剥削员工视为理所当然。居于食物生产线上的工人们由于缺乏经济资本，在权力游戏中总是处于劣势，一方面不得不努力工作以维持生存，另一方面却又因环境的恶劣和受到的无情压榨深感不满，但却缺乏反抗意识，甚至有部分人为了些小的利益采取了违背阶级立场的行动，造成了阶级群体的分裂。惯习具有社会性。剧中人的惯习行为其实反映了他们在社会生产关系中的位置，展示出各个阶层之间的权力关系，是二战之后西方工业资本主义社会状况的真实写照，也反映了剧作家威斯克的思考。正是通过对厨房设置和生产食物的流程进行实景展示，以及对各个阶层人物的惯习行为的精心描绘和舞台模拟，威斯克剖析了资本主义社会中的各个阶层的行为动因，展示了工人阶级革命斗争的困境与挑战，致力于融合艺术与教育于一体开展大众教育，提升民众的无产阶级革命意识，展现出二战之后具有担当意识和革命情怀的剧作家形象。

基金项目：本文为 2023 年国家社科基金一般项目“当代英国左翼戏剧中的工人阶级共同体及其社会主义理想研究”（23BWW006）的阶段性研究成果。

Funding: This research received funding from the National Social Science Fund of China entitled *A Study of the Community of Working Class and the Ideal of Socialism in Modern British Leftist Drama* (23BWW006)

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Liu Minglu ID https://orcid.org/0009-0008-1716-7137

References

Goodman, Henry (1961). “The New Dramatist: Arnold Wesker.” *Drama Survey* (01): 215-222.

Hayman, Ronald (1979). *Contemporary Playwrights: Arnold Wesker*. Heinemann.

Karaman, E. (2021). “Class Conflict with Its Causes & Effects in *The Kitchen* by Arnold Wesker.” *Essence & Critique: Journal of Literature and Drama Studies* (01): 53–74.

Leeming, G., & Trussler, S. (1971). *The Plays of Arnold Wesker: An Assessment*. Gollancz.

Leeming, Glenda (1972). *Arnold Weske*. Longman Group Ltd.

Orr, John (1989). *Tragic Drama and Modern Society: A Socialology of Dramatica Form from 1880 to the Present*, 2nd ed. Macmillian.

Taylor, John Russell (1962). *Anger and After: A Guide to the New British Drama*. Routledge.

Wesker, Arnold (1961). *The Kitchen*. Random House.

Wilcher, Robert (1991). *Understanding Arnold Wesker*. University of South Carolina Press.

戴维 • 斯沃茨 (2006):《文化与权力：布迪厄的社会学》，陶东风译。上海译文出版社。

[Swartz, David (2006). *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, trans. Tao Dongfeng. Shanghai Translation Publishing House.]

宫留记（2007）:《布迪厄的社会实践理论》，南京师范大学博士学位论文。

[Gong Liuji (2007). Bourdieu’s Theory of Social Practice. Doctoral dissertation, Nanjing Normal University.]

黄梅（1982）:“韦斯克和他的代表作”，《外国戏剧》（02）：94-98。

[Huang Mei (1982). “Wesker and His Representative Works.” *Foreign Drama* (02): 94-98.]

迈克尔 • 格伦菲尔 (2018):《布迪厄：关键概念》，林云柯译。重庆大学出版社。

[Grenfell, Michael (2018). *Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, trans. Lin Yunke. Chongqing University Press.]

皮埃尔 • 布迪厄、华康德（1998）:《实践与反思--反思社会学导引》，李猛，李康译。中央编译出版社。

[Bourdieu, Pierre, and Loïc J.D. Wacquant (1998). *Practice and Reflection: An Introduction to Reflexive Sociology*, translated by. M. Li & K. Li. Central Compilation & Translation Press.]

皮埃尔 • 布迪厄（2017）:《实践理论大纲》，高振华，李思宇译。中国人民大学出版社。

[Bourdieu, Pierre (2017). *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique précédé de trois études d'ethnologie kabyle,* translated by. Z. Gao & S. Li. China Renmin University Press.]

汪民安（2007）:《文化研究关键词》。江苏人民出版社。

[Wang Min’an (2007). *Key Words in Cultural Studies*. Jiangsu People’s Publishing House.]

JESL

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

***JESL*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026, pp.82-91.**

Print ISSN: 3107-3492; Online ISSN: 3107-3506

Journal homepage: https://www.jesljournal.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.64058/jesl260105pwcbg

HIEP
Academic Publishing

从《周六晚与周日晨》看英国“黄金时代”的工人阶级困境

李郑心岚（Li Zhengxinlan），李　锋（Li Feng）

摘要：受凯恩斯主义宏观经济学的思想影响，二战后的英国通过国有化改革推动工业经济复苏，带动工业城市蓬勃发展，促成消费社会兴起，迎来经济高速增长的黄金时代。阿兰·西利托的小说《周六晚与周日晨》以 20 世纪五十年代工人的生存境遇为切入点，揭露了繁荣表象下被掩盖的劳动规训、劳资博弈，以及消费主义蔓延等社会问题。流水线生产、薪酬体系与工作纪律将工人异化为可替代的工具，工人则以消极怠工、反抗权威等方式进行抗争，工厂内部形成对立割裂的等级关系，劳资矛盾不断激化。在工厂之外，战争创伤、核威胁等现代化风险笼罩英国社会，工人们试图通过报复性消费、纵情享乐来逃避生存焦虑，分期付款、超前消费等信贷消费模式也逐渐流行。规训与诱惑相互交织，最终使工人陷入身体与精神的双重异化。

关键词：《周六晚与周日晨》；黄金时代；工人阶级；劳动规训；消费社会

作者介绍：李郑心岚，中国海洋大学外国语学院博士生，主要研究方向为英美文学，电子信箱：lizhengxinlan@stu.ouc.edu.cn。**李锋**（通讯作者），文学博士，中国海洋大学外国语学院教授，郑州大学英美文学研究中心兼职研究员，主要从事英美文学研究，电子信箱：franklee1978@163.com。

Title: The Plight of the Working Class in Britain’s “Golden Age”: A Case Study of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*

Abstract: Under the influence of Keynesian macroeconomic thought, post-WWII

Received: 06 May 2026 / Revised: 20 May 2026 / Accepted: 05 Jun. 2026 / Published online: 15 Jun. 2026 / Print published: 25 Jun. 2026.

Britain restored its industrial economy through nationalization reforms. These policies boosted the robust development of industrial cities, facilitated the rise of a consumer society, and ushered in a golden age of rapid economic growth. Alan Sillitoe's novel *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* focuses on the living conditions of workers in the 1950s, exposing social problems hidden behind prosperity—including labor discipline, labor-capital relations, and the spread of consumerism. Driven by assembly-line production, wage systems and work disciplines, workers were reduced to replaceable tools, yet they resisted through acts like slacking and defying authority. Such conditions engendered antagonistic and fragmented hierarchies inside factories and further intensified conflicts between labor and capital. Outside the workplace, British society was overshadowed by modernization risks such as wartime trauma and nuclear threats. To escape existential anxiety, workers resorted to compensatory consumption and hedonistic pleasures, leading to the growing prevalence of credit-based consumption such as installments and advanced consumption. As discipline and temptation became intertwined, workers were ultimately trapped in a state of physical and mental alienation.

Keywords: *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*; Golden age; Working class; Labor discipline; Consumer society

Author Biography: Li Zhengxinlan is a Ph.D. candidate at the College of Foreign Languages, Ocean University of China, specializing in British and American literature. E-mail: lizhengxinlan@stu.ouc.edu.cn. **Li Feng (**corresponding author**)**, Ph.D., is a professor at the College of Foreign Languages, Ocean University of China and a research fellow at the Center of English Studies, Zhengzhou University, specializing in British and American literature. E-mail: franklee1978@163.com.

1950-1973 年的二十余年间，英国以及其他欧洲大国的经济快速复苏，这一时期被学界称为欧洲经济高歌猛进的“黄金时代”。（Crafts，2018，p. 79）在凯恩斯主义宏观经济学思想的指导下，战后的英国政府开始推行国有化改革、福利国家制度与充分就业政策，国内经济保持平稳发展，民众消费能力持续增强。1957 年 7 月，时任英国首相哈罗德·麦克米伦（Harold Macmillan）在贝德福德发表著名演讲，称英国民众正经历“生活从未如此美好”（Never Having Had it So Good）的时代，这句乐观宣言旋即成为战后经济繁荣期的政治标语。（Thorpe，2010，p. 62）

然而，在主流话语所歌颂的繁荣背后，广大底层工人的真实处境与生活体验却长期被遮蔽。作为“愤怒的青年”（Angry Young Men）代表作家，阿兰·西利托（Alan Sillitoe，1928-2010）从工人视角出发，撕开了这层光鲜表象。他出生于英国诺丁汉一个工人家庭，曾在自行车厂务工，积累了丰富的写作素材，对英国工人的生活有着深刻认知。1958 年，西利托的首部小说《周六晚与周日晨》（Saturday Night and Sunday Morning，1958）甫一问世即大获成功，被誉为“阶级意识的核心，散发着工人阶级精神的光晕”。（Ritchie，1988，

p. 199）小说以青年工人亚瑟·西顿（Arthur Seaton）的工作与生活为叙事中心，详实地展现了战后英国的社会与经济面貌，在宏观层面勾勒出黄金时代工业经济的发展状况、工厂内部的运行逻辑，以及消费社会逐步形成与扩张的整体局势。同时，西利托巧妙地将工业经济结构、工厂运营模式与工人个体的生命体验和心理变化联系起来，从微观视角呈现工人在生产劳动与日常生活中的真实处境，进而反映出工人阶级在时代发展中的生存焦虑与困境。

一、黄金时代的工业图景：工业经济、城市与消费社会

二战后，英国以凯恩斯主义为指导，通过国家干预推动战后经济重建与工业复苏。政府先后通过八个国有化法令，将英格兰银行、煤矿、航空、电报和无线电通讯等关键机构与基础行业收归国有。国家的统一管理有效稳定了生产秩序、加速了产能恢复，进而促进工业与制造业发展。英国延续了工业革命以来的产业根基，形成以钢铁、机械、汽车、纺织等为核心的制造业体系，创造了大量就业岗位，成为国民经济的重要支柱。据统计，20世纪五十年代英国制造业等第二产业就业占比维持在 40%左右[①]，失业率长期处于 1%-2%的低位。（Denman & McDonald，1996，p. 7）发达的工业经济推动国民收入快速增长，涌现出“一批实现充分就业、收入持续提升且权益不断完善的劳动力群体，不仅享有持续增长的工资与附加福利，还受益于不断扩展且更为完善的福利政策”（Hobsbawm，1995，p. 282）。《周六晚与周日晨》的故事背景正是设定在战后工业蒸蒸日上的五十年代初期，主人公亚瑟是自行车工厂的车床工人，他工作稳定、温饱无虞，能负担得起酒水、香烟等非必需品，也不必为失业或贫困忧心。从收入水平来看，他的周薪为 14 英镑，在当时英国人周均工资为7.14英镑的年代[②]，这是一笔相当可观的收入。可以看出，战后蓬勃兴起的工业经济为工人们带来了稳定的工作与收入，提升了整体的生活质量与消费水平。

工业的繁荣也不断推动人口向城市集中，伯明翰、曼彻斯特、诺丁汉等工业城市迅速发展。其中诺丁汉作为英格兰中部的重要工业城市，其制药、烟草、纺织等本土产业在黄金时代十分兴盛，吸纳了大量本地及周边劳动力，单是一家自行车公司便有 7000 余名员工。（Williams，2022，p. 2）这类工业城市的经济结构与空间布局均围绕工业生产展开，工厂逐渐成为城市空间的核心组成部分。工业生产与城市生活的深度融合，还对工人的家庭结构与居住空间产生影响——传统的联合家庭逐渐向讲求效率的夫妇式家庭（conjugal family）与核心家庭（nuclear family）转变。美国社会学家威廉·古德（William Goode）指出：“夫妇式家庭比其他任何家庭形式都更能适应工业化制度的需要。个人更容易顺应劳动市场的需要，更能集中精力干工作，而不是集中精力考虑其亲戚网络的需要。”（古德，1986，p. 156）小说中，亚瑟一家与其他工人家庭通常采用新居制，由一对夫妻独立门户，丈夫作为家庭的经济支柱进厂务工，妻子承担家务劳动，而年龄稍长的子女或在本地工厂工作，或

[①] Office for National Statistics. “Long-term trends in UK employment: 1861 to 2018.” https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/compendium/economicreview/april2019/longtermtrendsinukemployment1861to2018#the-evolution-of-sectoral-distribution-of-employment.

[②] Bank of England. “A Millennium of Macroeconomic Data.” https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/statistics/research-datasets.

前往其他城市谋生。与此同时，适配核心家庭 4-5 人居住、兼具低成本、高灵活性的“两上两下”（two-up, two-down）住宅成为主流。这类住宅多建于城市郊区的工厂周边，既满足工人家庭的居住需求，又契合工业城市低成本扩张的逻辑，得到了英国政府的大力推行。

在工业经济稳定发展、工人收入持续增长以及社会福利体系的支撑下，个人与集体的消费需求持续扩大，英国也由此形成了规模庞大的消费社会。1961 年英国政府发布的《当代与未来住宅》（*Homes for Today and Tomorrow*）报告显示：每日有“近一千户家庭迁入新房，每三户家庭中便有一户拥有汽车，超过三分之二的家庭拥有电视机”。（Burnett，1986，pp. 304-306）英国社会学家齐格蒙特 • 鲍曼（Zygmunt Bauman）在其著作《工作，消费主义和新穷人》（*Work, Consumerism and the New Poor*，1998）中揭露当代发达社会已从生产者社会转变为消费社会，个体的身份定义从“我生产了什么”转向“我消费了什么”。（鲍曼，2021，p. 29）在这个阶段，“社会主要要求人们以消费者的能力参与其中，首先依照‘消费者’角色需要塑造其成员，并期望他们具有消费的能力和意愿”。（鲍曼，2021，p. 29）也就是说，消费不仅是满足需求的行为，更是寻求自我认同、稳固社会地位的手段——“人首先要成为消费者，才能再拥有其他特别的身份。”（鲍曼，2021，pp. 32-33）

亚瑟一家在战前依赖救济金生活在贫民窟，战后则拥有四居室的住房和电视机。这台电视机不再仅仅是娱乐工具，更成了亚瑟一家脱离赤贫、成为体面消费者的象征。当亚瑟在工厂里以计件劳动换取工资，又将这笔收入用于购置香烟、酒水与其他家庭消费时，他的身份已从作为生产者的车工转变为具有购买意愿和能力的消费者。这种意愿和能力是消费社会衡量个人成功与否的关键指标，否则个人将承担“作为一个不合格消费者的污名和耻辱”。（鲍曼，2021，p. 52）四居室烟囱上安装的电视天线共同构成了亚瑟一家向外界证明生活变好的物质凭证。以消费定义生活的逻辑还延伸到了日常娱乐领域——随着当代商业社会的不断发展，大众的娱乐活动与消遣方式也因消费主义的渗透变得日益多样化。西利托笔下的工人们在酒吧、赛会、俱乐部、跑马场、鹅市等娱乐场所肆意狂欢，是经济繁荣下消费社会狂欢的缩影。

战后的黄金时代为英国带来了空前的繁荣，依托凯恩斯主义宏观经济理论与国家干预构建的国有化工业体系，进一步推动了工业经济的复苏与发展。工人们的就业得到了保障，工业城市的家庭结构与居住空间发生转变，住宅、家电、服饰、娱乐等消费项目构建起了新的生活方式与消费习惯。值得注意的是，黄金时代虽为工人们提供了稳定的工作和良好的生活条件，但同样为后续劳资博弈、阶级对立、消费主义盛行等社会矛盾埋下伏笔。正是繁荣与隐忧的交织，让黄金时代成为英国历史上重要的里程碑，其塑造的阶级关系、生产与生活方式对战后英国的社会与经济面貌产生了深远影响。

二、繁荣背后的剥削：劳动规训与劳资博弈

黄金时代的经济复苏与大众生活水平的提升常常被视作资本主义进步的明证，但细究之下便会发现，繁荣背后的剥削并未因经济的表面景气而消解；相反，资本家对劳动者的压迫变得更为系统化、结构化。在工人所面临的种种困境中，工厂作为劳动规训与阶级对抗的核心场所，通过生产模式、物理环境、薪资制度和工作纪律对工人的身体与精神实施

直接剥削。自 1913 年美国企业家亨利 • 福特（Henry Ford）开创车间流水线生产模式以来，工厂逐渐迈入大规模流水线的工业化生产时代。这种模式将整个劳动过程分解为标准化的步骤，彻底改变了工人们的劳动状态，使他们的主体性被简化为流水线上的可替换零件。政治经济学家罗伯特 • 赖希（Robert Reich，1991，p. 175）提出，常规生产行业的从业者（如流水线车工、领班、蓝领工人等非技术性操作者）被固定在单一的工序上，重复执行特定步骤，“他们与其他同事一起在大型封闭空间内工作……主要优点是可靠性、忠诚和服从指挥的能力”。流水线分工虽然提升了生产效率，却导致工人技能的单一化，模糊了人与机器的界限。作为一名流水线工人，亚瑟的全部工作就是一遍遍地拧紧螺丝。这种被异化为机器的工作状态，甚至影响到亚瑟对生命和时间的认知。对他而言，未来不过是“对当下的机械复演，时间的流逝不过是季节与事物的循环往复”（Bell，2000，p. 159）。

工人们的工作环境与生活空间同样受到了压迫。工厂车间乃至生活社区里到处充斥着噪音与油污，“发电机通宵达旦地轰鸣着……工厂周围四间一套的住房附近的空气里弥漫着杀菌剂泡沫、油污和新切割的钢屑”[①]。持续的环境侵蚀不仅损害工人的身体健康，更在无形中消磨他们的反抗意志。长期高强度的工作也让工人无暇顾及自我成长，“休闲时间的缺乏……剥夺了他们发展智力的机会，导致其认知水平低下。”（李锋，2024，p. 81）以亚瑟为代表的工人，其受教育程度十分匮乏，他们大多数都在十四五岁的年纪就辍学进厂，从此开始了几十年如一日的车间工作。工人们的日常生活全然被工厂所主导，以至于书名中的“周六晚”与“周日晨”这两处时间节点，唯有置于“与这份工作的辩证关系中才能被理解”。（Del Valle Alcalá，2016，p. 14）这是因为，对于一名底层工人来说，一个星期里仅有周六晚上和周日早上才是无拘无束、独属于自己的时间，可以摆脱枯燥乏味的工作、难缠的工头，过上真正自由的生活。亚瑟将周一称为“黑色星期一”（Black Monday），因为在这一天，周末的富裕和快乐仿若幻影，取而代之的则是即将到来的残酷现实。

在周而复始的剥削循环中，工资不仅模糊了必要劳动与剩余劳动的界限，还将劳动“简化为可量化的时间，试图由此消解工人的主体性”（Del Valle Alcalá，2016，p. 27）。在这种以时间为标准的工资计量方式下，工人的价值认知完全围绕工资展开：他们重视发薪日，认为周五发薪是吉利的象征，还会在当天获得特别加餐。工资的意义早已超越单纯的报酬属性，逐渐演变为衡量人生成功与否的标尺。亚瑟的工资和劳动价值在书中被刻意地反复提及；在介绍其他工人时，他们的工钱亦如个人名片般频繁出现。这些都是工人主体性被弱化、生活完全服从于工资逻辑的具体体现。此外，黄金时代的英国工厂普遍实施“差别计件制”的刺激性付酬制度，即“按照工人是否完成其定额而采取不同的工资率”（泰勒，2013，p. 249）。美国管理学家弗雷德里克 • 泰勒（Frederick Taylor）提出这一薪资制度的初心是激发工人劳动的主动性与积极性，然而在具体实践中，许多工厂为了追求利益最大化，故意实施不透明工资并垄断定额标准，以便“驱赶工人们去更艰苦、更勤劳地工作，却不增加多少工资”（泰勒，2013，p. 76）。这也让工资沦为挑拨工人关系、煽动恶

[①] 阿兰·西利托（2004）：《周六晚与周日晨》，孙法理译。译林出版社，p. 20。以下引文只标注页码，不再一一说明。

意竞争的手段。工头罗波（Robboe）曾对亚瑟说："我没有说钱不是你挣的，可你最好别张扬。我不愿意谁知道你拿回家多少钱。他们全都会抓住我的喉咙，要求加工资的。"（p. 54）

压榨工人薪资的行为，还延伸到了社会政策的设计与运行中。英国的福利国家制度虽在一定程度上缓解了极端贫困，但部分名义上与"福利"挂钩的保险、税务等项目，实际并未真正惠及人民百姓，反而以苛捐杂税的形式将经济负担转嫁给他们。亚瑟直接撕开了福利政策的假面："'领瘦'们每周都要从我们的工资袋里挖保险费呀所得税呀什么的，而且打算告诉我们那全是为了我们好。"（28）然而现实情况却是：福利政策变成了工资单上被扣减的高额税款，将底层劳动者本就微薄的工资进一步挖空。以福利为名的持续压榨，催生出更为尖锐的矛盾。

工人们虽有稳定收入，却在社会管理中缺少话语权，自身地位也未得到充分认可。这种落差正是他们对现状心生愤怒与不满的根源，更是导致亚瑟心理状态自相矛盾的主因——他时而觉得自己是"这个世界的幸运儿"（p. 31），时而想要"把国会卖掉，把工厂炸掉"（p. 29）。产生这种矛盾心态的原因有二："一方面，他承认战后相对富裕的经济条件离不开国家、政府等当权者的支持。另一方面，他始终以体制外者自居，将自发性的暴力反抗视为挑战权威和制度的方法。"（Kalliney，2001，p. 107）对于像亚瑟这样愤怒的青年而言，生命的意义在于对抗扭曲、矛盾的现实，正因"错误投生到了一个疯狂离奇的世界"，他便只能"每天战斗，直到死亡"（p. 213）。

在此背景下，工人们对一切当权者的怨恨与仇视被不断放大。谩骂政府、诋毁当权者成了他们缓解失衡感的出口，叛逆行为也被赋予了"向生存困境与权力压迫宣泄不满和抗议"的道德正当性。（Wilson，2006，p. 112）他们自发地加入了"无政府主义工党"，把凡是不反对政府、同工厂站在一起的人视为叛徒（p. 9）。工头、监工等人更是被形容为敌人的侦察兵，他们象征着工厂内部的"阶级壁垒"以及"最惹人厌憎的一切特质"。（Lewis，1978，p. 161）正是这种藏在血脉里的阶级仇视与对立，让亚瑟多次站出来号召工人们反对压迫："别叫混蛋们折磨垮了。"（p. 33）这种反抗首先体现在对工作的消极态度与抵制行为上。尽管工人们对自身的工作条件几乎毫无掌控力，但在决定工作速度方面却拥有一定自主权：只要上午完成定额、赚够当天的钱，亚瑟下午便能慢悠悠地干活，就可以"磨洋工，跟女人开开玩笑，跟伙伴吹吹牛了"（p. 24）。为了对抗流水线的乏味枯燥，他上班时一直沉浸在自己的白日梦幻想中，"只要胡思乱想，时间就一小时一小时迅速消失"（p. 26）。这些看似荒唐甚至幼稚的举动，其实都是工人对抗阶级壁垒、宣泄对当权者不满的方式——通过消极怠工、故意复杂化操作、做白日梦等策略，他们反抗自己在技术层面从属于机器的状态，将自主安排工作速度的权力，变成抵抗流水线压迫的重要工具。

然而，与传统的集体阶级斗争相比，诺丁汉工人们的叛逆与愤怒本质上是"一场虚无主义与个人主义的反叛"（Wiemann，2017，p. 115），这种抗争精神只能依靠消极工作、酗酒狂欢、语言暴力等方式来彰显。他们仇视一切有权阶级，跟工头、警察和政府对着干，将叛逆的个性与愤世嫉俗的生活态度作为逃避现实、投身于温柔乡的挡箭牌。纵使对工作、金钱、制度有所抱怨，亚瑟式的愤青们也并不完全是革命者；相反，他们只是被成功的门

槛拒之门外，拼命想要获得“名望、美女和财富”的年轻人罢了。（Morris，2009，pp. 161&165）工人们的愤怒与反抗更多源于“继承、盲从而非反思”（Bell，2000，p. 152），这种心理状态也揭示了其阶级意识觉醒的模糊性——与 18 世纪末暴力革命的激昂和决心相反，书中工人们的斗争“太轻率，太没有组织，非失败不可”（p. 174）；在工厂以外，面对更加隐形、充满诱惑的消费社会，欲望在无形之中瓦解了工人们的愤懑与敌意，使其在物质的享乐中彻底缴械投降。

三、消费享乐的狂欢：风险社会与信贷经济

工厂内的直接压迫催生了工人们零散而无力的反抗，而当战场从车间延伸至更广阔的社会及消费领域，资本家的操控手段便随之升级：“资本主义在试图掌控工人阶级自主性方面，已达到了一个高度社会化的水平。”（Del Valle Alcalá，2016，p. 17）当社会秩序从生产主导转向消费主导时，个体的价值标准、身份认同与社会关系都会被彻底重构。在小说中，平淡稳定的生活和其他传统价值观对于亚瑟而言皆如浮云，只有购买漂亮、昂贵的服饰才能彰显他的财富与生命的价值，“他对自己说，在衣服上花钱是聪明的投资，因为它们使他漂亮，也使他快活”（59）。购物同时也是一种心理补偿。车工这份工作仅能勉强维系亚瑟的基本生计，他无法在岗位上凭借专业技能获得自豪感与成就感，便只能通过购买精美商品来寻求——“在迷宫般的大型购物中心发现最好的‘店铺’，发现推车上最好的衣服或货架上最好的商品”。（鲍曼，2021，p. 89）

这种被消费主义主导的生活方式，也受到了战争的影响。二战后，对战争的恐惧依然萦绕在大众心中，整日惶恐不安的心理状态导致大家都倾向于过及时行乐的生活，“因为一年一年地存钱是没有用的，那是傻瓜才玩的游戏。钱一天天贬值，你无论如何也不会知道美国佬什么时候会干出疯狂的事，往莫斯科扔下个氢弹什么的”（p. 21）。德国社会学家乌尔里希·贝克（Ulrich Beck）指出：战争与核事故等现代化风险对人类的威胁具有全局性，“其影响将波及数代人，甚至包括那些事故发生时尚未出生者，或远在千里之外的人”。（贝克，2018，p. 7）在现代化风险的阴影下，共同体的性质由追求平等转向规避危险，即“共同的焦虑取代了共同的需求”。（贝克，2018，p. 48）与此同时，大众对风险、焦虑、不安的感知极大地影响了他们的生活态度以及人生层面的选择——对于“日常意识既看不到也感知不到的内容的现实意涵，如放射性物质、污染物和未来的威胁”（贝克，2018，p. 82），公众会感受到恐惧、痛苦以及被威胁感，最终凝结成普遍的受害意识。亚瑟感到“全世界就没有一片可以称作安全的土地……你在黑森林中的洞穴里住，觉得不安全，极不安全，就只好永远睁着一只眼睡觉，身边放一大堆伸手就能抓到的尖石头”（p. 176）。对于极度焦虑的人，唯有落在实处的物品和及时享受的生活，才能像“尖石头”一样给予片刻安慰。因此，周六晚的报复性消费既是对现实风险的规避，对生存焦虑的逃避，也是工人们缓解不安与释放压力的一种方式：

> 因为那是周六晚，一周之中最快活、最宜于饮酒喧哗的日子，是随着年月的大轮子缓慢运转的五十二个假日之一，是筋疲力尽的安息日的暴烈前奏。积蓄了整整一个礼拜

的情绪在周六晚上爆发，工厂里整个礼拜枯燥苦役的后果随着祝福的喊叫从你全身上下往外喷射。（p. 3）

面对未知和不可见的风险，狂欢成为工人们克服恐惧的方式。他们习惯了透支工资、提前消费、四处欠账，只为把全部积蓄花个精光，害怕突然爆发的战争将随时终结一切生活。同样地，流水线车工这一职业深刻影响着工人们的消费观和心态——劳动者的工作是脆弱的、临时的、可替换的，因此他们很少有团结起来进行抗争的意愿，亦缺乏讨价还价的资本。久而久之，这些工人的人生观也会相应变化，"'今朝有酒今朝醉，明日愁来明日愁'和'各人自扫门前雪，莫管他人瓦上霜'在潜移默化之间不可避免地成为审慎而有效的生存哲学"。（鲍曼，2021，p. 87）现代化风险带来的生存焦虑瓦解了工人们对未来的信心，低技能、高替代性的工作则消磨了他们的抗争动力，于是他们放弃对长期规划的追求，转而通过即时消费获取短期快感，以应对未知风险与乏味工作带来的焦虑感。

工人们对风险的感知与生活观念的转变，使得节俭储蓄、量入为出的传统消费模式逐渐式微，而分期付款、赊账、及时享乐的炫耀性消费则变得流行起来。事实上，后者的兴起并非偶然，自 19 世纪工业革命后，小规模信贷经济开始在英国萌芽，一些店铺与家庭超市主要针对食品、日用品、衣物等工人家庭的主要支出项目，推出一种类似于租购的分期付款模式（即 never-never）。（Johnson，1985，p. 145）到 20 世纪中期，政府为了刺激消费而放宽信贷管制，银行与大型商超进一步合作普及分期付款制度，让普通工人家庭得以购买过去难以负担的商品。在小说中，分期购买的商品随处可见，亚瑟家的电视机需要每周还款 30 先令，其他工人家庭几乎每家每户"都装着电视天线，仿佛成了雷达站——全都是靠分期付款安装的"；亚瑟对此打趣道，只需每周付款五先令，每个人都能有一架小型直升机（p. 22）。支撑这种狂热消费的，正是资本主义对消费意义与价值的扭曲，即大众被灌输"奢侈的消费是成功的标志，是赢得公众掌声和名誉的捷径，拥有和消费某些商品，践行这种生活方式，是幸福的必要条件，甚至是实现人类尊严的必要条件"。（鲍曼，2021，p. 109）从表面上看，分期付款暂时提升了工人们的生活水平，让他们提前满足了物质欲望；然而在超前消费的经济压力下，工人们更难摆脱资本控制——发薪日的短暂狂欢之后，是接踵而至的负债与还款压力，从而形成一个难以挣脱的循环。

这种循环的背后，是消费主义与资本对人性和欲望的深刻洞悉与把握。鲍曼认为，消费主义的核心就是不断地唤醒和满足某种欲望，"人类欲望的潘多拉之盒已经打开，再多的购买和刺激的感觉，都不能唤回过去达到标准带来的满足感：现在根本就没有标准可言"。（鲍曼，2021，p. 109）在钓鱼时，亚瑟顿悟到原来自己一直处在资本主义和消费主义共同打造的鱼塘中，追求着永远无法被满足的欲望："突然，泼拉一声！你的嘴叫大鱼钩钩住了，你给钓起来了。你还没明白自己在干着什么，你咬下的东西已超过了你能咬的限度，以后只好一辈子坚定地咬着同一块鱼饵。"（p. 211）亚瑟将自己比作一条原本自由自在的鱼，消费社会中所面临的种种诱惑就是鱼饵，即使知晓咬上鱼饵就意味着死亡，他也情愿享受这一时的美味，这是因为"如果你一辈子老拒绝吞食摇晃在你面前的一切鱼饵，那就完全不称其为生活了。那就没有变化，你也没有斗争对象了。生活就会死气沉沉，像沟里的水一

样”（p. 211）。消费主义不断突破人类欲望的阈值，又迫使人们陷入持续消费的漩涡，因为在其逻辑中，人们一旦“处于没有选择的境地，就会被消费社会摒弃。剥夺选择权本身是一种羞辱，无论是否最终事关福祉”。（鲍曼，2021，p. 78）总之，周六晚的酒吧狂欢既是压抑情绪的释放与宣泄，又被纳入周复一周、年复一年的“机械循环”。（Bell，2000，p. 155）这也意味着，消费不再是真正自由的选择，反而成了被规训的狂欢仪式。

二战后英国黄金时代的经济繁荣，是凯恩斯主义、国有化改革与充分就业等政策共同推动的阶段性资本积累成果。当经济维持高速增长，剥削的本质便被表面的繁荣暂时遮蔽，但在表象之下，针对英国工人阶级的系统性压迫始终在运转。流水线生产与科学管理持续加剧劳动异化，将工人困在机械重复的劳动中；差别计件的薪酬制度则以不透明的工资刻意分化工人间的团结；工厂内部的等级体系不断强化阶级间的敌视与对立。就连号称惠及大众的福利政策，也变为向劳动者转嫁经济负担的工具。西利托笔下的英国底层社会是黄金时代下的一道裂痕，它撕开了消费神话的伪装，揭示了资本主义与消费主义合谋打造的鱼塘：当工人以为自己通过消费成为生活的主人时，他们不过是从工资的奴隶变成了欲望的囚徒。在消费社会的规训下，他们用光鲜的服饰证明自我价值，用酗酒的狂欢规避未知风险，用超前消费的自由消解生存的压抑。在充满不确定性与威胁的风险社会里，享乐与狂欢趁虚而入，周六晚的啤酒成了人们对抗虚无、逃避现实的好办法。最终，劳动的异化与消费的异化互为表里，共同构成了剥削工人价值、消解其反抗意志的闭环。

基金项目：本文系国家社会科学基金重大项目“英国文学经济思想史”（项目编号：22&ZD289）的阶段性成果之一。

Funding: “History of Economic Thoughts in British Literature” (22&ZD289) sponsored by the National Social Science Fund of China

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Li Zhengxinlan ID https://orcid.org/0009-0005-3228-9528

Li Feng ID https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5463-0620

References

齐格蒙特·鲍曼（2021）：《工作、消费主义和新穷人》，郭楠译。上海社会科学院出版社。

[Bauman, Zygmunt (2021). *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor*, translated by Guo Nan. Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press.]

乌尔里希·贝克（2018）：《风险社会》，张文杰，何博闻译。译林出版社。

[Beck, Ulrich (2018). *Risikogesellschaft*, translated by Zhang Wenjie, & He Bowen. Yilin Press.]

Bell, Kathleen (2000). "Arthur Seaton and the Machine: A New Reading of Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*." In H. Gustav Klaus, & Stephen Knight (Eds.), *British Industrial Fictions*. University of Wales Press: 148-162.

Burnett, John (1986). *A Social History of Housing 1815-1985*. Methuen.

Crafts, Nicholas (2018). *Forging Ahead, Falling Behind and Fighting Back*. Cambridge University Press.

Del Valle Alcalá, Roberto (2016). *British Working-Class Fiction: Narratives of Refusal and the Struggle Against Work*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Denman, James and P. McDonald (1996). "Unemployment Statistics From 1881 to The Present Day." *Labour Market Trends* (01): 5-18.

威廉·古德（1986）：《家庭》，魏章玲译。社会科学文献出版社。

[Goode, William (1986). *The Family*, translated by Wei Zhangling. Social Science Academic Press.]

Hobsbawm, Eric (1995). *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991*. Abacus.

Johnson, Paul (1985). *Saving and Spending: The Working-Class Economy in Britain, 1870-1939*. Clarendon Press.

Kalliney, Peter (2001). "Cities of Affluence: Masculinity, Class, and the Angry Young Man." *Modern Fiction Studies* (01): 92-117.

Lewis, Peter (1978). *The Fifties*. Book Club Associates.

李锋（2024）："现代主义早期文学中的'英国病'、国家干预理念与金融帝国构想"，《外国文学研究》（04）：74-85。

[Li Feng (2024). "'British Disease', Ideas of State Intervention, and Imagination of Financial Empire in Early Modernist Literature." *Foreign Literature Studies* (04): 74-85.]

Morris, John (2009). "Mid-Late Twentieth Century: 'An Unprecedented Moral Quagmire'." In Arthur Pollard (Ed.), *The Representation of Business in English Literature*. Liberty Fund, Inc.: 138-185.

Reich, Robert (1991). *The Work of Nations*. Simon & Schuster.

Ritchie, Harry (1988). *Success Stories: Literature and the Media in England, 1950-1959*. Faber & Faber.

阿兰·西利托（2004）：《周六晚与周日晨》，孙法理译。译林出版社。

[Sillitoe, Alan (2004). *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, translated by Sun Fali. Yilin Press.]

弗雷德里克·泰勒（2013）：《科学管理原理》，赵涛，陈瑞侠，郭珊珊译。电子工业出版社。

[Taylor, Frederick (2013). *The Principles of Scientific Management*, translated by Zhao Tao, Chen Ruixia, & Guo Shanshan. Publishing House of Electronics Industry.]

Thorpe, D. R. (2010). "Harold Macmillan, 1957-1963." In Vernon Bogdanor (Ed.), *New Jerusalem to New Labour: British Prime Ministers from Attlee to Blair*. Palgrave Macmillan UK: 60-78.

Wiemann, Dirk (2017). "The Burden of Representation: Reflections on Class, Ethnicity and the Twentieth-Century British Novel." In Martin Middeke, Gabriele Rippl, & Hubert Zapf (Eds.), *Handbook of the English Novel of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (Vol. 5). Walter de Gruyter GmbH: 107-130.

Williams, Philip Hamlyn (2022). *How Britain Shaped the Manufacturing World*. Pen & Sword History.

Wilson, Colin (2006). *The Angry Years: The Rise and Fall of the Angry Young Men*. Robson Books.

JESL

HIEP
Academic Publishing

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

***JESL*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026, pp.92-105.**

Print ISSN: 3107-3492; Online ISSN: 3107-3506

Journal homepage: https://www.jesljournal.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.64058/jesl260106waaeg

美国黑人经验的全球南方视域书写
——奥德·罗德诗歌中的差异损耗、创伤传递与多元融合

张跃军（Zhang Yuejun），李奕奇（Li Yiqi）

摘要：奥德·罗德出生于美国纽约哈莱姆区的一个加勒比移民家庭，身处物质与精神、中心与地方的双重夹缝中，族裔身份所内化的历史记忆与现实困境赋予罗德诗歌差异书写的特质。罗德在全球北方、北方传统中的南方及全球南方理论等三种语境中，书写作为黑人主体从差异损耗、创伤传递到多元融合的转变。罗德诗歌以“深南”视角，表现“全球南方”视域如何调停来自殖民过去与新殖民当下的焦虑，并以多元价值取代差异损耗，疗愈种族记忆中的创伤。

关键词：奥德·罗德；全球南方；差异损耗；创伤传递；多元融合

作者介绍：张跃军，教授，广西民族大学外国语学院，英美文学与文学理论，774559939@qq.com。**李奕奇**（通讯作者），广西民族大学外国语学院博士生，副教授，广东财经大学外国语学院，英美文学与文学理论，portia@gdufe.edu.cn。

Title: Writing African American Experience from a Global South Perspective: Differential Attrition, Traumatic Transmission, and Pluralist Integration in the Poetry of Audre Lorde

Abstract: Audre Lorde was born in Harlem, New York, from a Caribbean immigrant family. Caught in the dual interstice of material and spiritual dimensions, as well as center and periphery positions, the historical memories and existential predicaments internalized within her racial identity endow Lorde’s poetry with a distinct quality of writing difference. And Lorde articulates the transformation of Black subjectivity in the

Received: 03 Apr. 2026 / Revised: 27 Apr. 2026 / Accepted: 07 May 2026 / Published online: 15 Jun. 2026 / Print published: 25 Jun. 2026.

contextual layers of the Global North, the South framed by Northern traditions, and Global South, charting a trajectory from differential attrition to traumatic transmission and ultimately to pluralist integration. From a Deep-South perspective, Lorde demonstrates how a Global-South vision mediates anxieties arising from both the colonial past and the neo-colonial present. By foregrounding pluralistic values, Lorde replaces attritional violence with a poetics of difference that seeks to heal the trauma embedded in racist society.

Keywords: Audre Lorde; Global South; differential attrition; traumatic transmission; pluralist integration

Author Biography: Zhang Yuejun, professor, School of Foreign Studies, Guangxi Minzu University, English literature and literary criticism, 774559939@qq.com. **Li Yiqi (**corresponding author**),** PhD candidate at Guangxi Minzu University, Associate Professor at Guangdong University of Finance and Economics, English literature and literary criticism, E-mail: portia@gdufe.edu.cn.

引 言

奥德·罗德（Audre Lorde, 1934—1992）自我定义为黑人、女同性恋、诗人、女战士（2007, pp. 39-40）和女性主义者（2007, p. 59），加上身为母亲，这表明其身份的多元与矛盾。作为黑人女性诗人，罗德深受美国社会种族、性别等因素影响，终其一生践行差异政治的关系平等主义与情感经济的爱欲生产理念，于夹缝间探索并书写“深南”视角中的差异价值（“深南”视角涵盖全球北方语境、加勒比记忆与全球南方语境中的黑人经验）。诗歌如何表现全球化神话暴力与幻灭、如何在抵制中破局，是切入罗德诗歌差异价值的关键所在。

以经济视角切入的罗德研究涵盖：经济与文学关系概览、公平贸易与自我价值认同、年轻黑人与非洲政治经济、白人至上的反人道本质以及社会不公的制度成因、社会经济形塑的女性身体与消费欲望、女性主义视角下性交易的正义之争等话题。《经济文献杂志》（*Journal of Economic Literature*）第59卷第2期，在代码为“J”的“劳动与人口经济学”类目下，收录了涉及罗德诗歌修辞的非裔政治思想研究（2021, p. 708），由此可见罗德研究与政治经济研究之间的交叉性。特纳（Jack Turner）指出，罗德差异政治理论的意义在于其关于关系平等主义的实践方略：有助于描摹不平等的分布图景、组建多元联合阵线，并将个体视作平等价值最终的主体与归宿；平等在道德层面具有优先性，是首要的价值承诺，而差异则是罗德探寻实现这一承诺的分析路径（2021, p. 563）。阿特雷亚（Bama Athreya）认为全球经济危机凸显女性在服装供应链上的弱势地位，并以罗德《主人的工具永远不会拆除主人的房子》为例质疑现行公平贸易体系，提倡重塑女性的自我价值认同（2022, p. 18）。奥伊纳斯等学者（Elina Oinas et al.）称，罗德在全美妇女研究协会大会主旨发言中怒斥社会不公，表现了年轻黑人投身非洲政治运动、承担社会责任的决心和勇气，表明罗德研究与政治经济研究之间的潜在联系（2018, p. 10）。吉本斯（Andrea Gibbons）指出抵制白人至上的全球政治、经济、文化体系，需了解五类拒斥他者的白人至上心态，这有助于

根除资本主义种族优越论所引发的社会不公；在阐释五类心态时，作者引用了罗德诗文中黑人女性对种族歧视的日常感知为佐证（2018, p. 735）。加德纳（Kirsten E. Gardner）的疾病书写研究发现：乳房假体产业1945-2000年间的发展表明，医疗体系借诸如“医疗恢复”之类的消费主义陷阱，推动假体需求与产业发展；这一论证引用罗德《癌症札记》中的个人经历与反思，佐证社会经济形塑女性身体与消费欲望的观点（2000, pp. 587-588）。赖利（Kristine Riley）指出，修复性正义虽以服刑作为代偿方式，实则争议颇多，尤其在该机制被纳入刑事司法系统后更为明显；其中，在法律制裁与道德审判双重压力下，性工作者无法通过代偿机制解决性交易与街边经济（street economy）中女性从业者的困境与矛盾；这一论述借助罗德作品提倡的差异观作为构建多样身份，从而化解内在矛盾、解决社会不公（2017, pp. 1169-1170）。以上成果出自人口与劳动经济学领域的知名学者，且以罗德诗文为佐证，涉及族裔、性别和消费主义等议题。迄今为止，鲜见将全球南方理论引入罗德研究，系统阐释其诗歌经济书写中的黑人经验。实际上，诗人生平和创作与南方视野和经验息息相关。本文聚焦罗德诗歌中地缘政治与情感经济视域下的爱欲书写，以期发掘种族-性别阈限身份中的差异价值。

一、全球北方语境中黑人经验的差异耗损书写

穆尔蒂（Pashmina Murthy）的《深南方：美国南方与全球南方》（“Deep Souths: The U.S. South and the Global South”）一文考察美国南方作为南南关系之一例，通过与加勒比、拉丁美洲及西非的对话，探讨其情感话语和结构与全球南方理论的适配性问题[①]。美国社会的种族问题令人担忧，“人人生而平等”的宣言苍白无力。南方理论是在与北方传统的持续抗争中发展起来；而黑人的生存体验则是对南方理论的有力支撑，控诉白人至上的北方传统在美国本土的内部殖民，并表现全球化设想如何在北方内部酝酿并向外传播。常晅在《资本的内部：全球化的哲学理论》译者序中指出，该书作者斯洛特戴克（Peter Sloterdijk）惯于以隐喻式的意象揭示全球化世界的复杂问题[②]；另一方面，罗德则以充满隐喻风格的诗歌形式披露“深南”处境中的美国黑人生存境遇。

以“深南”语境审视黑人被贬损的生命，不失为阐释罗德美国黑人经验书写的一次南方理论实践。罗德诗歌《权力》（“Power”）[③]聚焦黑人少年格洛弗（Clifford Glover）被警察谢伊（Thomas Shea）当街射杀的暴力执法事件。1973年发生于美国纽约皇后区的这次事件引起巨大社会争议，当事人谢伊被控谋杀，却由陪审团裁定无罪。因枪杀事件的无正义审判结果，诗歌叙述者“我”处于情感与制度之间的阈限，以及可言说与不可言说、政治行动与情感瘫痪的心理临界点。诗行“我被困在一片由枪伤构成的荒漠里”与“当它渗进那使我迷失的白色荒漠/那没有象征也没有魔力的地方”（*The Collected Poems*, p. 345）

[①] López, Alfred J., & Quintana-Vallejo, R. (Eds.) (2024). *The Routledge Companion to Literature and the Global South*. Taylor & Francis Group, p. xvii. 后文出自该著的引文，只标出“*The Routledge Companion*”和引文出处页码，不再另注。

[②] 斯洛特戴克 (2014):《资本的内部：全球化的哲学理论》，常晅译，社会科学文献出版社，（译者序）第3页。后文出自该著的引文，只标出《资本的内部》和引文出处页码，不再另注。

[③] Lorde, Audre. (1997). *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde*. W. W. Norton & Company. 后文出自该著的引文，只标出“*The Collected Poems*”和引文出处页码，不再另注。另，文中罗德诗歌引文均为原诗自译。

揭示了美国社会的结构性暴力，“由枪伤构成”的荒漠更加荒芜、孤绝。诗人把社会暴力物质化为景观，暗示暴力不仅是社会事件，而是黑人所面临的残酷政治与社会生态。枪杀是传统意义上的暴力事件，在时间上是即时的，在空间上是爆发性的、具有景观特质，并以瞬间的、引人注目的可见性显现出来（Nixon, 2011, p. 2），但其无正义审判却是美国社会结构性暴力对黑人权利的无情碾压，以及对黑人生命权的漠视。无罪判决无疑背离美国宪法对生命权的捍卫（Vile, 1997, p. 181），揭示美国社会的平等构想与实践中傲慢的白人中心与种族偏见。在“文化大熔炉”的理想下，黑人的权利与价值却是可商榷、可损失的。诗行“死去的孩童，黑面扭曲、颓然倒地”（*The Collected Poems*, p. 345）中“黑色面庞”既表示面庞黝黑，也指白色荒漠中“被舍弃的黑色躯体”；黑色血肉被抽离暗示正义阈限之上，黑人生命的象征价值被剥夺，这说明黑人生命在美国社会体制中是无价值的、可消费的对象。北方理论传统根植于现代主义的宏大叙事，同时内化白人至上理念，并以此作为文学经典建构的无意识基石。罗德借“白色荒漠”意象，将“全球南方研究挑战北方传统、质疑现代性霸权的逻辑”（*The Routledge Companion,* pp. xv-xvi）与反种族主义相结合，探索如何化愤怒为力量，为黑人群体赋权。该诗把血、沙漠、白色、黑色等象征意象引入政治生态中，使象征不再是脱离现实的修辞技能，而成为一种具身的事实，颜色也超越隐喻成为法律暴力的实施依据。诗行“渴求着他的血的湿度”“胃因想象中那血的滋味翻腾”（*The Collected Poems*, p. 345），描述一种被暴力同化后的生理性愤怒，表现了见证者/母体在创伤面前的矛盾：既想救治，又被暴力的欲望吞噬。诗中，罗德将愤怒视为被压迫者的一种知识与资源，记录黑人群体的生存感受；同时，诗人也以道德与族群意识将愤怒转换为力量来源。换言之，诗意书写将黑人群体的愤怒转化为自我约束与反思，从而避免其坠入仇恨与毁灭的深渊。

如果说枪杀是赤裸裸的暴力事件，那么庭审则揭示了慢暴力（slow violence）如何逐渐积累并内化为黑人的创伤与白人的特权。尼克森（Rob Nixon）认为：慢暴力指一种逐渐发生且不易察觉的暴力，它是延迟性的，在时间与空间中弥散展开，是一种损耗性的暴力（attritional violence），而这种暴力通常甚至不被视为暴力（2011, p. 2）。诗中对法庭场景的描写表明：美国社会内部针对黑人群体的结构性暴力是内化的、历史性的、以及制度性的，是在漫长的历史叙事中被遮蔽、被合理化、甚至被美化的集体无意识。诗中，法庭并非真理的殿堂，而是权力的延伸；证据、录音、陪审团等法庭组成被用来示范司法的选择性。罗德诗歌叙事经历从想象到现实的转变：前段是梦/想象、意象繁杂；而“在皇后区射杀一名十岁孩童的警察”（*The Collected Poems*, p. 346）则把诗文本地化，直击历史语境中的枪杀事件（即格洛弗被杀），完成从个人心理到公共史实的诗意书写，并强化了诗歌作为证言的功能。警察的言语本应代表公平正义，诗中当事警员的粗暴语言（如“去死吧，你这个小王八蛋。”）与法庭控辩（如“我没注意他的身材或别的什么/我只注意到肤色。”）却充斥着种族歧视的傲慢；诗行“有录像带可以证明”既从道德层面控诉警察暴行，也从司法层面主张黑人权力。然而，即使有明证，正义却难以保障。同时，录像带的讽刺之处在于真相可以被记录，却不会自动转化为正义，这其中暗含了对白色优越与证据政治的质疑。诗中最可怕的并不是某个警察的暴行，而是当体制通过“无罪释放”使暴行合法化时，整个社会如何参与了对黑人生命的系统性漠视。诗行“11 个白人男子宣称他们

相信/正义已然得到了伸张/一个黑人女性说：‘他们说服了我。’”表明：陪审团的构成与运作，使黑人生命成为被妥协、被牺牲的筹码。面对无罪释放的法庭判决，陪审团中的十一名白人男性认为“正义得到了声张”，一名黑人妇女表示“他们说服了我”。罗德认为黑人女性陪审员的表态不仅是个人对白人至上种族观念的妥协，更是长期处于弱势地位的黑人女性放弃生育权，并绝望地抵制种族与性别的双重压迫；“用水泥封堵子宫，为我们的孩子筑起一座坟茔”正是诗人拒绝新生的孩子再次坠入种族-性别深渊的诗意书写。诗行把孕育黑孩的子宫比做坟墓，这象征着代际的损耗与生育的政治化。该诗揭示陪审团的“合法裁决”剥夺黑人的生命意愿，由此批判了现行司法体系的正义性。诗歌表明，法律并非中立，而是在种族与性别结构里运作，使“正义”成为一种表演与再分配暴力的机制。此外，诗行不断回到“孩子”与“子宫”的图像，“直到她松开了她人生里第一次真正拥有的权力/并用水泥把自己的子宫/变成我们孩子的墓穴”（*The Collected Poems*, p. 346），母体的保护、抚慰行为被视为无力；而陪审团中黑人女性的妥协则犹如将子宫封死，剥夺了生育与未来的希望。诗歌叙事中的“母性政治”不仅是情感或生物性的，还是政治性的，即谁被允许生存、谁的未来被保障，均成为可在体制内商讨的、可消耗的议题。最重要的是，全诗开篇“诗与修辞之间的区别/在于你是否已经准备好/去杀死你自己/而不是杀死你的孩子”，以极端的伦理选择为该诗立题；结尾处“我无法触碰我体内的毁灭。/但除非我学会使用/诗与修辞之间的区别”（*The Collected Poems*, pp. 346-347）又以相同的伦理拷问结题。诗人将“诗”与“修辞”进行伦理区分，即诗是自我反省、自我牺牲的形式，而修辞则变为为了赢得外部权力而牺牲后代的工具。诗歌结尾处，“当我把她打得不省人事并在她的床上点火/会有一个希腊合唱队用三拍子的节奏唱着：‘可怜的人。她从未伤害过任何灵魂。他们这些野兽呀。’”（*The Collected Poems*, p. 347）并非鼓励黑人群体暴力复仇，而是一种自我告白式的暴力幻想。罗德把最可憎的想象曝露在外，强调当压迫长期堆积而无法得到正义的恰当回应时，被压迫者的伦理受到侵蚀，将产生恐怖的复仇冲动。这是暴力循环的心理图景与公众预警，即暴力并非只是施为，也可能内化并反弹。可见，无论白人亦或黑人，均内化了北方传统的种族主义倾向；不管是施虐者还是受虐者，都潜移默化地认同或妥协于美国社会的结构性暴力，接纳了黑人作为差异他者可被损耗的命运。

诗中以“白色荒漠”“黑色脸庞”“血”“阳光”“录音”“子宫”“墓穴”等隐喻，揭示美国社会内化的结构性暴力对黑人群体带来持续的、无法言说的伤害。该诗表明结构性暴力将在人类价值谱系中划出生存与可丧失的界限。霍尔（Stuart Hall）指出：在主流的社会学传统中，文化是一个融合的领域；但它并未告知文化融合所围绕的是一个什么样的文化价值观，以及为了获得并维持能够保持社会稳定的共识，什么样的文化价值观必须被边缘化、从属化（2021, pp. 36-37）。罗德书写美国“深南”处境中黑人生存困境，揭示阈限中生死、生殖、身份、语言的边界，警示社会结构如何将边缘群体置于可耗损的位置。诗人将诗作为证言与抵抗的手段，不只是叙述愤怒，而是书写诗歌伦理。《权力》直面美国社会中的种族-性别双重暴力、创造如水泥封堵的子宫等毁灭性的意象、指出证据-证言无效的司法制度弊病，进而呼吁读者把愤怒转化为有组织、方向明确的政治行动，而非泄私愤、甚至被制度的恶所吞噬。诗中陪审团对结构性暴力的认同与妥协，体现了内部殖民逻辑在美国社会的理论实践，并表明这一殖民话语的全球化通过内部酝酿与外部传播的方

式强化其作为权力话语的地位。该诗从白人群体内部殖民的逻辑惯性到黑人群体内化损耗的自我妥协，披露了“深南”语境中的黑人生存困境与诗歌策略。罗德诗歌中涉及黑人经验的差异损耗书写记录了施加于黑人群体之上的暴力以及慢暴力，以及在时间中不断积累并形成的黑人代际创伤。

二、加勒比记忆中黑人经验的创伤传递书写

全球北方理论根植于一种认识论二元等级结构，该结构深受北方话语影响，充斥着伪科学式的客观主义叙事，认为全球南方的认识论和思维是前现代的、迷信的，因而是不重要的（*The Routledge Companion*, p. x）。换言之，现代性理论是以西方为主导、根植全球北方的殖民权力话语体系。殖民话语不仅是全球话语的一种声音，而是作为引领和拯救被邪恶、野蛮/原始、不发达、专制所影响的全球其余地区的权力话语，力图实现人类永恒福祉（Mignolo, 2011, p. 28）。不难发现，南方理论的发展与抵制殖民话语关系密切。全球南方研究的紧迫性在于其在知识生产中长期处于边缘地位，故建构南南知识体系所面临的不稳定性表明强调并坚持地方性与夹缝性的迫切性（*The Routledge Companion*, p. xi）。据此，南南研究是根据南方经验，在生产体系与权力结构中重新审视知识生产历史与建构知识话语权力的努力。南方理论去殖民化的世界愿景应是多中心的，即“任一文化均不能凌驾于其余文化之上”（Mignolo, 2011, p. 28）。这一多中心、多元文化共荣的倡议正是南方理论去中心化、突出地方与阈限书写的理论内核。“去中心化的发声位置”被视为一种方法论，以便“在知识的全球流通中实现对认识论位置的全面批判性分析与再分类”（Klengel & Wallner, 2016, p. 10）。

罗德的生平与创作具有上述南方理论主张的某些特征：她出生于纽约哈莱姆区的一个加勒比移民家庭，身处物质与精神、中心与地方的双重夹缝中，族裔身份所内化的历史记忆与现实困境赋予罗德诗歌去中心化、强调差异的创伤书写特质。她曾如此记录黑人女性日常感知：

> 黑人女性以及我们的孩子都清楚，我们生活的织体是由暴力与仇恨缝合而成的，从来没有片刻安宁。我们所面对的这些，并不仅仅存在于抗议的纠察线上、幽暗的午夜小巷中，或那些我们敢于将反抗诉诸言语的场所。对我们而言，暴力愈加强烈地编织进日常生活的肌理之中——在超市里、在教室中、在电梯里、在诊所和学校操场上；来自水管工、面包师、女售货员、公交司机、银行柜员，以及那位拒绝为我们服务的女服务员。（Lorde, 2007, p. 119）

诸如此类的日常慢暴力损害并消耗黑人对身份与价值的自我认知。差异成为她们被标识、被歧视和贬损的符号，成为创伤代际传递的根源。若将经历语言损耗的个体视为理解与产出过程中激活程度的差异（Schmid, 2019, p. 19），黑人群体经历种族主义、创伤疗愈与身份认同的漫长过程，其身份价值损耗的差异则可理解为种族歧视与自我疗愈中创伤程度的区别，如创伤的他异性（alterity）——阈限诗学（the poetics of liminality）与阈限伦理（liminal ethics）的核心主张，强调集体创伤与个体创伤的特征以及两者之间的区别（Onega

& Ganteau, 2014, pp. 14-15）。据此，黑人身份价值的差异损耗与其创伤他异性和创伤传递存在关联。换言之，黑人自我认知既受美国社会结构性暴力造成的差异损耗影响，也在创伤他异性和创伤传递中发生变化。克勒曼（Natan P. F. Kellermann）认为，创伤的传递机制“是一个更为多面向的过程，涉及各种显性与隐性的亲子学习经验，包括内化、投射性认同、模仿、社会化以及替代性学习……可被视为一种微妙的‘父母中介过程’”（2001, p. 208）。这表明创伤在家庭内具有极强的传递性与影响力，与罗德诗歌关于黑人女性的创伤书写有相似之处。

《家族的相似》（“A Family Resemblance”）收录于罗德首部诗集《第一批城市》（1968），围绕“黄金”“漂白”“拱门”“噩梦”“石头”等核心意象，探讨黑人女性主体间的创伤记忆、情感经济、地缘政治等主题。上世纪五六十年代，墨西哥是美国左翼流放者的精神家园，而全球南方（Global South）概念正是这一时期由奥格斯比（Carl Oglesby）引入理论界，最初意指美国冷战时期对东南亚实施控制的外交政策。全球南方是一个本质上不稳定的地理范畴，它召唤地方性与历史性的关联：全球南方横贯整个热带地区，还贯穿殖民与种族灭绝的历史、以及当代新殖民主义企业与银行的实践——这些均来自全球北方的软性与暴力双重介入（The Routledge Companion, p. xii）。墨西哥地处全球南方，其历史与当下均属南南研究的重要关切点；罗德年轻时曾旅居于此，且这段经历对其思想与创作产生重要影响（Lorde 1982: 210）。相较于美国，墨西哥地处其地理上的南方，形成与美国、欧洲等地缘政治中心相异的帝国边缘地带。墨西哥时光使罗德跳出美国式种族与性别差异分类，激活她身体、情感深处与格林纳达的联系，包括知识、记忆、情感等方面；同时，身处种族-性别他者与身体异化束缚之外的墨西哥，罗德以同性爱欲获得美与权力的顿悟。（Bolaki & Broeck, 2015, pp. 179-184）这是一种在同性交往中获得的自我身份确认，并启发其诗歌爱欲书写中的身体政治实践。旅行经历的洞见在《家族的相似》中表现为将情感经济与爱欲书写作为反霸权力量的最初构想。“家族”暗指历史中的时空延续，“相似”则寓意传承性的身体/意识生产。“我的姐妹与我发肤眉眼一脉相承/而我深知她早已失信于人”（*The Collected Poems*, p. 25）表现身体相似与信任破裂之间的张力，家族身体特征相似蕴涵创伤记忆的传递，表明诗歌从身体书写向情感生产的转变；“相似”是家族传承，也是女性身体与情感创伤的共同印记，而“失信”则揭示创伤传递中女性之间的关系是脆弱的、复杂的。“狂热”意指欲望，与接续诗行中的“黄金”互文，均寓意欲望、希望或价值，特别是与女性相关的身体政治隐喻。从“家族”的历史/延续时空到“相似”的身体/意识生产，罗德构建诗歌虚构感受与个人现实体验中的地缘政治空间的雏形——美国、墨西哥、格林纳达之间的身份地理定位。墨西哥远非边缘化之地，在此反而凸显为理解罗德关于情感经济与地缘政治之间复杂关联的重要场域：

> 墨西哥因此成为罗德与格林纳达之间关系的媒介，也成为她与母亲之间复杂联系的中介。正如她后来在接受里奇（Adrienne Rich）采访时所回忆的那样，在墨西哥度过的一段时间，让她能够触及那些将她与母亲讲述的格林纳达生活故事联系起来的知识、记忆与情感。罗德在墨西哥的经历激发了其身体与内心深处的联结，使她得以超越白人至上的北方传统、抵达界定自我身份的南方纽带。通过动摇她作为一个脆弱的美国

公民的归属主体位置，以及这一身份所允许的受限自我形式，墨西哥“提醒”了她“我们曾经认出彼此”。（Bolaki & Broeck, 2015, pp. 182-183）

对于罗德而言，美国与墨西哥、格林纳达之间截然不同的黑人经验提供了重新思考地缘政治间跨界团结的可能性，并重新激活诗人关于女性相互依存与共同斗争的政治承诺。“家族的相似”象征地缘政治中的情感生产，是罗德身处美国南方的墨西哥时对多元身份定位可能性的感知。“罗德在墨西哥得以站稳脚跟，并以一种新的方式认识、定位自己；‘希望’在她意识的地平线上升起，为她带来另一种可能的种族结构的展望；在这种结构中，她‘被法律赋予的他者性’（Lord, 1982, p. 168）不再是一种注定的前提”（Bolaki & Broeck, 2015, p. 182）。罗德暂离美国、旅居墨西哥的经历引发多元身份的重新定位，为《家族的相似》中的姐妹政治提供诗歌灵感。诗人曾指出，黑人女同性恋女性拥有姐妹情谊与力量，积极参与了这个国家每一场自由抗争运动[①]。姐妹政治强调对差异的接纳，在承认差异之力量的基础上，彰显异质性的黑人女性主义主张。“希望”既出现在罗德身份重构的真实经历描写中，又与《家族的相似》中的象征意象“黄金”相关。诗行“当她年轻、对每一种狂热都敞开自己时/她把黄金戴在脸上/像一层幸运的面纱/在每一场雨中等待一束光的幻梦”（*The Collected Poems*, pp. 25-26）中，“黄金”是象征欲望、希望、女性价值的政治隐喻。各类装饰性物件（如黄金）、躯体与姿态昭示财富与欲望的关联，解构了同一性与差异性非此即彼的逻辑……将财富的定位从交换价值转向使用价值、把欲望纳入经济领域的批判路径。（Liu, 2022, p. 487）正如“年轻对狂热的拥抱”象征被社会内化的女性身份定位，“黄金戴在脸上”表明贵金属对女性的意义在于装饰功能而非价值属性，寓意社会期待赋予女性的装饰性价值；换言之，女性价值不在于其自身定位，而在于她相对于装饰物的位置。故，传统观念认为：女性身份缺乏独立性、强调附属性。此外，作为装饰性的女性存在是依附性的，更是被动的。年轻的、缺乏经验的女性相信“幸运”、期许“梦幻”，诗行“像一层幸运的面纱/在每一场雨中等待一束光的幻梦”表明“姐妹”被置于虚构的幻觉中，将自己托付于虚幻的美好，并寄希望于外在因素与不确定的未来，即一束并不会到来的光。“黄金”代表欲望、希望、幻梦，作为价值度量且具有物质-精神属性的双重符号，它被用来圈定女性依附性的、装饰性的身份定位。更有甚者，诗行“然而太阳升起/像水晶般灼烧我们的双眼/把天际的希望漂得泛白”（*The Collected Poems*, p. 25）中，象征秩序的“太阳”并未为弱势女性主持正义，而是抹去虚幻的希望。这是诗人对制度性暴力的控诉，也唤醒了内化身份束缚的“姐妹”。诗中，“漂白”连续出现，既表明白人主导的文化结构抹杀黑人存在、消除黑人价值，又批判现代性话语权力以理性霸权强化白人优先、漠视黑人存在。值得注意的是，两次“漂白”，既有白人文化内部殖民的历史影响，又是内化了权力话语的黑人选择。沉醉在虚构的善意中，“姐妹”的身份被质疑、被否定；当她深切体会真实处境时，装饰的“黄金面纱”化身“拱门”，寓意信任崩塌后其身份定位结构的转变，即从曾经的希望变为通向创伤的门户。拱门是结构性的，指向预定的命运轨迹。随着诗行的推进，拱门预示的命运通道以噩梦般的创伤记忆呈现。同时，

[①] Lorde, Audre. (2020). *The Selected Works of Audre Lorde*. W. W. Norton & Company, pp. 60-61. 后文出自同一著作的引文，将随文标出该著名称简称“*The Selected Works*”和引文出处页码，不再另注。

门廊本应作为象征安全的家的一部分，却成为暗示黑人女性身体被狩猎的空间，与寓意被狩猎时间的噩梦共同构成黑人女性的集体创伤。当夜晚不再宁静，当港湾不再安全，狩猎强化了黑人女性的生存困境：她们被凝视、被审判、被占有、被种族与性别权力所追逐。噩梦带来的恐惧使失眠成为持续性的创伤，但当“我的姐妹不再等待/也不再为那离开她床榻的黄金哀悼”时，黑人女性告别被塑造的自我。其中，最显著的变化在于“我的姐妹与我一般舌锋唇枪……她如石头般不再轻信”（*The Collected Poems*, pp. 25-26）。舌头是发声器官，拥有舌头意味着不再沉默，即诗人所强调的“我们的沉默不会保护我们”。罗德的这一信念来自旅居墨西哥时与尤多拉的相处：

> 尤多拉为罗德的生命带来了一个全新的爱欲维度……体现了“爱的一切维度——源于混沌，又具有创造力。”……允许自己去感受，经常调侃罗德的“拘谨”，并教她不要回避情感的强度——这对未来那位将告诉后代“我们的沉默不会保护我们”的“黑人女权主义者、女同性恋者、战士诗人”来说，并非细枝末节。（Bolaki & Broeck, 2015, p. 183）

可见，罗德的墨西哥经历与《家族的相似》互相佐证，从“深南”视角探讨现实与想象中的姐妹政治设想与实践，为黑人女性重新定位地缘政治中的情感经济与爱欲书写中的身份政治。诗歌击碎北方理论中的种族与性别殖民所编织的谎言，主张在差异中相互依赖和共同抗争的姐妹政治，帮助黑人女性挣脱早已内化的边缘身份桎梏。

三、全球南方语境中黑人经验的多元融合书写

詹姆斯（William James）探讨多元宇宙与统一宇宙之间关系时指出，多元宇宙能构成统一宇宙，因宇宙的每一部分必然通过某种可能的、间接的纽带相连与其紧邻的部分紧密勾连，交融渗透，且不可分割”（1920, p. 325）。多元与统一彼此共生的哲学论断为全球南方与北方经验提供了相互融合的契机。全球化是世界乌托邦，是上帝之下的全球统一市场（Lopez, 2007, p. 7）；全球化话语产生于全球经济中心，并在国际资本市场中传播开来（*The Routledge Companion*, p. xii）。资本主义随全球化发展而增强，政治、军事关系则沿着世界劳动体系中根本的经济关系所显示的路线流动，表现出现代性晚近讨论中的多维全球化进程”（罗伯森，2000, p. 21）。换言之，与普世的、现代主义的资本全球扩张相伴而生的，是多元化的应对策略，并催生了一系列非规则却日益强烈的反全球化对立力量。反全球化的对立力量来自分散的底层主体；巴米叶（Mohammed A. Bamyeh）将其描述为“因遭受压迫而集结自身……并在政治行动的发展过程中稳步实现可用于斗争的不同社会类别之间文化层面的汇合”（2000, p. 20）。无论是后全球化的大都市亦或整个全球南方，这一复杂的跨国群体以反向文化或多元文化逻辑对抗全球化压力。为了避免制度不平等与压迫的再生产，全球南方学者关注显性的反全球化对立力量如移民或族裔行动组织，尤为关切机遇与平等问题。作为对全球化的反拨，全球南方理论中的多样性理念强调多元融合、差异共生，表现在经济多样性、政治地缘性与文化差异性等。以上关切在罗德阈限书写中亦有所表现；以《黑色独角兽》（“The Black Unicorn”）为例，诗歌从象征重构、身体/爱

欲书写、神话改写三个角度批判北方理论对黑人群体的情感冷漠与制度暴力，并以身体/爱欲书写探索黑人女性力量之源。

罗德认为：正视爱欲在我们生命中的力量，便能赋予我们推动世界实现真正变革的能量，而非仅仅满足于在欧美主流叙事这一陈旧乏味的戏码里更换几个角色（*The Selected Works*, p. 35）。爱欲是一种情感欲望，罗德从他者视角出发，将爱欲视为为文化他者赋能的力量。其诗歌中的爱欲书写以生命的原初动力呼吁差异政治主张中的种族–性别平等，批判欧美白人男性权力主导的文化传统。更为重要的是，爱欲成为黑人女性将差异损耗转化为差异价值的生命力量，帮助罗德书写多元融合的黑人经验。谢帕德（Odell *Shepard*）指出：拜占庭文艺复兴时期学者斐提乌斯（Photius）笔下的独角兽是白色、美丽、纯洁、梦幻的生物，充满力量且不受控制；其最早书面记录可追溯至公元前 4 世纪，是一种在古印度被描述、却无实证的神秘动物，以至于南非山洞发现的一幅壁画都可能作为其存在的证据（Shepard, 1930, p. 25-30）。独角兽的形象符合西方文化传统期待，而罗德诗歌中的改写不仅借颠覆固有意象打破传统文化秩序，又赋予独角兽以黑人女性所独有的爱欲力量。斯洛特戴克曾以球体意象将人类历史中的全球化分为三个阶段，分别是天体全球化、大地全球化和电子全球化的时代（《资本的内部》译者序, pp. 4-5）。罗德诗歌创作与全球化进程存在关联，如罗德曾旅居多国的经历使她对全球北方传统的束缚有切身体会；在诗歌《黑色独角兽》中她以黑色重构这一西方传统文化中的象征意象，彰显可视的身份差异，进而抵制北方理论对底层/黑人群体的漠视。其中，“黑独角兽是贪婪的。/黑独角兽是急躁的”（*The Collected Poems*, p. 9）以贬义词反讽白人文化对黑人女性的否定投射。诗歌以“贪婪”和“急躁”开头，讽刺殖民、白人父权文化对黑人女性的刻板印象，并揭示其对黑人女性的压制。诗人赋予黑独角兽这些特性，以重复将身份污名转化为生命力量。“黑独角兽曾被误认为/只是一个影子/象征”（同上）表明黑人拒绝被符号化、被抽象化的态度，批判西方理论与美学将黑人女性经验符号化、意象化，却从未给予主体认同。“影子”具有无形、无自我、可遮蔽等特征，仅作为他者主体的投影；“象征”则意指被理论化、被消费、被剥夺真实感受的文学修辞。诗人大声疾呼：黑独角兽不是他人文本里的象征，而是拥有自主身体、情感、记忆的存在。

据中世纪与之有关的绘画以及文学作品，独角兽与女性身体并置、具有女性气质，象征纯洁、贞洁、善良、完美与神圣的品质（Shepard, 1930, p. 48-49）。罗德诗行“它的角并不/安放在她的腿上，/而是在她月亮般的深穴里/生长”（*The Collected Poems*, p. 9）则强调黑女性身体的神秘创造力与强大力量，是最具身体政治意味的爱欲书写。其中，黑独角兽的“角”摆脱西方传统中的治愈奇效，被转化为性、力量、暴力与创造的混合象征。同时，“它的角并不/安放在她的腿上”寓意黑独角兽不再是被动、温柔、外露性的女性身体印象；“而是在她月亮般的深穴里/生长”中，“月亮”指向女性周期、生育、夜的力量，“洞穴”是深处、子宫、伤口、潜能、黑暗；两者结合表明黑女性的身体从接纳创伤的可损耗资本转变为象征战争、创造、魔法与未来的力量源泉。换言之，黑人女性身体最深处、最原始的创造力和强大力量正在孕育生成；黑人女性身体是力量的源头，具有生命力，而非被凝视、被符号化的对象。

对资源的随意占有与利用是美国社会发展的历史经验，“近代对于广阔世界的感觉由美国的基本体验、占有土地和资源的随意性决定”，全球化设想则是美国领土扩张时代精神的延续，“地球以其丰富授权我们这一代进行开发利用”（《资本的内部》，pp. 181-183）。面对将一切资源化的美国经验，《黑色独角兽》以爱欲书写彰显黑女性身体政治的生命与力量。罗德曾指出：权力有许多种形式，被使用的、未被使用的，被承认的或未被承认的；爱欲是一种存在于我们每个人之中的资源，它位于一种深层的女性与精神层面，深深扎根于我们那些未被表达或未被认知的感受所蕴藏的力量之中（*The Selected Works*, p. 31）。换言之，为了延续自身，每一种压迫都必须腐蚀或扭曲被压迫者文化中那些能够为变革提供能量的多种力量来源；对于女性来说，这意味着：爱欲作为一种我们生命中的力量与知识来源，被抑制、被排除在外。黑人女性只有冲破白人在种族-性别方面的文化枷锁，才可能以底层经验发声、建构夹缝中的身份权力话语、重塑可视的差异身份价值。

17 世纪初出版的钦定版《圣经》中，独角兽以充满力量、野性与不可征服的精神气质出现，与狮子、野牛和牛犊等动物形象相关联，营造了一种高贵且令人敬畏的生动意象（Shepard, 1930, pp. 41-42）。《黑色独角兽》中的诗行“黑独角兽是不安的，/黑独角兽是不屈的，/黑独角兽/并不/自由”像是压抑太久的呼吸，也像是被切断的咒语，最后的句式短促、断裂，形成一种喘不过气的节奏。尽管诗行前半部分的诗歌意象充满力量，结尾处却骤然转向无力的政治现实，即黑独角兽不自由。这源于种族制度、殖民历史、性别压迫对黑女性的束缚。黑独角兽这一极具族裔意识的神话符号虽具打破桎梏的象征力量，但黑人女性仍然困于压抑且逼仄的处境：愤怒与创造力并不等于解放；且黑女性依旧在充满结构性暴力的现实世界中生存。换言之，自由的缺失本质上是跨越神话与现实的政治控诉。诗中的黑独角兽指向黑人女性，象征被误读、被压制但依然生长的力量，是一种拒绝被阉割的神性存在。相较于白色独角兽，罗德笔下的黑色独角兽是他者想象的再现，以非裔意识的文化意象凸显美国文化的多元性。海德（Lewis Hyde）研究想象与属灵的爱欲生命时提到非理性的爱欲交换，认为惠特曼创作生涯的顿悟时刻是因其与灵魂分享食物所获得的馈赠（1983, pp. 162-163）。这一馈赠交换是自我与他者的欲望相融，是可替代市场经济并能生产情感价值的爱欲交换。正如巴耶塔（Georges Bataille）补充、甚至颠覆了经济作为稀缺性配置的传统观点，他指出人类文化中最重要的现象并非稀缺，而是那种无法被有效生产性利用、因而必须被无利可图地消耗或浪费掉的“过剩”（1991, pp. 21-23）。巴塔耶的理论构成了对资产阶级经济学的批判，并提醒我们，许多经济行为背后潜藏着“非理性”、甚至爱欲动机，而这些方面恰恰是传统经济学难以充分处理的（Osteen & Woodmansee, 2005, p. 25）。非理性的、他者的文学想象与欲望书写生产颠覆传统的爱欲情感价值，这一价值契合罗德差异政治理论中关系平等主义的差异价值主张。不同于约翰逊呼吁理性回归、抵御“非理性”情感引发的社会失序、重塑以生产性劳动为核心的经济秩序（陶久胜，2026, p. 79），罗德强调爱欲书写中的情感生产，并以此建构黑人被损耗的身份与价值。麦克洛斯基（Deirdre McCloskey）主张“成熟的经济学绝非巫术玄学，而是诗性之思……关键在于理解历史，而非改造历史”（1990, p. 109）。其人文经济学强调理性科学与感性人文之间的融合，推崇经济学研究的科学性、开放性、生成性与阐释性（Seybold & Chihara, 2019, pp. 42-43）。诗人正是以黑色独角兽这一诗意的、肉身的、政治

的、超自然的、又极具非裔意识的形象重建一种属于黑人女性的神话，彰显一种不被占用、从身体深处生长出来的成熟力量。在神话重构的诗意书写中，罗德发现情感生产中孕育的生命力量。更重要的是，诗人以《黑色独角兽》改写西方神话，此举既是对北方理论的挑战，也是"深南"视域下的诗歌爱欲书写。正如"甘地毕生最深切的追求是调和并重新整合人类生活的各个维度——这些维度在现代社会中日益疏离、彼此冲撞"（Dallmayr, 2019, p. 130），罗德在被理性神话割裂的现代世界中尝试以诗歌爱欲书写寻求生命力量里孕育的差异价值。

结 语

全球化是资本的世界范围拓殖，是单边主义行动在后殖民语境下的延续，也是现代主义宏大叙事中美国主导的西方经济话语。数百年前，当欧洲人以进攻者的姿态推进船的神话、基督教信仰、对祖国领主的忠诚、对外部空间科学的领会与语言的翻译时，全球化历史必须选择讲述用以抹杀殖民地存有的遮蔽物历史，描述具有遮蔽作用的存在，进而创造"空白之地"（《资本的内部》， p. 189）。全球化本质上是后殖民时代西方霸权话语的世界建构；全球化的根本矛盾在于：殖民历史叙事的空白空间臆断掩盖差异存在，持续强化世界通行的普遍原则，进而合理化后殖民逻辑。罗德以诗歌书写被抹杀、被漠视的黑人经验，记录美国社会对结构性暴力的认同与妥协所助长的内部殖民逻辑，探讨现实与想象中的姐妹政治设想与实践如何重新定位黑人女性地缘政治中的情感经济，以及如何借鉴爱欲经验改写西方神话、建构黑人女性的身份政治话语体系。其创作刻画美国社会结构性暴力中的白人内部殖民与黑人自我妥协，打破北方理论中种族-性别殖民所编织的谎言，披露"深南"语境中的黑人女性困境，最终通过爱欲书写与姐妹政治帮助黑人女性挣脱早已内化的边缘身份桎梏，构建基于美国黑人经验的权力话语与诗歌策略。

基金项目：本文系广西壮族自治区研究生教育创新计划项目"人文经济学视角下奥德·罗德诗歌中的黑人女性差异价值研究"（项目编号：YCBZ2025140）与国家社科基金重大项目子项目"《普林斯顿诗歌与诗学百科全书》翻译与研究"（项目编号：21&ZD280）的阶段性研究成果之一。

Funding: This research received funding from the Postgraduate Education and Innovation Program of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region entitled *The Value of Difference for Black Women: A Study on the Poetry of Audre Lorde from the Perspective of Humanist Economics* (Project No. YCBZ2025140), and from the Sub-project of the Major Project of the National Social Science Fund of China entitled "Translation of and Research on *Princeton Encyclopedia of poetry and Poetics*" (21&ZD280).

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Zhang Yuejun ID https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5692-3088

Li Yiqi ID https://orcid.org/0009-0001-4097-1747

References

Athreya, Bama (2022). “Can Fashion Ever Be Fair?” *Journal of Fair Trade* (02): 16-27.

Bamyeh, Mohammed A. (2000). *Ends of Globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.

Bataille, Georges (1991). *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy (Volume I Consumption)*. Zone Books.

Bolaki, S., & Broeck, S. (Eds.) (2015). *Audre Lorde's Transnational Legacies*. University of Massachusetts Press.

瑞文・康奈尔 (2024)：《南方理论：社会科学知识的全球动态》，詹俊锋译。江苏人民出版社。

[Connell, Raewyn (2024). *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science*, translated by Chang Xuan. Jiangsu People's Publishing House.]

Dallmayr, Fred (2019). *Integral Pluralism Beyond Culture Wars*. The University Press of Kentucky.

Gardner, Kirsten E. (2000). “A History of Post-Mastectomy Breast Prostheses, 1945-2000.” *Enterprise & Society* (03): 565-590.

Gibbons, Andrea (2018). “The Five Refusals of White Supremacy.” *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* (3/4): 729-755.

斯图亚特・霍尔 (2021)：《文化研究 1983:一部理论史》，周敏，程孟利译。商务印书馆。

[Hall, Stuart (2021). *Cultural Studies 1983: A Theoretical History*, translated by Zhou Min, Cheng Mengli. The Commercial Press.]

Hyde, Lewis (1983). *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*. Vintage Books.

Anonymous. (2021). “J Labor and Demographic Economics.” *Journal of Economic Literature* (02): 706-709.

James, William (1920). *A Pluralistic Universe*. Forgotten Books.

Kellermann, Natan P. F. (2001). “The Long-Term Psychological Effects and Treatment of Holocaust Trauma.” *Journal of Loss and Trauma* (03): 197-218.

Klengel, S., & Ortiz Wallner, A. (Eds.) (2016). *Sur↓South: Poetics and politics of thinking Latin America / India*. Iberoamericana • Vervuert.

Liu, Xin (2022). “Crazy Rich Asians: Towards an Ornamental Feminist Account of Wealth and Desire.” *The Australian Feminist Studies* (114): 475-489.

López, Alfred J. (2007). “Introduction: The (Post)Global South.” *Global South* (01): 1-11.

López, Alfred J., & Quintana-Vallejo, R. (Eds.) (2024). *The Routledge Companion to Literature and the Global South*. Taylor & Francis Group.

Lorde, Audre. (1982). *Zami*. Crossing Press.

Lorde, Audre. (1995). *The Black Unicorn*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Lorde, Audre. (1997). *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Lorde, Audre. (2007). *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Ten Speed Press.

Lorde, Audre. (2017). *A Burst of Light and Other Essays*. Ixia Press.

Lorde, Audre. (2020). *The Selected Works of Audre Lord*e. W. W. Norton & Company.

McCloskey, Deirdre. (1990). *If You're So Smart: The Narrative of Economic Expertise*. The University of Chicago Press.

Mignolo, Walter D. (2011). *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Duke University Press.

Nixon, Rob (2011). *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press.

Oinas, E., Onodera, H., & Suurpaa, L. (2018). "Evasive Youth, Oblique Politics." In E. Oinas, H. Onodera, & L. Suurpaa (Eds.), *What Politics? Youth and Political Engagement in Africa* (pp. 1-20). Koninklijke Brill.

Onega, S., & Ganteau, J.-M. (Eds.) (2014). *Contemporary Trauma Narratives: Liminality and Ethics of Form*. Routledge.

Riley, Kristine (2017). "Empowering Justice: An Intersectional Feminist Perspective on Restorative Justice in the Sex Trade." *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* (05): 1157-1190.

罗兰·罗伯森 (2000)：《全球化：社会理论和全球文化》，梁光严译。上海人民出版社。

[Robertson, Roland (2000). *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, translated by Liang Guangyan. Shanghai People's Publishing House.]

Schmid, Monika S., & Kopke, Barbara (Eds.) (2019). *The Oxford Handbook of Language Attrition*. Oxford University Press.

Seybold, M., & Chihara, M. (Eds.) (2019). *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Economics*. Routledge.

Shepard, Odell (1930). *The Lore of Unicorn*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

斯洛特戴克 (2014)：《资本的内部：全球化的哲学理论》，常晅译。社会科学文献出版社。

[Sloterdijk, Peter (2014). *In the World Interior of Capital: For a Philosophical Theory of Globalization*, translated by Zhan Junfeng. Social Sciences Academic Press.]

陶久胜 (2026)："《徒劳的愿望》中的启蒙思想、经济人与道德情操焦虑"，《河南大学学报（社会科学版）》（02）：74-82, 154。

[Tao Jiusheng (2026). "Enlightenment Thought, Economic Man and Moral Sentiments Anxiety in The Vanity of Human Wishes." *Journal of Henan University (Social Science Edition)* (02): 74-82, 154.]

Turner, Jack (2021). "Audre Lorde's Politics of Difference." In M. L. Rogers & J. Turner (Eds.), *African American Political Thought: A Collected History* (pp. 563-592). The University of Chicago Press.

Vile, John R. (1997). *A Companion to the United States Constitution and Amendments* (2nd ed.). Praeger Publisher.

Woodmansee, M., & Osteen, M. (Eds.) (2005). *The New Economic Criticism*. Taylor & Francis e-Library.

JESL

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

***JESL*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026, pp.106-116.**

Print ISSN: 3107-3492; Online ISSN: 3107-3506

Journal homepage: https://www.jesljournal.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.64058/jesl260107efmad

节俭的伦理学与情感的货币化

——《理智与情感》中经济叙事的双重道德机制

张鑫（Zhang Xin）

摘要：“新经济批评”为简·奥斯丁《理智与情感》的经济叙事与道德主题之间的关联提供了方法论框架。小说通过“饥荒价格”的历史嵌入、财产继承法的制度分析及女性经济依附性的多重再现，建构独特的“道德经济学”。埃莉诺的“审慎理性”与玛丽安的“情感过量”构成经济—道德连续体的正面张力，威洛比的“投机性情感”与露西的“算计性婚姻”则暴露市场逻辑对人际关系的渗透。奥斯丁既承认经济理性的决定作用，又坚持道德判断的相对自主性，从而形成批判性的经济人文主义。这一立场回应亚当·斯密《道德情操论》的核心命题，亦预示 19 世纪现实主义小说对资本主义现代性之核心焦虑：经济合理化与伦理价值领域的持久张力。

关键词：简·奥斯丁；《理智与情感》；经济叙事；道德哲学；新经济批评

作者簡介：张鑫，博士，教授，现任职于中国江苏省常州市江苏理工学院外国语学院，主要从事欧美文学研究。电邮：zhangxin@jsut.edu.cn

Title: The Ethics of Frugality and the Monetization of Affection: The Dual Moral Mechanism of Economic Narrative in *Sense and Sensibility*

Abstract: New economic criticism provides a methodological framework for examining the interconnection between economic narrative and moral themes in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*. Through historical embedding of “famine prices”,

Received: 24 Apr. 2026 / Revised: 06 May 2026 / Accepted: 01 Jun. 2026 / Published online: 15 Jun. 2026 / Print published: 25 Jun. 2026.

institutional analysis of property inheritance law, and multiple representations of female economic dependency, the novel constructs a distinctive "moral economics". Elinor's "prudent rationality" and Marianne's "excessive sensibility" constitute the positive tension of an economic-moral continuum, while Willoughby's "speculative affection" and Lucy's "calculative marriage" expose the penetration of market logic into human relations. Austen acknowledges the determining function of economic rationality while insisting on the relative autonomy of moral judgment, forming a critical economic humanism. This stance responds to the core proposition of Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* and anticipates the central anxiety of nineteenth-century realist fiction regarding capitalist modernity: the persistent tension between economic rationalization and the domain of ethical value.

Keywords: Jane Austen; Sense and Sensibility; Economic Narrative; Moral Philosophy; New Economic Criticism

Author Biography: Zhang Xin is a PhD and Professor at the School of Foreign Languages, Jiangsu University of Technology, Chang Zhou, Jiangsu Province, China. His research area is European and American Literature. E-mail: zhangxin@jsut.edu.cn.

引言：经济叙事作为文学方法论

文学作为上层建筑的重要组成，其与经济基础的互动关系始终是历史进程中的核心议题。随着 20 世纪 90 年代"新经济批评"的兴起，文学与经济跨学科研究日益突破传统反映论范式，转而关注文学如何通过经济叙事想象和建构尚未存在的社会条件，并在这一过程中介入伦理价值的形塑（Woodmansee & Osteen, 2005, pp. 3–4）。具体而言，新经济批评将经济话语——如价值、交换、债务、投机、信用——视为一种深刻影响文学形式与内容的符号系统和修辞策略。它不再将经济视为外在于文本的"背景"，而是将其视为渗透于文本内部、塑造人物主体性、驱动情节发展并构建道德框架的核心力量。这种批评范式认为，文学文本不仅再现经济活动，更主动参与了对经济行为和经济理性的伦理辩护或批判，从而成为一个协商、测试乃至重塑经济观念的文化场域(Gagnier, 2000, p. 15)。马克·谢尔（Marc Shell）的货币符号学理论指出，金钱与语言共享"转义交换"的本质，"隐喻在某种意义上都是经济的"（Shell, 1978, p. 2）；而玛瑞吉·加利尔（Regenia Gagnier）则强调，19 世纪的英国文学经济批评应关注"经济如何被叙述，以及叙述如何经济化"（Gagnier, 2000, p. 30）。

经济叙事绝非文学文本中的背景性存在，而是情节发展的核心驱动力、人物命运的决定性因素，以及审视社会规范、探索复杂人性的关键场域。从亚当·斯密《道德情操论》对金钱伦理的辩证思考，到马克思关于经济基础与上层建筑的经典命题，18 至 19 世纪的英国社会见证了政治经济学与文学创作的深度交融（Smith，2002; Marx，1970）。简·奥斯丁的创作正处于这一思想交汇的历史节点：其小说既是对摄政时期英国社会经济转型的敏锐

观察，亦构成了对古典经济学理论的文学性回应与反思。正如詹姆斯·汤普森（James Thompson）所言，奥斯丁的小说“使经济关系变得可见，并将其作为社会分析的核心范畴”（Thompson, 1988, p. 12）。

《理智与情感》(1811)作为奥斯丁首部出版的小说，其创作历程本身即是一部经济-文本互动的微观史。该作品“至少酝酿了 15 年”：1795 年以书信体《埃莉诺与玛丽安》（*Elinor and Marianne*）初成，1797 年改写为第三人称叙事，1809-1810 年间最终修订，1810 年冬被出版商埃杰顿接受，1811 年 10 月 30 日正式出版（Copeland, 2006, p. xxiii）。这一漫长的创作周期恰逢英国历史上最剧烈的经济社会转型期：英法战争(1793-1815)的持续消耗、1795 年“饥荒价格”（famine prices）危机的爆发、农业萧条与商业衰退的叠加效应，以及斯皮纳姆兰（Speenhamland）户外救济制度的实施。奥斯丁将这一宏观历史语境转化为具体的家庭叙事，使《理智与情感》成为“理解摄政时期经济焦虑的关键文本”（Easton, 1998, p. 467）。

本文立足这一学术脉络，以“经济叙事”为方法论视角，系统探究经典文学作品如何再现经济生活、表达时代焦虑，并由此透射深层道德主题。本文的核心论点是：《理智与情感》通过双重经济叙事机制“节俭的伦理学”与“情感的货币化”，建构了一套独特的道德诗学。前者体现为埃莉诺的审慎理性、达什伍德太太的人际忠诚，以及布兰登上校的长期主义投资;后者则表现为威洛比的情感投机、露西·斯蒂尔的婚姻算计，以及约翰·达什伍德夫妇的即时性消费。这两种机制并非简单的二元对立，而是在叙事进程中相互渗透、辩证转化，最终指向奥斯丁对“经济人”假设的文学性批判。

“饥荒价格”的历史语境与叙事嵌入

奥斯丁的经济叙事绝非抽象的观念演绎，而是深植于具体历史情境的文学建构。《理智与情感》的创作周期(1795-1811 年)恰逢英国社会最为剧烈的经济转型期，1795 年“饥荒价格”危机、农业萧条与商业衰退的叠加效应，为小说提供了不可替代的历史土壤。将这一宏观语境转化为家庭叙事的微观形态，需要考察三个相互关联的维度：特定历史危机在文本中的痕迹化处理、财产继承法作为制度性框架的叙事功能，以及奥斯丁个人经济经验与创作实践的互文关系。这三个维度共同构成了小说经济叙事的历史唯物主义基础。

《理智与情感》的经济叙事首先植根于具体的历史时间性。小说开篇即呈现诺兰庄园的财产继承危机：“诺兰庄园的老主人……终身未娶，……把家产传给侄子的同时，附加了种种条件：遗嘱规定必须完整地传给他的儿子和他儿子的儿子，一个四岁的孩子”（Austen, 1811/2010, p. 2）。这一继承困境并非纯粹的文学虚构，而是 18 世纪英国限定继承权制度的精确反映。更具历史纵深的是，奥斯丁将这一家庭危机置于 1795 年“饥荒价格”的宏观经济背景中，使私人领域的道德戏剧与公共领域的经济灾难形成结构性呼应。

1795 年的英国经历了前所未有的农业危机。前一年夏天的严重干旱与极寒冬季导致农作物大面积歉收，春季的非自然霜冻使麦田几近绝收(Burke, 2003, p. 271)。自 1750 年至 1798 年，英国消费品价格增长率从 50%飙升至 100%，而工资增幅仅约 25%（Burnett, 1969, p. 137）。女小说家夏洛特·史密斯(Charlotte Smith)在 1794 年 1 月的信中写道：“日常生活

所必需的一切商品的价格都在增长”(转引自 Copeland, 1995, p. 15)。诗人华兹华斯的妹妹多萝西(Dorothy Wordsworth)则在日记中记录了一位邻居的观察:“短期内全国就只剩两种人了:最有钱的人和最贫穷的人”(Wordsworth, 2002, p. 3)。这种经济极化现象直接渗透进《理智与情感》的人物塑造:达什伍德太太与女儿们的年收入仅五百英镑,而格雷小姐的嫁妆高达五万英镑,威洛比的年收入约六七百英镑却“花销大,……总是年年债上加债”(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 314)。

奥斯丁对经济细节的精确控制体现了“新经济批评”所强调的“想象经济学”特征。当埃莉诺和玛丽安讨论婚姻的经济门槛时,玛丽安“忽然冒出一个古怪的念头,说:‘但愿有什么人给我们每人一大笔钱就好了’”,这一“幻想的幸福使她激动得眼睛闪闪发亮,高兴得双颊绯红”(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 91)。这一场景绝非简单的浪漫主义插曲,而是对经济决定论的戏剧化呈现:即使是一次依靠经济实力而获得的幸福的空幻想象,也能使年轻女性产生如此强烈的情感反应。玛丽安随后提出的生活标准——“大约一千八或者两千镑一年”——在当时的经济语境中具有明确的阶级指涉:年收入一千英镑的家庭方能“雇得起三个女仆,一个男仆,一个马车夫,买得起一辆两轮敞篷马车或四轮大马车和几匹马”(Nottingham, 2014, p. 102)。

《理智与情感》的核心经济叙事围绕财产继承法展开,这一法律制度构成了小说道德戏剧的制度性基础。老庄主的遗嘱规定:“一份限定了继承权的不动产既不能变卖也不能用作抵押,……只有两代之内的财产才能被限定继承权”(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 2)。这种复合继承制——不动产的长子继承与动产的分割继承——直接导致达什伍德太太与三个女儿的经济边缘化。她们“除了先父留下的少量政府债券的微薄利息”,别无其他收入来源,被迫“在自己的家中过着寄人篱下的生活”(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 2)。

奥斯丁对这一法律制度的批判并非直白的政治抗议,而是通过人物命运的对比性安排实现的。约翰·达什伍德继承诺兰庄园后,其妻子以十三篇演说的“经济理性”说服丈夫将承诺给妹妹们的一千镑缩减为“替她们留心找所舒适的小房子呀,帮她们搬搬东西呀,等鱼和野味之类上市的时候,送她们一些呀”(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 10)。这一情节揭示了经济叙事的核心道德悖论:在“饥荒价格”的危机语境中,中产阶级女性的“主动美德”——行为指南所倡导的慈善与济贫——被经济利益完全吞噬。范妮的道德败坏并非个人品性缺陷,而是财产继承法所结构化的性别—阶级位置的产物。

更具讽刺意味的是威洛比的经济叙事轨迹。这位“具有开朗、可爱而活泼的风度”的青年绅士,因“家产原就不大,……总是大手大脚花钱,总跟比我富有的人混在一起”,最终选择“娶个有钱姑娘,重立家业”(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 314)。他的婚姻决策完全遵循古典经济学的“理性选择”模型:玛丽安的微薄财产与格雷小姐的五万英镑嫁妆构成清晰的成本—收益计算。然而,奥斯丁的叙事策略使这一“理性”选择暴露出深刻的道德危机,威洛比的“自利”与斯密《国富论》中的“看不见的手”形成辛辣的对照,其个人效用最大化导向的是他人的情感毁灭与自我的道德贬损。

奥斯丁在《理智与情感》创作与出版过程中涉及的经济考量本身即构成了文本的元经济叙事。她曾告诉姐姐卡桑德拉关于校对和修改的情况,尤其提到收入和稿酬:“这部小说的

收入依然与往常一样，但如果我能的话，我将要求提高稿酬”(Austen-Leigh & Austen-Leigh, 1913, p. 196)。这种对金钱锱铢必较的态度与小说中对经济细节的精确刻画形成互文。1796年1月，她记述哥哥亨利“购买牛津郡副官职位的计划现在已经破灭”，她们“整理并分发了妈妈做的旧帽子”；两年后，家中的马匹也没有了，父亲“把一只莱斯特郡羊上个星期卖给了屠夫”(Austen-Leigh & Austen-Leigh, 1913, pp. 76, 88)。

这些私人经济叙事与小说中的“节俭美学”形成深层关联。1798年10月，奥斯丁在斯蒂文顿的“里德斯夫人”商店购物后，写信给卡桑德拉：“我买了一些日本颜料，下周就可以开始拾掇我的帽子了，这可是维系我主要乐趣之所在的东西了”(Austen-Leigh & Austen-Leigh, 1913, p. 87)。伊恩•里奇(Ian Rich)指出，“旧衣翻新、帽子染色等做法不仅可以使她有焕然一新的外貌，……还可以为她在舞会上赢得更多的赞赏”(Rich, 1998, p. 57)。这种在物质匮乏中维持审美追求与社会参与的节俭伦理学，不仅是埃莉诺经济-道德策略的生活原型，更构成了小说“道德经济学”的隐性纲领，它将在人物命运的展开中，与另一种将情感彻底市场化的逻辑形成尖锐对照。

“节俭的伦理学”：审慎理性与长期主义

面对“饥荒价格”危机与财产继承法的双重挤压，小说中的女性角色发展出差异化的生存策略，形成一套可称之为“节俭的伦理学”的道德实践体系。这一体系并非单一的道德教条，而是在经济约束条件下维护伦理自主性的多重路径：埃莉诺以“审慎理性”实现情感与经济的动态平衡，达什伍德太太以“反经济”的人际忠诚对抗市场逻辑，布兰登上校则以“长期主义”的投资理性跨越即时性消费主义的陷阱。三者共同构成了“道德经济学”的完整光谱，既相互补充又彼此张力，折射出摄政时期中产阶级女性在公私领域间的复杂处境。

埃莉诺•达什伍德构成了《理智与情感》中“节俭的伦理学”的核心载体。与传统批评将其视为“理智”的抽象化身不同，本文认为埃莉诺的主体性建构体现了一种“道德经济学”的实践策略，那是一种在极端经济依附条件下维护伦理自主性的女性经验。这一策略首先表现为情感表达的“成本-收益”管理：当得知爱德华与露西•斯蒂尔的秘密婚约时，埃莉诺选择“下定决心要按照每一条荣誉和诚实原则行事”，同时“利用任何对自己有利的时机”保护母亲和妹妹免受信息冲击(Austen, 1811/2010, pp. 138–139)。

这种隐忍并非情感压抑，而是亚当•斯密所谓“合宜性”的女性化实践。斯密在《道德情操论》中强调，“公正的旁观者”的内在化使个体能够调节自我情感以符合社会规范(Smith, 2002, pp. 109–113)。埃莉诺的“合宜性”实践具有明确的经济维度：她对爱德华的爱情宣言，“我一向收入少，习惯了，为了他我什么穷日子都能熬”，将情感承诺与长期经济承受力绑定，拒绝了露西式的机会主义计算(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 144)。这种“道德货币化”策略使埃莉诺在婚姻市场中最终获得“超出预期”的回报：德拉福牧师住宅、二百五十镑年收入，以及“选用墙纸，安排灌木林，开辟一条曲径”的审美自主权(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 368)。

与埃莉诺的审慎理性形成对照的是达什伍德太太的“反经济”人际伦理。作为财产继

承法的直接受害者，她拒绝将经济地位作为待人接物的首要标准。当讨论埃莉诺与爱德华的关系时，她明确表示："贫富悬殊就得拆散一对情意相投的情侣，她压根儿就反对"(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 14)。这一立场与当时的行为指南形成张力，因为后者强调女性应通过"谦卑、服从和忠诚"去维护家庭经济利益(Gregory, 1996, p. 45)。

达什伍德太太的伦理观念具有明确的政治经济学内涵。她保护女儿们免受约翰夫妇的经济剥削，同时拒绝露西·斯蒂尔式的算计性社交。这种"高贵的责任"在玛丽·沃斯通克拉夫特(Mary Wollstonecraft)的语境中可被理解为"通过实践发挥自己的道德判断力来修正一般道德规则"(Wollstonecraft, 1992, p. 305)。然而，奥斯丁的叙事并未将这一伦理理想化：达什伍德太太的"情感"导向同样导致判断失误她对威洛比的最初认可、对布兰登上校的"老得不该结婚"的偏见，都显示了"反经济"伦理的认知局限。

布兰登上校的经济叙事体现了第三种"节俭的伦理学"形态："长期主义"的投资理性。他的两千镑年收入、德拉福庄园的产业管理，以及对玛丽安的持久情感投入，构成了一种跨越市场波动的价值投资策略。与威洛比的即时消费主义不同，布兰登上校"两年前"即认定玛丽安的价值，尽管当时她"认为他是位老得不该结婚的人，而且还得穿法兰绒背心保护身体"(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 372)。

这一"长期投资"的道德回报在小说结局中得到实现：玛丽安"开始担负起新的职责，被安置在一个新的家里，当了妻子，成为一位家庭主妇，而且还是一个村落的女庇护人"(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 372)。然而，奥斯丁的叙事对这一"幸福结局"保持着批判性距离，玛丽安的转变被描述为"在大家一致同意之下，就必得成为报偿这一切的人"，其情感自主性的丧失与阶级地位的跃升形成代价关系。这种"道德-经济"的辩证，使《理智与情感》超越了简单的劝诫小说模式，成为对"改良"意识形态的复杂反思。

"情感的货币化"：市场逻辑与道德危机

然而，"节俭的伦理学"并非小说经济叙事的全部。奥斯丁同样以惊人的洞察力，呈现了摄政时期市场逻辑向情感领域的全面渗透，一种可称之为"情感的货币化"的道德危机形态。当市场逻辑渗透进情感领域，人际关系便转化为可计算、可交易、可投机的资本形态。这一批判性维度同样呈现为三种典型形态：威洛比的"情感投机"将浪漫追求转化为高风险杠杆操作，露西·斯蒂尔的"婚姻套利"利用信息不对称实现利益最大化，约翰·达什伍德夫妇的"消费主义"则将新获财富转化为即时性炫耀与义务规避。这三类人物构成了"道德经济学"的负面教材，其叙事功能不仅在于道德贬斥，更在于揭示经济理性自我瓦解的内在悖论——当一切情感都被标价，市场逻辑本身亦丧失合法性基础。

威洛比构成了《理智与情感》中最具经济-道德张力的人物形象。他的情感轨迹从玛丽安的"浪漫英雄"到格雷小姐的"财富猎手"，可被解读为一种"情感投机"的完整周期。威洛比对玛丽安的初始追求遵循"高杠杆"策略：以有限的个人魅力获取最大化的情感回报，同时保持"投资组合"的多样性。

这种投机策略的破产源于现金流危机。威洛比坦陈："我要的是她的钱，我那样的处境需要我不管怎样都不能闹翻脸"(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 323)。这里的"处境"具有精确的经

济指涉：年入六七百镑的开支赤字、史密斯太太遗产的不确定性，以及“年年债上加债”的复利效应。格雷小姐的五万英镑嫁妆构成了威洛比的“并购”目标，这一横向整合使其债务结构得以重组，但代价是道德信用的彻底破产。

奥斯丁对威洛比的叙事处理体现了“新经济批评”所关注的“经济主体性”问题。威洛比的自我辩解：“我早已盘算着该娶个有钱姑娘，重立家业了”（Austen, 1811/2010, p. 314），将婚姻市场理性化，但其“盘算”暴露的是古典经济学“理性人”假设的伦理空洞。与埃莉诺的“道德经济学”不同，威洛比的计算排除了公正的旁观者的调节机制，导致情感与道德的完全工具化。

露西·斯蒂尔代表了“情感的货币化”的另一种形态“婚姻套利”。她的经济策略基于信息不对称与市场时机把握：与爱德华的秘密婚约使其获得“期权”地位，而费勒斯太太的继承权变更则触发“行权”决策，使之从爱德华转向罗伯特。这一操作的效率令人侧目：露西“迅速地放弃爱德华转而选择其弟”，并以“爱德华对爱情不专一”为借口解除前约，完全“出于经济利益考量”（Austen, 1811/2010, p. 367）。

露西的精明具有性别化的经济维度。作为“出身低微”、年近三十的女性，她面临的是“剩女”市场的极端竞争压力。她的策略选择是对行为指南所教导的女性“主动美德”的讽刺性转化：将慈善济贫的伦理转化为社交攀附的技术。奥斯丁对露西的刻画保持着复杂的道德态度：一方面，她的“毫不文雅，做事不正派，心地不正直”受到明确谴责（Austen, 1811/2010, p. 127）；另一方面，其“懂得怎样充分利用一切”的居家管理能力获得隐性认可，“她如果和爱德华结婚，即使‘费勒斯太太只给她儿子五百镑一年，她也会跟有八百镑的人一样过得体体面面的’”（Austen, 1811/2010, p. 251）。

这种道德模糊性体现了奥斯丁对经济决定论的批判性反思。奥斯丁“对于那些因缺乏财富而‘贬值’的女孩大多持同情态度”，露西的“工于心计”背后难掩“境遇之艰辛与生存之不易”（Su, 2017, p. 78）。露西作为“最高明而稳妥的野心家”，“满嘴情意，几乎不提钱字，谋求财富的目的深藏在符合通行道德观念的语言和行动之下”（Huang, 2010, pp. 175–192）。

约翰·达什伍德夫妇代表了“情感的货币化”的第三种形态——即时性消费主义。他们的经济叙事以诺兰庄园的继承为起点，以“鱼、野味和偶尔的帮助”的承诺缩减为标志，体现了新获得财富阶层的“炫耀性消费”倾向。达什伍德夫人的十三篇演说构成了一套完整的“家庭经济学”话语：将父亲的临终嘱托重新定义为“不合理的”义务，将妹妹们的经济需求转化为依赖的道德风险。

这一话语策略的成功在于其对“大方”（liberal）概念的操纵。约翰最初希望“能够大方一下子的”，使举动“又大方，有体面”（Austen, 1811/2010, p. 4）。这里的“liberal”兼具经济慷慨与政治开明的双重含义，但在范妮的修辞运作中，这一概念被缩减为“鱼和野味”的象征性交换。尼古拉·斯利斯（Nicola Sleath）指出，奥斯丁“不失时机地将自己对礼仪道德的要求灌输其中”，同时暴露了“conduct”话语的经济本质（Sleath, 1988, p. 73）。

更具讽刺意味的是约翰夫妇对“改善”的投资。约翰计划将诺兰公地圈起来，购买“东金汉农场”，却因“股票大跌”而犹豫（Austen, 1811/2010, p. 219）。这一情节揭示了摄

政时期土地资本主义的流动性危机：农业“改良”的收益预期与金融市场的波动性形成张力。约翰的经济焦虑——“如果不是我银行里存款够用，我就得卖出股票，大大亏本的”(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 219)，将小说的时间性锚定于 1795-1811 年的金融动荡期，使私人叙事与宏观经济形成索引关系。

道德诗学的经济-伦理辩证

“节俭的伦理学”与“情感的货币化”作为辩证的两极，其张力并非简单的善恶对峙，而是揭示了现代性条件下经济理性与伦理价值之间的深层悖论。小说最终的道德诗学，正是在这一悖论中寻求有限度的综合。这一诗学的核心难题在于：如何在承认经济理性结构性力量的同时，为道德判断保留相对自主的空间?奥斯丁的解决方案并非简单的二元调和，而是通过“理智”与“情感”的再概念化、“无私利他”的礼仪重构，以及一种可称之为“批判性的经济人文主义”的立场，实现经济-伦理辩证的文学性超越。以下三个层面的分析将揭示这一道德诗学的操作机制及其历史限度。

传统批评将《理智与情感》解读为“理智”对“情感”的胜利，或两种品质的最终调和。基于真实时代背景的经济叙事分析可以发现，“理智”与“情感”其实呈现出一种概念化对立的局面：埃莉诺的“理智”实质是“道德经济学”的实践理性，而玛丽安的“情感”则是对商品化人际关系的审美抵抗。这一解读与克劳迪娅·约翰逊(Claudia Johnson)的修正主义观点形成对话，后者指出“‘感性’这个基本术语在这部小说中只是偶尔出现，而且有点残缺不全”，真正核心的是“不确定性和道德上的希望”(Johnson, 1983, pp. 171–172)。

玛丽安的经济-道德轨迹体现了“情感过量”的代价与转化。她对威洛比的“一见倾心”拒绝了婚姻市场的信息筛选机制，其“设置帽子征服男人”的厌恶(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 43)是对露西式算计的反向极端。然而，威洛比的背叛迫使玛丽安接受“情感教育”：从“想象支配现实”到“理智调节情感”的转变，并非简单的道德驯化，而是对经济约束条件的认知适应。她与布兰登上校的婚姻，希望“在大家一致同意之下，就必得成为报偿这一切的人”的理想(Austen, 1811/2010, p. 372)，既是阶级跃升的经济理性选择，也是情感自主性的结构性丧失。这种“道德-经济”的悖论，使玛丽安的结局成为奥斯丁最复杂的叙事设计之一。

《理智与情感》的经济叙事最终指向一套重构的礼仪伦理。这一伦理既非纯粹的功利计算，也非浪漫的情感至上，而是在经济约束条件下寻求“合宜性”的社会实践。埃莉诺对露西的“隐忍”、达什伍德太太对约翰夫妇的宽容、以及布兰登上校对威洛比的隐性宽恕，都体现了这一伦理的操作性特征。

奥斯丁的叙事策略使“无私利他”成为经济理性的超越性维度。埃莉诺保护母亲和妹妹的情感劳动、达什伍德太太打破门第观念的婚姻支持、以及布兰登上校对德拉福教区的“庇护人”责任，都构成了非市场交换的社会资本积累。这种“道德货币”虽无即时经济回报，却在长期中转化为社会信任与情感安全。正如西蒙·哈里特(Simon Harriet)所言，奥斯丁“关于玛丽安的经济叙事，最终折射到她和布兰顿上校的婚姻生活上，显示了作者坚持平衡原则下的道德优先和报偿理想”(Harriet, 1998, p. 117)。

然而，这一“道德经济学”的局限同样明显。小说的幸福结局成就了埃莉诺“完全像是个当家庭主妇”、玛丽安像个“女庇护人”角色，这都将女性主体性完全纳入了家庭经济的再生产。这一结局“精彩地演绎了资本、市场与情感、伦理之间的斗争、沟通和协商的历程”，但其“现代性”承诺最终被“传统的性别分工所收编”（Fan, 2021, p. 91）。奥斯丁的道德诗学因而处于批判与妥协的张力中：既暴露经济决定论的伦理危机，又承认其结构性不可逃避性。

《理智与情感》建构了一种批判性的经济人文主义。这一立场具有以下特征：首先，它承认经济理性对社会生活的决定性作用。威洛比的“盘算”、露西的“精明”、以及约翰夫妇的“消费主义”都是对这一理性的不同形态呈现。其次，它坚持道德判断的相对自主性。埃莉诺的“隐忍”、达什伍德太太的“反经济”伦理、以及布兰登上校的“长期投资”都体现了伦理对经济计算的调节功能。最后，它关注这一调节的历史局限性。玛丽安的“情感教育”、露西的“道德模糊性”、以及结局的“性别收编”都显示了“道德经济学”在特定社会结构中的边界。

奥斯丁在小说中建构的这种批判性立场，与亚当·斯密的道德哲学形成复杂的互文关系。斯密的思想体系本身即内含着《国富论》中“经济人”的自利追求与《道德情操论》中“社会人”的同情心之间的张力。他试图通过“公正的旁观者”这一核心概念来调和两者，即个体通过想象他人的评判来审视并调节自身行为的合宜性，从而使自利行为不逾越社会伦理的边界（Smith, 2002, pp. 109–113）。本文所提出的奥斯丁的“道德经济学”，正是对斯密这一理论张力的文学性检验与深化。小说中的双重道德机制——“节俭的伦理学”与“情感的货币化”——可以被视为斯密哲学中两种人性逻辑在摄政时期特定社会情境下的戏剧化呈现。埃莉诺的审慎，正是“公正的旁观者”在女性经济依附困境下的内化实践，其“道德经济学”策略是将经济计算置于同情与责任的伦理框架之内。相反，威洛比与露西等角色则代表了被抽离了道德维度的“经济人”，他们的“理性选择”因缺乏“公正的旁观者”的调节而沦为纯粹的功利算计，最终导致自我与他人的情感破产。

因此，奥斯丁并非简单地图解斯密的理论，而是通过具体的、尤其是性别化的生活叙事，对斯密试图弥合的经济自利与道德同情之间的裂隙进行了深刻的文学勘探。她揭示了在现实的财产与婚姻市场中，“公正的旁观者”的调节机制是何其脆弱，而维系它的“道德经济学”实践又是何其艰难（cf. Butler, 2007, p. 112）。斯密在《道德情操论》中试图调和“自利”与“同情”，将“公正的旁观者”作为社会秩序的调节机制（Smith, 2002, pp. 109–113）。奥斯丁的文学实践则可被视为这一理论的性别化检验：在女性被排除于正式经济领域的条件下，“同情”如何成为生存策略，“公正的旁观者”如何内化为自我监管，以及这一监管如何导致主体性的分裂与重组。汤普森的观察由此获得新的维度：奥斯丁“使经济关系变得可见”，不仅作为“社会分析的核心范畴”，更作为“性别化的道德剧场”（Thompson, 1988, p. 12）。

结语：经济叙事作为道德方法

《理智与情感》中的经济叙事与道德主题存在深层勾连关系。奥斯丁通过“饥荒价格”的历史语境嵌入、财产继承法的制度性分析、以及女性经济依附性的多重再现，建构了一套独特的“道德经济学”。这一体系的核心张力在于：“节俭的伦理学”与“情感的货币化”构成经济-道德连续体的两极，而其间的辩证转化揭示了摄政时期英国社会的核心焦虑。《理智与情感》的持久价值在于其“不可穷尽性”（Derrida, 1976, p. 158）。19 世纪的批评聚焦“理智”与“情感”的性格类型学;20 世纪的女性主义解读关注性别与阶级的交叉压迫;21 世纪的“新经济批评”则揭示其政治经济学的文学形态。这些阐释的累积效应并非相互替代，而是共同指向奥斯丁作为“经济叙事家”的历史地位，她既是对社会经济转型的敏锐观察者，亦是对经济学理论的文学性回应者，更是对人类处境中经济-伦理张力的永恒探索者。

在当代语境中，《理智与情感》的经济叙事提供了重要的方法论启示。当“人力资本”话语将情感关系全面纳入市场计算，当“平台经济”使劳动与休闲的边界日益模糊，奥斯丁的“道德经济学”提醒我们关注经济理性的伦理代价，以及在经济约束条件下维护主体性的可能路径。这一批判性的经济人文主义，既承认经济决定论的结构性力量，又坚持道德判断的调节功能，或将成为奥斯丁对 21 世纪读者最持久的馈赠。

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Zhang Xin[ID] https://orcid.org/0009-0007-7814-9162

References

简·奥斯汀（2010）:《理智与情感》，吴承义译。上海译文出版社。(原著出版于 1811 年)

[Austen, J. (2010). *Sense and Sensibility*, trans. Wu Chengyi. Shanghai Translation Publishing House. (Original work published 1811)]

Austen-Leigh, W., & Austen-Leigh, R. A. (Eds.) (1913). *Jane Austen: Her Life and Letters, a Family Record* (2nd ed.). Smith, Elder & Co.

Burnett, J. (1969). *A History of the Cost of Living*. Penguin Books.

Burke, E. (2003). *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity*. Kessinger Publishing.

Butler, M. (2007). “*The Impartial Spectator in the Drawing-room: Austen’s Dialogue with Adam Smith*.” In E. J. Copeland, & J. McMaster (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen* (pp. 108-125). Cambridge UP.

Copeland, E. (1995). *Women Writing about Money: Women’s Fiction in England, 1790-1820*. Cambridge UP.

Copeland, E. J. (2006). *Introduction. In J. Austen, Sense and sensibility* (xvi-xxii). Cambridge UP.

Derrida, J. (1976). *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. C. Spivak. Johns Hopkins UP. (Original work published 1967)

Easton, F. (1998). "The Political Economy of *Mansfield Park*: Fanny Price and the Atlantic Working Class." *Textual Practice* (2): 459-496. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09502369808582322.

范一亭（2021）："城-乡系统论视域下的资本、生态与性别——论《理智与情感》中奥斯丁的'现代社会想象'"，《国外文学》（3）：82-92+158。

[Fan, Y. T. (2021). "Capital, Ecology, and Gender from the Perspective of Urban－rural System Theory: On Austen's 'Modern Social Imagination' in *Sense and Sensibility*." *Foreign Literatures* (3): 85-95. DOI: 10.16345/j.cnki.cn11-1562/i.2021.03.009]

Gagnier, R. (2000). *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society*. University of Chicago Press.

Gregory, J. (1996). "*A Father's Legacy to His Daughters*." In J. Todd (Ed.), *Female Education in the Age of Enlightenment* (pp. 45-78). Pickering & Chatto.

Harriet, S. (1998). *Jane Austen's Art of Ideological Narration*. University of Minnesota Press.

黄梅（2010）："《理智与情感》中的'思想之战'"，《外国文学评论》（1）：175-192。

[Huang, M. (2010). "The 'Battle of Ideas' in *Sense and Sensibility*." *Foreign Literature Review* (1): 175-192.]

Johnson, C. L. (1983). "The Twilight of Probability: Uncertainty and Hope in *Sense and Sensibility*." *Philological Quarterly* (2): 171-186.

Marx, K. (1970). *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. S. W. Ryazanskaya. International Publishers. (Original work published 1859)

Nottingham, I. (2014). "Earnings, Money and Wealth in Jane Austen's Time." *Jane Austen—Her Life and Works* 11(May): 98-115.

Rich, I. (1998). *The Economy of Thriftiness and Literary Narration*. Holmes & Meier.

Shell, M. (1978). *The Economy of Literature*. Johns Hopkins UP.

Sleath, N. (1988). *The Conduct Mode and Women Novelists' Consciousness*. Folio Press.

Smith, A. (2002). *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. K. Haakonssen. Cambridge UP. (Original work published 1759)

苏耕欣（2017）：《英国小说与浪漫主义：意识形态的冲突、妥协与包装》。北京大学出版社。

[Su, G. X. (2017). *The English Novel and Romanticism: Conflict, Compromise, and Packaging of Ideology*. Peking UP.]

Thompson, J. (1988). *Between Self and World: The Novels of Jane Austen*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Woodmansee, M., & Osteen, M. (Eds.). (2005). *The New Economic Criticism: Studies at the Intersection of Literature and Economics*. Routledge.

Wollstonecraft, M. (1992). *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. M. Brody. Penguin Books. (Original work published 1792)

Wordsworth, D. (2002). *The Grasmere and Alfoxden Journals, 1798-1803 & 1797-1798*. Oxford UP.

JESL

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

JESL, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026, pp.117-128.

Print ISSN: 3107-3492; Online ISSN: 3107-3506

Journal homepage: https://www.jesljournal.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.64058/jesl260108epssi

HIEP Academic Publishing

《推销员之死》中的老年贫困与现代资本主义社会保障问题

许梅花（Xu Meihua）

摘要：阿瑟·米勒的《推销员之死》暴露了战后美国经济繁荣背景下以威利为代表的普通老年个体的贫困问题。威利陷入老年贫困，绝非个体性格缺陷所致，而是资本主义制度下多个因素共同作用的结果。文章拟从年龄歧视、家庭养老失效、社会保障缺位与消费信贷裹挟四个层面，分析威利老年贫困的成因、表现与本质，探究资本主义生产体系下底层老年劳动者的生存困境，揭示老年贫困背后的社会保障结构性问题，从而彰显米勒在该剧中的社会批判意识。

关键词：阿瑟·米勒；《推销员之死》；老年贫困；社会保障

作者介绍：许梅花，四川外国语大学英语学院教授，主要从事英美文学研究、文学与经济学跨学科研究。电子邮箱：daisy520025@163.com

Title: The Elderly Poverty and Social Security Issues of Modern Capitalism in *Death of a Salesman*

Abstract: Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* exposes the problem of elderly poverty among ordinary individuals like Willy Loman against the backdrop of postwar American economic prosperity. Willy's descent into old-age poverty is by no means a result of personal character flaws, but a joint outcome of multiple factors inherent in the capitalist system. This paper intends to analyze the causes, manifestations, and

---

Received: 19 Apr. 2026 / Revised: 06 May 2026 / Accepted: 01 Jun. 2026 / Published online: 15 Jun. 2026 / Print published: 25 Jun. 2026.

essence of Willy's elderly poverty through four interconnected dimensions: age discrimination, the failure of family elderly support, the absence of social security, and the entrapment by consumer credit. It explores the existential predicament of underprivileged elderly laborers within the capitalist production system, reveals the underlying structural flaws in social security behind the elderly poverty, and thereby highlights Miller's social critical consciousness embedded in the play.

Key Words: Arthur Miller; *Death of a Salesman*; the elderly poverty; social security

Author Biography: Xu Meihua, Professor of English at Sichuan International Studies University, Specializing in British and American Literature, as well as interdisciplinary research in literature and economics. E-mail: daisy520025@163.com

随着全球人口老龄化进程日益加深，衰老与老年生存话题逐渐成为文学研究领域的重要关切，跨学科研究范式的勃兴更是推动了文学老年学（Literary Gerontology）的纵深发展。这一学科自20世纪70年代发轫以来，始终以文学文本为依托，聚焦老年群体的生存境遇、精神困顿与社会处境，已然成为文学研究中兼具人文关怀与现实意义的显学。关注衰老，既是对个体生命历程的关照，也是对社会结构、制度体系与价值观念的审视。将老年群体纳入社会关系框架中考察，对其经济生存状态与养老保障问题的关心，牵涉对社会公平、制度正义的本质思考。文学作品中的老年贫困话题，早已超越单纯的物质匮乏书写，成为洞察社会制度缺陷的一面镜子。阿瑟·米勒（Arthur Miller）的经典剧作《推销员之死》（*Death of a Salesman*），正是凭借这一书写维度，展现出超越个体经验的批判力量。

米勒素有“美国戏剧的良心”之美誉，这一赞誉源于其作品始终以犀利的笔触针砭时代弊病的社会担当。在自传《文学的一生》（*Time Bends: A Life*）中，米勒（2024, p. 196）指出，“伟大的戏剧要么提出伟大的问题，要么除了技巧什么也不是。一出不想改变世界的戏剧，（…），我无法想象那值得我花时间观看”。作为一位现实主义者，米勒终其一生都在以戏剧为媒介直面美国社会的病痛，希冀唤起社会的反思。《推销员之死》就是其社会批判意识的巅峰之作。该剧以推销员威利·洛曼（Willy Loman）的晚年悲剧为叙事重心，呈现了其老年经济困顿、生存无依的绝境，直指现代资本主义制度的种种弊端，引发了社会的广泛关注。学界现有研究已注意到该剧中的经济相关问题，譬如Remond Williams （1966）将该剧视为一部批判资本主义制度的作品，指出资本主义制度只重视经济上的成功；Michael Spindler（1983）认为，这部剧揭示了企业家长式作风的虚伪性：劳动者的忠诚在经济效用贬值的逻辑面前变得毫无意义；Christopher Bigsby （2005）认为威利的悲剧是由可影响任何人的社会经济因素引起的；Naveed Yousaf （2026）则指出威利被解雇体现了“经济可弃性”（economic disposability）原则。以上研究均指涉了资本主义社会经济上的功利主义，但老年贫困或被当作悲剧背景，或被认为是威利美国梦破灭的结果，并未将其上升至资本主义制度下的老年生存难题进行解读，更未深入剖析资本主义社会保障的制度性缺陷对老年贫困的决定性作用。

有鉴于此，本文拟从年龄歧视、家庭养老、社会保障、消费文化四个层面，聚焦威利的老年贫困问题，指出其缘由并非是个体性格缺陷所致，而是资本主义制度下多重因素共同作用的结果：劳动力市场的年龄歧视剥夺了老年劳动者的经济来源，是威利贫困的直接诱因；传统家庭养老模式的失效将养老压力完全转嫁给个体，打破了威利“养儿防老”的朴素期待；现代资本主义社会保障体系的缺位是造成威利老年贫困的制度根源；消费主义文化的裹挟进一步放大了其经济脆弱性，成为压垮威利的最后枷锁。

一、 年龄歧视：现代资本主义对老年劳动者的价值榨取

在《文学的一生》中，米勒（2024, p. X）谈及美国社会的代际认知时，指出：“对于美国人来讲，‘过去’不是他们自己人生的前奏，而是可以丢弃的东西，就像市中心的老房子要为即将修建的新超市让位，或者像老人，抑或像圣诞节的包装纸一样，这种倾向早已被无数次地注意到了”。短短几行文字既讲述了代际文化的断裂，又表达了米勒对社会达尔文主义经济逻辑的批判。米勒将老年人比喻为“可以丢弃的东西”，戳穿了资本主义生产体系下老年劳动者经济价值被剥夺的残酷真相。Friedmann(1969, p.120）曾指出，人的衰老是一种变化的表述，正如生物衰老指的是人体机能随时间变化，社会衰老也指的是个体角色表现随时间而变化。人们对社会衰老的认知，最终让老年群体被社会认为“他们属于完全不同的物种”（Beauvoir, 1996, p. 15），彻底脱离主流社会的关怀与保障范畴。这种极端认知的形成正是源于资本主义体系的功利性逻辑，该逻辑将老年群体简单归为非生产性人口，认定他们会成为青壮年劳动者的负担，在资本利益至上的原则下，缺乏劳动价值的老年人被强制退休或无预警解雇就成为劳动力市场的常态。这属于典型的结构性年龄歧视。《推销员之死》中的威利，因年老被公司无情解雇这一事件，就是年龄歧视在资本主义劳动力市场的真实体现，而这也成为威利陷入老年贫困的直接导火索。

“年龄歧视”（Ageism）由美国老年学家罗伯特·巴特勒（Robert Butler）率先提出，专门用来描述对老年人的偏见。世界卫生组织（2022, p. XV）在 2022 年发布的《关于年龄歧视的全球报告》（*Global Report on Ageism*）中将其界定为“基于年龄而对人产生的刻板印象（我们如何思考）、偏见（我们如何感受）和歧视（我们如何行动）。它可能是制度性的、人际的，也可以针对自己”。基于文本，我们可以判定威利所遭遇的歧视正是制度层面的年龄歧视，即“机构基于个体年龄不公平地限制机会并系统地使其处于劣势的法律、规则、社会规范、政策和做法”（世界卫生组织， 2022, p. XV）。劳动领域的歧视性用工、强制退休制度，均是此类歧视的典型表现，其本质是资本对老年人“经济无用性”的刻意建构。Beauvoir (1996, p. 18) 在《论老年》（*The Coming of Age*）亦指出，“经济建立在利润之上；事实上，整个文明都受利润支配。人类劳动者的价值仅在于他们能否带来利润。当不再有利可图时，就会被抛弃”。剧中，威利为瓦格纳公司勤恳效力 34 年，晚年体力衰减、业绩下滑，便被老板霍华德无情解雇。霍华德的一句 “这是买卖，伙计，谁都得凭本事吃

饭”[①]，彻底隔离情分与利益。当威利试图凭借多年的交情寻求挽留时，却只换来 “亲是亲，财是财”（p. 65）的冷酷回应。面对霍华德的冷酷，威利悲愤地呐喊道：“你不能吃了橘子就把皮扔了，人不是橘子”（p. 63），这一句掷地有声的台词是米勒对 20 世纪美国工业资本主义下年龄歧视的最有力的控诉，高度呼应了波伏娃（1996, p. 18）所描述的老年人被视为“废弃品”的绝境。霍华德的行为远非个人残忍，而是在执行一个不承认老年价值的制度程序。在这套程序里，劳动者价值仅由年龄与收益衡量，过往贡献、经验积累皆可被清零。威利本身也内化了这种歧视逻辑，他细数年轻时单周 170 美元佣金、险些成为合伙人的辉煌，试图以此保住工作，却恰恰坐实了衰老即是价值衰退的社会偏见。

1948 年，米勒创作《推销员之死》之际，年龄歧视已成为美国社会的普遍风气。威利请求调任纽约内勤岗位遭无情拒绝，绝非个例。同年，纽约州老龄问题联合立法委员会对 172 家公司进行了一项全州调查，结果显示，其中 39%的公司在招聘时设置了年龄限制（Abrams, 1952）。虽然在一些需要判断力和经验的工作中，老年人更受青睐，但是“年龄上限在文职、销售、专业和管理以及非技术性职位的招聘订单中最为常见”（Slavick & Wolfbein, 1969, p. 307）。这种歧视性政策的泛滥期恰逢美国经济的重大转型。二战后军工复合体向消费主义经济转轨过程中，市场营销取代传统制造业成为经济增长的引擎。新兴的广告业与销售行业为追求年轻化的品牌形象，刻意制造年龄与创新能力的虚假关联。社会学家米尔斯（Mills, 2016, p. 9）在《白领：美国的中产阶级》（*The White Collar: The American Middle Classes*）中剖析了这种文化现象，指出销售人员等白领群体作为“人格商品”的异化处境，“他们必须面带笑容、风度翩翩，（…），在诸多白领雇员阶层中，诸如彬彬有礼、乐于助人与和蔼可亲等特点曾经是个人品质，但现在却成了非个人的谋生手段的组成部分。如此，自我的异化是其异化劳动的伴随物”。可见，人格特质成为了销售商品、获取利润的关键，而老年劳动者无法迎合“永葆青春” 的消费主义幻象，自然最先被市场淘汰。剧中，精神恍惚、疲惫不堪的 “老狗”（p. 43）威利就是销售行业的过时产品，因此霍华德宣称威利不能再代表公司去波士顿，最后将其解雇。

米勒（2024, p. X）在自传中用“市中心的老房子要为即将修建的新超市让位”来形容老人在社会中被替代的命运，同样，他在《推销员之死》中借助城市化进程中的“公寓大楼”意象强化资本主义社会对老年劳动者的压迫。戏剧开篇，威利的家就被设定为一所小小的、脆弱的房子，被包围在周围坚实的公寓大楼之中（p. 4）。小屋与公寓的强烈对比已经暗示个体在资本力量面前的渺小无力。随着剧情推进，公寓大楼的“砖墙、窗户，窗户、砖墙”（p. 9）反复挤压威利的生存空间，让他愈发怀念从前庭院种满丁香、紫藤的日子，他甚至期盼能出台 “禁止盖公寓大楼”（p. 10）的相关法律。威利怀念前工业时代的美好，并把眼下的一切归咎于美国 “人口失控”（p. 10）。美国当时的人口数据的确证实了威利的感受。据统计，1900 年至 1950 年间，美国总人口增长了近 100%，从约 7600 万增至 15100 万（Sheldon, 1969, p. 32）。城市化带来人口激增，住房需求暴涨，生存竞争不断加剧，

[①] 阿瑟·米勒（2008）：《推销员之死》，英若诚译，上海译文出版社，p. 61. 以下引文只标注页码，不再一一说明。

如威利所言，“竞争激烈得叫人发疯”（p. 10）。可见，城市更新中的空间重组，与资本市场对劳动者生命周期的规划如出一辙。按照 Schumpeter（1942，pp. 82-83）的资本创新理论，资本主义正是通过不断破旧立新来实现资本增值，而老旧空间、老旧劳动力都难逃被抛弃的命运，用琳达的话说，就是“过了时的东西就扔掉”（p. 8）。但是，底层老年劳动者一旦失业，便失去了唯一的经济来源，这在一定程度上就意味着将其衰老成本转嫁给家庭与社会。如若传统家庭养老难以支撑，公共社会保障又长期缺位时，“‘又老又穷’几乎成了同义反复”（Beauvoir, 1972, p. 18）。

二、 家庭养老失效：“养儿防老”遭遇代际断裂

家庭养老并非东方社会独有的养老模式。在前工业时代的西方社会，家庭作为传统生产单位，老年人依托家族共同体，可维持相对稳定的晚年生活。学界已有研究表明，在传统西方社会中，“老年人的地位取决于他们能否通过两种方式维持自身权益：要么坚持掌控经济资源至生命终结，要么在生前转让家产时与子女达成令其满意的赡养协议”（Friedmann, 1969, p. 134）。其中，契约式赡养的实现，高度依赖社会的低流动性、个体生存选择单一、家族世代聚居的传统社会结构，一旦社会结构步入现代化转型，青年一代拥有独立谋生与迁居自由，基于财产捆绑的代际赡养约束便自然松动，代际经济隔阂与情感疏离随之滋生，传统家庭养老模式逐步走向解体。这一社会转型引发的养老危机在《推销员之死》中体现得尤为明显。剧中，威利家族本就亲历 19 世纪末西进拓荒迁徙，步入 20 世纪后，现代化进程彻底颠覆了原有的生活结构。工业化消解了家庭的生产联结，城市化与战后人口流动瓦解了世代同居的居住格局，青年子女向外择业、迁居独立生活，逐渐疏离原生家庭的赡养责任。威利对被解雇的激烈抗拒，根本原因就在于老无所依的生存焦虑，而其悲剧本质，正是传统家族式养老伦理在工业化、城市化与人口流动浪潮中全面崩塌的缩影。

首先，家族西迁与社会的高流动性拉大了代际地理距离，从根源上动摇了传统家庭养老根基。前文已经提到，在父权制社会中，大家庭里的老人地位相对稳固。但美国并无长期盛行大家庭制的历史依据。Friedmann（1969, p. 131）通过统计学方法证明了这一点，他指出：“现有证据无法证明三代同堂或大家庭曾经在美国盛行，甚至是一种常见的家庭形式。也无从证实历史上多数老年人依靠此类模式获得赡养。”而美国社会与生俱来的高流动性，从根本上阻碍了大家庭的形成与维系。自殖民地时期到 19 世纪，西部边疆的拓荒模式催生了核心家庭独立谋生的形态，即便在乡村地区也未形成稳固的大家庭聚居格局。Calhoun（1917-19）认为，拓荒环境形成的特殊经济格局，客观上推动着儿童与青年的解放，而当父母过度伸张特权或试图在儿子成年后仍保持控制时，亲情裂痕便有可能产生。这一历史特征，在威利家族身上得以具象化。威利的父亲在威利幼年时，便举家从波士顿出发，向西闯荡谋生，辗转俄亥俄、印第安纳、密歇根、伊利诺伊等州，“整个西部都跑遍了”（p. 36）。这位长笛手艺人的家族迁徙，虽带有传统家族共生的痕迹，本质却是工业文明冲击农耕社会的必然结果。持续的空间迁移，彻底割断了家族技艺传承与情感联结。威利与哥哥本（Ben）均未继承父亲的手艺，本深入西部丛林拓荒，而威利则留居纽约成为一名推销

员，之后兄弟二人各自离散。威利对父亲也毫无印象，感觉自己“没根似的”（39），更无从履行赡养义务。这种家族养老的断裂，也直接复刻在他与子女的关系之中，为晚年的老无所依埋下伏笔。

其次，工业化切断了代际经济纽带，加剧了代际情感疏离，最终彻底摧毁了传统家庭养老的物质基础。前工业社会中，家庭既是生产单元，也是天然的养老保障体系，土地与长子继承制维系着家族经济与代际赡养的完整性。近代商业扩张、跨大西洋贸易兴盛与新大陆移民，逐步瓦解了传统长子继承制赖以存续的社会基础。而 20 世纪美国工业化后期，福特主义生产模式则彻底打破了代际经济联结。大卫 • 哈维（David Harvey）（2003, p. 179）指出：“战后的福特主义必须被看成较少是一种单纯的大规模生产的体制，而更多的是一种全面的生活方式”，这种方式打破了家庭内部技艺代际传递的可能，让劳动者彻底依附于工业化生产体系。剧中，汽车作为工业文明的符号，成为威利家庭关系疏离的关键见证。威利常年驾车在外推销，缺席子女成长，将雪佛兰八万英里的行驶里程等同于自身的职业价值，正是福特主义在推销行业规模化运作的体现。作为传统家长观念的信奉者，威利始终希望子承父业，而长子比夫却拒绝这种异化的生存模式：他鄙视工业社会“效率至上”的法则，厌恶都市的快节奏与商场的逐利之风，拒绝接受父亲灌输的成功神话，以“适应不了商界的那套”（p. 46）为由，一心追求西部牧场生活。工业化催生的高流动性，进一步弱化了子女的赡养责任。比夫战前离家十余载，长期与家庭断联，既无赡养意识，也无赡养能力，周薪不足三十五美元，还沾染恶习；次子哈皮周薪七十美元，却全部用于个人享乐，完全违背“爸，我说过要您退休，我养活您”（p. 30）的承诺。父辈无法再通过土地、手艺为子女提供生产资料，子女也丧失了赡养长辈的经济基础，代际财富积累变得毫无可能。比夫曾试图分担家庭压力，承诺工作后接济父亲，却因威利始终以市场功利思维对待亲子关系，代际经济互助最终让位于利益算计，比夫打算再度离家。其口中“要是我发现油田，我准给您寄张支票来”（p. 102）的承诺，不过是虚幻的慰藉，工业社会的契约逻辑早已摧毁了传统孝道的物质根基。

再次，城市化对传统家庭空间的侵蚀，改变了家庭空间的功能，也加速了子女对家庭赡养责任的逃避。美国 19 世纪便开启乡村到城市的转型，一战后城市格局基本定型：市中心集聚商业与产业，居住区向外扩张，郊区空间被持续挤压，商业资本不断侵占传统社区。威利家是带有庭院的独立住宅，伴随城市化推进，“这所小小的、脆弱的房子被包围在周围坚实的公寓大楼之中”（p. 4），原本具备种植功能的庭院变成了钢筋水泥包围的牢笼，这不仅剥夺了家庭养老的物质基础，也切断了由共同劳动维系的亲情联结。在传统农耕文明中，家庭空间本身带有伦理属性，开放的庭院保障着代际间的物质互助与情感交流。城市化大幅推动之前，威利与孩子们一同修缮房屋、搭建吊床的共同劳动，本身就是在建立基于互惠的赡养契约。但这种契约需要稳定的空间作为前提，当家庭成员共享的物理空间被功利化的城市建设挤压时，其功能也发生了根本改变。

米勒通过家庭内部空间的层级设计，进一步暗示了代际互助关系的断裂。厨房为下沉空间，子女卧室高出六英尺半，光线昏暗、闭塞压抑。文本多次呈现威利和妻子在厨房为生计发愁，而两个儿子躲在房间里，即便听见也置之不理的场景。由此，家人间的互动从

面对面交流变为背对背的疏离。厨房本是共享天伦的场所，却成为全家争吵、焦虑、为生计发愁的苦闷空间。威利指责子女、琳达哀求孩子、夫妻二人为贷款焦灼，所有矛盾都在此爆发。家庭空间彻底丧失温情与伦理功能，比夫“恨透了这个城市”（p. 44），一心想逃离至无贷款、无压力的西部牧场，哈皮也独居在外。二人皆以逃离的方式，回避令人窒息的家庭责任。最终，威利与琳达成为空巢老人，既无子女的情感陪伴，也无经济支持，老年贫困愈发深重，“养儿防老”的期望彻底破灭。

Gordon （1969, p. 209）总结道，“伴随工业化带来的地域流动性提升与城市化进程，持续削弱家庭纽带，并改变成年子女对赡养的态度”。Friedmann（1969, p. 135）的分析更具体，他认为，“代际之间的地理分离——无论是英国青年移民殖民地、拓荒者的子女在邻州建立新农场，还是欧洲农民进入美国城市工厂——都瓦解了传统的家庭养老模式”。威利的悲剧印证了在现代化浪潮下，美国传统家庭养老的纽带本已然彻底断裂的事实，而彼时资本主义社会保障体系的严重缺位，压根无法填补家庭养老失灵后的空白，成为将其推向绝境的关键诱因。

三、　社会保障缺位：老年贫困的制度性根源

20 世纪 40 年代老年贫困已被列为美国核心社会问题。如 Gordon(1969, p. 208）所说，“过去二十年，美国在建立全面的老年人经济保障体系方面取得了实质性进展。但老年贫困仍然是最持久、最棘手的经济和社会问题之一”。这一论断也契合了老年学学者 Achenbaum（2019）的观点，他认为社会保障体系的建立，主要是政策制定者对老年人失业和贫困加剧的一种仁慈回应。据此，在社会福利范畴内，“贫困老年人”成为了一个全新的身份标签，这一身份既由年龄界定，也取决于个人的自给自足能力（Friedmann, 1969, p. 136）。在《推销员之死》中，63 岁惨遭解雇、丧失经济来源的威利，正是这一群体的典型代表。尽管彼时美国社会已逐渐承认“贫困老人”“受赡养老人”这类身份界定，但战后初期的社会保障体系存在覆盖范围有限、准入条件严苛、制度执行缺位等诸多问题，威利这类底层老年劳动者，始终被排除在社会保障体系之外，这也成为其陷入绝境的制度诱因。

威利的职业属性，从根源上就决定他被排斥在社会保障体系之外。1935 年美国《社会保障法》的出台虽属社会保障领域的里程碑事件，但美国社会保险立法远晚于欧洲国家。据相关数据显示，1935 年该法案通过时，全球已有 23 个国家推行强制医疗保险，20 个国家建立养老保险制度，10 个国家实施强制失业保险计划（Epstein, 1936），部分国家还设立了非缴费型养老金制度。在此之前，美国仅有个别州出台过老年援助相关法律，实际执行效果微乎其微。20 世纪 30 年代大萧条爆发后，各州财政无力供养激增的老年贫苦人口，家庭也失去赡养老人的能力，加之社会亟需将老年人移出劳动力市场，为年轻劳动者腾出岗位，同时社会价值观念也发生转变，要求联邦政府分担老人赡养责任，这些因素共同促成了 1935 年《社会保障法》的落地（Friedmann, 1969, p. 137）。但该法案的保障范围极其有限，仅覆盖工商业正式雇员，明确将报童、部分家庭雇工、农业工人、非固定家政人员以及低收入自雇者排除在外（Gordon, 1969, p. 230）。威利作为佣金制推销员，雇佣关系松散，并非企业正式在册雇员，即便在瓦格纳公司供职 34 年，也因收入模式灵活、无固定劳工资质，始终不符合法案规定的参保主体资格，自然无法享受任何社保福利。《推销员之死》创

作于 1948 年，而 1935 年《社会保障法》直至 1950 年才完成全面修订，大幅度提升保障覆盖率，威利的情况只能适用旧法案，注定无法获得任何制度性保障。

威利被公司解雇时无任何遣散费、失业补偿，进一步证明了公司从未将他视作享有完整劳工权益的正式员工。理论上，失业保险应成为失业者的生活保障来源，但 1935 年法案将失业保险的执行权力下放至各州，导致各地资格认定标准混乱不一。威利极有可能因社保缴费记录不达标，或是其他理由，被剥夺领取失业救济的资格。威利对退休的强烈抵触也反映了 20 世纪 40 年代美国老年劳工的普遍心态。正如 Friedmann(1969, p. 130）所言：

老年工人对这些分离程序的抵制在 20 世纪 40 年代最为明显。经济大萧条时期，他们维持退休生活所需的个人财务储备大幅减少。尽管工业体系为老年工人提供了更多就业机会，但却未能满足这一群体的就业需求。在此期间，政府和工业界新推出的退休收入条款也未能充分满足新退休工人的需求。

事实上，美国正规退休福利制度与工业养老金体系直至 1950 年才正式建立，威利所处的时代，根本无成熟退休保障可依。

即便威利侥幸符合参保条件，老年保险（OASI）的严苛准入门槛与微薄待遇，也无法支撑其基本生活。法案明确规定，劳动者需在 1937 年社保制度实施后，工作满 10 年、缴满 40 个季度的社保费用，且年满 65 岁后方可申领养老金。威利虽满足社保制度实施后的 10 年工作年限，但因后期收入极其不稳定，大概率未达到最低缴费标准。即便达标，早期养老金待遇也极度微薄。1935 年法案规定的最低老年福利为每月 10 美元，1954 年法案修订后，也仅提升至每月 30 美元（Gordon, 1969, p. 233）。以威利的收入水平，他只能领取最低标准的养老金，在 20 世纪 40 年代该福利月均发放额不足 25 美元。然而，根据威利妻子琳达核算的家庭月均必要开支远超 100 美元，若能领到养老金，也不足以覆盖其基本生活。更为关键的是，米勒将威利被解雇的年龄设定为 63 岁，如此，他距法定申领养老金的年龄尚有 2 年，而他却无任何积蓄支撑过渡期的生活，这意味着他的生存会更加艰难。

此外，彼时美国社会保障体系在医疗与残疾保障方面的完全空白，进一步加剧威利的身心崩溃。1935 年《社会保障法》完全未涉及医疗保险内容，残疾保险直至 1956 年才被纳入社保范畴。威利作为旅行推销员，常年驾车奔波推销，长期高压劳作引发严重精神障碍，出现幻觉、幻听与自杀倾向，其症状已构成职业相关精神损伤，但在 20 世纪 40 年代，他既无医疗补助，也无残疾津贴可申领。雇主霍华德明知其身心异常，仍执意解雇，尽显资本对老年劳工健康权益的彻底漠视。社保制度的缺失，让威利丧失了体面退出劳动力市场的所有途径。这套制度的缺陷，将威利这样的高龄劳动者逼入绝境，没有足够的积蓄养老，也得不到国家的退休保障，最终只能依靠私人救济、人寿保险这类毫无保障的方式求生。

然而，邻居查利每周借给威利 50 美元，并非长效救济，而是前现代私人慈善在福利国

家体系缺位下的异化延续，是维系威利最后尊严的虚假缓冲。19 世纪“科学慈善”的理念将贫困归咎于个人道德缺陷，这一观念延续至 20 世纪，人们甚至觉得“贫困是可以治愈的”（Friedmann,1969, p. 137），认为私人救济能够替代公共救济。当威利拒绝查利提供的差事，对着他怒吼“我不能在你手下干”（p. 76）时，既是在摆脱清教传统中将接受援助视为人格污点的道德审判，也是在反抗资本逻辑下“债务即控制”的新型依附关系。最终，他选择自杀以换取 2 万美元保险金，成了对失效的社会保障体系最尖锐的讽刺。值得注意的是，这一悲剧的酿成，绝非单一的制度缺位所致。当时美国盛行的消费信贷文化，进一步将威利推入无法逆转的财务深渊。

四、 消费信贷：老年贫困的精神枷锁

《推销员之死》创作于 1948 年，恰逢美国经济由生产型向消费型转变的关键时期。美国经济学家约翰·肯尼斯·加尔布雷思（John Kenneth Galbraith）在《丰裕社会》（*The Affluent Society*）中所描绘的消费主义社会图景，正是威利悲剧发生的时代土壤。战后的美国为消化战时积累的过剩产能，将大众消费置于经济发展的重心。生产的目的不再局限于满足真实需求，而是转向主动制造消费欲望，消费也由此脱离物质实用的本质，成为一种心理与情感层面的理想化实践。与此同时，商品被赋予符号意义，成为建构个人身份、实现社会交流的工具。在“拥有即成功”的消费主义神话裹挟下，大众逐渐沦为信贷体系的附庸，威利的老年贫困，正是底层劳动者被消费信贷文化吞噬未来的写照。

威利一生笃信美国梦，却被消费文化扭曲了追梦路径。Adams（1931, pp. 405-406）所定义的美国梦是“根据各自的能力或业绩，人们的生活应该更美好，更富裕，更充实”，其核心是机会均等与自我实现，追求的是更美好、更充实的生活本身，而非单纯的物质富足。而美国消费文化的兴起彻底扭曲了美国梦的精神，大众将物质财富的积累当作衡量生活质量的唯一标准，美好生活被简化为房产、汽车、家电等耐用品的堆砌。正如伦德尔·卡尔德（Lendol Calder）（2007, p. 7 ）所言，消费文化定义的美好生活，就是拥有更多市场上的商品。这种价值取向重塑了威利的认知，他坚信“招人喜欢”“仪表堂堂”就能换取商业成功的片面成功学，将人生目标浓缩为一套具体的物质清单，试图通过占有这些商品来确立自己的中产阶级身份，这就是波德里亚（Jean Baudrillard）所说的符号消费的典型表现。在符号消费的逻辑中，“人们从来不消费物的本身（使用价值）——人们总是把物（从广义角度）用来当作能够突出你的符号”（波德里亚， 2000, p. 48）。威利对物质商品的执着，本质上是对消费符号所代表的成功身份的执念，而这一执念恰好被消费信贷体系所利用。

战后消费信贷“先享受、后付款”的模式，颠覆了传统消费伦理，将威利引入债务的陷阱。战前，美国社会恪守先储蓄后消费的准则，而战后消费信贷制度自 1915 年后的 20 年间逐步形成根基（卡尔德， 2007, p. 15），通过分期还款、小额贷款等方式大幅降低消费门槛，让普通个体得以快速占有商品。到 20 世纪 20 年代末，鼓励信贷消费的口号“诸如‘先买后付账！’和‘利用我们的轻松付款方法！’已经成了美国消费群体语汇中的标准用语”（卡尔德， 2007, p. 17）。威利正是这一消费模式的忠实执行者，其房产、汽车、家电等所有耐用品，均通过分期付款购得，而他的房屋和汽车购置时间，恰好处于美国信贷网

络结构形成的 20 世纪 20 年代。琳达在厨房念叨的各类分期账单，如“冰箱得交十六元”“风扇得交一元八毛”“洗衣机得付九元六”“到十五号得交三元五的吸尘器的分期付款”“屋顶，还剩二十元”（pp. 25-26），既是这个家庭经济困境的直观写照，也是威利透支未来以维系中产体面的有力证明。他并非被迫消费，而是主动以信贷堆砌身份幻象。但是，消费信贷的吊诡之处在于将消费的快乐前置，将支付的痛苦延后。卡尔德（2007）所言的克制与挥霍的平衡，对于威利这类收入不稳定的底层劳动者而言，只是一种阶段性的表象，一旦收入中断，虚假繁荣便瞬间崩塌。

消费信贷的隐性陷阱，从根本上阻断了威利的财富积累，放大了社保缺位带来的生存危机。分期还款的刚性约束，是消费信贷最直接的陷阱，“在分期付款融资方式中，货币被出借——或者被商品销售——的条件是，借款人或购买人在特定时段里以固定支付的方式定期偿还贷款”（卡尔德， 2007, p. 15），这种刚性支出会大幅挤占个人收入用于储蓄和资产积累的空间，最终让威利陷入赚多少、还多少的恶性循环，无法形成任何实质性的财富积累，更无抗风险能力。同时，隐性利息、复利成本与商品计划性报废构成多重压榨，威利不禁感叹：

> 我真盼望，哪怕一辈子有一回呢，等我付清了分期付款之后，东西还能不坏！我现在是一天到晚跟垃圾场竞赛呢！我这辆汽车款刚刚付清，这辆车也快要散架了。电冰箱跟疯子似的一根接着一根吃传动皮带。他们生产这种东西的时候都计算好了，等你付清最后一笔款，东西也就该坏了（pp. 55-56）。

该引文生动地揭露了信贷体系与商品生产的隐秘共谋，即消费者为持续贬值的商品支付超额费用，债务结清之时，商品也丧失使用价值，新一轮负债随之开启，最终让劳动者永远无法完成实质性财富积累。消费信贷创建的无限债务循环，最终将威利推向老年绝境，其人生轨迹恰好印证了信贷致贫的完整逻辑。青年时期，他透支未来收入购置商品，以债务换取中产体面，埋下贫困隐患；中年时期，业绩下滑、收入缩减，刚性债务却未减少，收支彻底失衡，无任何储蓄与资产；老年时期，惨遭解雇失去全部收入，社保体系又完全缺位，既无生活来源，也无力偿还债务，长期积压的压力全面爆发，最终沦为消费信贷与制度缺位的双重牺牲品。

加尔布雷思（1965）在《丰裕社会》中警示，一个建立在不断创造新需求基础上的经济体系，本质上是不健全、不可持续且不道德的。该体系将消费从满足真实需求的手段，异化为维持生产体系运转的目的，而消费者则成为这一体系的附庸：为了偿还债务必须不断工作，为了维持生产体系必须不断消费，为了满足消费需求又必须不断负债。威利努力工作不再是为了自我实现，而是为了偿还账单；消费不再是为生活所需，而是为维系虚假体面；为了维持体面，又必须继续工作、继续消费、继续负债。当劳动能力无法支撑这一

循环，贫困与毁灭便成为其无法逃脱的结局。“威利·洛曼的原型不止一个”（米勒， 2024, p. 137），而是战后美国消费主义浪潮下，无数底层劳动者老年命运的真实缩影。

米勒（2024, p. 73）在自传中坦言：“我在二十多岁时就觉得自己老了，觉得时间像个砂轮要将我碾碎。不过我害怕的不是死亡，而是微不足道。”即便是米勒这样久负盛名的作家，尚且怀有对生命价值消弭的恐惧，更何况威利这般底层老年劳动者。劳动力市场的年龄歧视剥夺了他的劳动价值，传统家庭养老失灵让他老无所依，资本主义社会保障体系完全缺位，消费信贷债务又将他的未来彻底透支。这些压力共同作用，催生了他晚年的生存焦虑与精神绝望，而这正是资本主义制度下底层老年群体的普遍困境。米勒在剧中借琳达之口发出呐喊：“可是他是个人，他现在正遇上灾难。所以必须关怀他，不能让他像条老狗似的死了埋掉。关怀，对这样一个人必须关怀”（2008, pp. 42-43），这份呐喊绝非单纯的情感抒发，而是对底层老年劳动者生命尊严的捍卫，更是对现代资本主义漠视老年生存权、社会保障制度缺位的尖锐批判。《推销员之死》的社会批判价值，早已超越文学文本本身，成为影射美国社会制度缺陷、推动社会反思的重要镜像。该剧 1949 年首演后便引发强烈社会回响，连锁百货总裁伯纳德·金贝尔（Bernard Gimbel）观演后当即废除超龄解雇制度（米勒， 2024, p. 208），这便是作品极具现实冲击力的最佳体现。剧评人 Brooks Atkinson（1949, p. 1）对威利“尘埃归于尘埃，突然间，一无所有”的评价，简洁而有力地概括了底层老年群体的宿命，也推动了 20 世纪 50 年代美国老年平权思潮的兴起。1950 至 1951 年全美老龄问题会议召开、1967 年《雇佣年龄歧视法》颁布，均可视作该剧社会影响力的直接回响。

但必须正视的是，政策与法律的完善，并未根除资本主义生产方式内核中的年龄歧视与保障不公的基因。后工业时代零工经济兴起、灵活就业模式下，老年劳动者的保障困境、贫困危机以新形态持续重演，威利式悲剧并未消失。《推销员之死》历经数十年仍具有现实意义，既表明了米勒创作的历史穿透力与人文深度，也验证了老年贫困、社会保障缺失，是现代资本主义体系中难以消解的结构性矛盾。该剧始终让我们警醒：老年群体的生存境遇，是衡量社会文明与制度正义的重要标尺，唯有打破资本至上的功利逻辑，建立普惠性的社会保障体系，才能真正避免威利式的悲剧反复上演。

基金项目：本文系教育部人文社科基金项目“美国文学早期对华贸易书写与帝国建构”（项目编号：23YJC752023）的阶段性成果之一。

Funding: This article is one of the interim findings of the Ministry of Education’s Humanities and Social Sciences Fund Project “The Early China Trade and Empire Construction in American Literature” (Project No.: 23YJC752023).

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Xu Meihua ID https://orcid.org/0009-0009-4226-9431

References

Abrams, A. J (1952). *Barriers to the Employment of Older Workers*. Ann. Am. Acad. Political & Social Sc.

Achenbaum, W.A(2019). *Old Age in the New Land: The American Experience since 1970*. John Hopkins University Press.

Adams, T (1931). *The Epic of America*. Little, Brown.

Atkinson, B (1949-02-20). "Death of a Salesman." *New York Times*, 20 Feb.Sec.2:1.

Beauvoir, S (1996). *The Coming of Age*. W.W.Norton &Company, Inc.

Bigsby, C (2005). *Arthur Miller: A Critical Study*. Cambridge University Press.

Calhoun, A. W (1917-19). *Social History of the American Family from Colonial Times to the Present*. Arthur H. Clark Co.

Epstein, A (1936). *Insecurity: a challenge to America*. Random House.

Friedmann, E.A (1969). "The Impact of Aging on Social Structure" in Clark Tibbitts (Ed), *Handbook of Social Gerontology: Social Aspects of Aging*. The University of Chicago Press: 120-144.

Gordon, M.S(1969). "Aging and Income Security." in Clark Tibbitts (Ed), *Handbook of Social Gerontology: Social Aspects of Aging*. The University of Chicago Press: 208-260.

Schumpeter, J (1942). *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. Harper &Brother.

Sheldon, H.D(1969). "The Changing Demographic Profile." in Clark Tibbitts (Ed), *Handbook of Social Gerontology: Social Aspects of Aging*. The University of Chicago Press: 27-61.

Slavick, F. & S. L. Wolfbein (1969). "The Evolving Work-Life Pattern." in Clark Tibbitts (Ed), *Handbook of Social Gerontology: Social Aspects of Aging*: 298-329.

Spindler, M (1983). *American Literature and Social Change*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Williams, R (1966). *Modern Tragedy.* Stanford University Press.

Yousaf, N (2026). "Self-annihilation as Final Testimony: Trauma, Witnessing, and Economic Disposability in *Death of a Salesman*." *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Tesol* (01): 592-605.

米勒（2024）:《文学的一生》，蓝玲，林倍加，梁彦译。上海译文出版社。

[Miller, A (2024). *Timebends: A Life*. Trans. Lan Ling & Lin Beijia. Shanghai Translation Publishing House.]

米勒（2008）:《推销员之死》，英若诚译。上海译文出版社。

[Miller, A (2008). *Death of a Salesman*. Trans. Ying Ruocheng. Shanghai Translation Publishing House.]

波德里亚（2000）:《消费社会》，刘成富、全志钢译。南京大学出版社。

[Baudrillard, J (2000). *Consumer Society*. Trans. Liu Chengfu & Quan Zhigang. Nanjing University Press.]

哈维（2003）:《后现代的状况》，阎嘉译。商务印书馆。

[Harvey, D (2003). *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Trans. Yan Jia. The Commercial Press.]

加尔布雷斯（1965）:《丰裕社会》，徐世平译。上海人民出版社。

[Galbraith, J. K (1965). *The Affluent Society*. Trans. Xu Shiping. Shanghai People's Publishing House.]

米尔斯（2016）:《白领：美国的中产阶级》，周晓虹译。南京大学出版社。

[Mills, C. W (2016). *White Collar: The American Middle Classes*. Trans. Zhou Xiaohong. Nanjing University Press.]

卡尔德（2007）:《融资美国梦：消费信贷文化史》，严忠志译。上海人民出版社。

[Calder, L (2007). *Financing the American Dream: A Cultural History of Consumer Credit*. Trans. Yan Zhongzhi. Shanghai People's Publishing House.]

世界卫生组织（2022）:《关于年龄歧视的全球报告》。

［World Health Organization (2022). *Global Report on Ageism*. ］

JESL

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

***JESL*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026, pp.129-139.**

Print ISSN: 3107-3492; Online ISSN: 3107-3506

Journal homepage: https://www.jesljournal.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.64058/jesl260109mucis

HIEP
Academic Publishing

济慈《拉米亚》中的边际效用与理想国度建构

程文（Cheng Wen），叶可（Ye Ke）

摘要：从文学经济学视角解读济慈叙事长诗《拉米亚》，可揭示英国浪漫主义时期文学经济思想为人忽视的侧面。杰文斯边际主义的主观价值论、边际效用递减原理与动态均衡原理，虽形式化于济慈身后半个世纪，但浪漫主义与边际主义对主观欲望的共同关切足以弥合这一时代落差。文学经济学的互构、同形、同归三个层次，依次聚焦诗的生产、诗中的消费与诗中的交易。其一，新历史主义视角下文学与历史的互构：诗人的财务焦虑与摄政英国的商业转型彼此塑造，诗作的经济潜文本是其存在的条件。其二，文学与经济学的同形（isomorphism）：利西乌斯痴迷欲望的递减回报与边际效用曲线构成同一过程结构的两个实例，拉米亚宫殿东方化、女性化的奢华则是一种待戳穿的幻象。其三，微观经济学与浪漫主义文学对理想国度愿景的同归：拉米亚、赫尔墨斯与仙女之间的谈判以自利之扰动打破克里特田园与科林斯城邦的均衡，悲剧结局表征诗人对无节制消费主义的拒斥。诗作以否定的方式勾勒出使价值重归真实需要、使相反力量重归动态均衡的理想国度。

关键词：约翰·济慈；《拉米亚》；文学经济学；边际效用递减；同形；动态均衡；理想国度

作者介绍：程文（通信作者），副教授，宁波大学，硕士生导师，研究方向：英美文学、比较文学，电子邮箱：chengwen@nbu.edu.cn；**叶可**，宁波大学，硕士研究生，研究方向：英美文学，电子邮箱：1184926692@qq.com。

Received: 01 May 2026 / Revised: 10 May 2026 / Accepted: 20 May 2026 / Published online: 15 Jun. 2026 / Print published: 25 Jun. 2026.

Title: Marginal Utility and the Construction of an Ideal State in Keats's *Lamia*

Abstract: Reading Keats's narrative poem *Lamia* from the perspective of literary economics brings into view a neglected facet of the economic thought of British Romantic literature. Although the subjective value theory, the principle of diminishing marginal utility, and the principle of dynamic equilibrium of Jevonsian marginalism were formalized half a century after Keats, the shared attentiveness of Romanticism and marginalism to subjective desire suffices to bridge the temporal gap. The three levels of literary economics—mutual construction, isomorphism, and convergence—focus in turn on the production of the poem, the consumption it stages, and the exchange that drives its plot. First, the mutual construction of literature and history under New Historicism: the poet's financial anxiety and the commercial transformation of Regency Britain shaped each other, making the poem's economic subtext a condition of its existence. Second, the isomorphism between literature and economics: the diminishing returns on Lycius's obsessive desire and the marginal-utility curve emerge as two instances of one process-structure, while the Orientalized, feminized opulence of Lamia's palace is an illusion awaiting disenchantment. Third, the convergence of microeconomics and Romantic literature upon the vision of an ideal state: the negotiation among Lamia, Hermes, and the nymph disrupts, through the perturbation of self-interest, the equilibrium of both the Cretan pastoral and the Corinthian city, and the tragic denouement—Lamia's vanishing and Lycius's death—signifies the poet's rejection of unrestrained consumerism. By negation, the poem delineates an ideal state in which value is reattached to genuine need and opposing forces are restored to dynamic equilibrium.

Keywords: John Keats; *Lamia*; literary economics; diminishing marginal utility; isomorphism; dynamic equilibrium; ideal state

Author Biography: Cheng Wen (corresponding author) is an associate professor and supervisor of postgraduate students at Ningbo University, specializing in British and American literature and comparative literature. E-mail: chengwen@nbu.edu.cn. **Ye Ke** is a postgraduate student at Ningbo University, specializing in British and American literature. E-mail: 1184926692@qq.com.

近二十余年来，“新经济批评”已在很大程度上破除了约翰·济慈（John Keats, 1795—1821）抒情理想主义独立于其时代经济生活之外的成见，费曼尼斯（Porscha Fermanis）与塔戈尔（Proma Tagore）等学者的研究均表明，济慈对金钱、债务、奢侈与文学市场有着敏锐的意识，这种意识在其诗作中留下了清晰可辨的痕迹（Fermanis, 2006; Tagore, 2000）。然而学界对济慈作品的关注并不均衡，《伊莎贝拉》（Isabella; or, The Pot of Basil）一再被用以剖析阶级、资本与商品化，而济慈最后一部叙事长诗《拉米亚》

（Lamia）的经济维度则相对少人问津。如果说《伊莎贝拉》展现经济力量对个体的压迫，《拉米亚》所表达的则是某种更宽广也更现代的东西：经济行为尤其是消费对整个社会的作用。

《拉米亚》可被读作对消费主义的隐喻式批判，更确切地说，对边际效用递减规律的一种文学预演。这一规律要到半个世纪之后才由杰文斯（W. S. Jevons）在《政治经济学理论》（1871）中加以形式化：价值并不内在于物品，而源于个体对效用的主观估量，凡能带来快乐或免除痛苦之物皆可能具有效用（杰文斯，1984, p. 38）；随消费数量的上升，总效用以递减的速率上升，最后一单位的效用最终随数量增加而降低（布鲁、格兰特，2008, p. 167）。《拉米亚》以叙事形式呈现的，恰是这条满足递减的曲线，以及那种试图挣脱这条曲线、却愈陷愈深的升级消费。

微观经济学思想萌生于浪漫主义时期。18 世纪末，工业革命已近百年而未能解决英国社会的根本问题，迫使人们突破古典经济学的限制另寻出路（布鲁、格兰特，2008, p. 166）。19 世纪初，古诺（Antoine Augustin Cournot）、杜普伊特（Arsène-Jules-Émile Dupuit）与冯·屠能（Johann Heinrich von Thünen）相继将边际分析引入经济问题（布鲁、格兰特，2008, pp. 170—179），至 1871 年杰文斯发表《政治经济学理论》，边际主义学派方告奠立，史称“杰文斯革命”（Roncaglia, 2017）。就思想的深层结构而言，浪漫主义与边际主义共同促成“主观转向”：加尼耶（Regenia Gagnier）的研究发现，二者都拒绝以生产者为中心的价值理论，转而以消费主体的欲望为中心，经济学与艺术中的价值由此同样变得更“主观”、更“心理化”（Gagnier, 2000）。布朗克（Richard Bronk）则将想象力与浪漫主义感受力重新发掘为经济推理自身内部的资源（Bronk, 2009）。济慈写作《拉米亚》的 1819 年，正处于这场双重转向的中途。因此，以杰文斯阐释济慈，不是以后起的理论强加于诗作，而是让同一历史土壤中生长出的两种话语互相印证。

杰文斯区分了“需要”与“欲求”。他并未声称满足在各类物品间均质：食物、水这类简单的动物性需要一旦满足，其最终效用便趋近于零；而对艺术品、学问、古玩这类精神欲求，则不受递减原理制约（杰文斯，1984, p. 61）。奢侈性消费恰恰占据了两者之间危险的位阶：它脱离了需要那种可被满足的逻辑，却又不具精神欲求的超越品格，只能在真实回报递减之际模拟出欲望无尽攀升的假象。值得注意的是，杰文斯将经济计算归入最低等级的情感，明确将其与道德是非的更高演算区隔开来（杰文斯，1984, pp. 42—44）。《拉米亚》所提供的，正是经济学自我悬置的那种道德演算。

文学经济学为本研究提供了互构、同形、同归三层分析框架。近年文学研究出现“经济人文”（Economic Humanities）转向，主张文学并非经济史的被动注脚，而是承载经济认知的知识形式（Crosthwaite et al., 2022, pp. 3, 13–14）；谢尔（Marc Shell）的《文学之经济》更早已确立从语言与经济象征方式的相似性理解思维与物质关系的方向（Shell, 1978, pp. 7–8）。已有研究以边际效用递减与动态均衡解读布莱克《耶路撒冷》的艺术创新与东西关系重构（程文，2024）。本文将这一路径延伸至济慈的叙事诗，并把文学经济学分析的三个层次依次界定为：其一，互构，即新历史主义视角下文学与历史的双向生成；其二，

同形（isomorphism），即文学结构与经济结构之间保持关系的映射；其三，同归，即微观经济学与浪漫主义文学对理想国度的共同主张。这三个层次依次递进，互构言其生成，同形言其结构，同归言其旨归，分别对应诗的生产、诗中的消费与交易。

文学经济学解读有望为《拉米亚》聚讼纷纭的阐释之谜提供一条贯通的线索。诗作的反讽与暧昧历来令批评家困惑。科尔文（Sidney Colvin）表示对诗作“意欲在读者的想象同情上造成的效果”深感“困惑”。斯珀里（Stuart Sperry）从近乎自嘲的苦涩中读出“诗人与其更好的自我为敌”。贝特（W. J. Bate）则称其歧义交错、变换之快为英语叙事诗中所仅见（Wolfson, 2015, pp. 119–120）。晚近的权威济慈研究恰为这条线索提供了双重支撑：罗（Nicholas Roe）的传记考订还原了诗作生成的商业处境（Roe, 2012），沃尔夫森（Susan J. Wolfson）的细读则揭示了商业逻辑织入诗歌语言肌理的方式（Wolfson, 2015, 2022）。诗的叙事能否先于经济学理论半个世纪，预演一条效用曲线的形状，并给出经济学所悬置的道德裁断？问题的本质，回归到文学想象与经济规律的关系。

一、“那么一股火气”：财务焦虑与《拉米亚》的商业生成

文学与历史的互构是文学经济学考察的第一个层次。新历史主义所看重的并非单向的“背景—文本”决定关系，而是文本与语境的双向生成：《拉米亚》既被摄政时期的经济转型所塑造，也以诗的形式参与了对经济转型的认知与评判。“经济人文”转向更进一步主张，浪漫主义诗歌是承载经济认知的知识形式，而非经济史的被动附庸（Crosthwaite et al., 2022, pp. 13–14）。沿此思路，济慈与政治经济学的关系便不应被化约为浪漫诗人对铜臭的简单厌弃。加拉格尔（Catherine Gallagher）指出，浪漫主义文学与政治经济学在世纪之交的英国激进思想中同根而生、共享前提，其冲突之所以尖锐，恰因双方是在共同的基础上论战（Gallagher, 2009, pp. 73–74）。康奈尔（Philip Connell）亦表明，浪漫主义对政治经济学并非置身事外的反商业潮流，而是亲和与回避并存的复杂关系（Connell, 2001, pp. 1–5）。正是在这一互构的张力中，《拉米亚》的经济潜文本得以生成。

《拉米亚》诞生于英国经济社会的深刻转型之中。诗作完成于 1819 年 9 月，此时工业革命正加速向工业资本主义过渡，在使商业与制造业利益集团致富的同时，也壮大了领取工资的劳动阶级；贸易与帝国带来繁荣与全球优势，却也加深了不平等与劳工的苦难。济慈早在《伊莎贝拉》中便已探索这一主题。对《拉米亚》而言尤为关键的是，这些发展重塑了人们对消费的态度，随着大规模生产与消费品的激增，消费日益成为社会身份与阶级区隔的标志。浪漫主义作家对此普遍心存疑虑，华兹华斯（William Wordsworth）对工业城市喧嚣的退避与对自然及简朴生活的反向坚持，即是这种疑虑的显例。

济慈个人的财务困境与《拉米亚》的经济意涵互为表里。1818 年 12 月，济慈的弟弟汤姆（Tom Keats）死于肺结核。据传记作家罗考订，汤姆的死讯引发了济慈在 1819 年 6 月间的财务困境。舅母玛格丽特·詹宁斯（Margaret Jennings）闻讯而动，拟向衡平法院递状索取汤姆遗产中源自祖母的份额，一桩沉睡约十年的家族遗产纠纷骤然重燃。遗产受托人阿贝（Richard Abbey）扣住汤姆的遗产不予分配，在此案了结之前，济慈从阿贝处再无款项可指望。罗特别指出，这场纠纷震动了济慈，并“将在他今年的诗歌中回响”（Roe, 2012, pp. 327–328）。彼时他被友人拖欠逾二百英镑，一度重新动念到药剂师处谋职，全赖布朗（Charles Brown）以待催回的欠款为担保先行垫资，并力劝他“再向出版界一搏”（Roe, 2012, p. 328）。就在这一窘境中，济慈开始筹划将伯顿（Robert Burton）《忧郁的解剖》中利西乌斯的故事敷演为他的第四部叙事诗（Roe, 2012, p. 328）。与此同时，移居美国的乔治（George Keats）因投资失败向他求援（Roe, 2012, pp. 333, 336）。济慈与布劳恩（Fanny Brawne）此时刚刚订下婚约，婚姻却可望而不可及，因为他资财不足又无稳定进项。在此情势下，用罗的话说，“写作已成必需”（Roe, 2012, p. 327）。《拉米亚》因此笼罩在一种双重困境之下，本可换来经济独立的文学劳作，恰恰受阻于那使独立显得迫切的激情。

济慈对诗作的商品属性有着坦率的自觉。当时文坛的商业化已蔚然成风：布里奇斯（Samuel Egerton Brydges）抱怨文学竟沦为一桩生意，实为恶劣的祸患（Brydges, 1834, p. 202）。威廉斯（Raymond Williams）日后描述，恰在这数十年间，艺术家被视为不过是为市场生产商品的生产者（Williams, 1960）。济慈本人则在 1819 年 9 月致乔治夫妇的信中坦言，《拉米亚》“有那么一股火气，定能以某种方式抓住读者”，并补充道，读者想要的不过是某种感官刺激（Keats, 2002, p. 363; 亦见 Roe, 2012, p. 328; Stillinger, 1974, p. 474）。诗人对市场口味的精明盘算，在同一个夏天还有更直接的旁证：他与布朗合写悲剧《奥托大帝》，为名伶基恩（Edmund Kean）量身定做，二人约定平分作者收益，指望它成为票房大卖之作（Roe, 2012, p. 329）。写于同一时期的《拉米亚》剖析商业诱惑，本身也成为文学市场上的竞争者。正如沃特金斯（Daniel P. Watkins）所言，济慈叙事诗的全部观念与情节皆植根于一组特定的经济关系（Watkins, 1989, p. 55）。由此可见，诗作的经济潜文本并非外加的装饰，而是其存在的条件。而要探究焦虑如何转化为诗的内在结构，我们须进入文本，考察欲望自身的曲线。

二、“沉重的金杯”：奢华幻象、东方主义与欲望的递减回报

文学与经济学的同形是本研究考察的第二个层次。新经济批评以同构（homology）为核心命题，揭示文学文本在隐喻、修辞与形式层面与货币、金融体系的对应（Woodmansee & Osteen, 1999, p. 4）；然而同构往往止步于两种结构因共同社会起源而彼此呼应，易流于单义因果。参考法国哲学家让-约瑟夫·古（Jean-Joseph Goux）的普遍等价物理论，可将文学经济学“同构”提升为更严格的“同形”：能指之于所指、价格之于价值、效用之于欲望，三者所对应的并非彼此的内容，而是各自充当“以有形表征无形”之普遍等价物的关系位置，从而构成保持关系的结构映射（Goux, 1990）；谢尔亦早已揭示语言与货币的同源关系及其趋于体制化的“顽固结构”（Shell, 1978, pp. 41–42）。据此可以论证：利西乌斯（Lycius）欲望的轨迹与边际效用递减曲线之间，并非松散的类比，而是同一过程结构的两个同形实例。

拉米亚（Lamia）与利西乌斯的故事承载着济慈对消费的反思。二人的故事在地理与道德上都从第一部克里特岛前商业的田园，移向第二部科林斯的居所。这一转移同时也是从欢愉无须购买的世界，转向为商业气息所浸透的世界。到了第二部，炫耀与奢靡走到前

台。沃尔夫森指出，第二部以对这对恋人的讽刺开场：利西乌斯由“痴愚的情人”（sap）一变而为“炫耀者”（show-off），急于在婚宴上展示他的“战利品”，好让仇敌艳羡、友人喝彩（Wolfson, 2015, p. 111）。

拉米亚的宫殿是奢华的缩影。它有“堂皇的门廊，建筑宏丽的庄园”（263）[①]；每一处“壁龛”与“墙角的浮雕”都被装点得愈加华美（263）；每扇明亮窗格前都置有香炉，“香烟缭绕，须添加没药和香木”（264）；十二张圆桌上陈设“沉重的金杯”（264—265）。其中的华丽铺陈值得整段引录：

> 宴会大厅里是一片富丽堂皇，
> 到处是灿烂的灯火，扑鼻的芳香：
> ……五十只炉里
> 五十道烟的花圈轻轻地飘起
> 直上屋顶……
> 十二张圆桌……
> 靠豹形爪子支撑，桌面上放置
> 沉重的金杯……（264—265）

这座宫殿的辉煌本是无根的幻象。沃尔夫森注意到，婚宴的铺陈是一片花环意象的过盛，“五十只炉里 / 五十道烟的花圈”一类细节甚至“过于现成、过于易读”，仿佛在戏拟自身的繁缛（Wolfson, 2015, p. 117）。诗作的素材来源已先行点破繁华背后的空虚。在伯顿的原叙事中，拉米亚的全副陈设“并无实体，纯属幻象”，一经识破，便连人带屋、杯盘器物顷刻消散（转引自 Roe, 2012, p. 328）。罗更指出，这座科林斯郊外的宫殿令人不可抗拒地联想到济慈相识的谜样女子伊莎贝拉·琼斯（Isabella Jones）陈设时髦的寓所，她可能今日在家，明日便如拉米亚一般无处可寻（Roe, 2012, p. 329）。奢华在济慈笔下始终是待戳穿的幻象。

济慈刻意将这种奢华渲染为东方式的。拉米亚的豪奢系于来自东方与美洲的物品，丝绸、染料、黄金、异域木材，以及“新雕的松木，雕成棕榈和大蕉 / 长在林间草地上”（262）。费曼尼斯发现，济慈取材于当时关于东方奢华的故事汇编，同时化用关于奢侈如何腐蚀帝国罗马的历史叙述（Fermanis, 2009, p. 115; Robertson, 1769, p. 8）。马克迪西（Saree Makdisi）则进一步揭示，浪漫主义时期对东方的迷恋远不止是题材的点缀，它参与了帝国式自我的建构，个体主体性的确立与帝国对他者的征用彼此成全（Makdisi, 2009, pp. 603–604）。拉米亚宫殿充满东方化、女性化的奢华，同时也是利西乌斯自我“帝国”的舞台。他在对异域奢侈的占有中确认自身，却也在同一过程中被那奢侈所封闭、所掏空。

[①] 约翰·济慈（1997）：《济慈诗选》，屠岸译，北京：人民文学出版社。本文所引《拉米亚》译文均出自该译本（第 240—270 页），以下引文只随文标注页码，不再一一说明。正文论述采用通行译名“利西乌斯”“赫尔墨斯”“阿波罗尼乌斯”，诗行引文保留屠译“里修斯”“赫耳墨斯”“阿波罗尼”。

恋人们置身奢华，在睡眠中“留着爱情使之睁开的小缝／让他们入睡时见到对方的面容”（258—259）。一如《伊莎贝拉》中独守罗勒花盆、枯萎至死的女主人公所展示，全然遁入私域在济慈笔下是一种道德病症，而且终将致命。

利西乌斯的情感轨迹即边际效用递减曲线的文学显影。边际效用递减的实质是心理学的：物品超过一定量后，再增加将变得漠不相关甚至唤起厌恶（杰文斯，1984, p. 204）。拉米亚的在场最初带来巨大欢欣，但满足并不持久，利西乌斯发展出对更多占有与控制的不可满足的渴求。沃尔夫森以一组消费意象点明这一吞噬性的占有，利西乌斯“两眼把她的美貌一饮而尽／那只发愣的酒杯里一滴也不剩”，而叙事者更把这首诗的轻信读者径直归入“感伤的消费者”之列（Wolfson, 2015, pp. 116–117）。

利西乌斯的悲剧源于欲求范畴的混淆。杰文斯特别强调，对艺术品、学问、古玩这类精神欲求不受边际效用递减原理制约（杰文斯，1984, p. 61）；利西乌斯却把一种被奢侈所制造、本质上仍属可餍足之需的占有欲，误认作那种不受餍足的精神欲求，于是愈消费愈匮乏，他自以为超脱其外，而递减的曲线却重新收紧。科明（Sarah Comyn）所论那个在叙事中反复现身的经济人（homo economicus），亦即出于自利在市场中作理性算计的抽象主体（Comyn, 2018），在他身上以反讽的形态显现。他自以为是欲望的主体，实则被欲望的结构所摆布。加尼耶对十九世纪欲望的论述则澄清了这一悖论的机制，她指出该时期的审美与消费主体由现代欲望的“不可满足性”（insatiability）所界定（Gagnier, 2000）。利西乌斯愈消费那幻象，幻象愈不能满足他，便愈发疯狂地消费。当哲人阿波罗尼乌斯（Apollonius）冷峻的目光戳破幻象，利西乌斯在拉米亚消失的当夜身着婚服而死，崩塌的不仅是一段恋情，更是一整套由消费主义与奢侈价值支配的世界观。诗的文本结构与经济学的效用结构在此若合符节，构成文学与经济学同形关系的一个范本。而当欲望从私人执念扩展为交换关系，同形便进一步上升为对均衡与国度的想象。

三、“凭我的蛇杖”：商业谈判、外部性与动态均衡的理想国度

微观经济学与浪漫主义文学对理想国度的共同主张，是考察的第三个层次。动态均衡原理认为，各种经济力量通常趋于均衡、相反作用力之间达成平衡，一旦扰动使之偏离，新的趋向均衡的运动便会发生（布鲁、格兰特，2008, p. 167）；杰文斯虽多用近似静力的分析，却明确强调均衡的动态性质，坦言“动的经济学还待人去发展”，并指出意志由各种动机的均衡所左右（杰文斯，1984, pp. 2, 37）。在此意义上，均衡不是静止的秩序，而是开放系统中相反力量不断被打破又重建的过程，是社会转型期面对不确定性的应对模式。把这一原理移入《拉米亚》第一部，便可见赫尔墨斯（Hermes）与拉米亚的交易乃是一次破坏均衡的扰动：自利凌驾一切，打破了克里特田园中相反力量相互维系的均衡。

拉米亚与赫尔墨斯的相遇是一场名副其实的商业谈判。这并非外加的隐喻。沃尔夫森指出，赫尔墨斯本是商业之神，拉米亚正是诱他入“一桩生意”，他那缠绕双蛇的商神杖恰象征“商业世界中对手之间的互惠”，是“即将到来的讨价还价的恰当先声”（Wolfson, 2015, pp. 111–112）；这位神祇“绝非人类的恩主”（Wolfson, 2022, p. 365），不过是“贪

欲的猎手”（Wolfson, 2015, p. 112）。正如斯密（Adam Smith）在《国富论》中所论，商业鼓励自由，因为每个人都受自利之心支配（Smith, 1979）。赫尔墨斯渴望隐匿的仙女，拉米亚渴望女子之身以追求她所爱的科林斯青年。彼此各执对方所欲，于是双方成交：

“你油嘴滑舌的蛇呀，灵感真不少！
……
你尽可去享有你能想到的福祉，
只消告诉我那林泽女神的踪影，
她如今在哪里！……”
蛇回答，“你要用誓言来保证，美神！”
“我起誓，凭我的蛇杖，”赫耳墨斯声称，
“凭你的眼睛，凭你星形的头冠！”（244）

这桩交易具备契约的全部形式要件。它以誓言封缄，两方各偿其诺，如同任何合同般履行完毕。济慈以神话诱惑的语汇框定这场交易。拉米亚毕竟是一条蛇，《创世记》中的蛇在场景背后投影，使经济意味更加凸显：诱惑与商业引诱共享同一语法，都以获利的允诺驱使行动者行动。

这场谈判的真正代价由交易之外的第三方承担。第一部的背景克里特岛是由“山谷”“树林”与“鲜花”构成的牧歌世界（241），赫尔墨斯本人称之为“可爱的世界”（241），居于其中的仙女“像空气一样自由、无形”，在没有荆棘的旷野中“自由地爱去哪里就去到那里”（244—245）。这桩自利的交易粉碎了这份自由，两方都未曾顾及仙女的意愿，蛇将仙女暴露于赫尔墨斯的目光之下，于是仙女“自己合拢来，就像 / 黄昏时自己昏晕的花朵一样”（246）。以动态均衡的眼光看，克里特田园的凋败即均衡被扰动的瞬间。科恩（Saul Bernard Cohen）在地缘政治学中区分秩序与均衡，强调均衡是动态的：开放体系中两种相对势力间的平衡被打乱后，可经引入新成分而恢复，在理想状况下经“看不见的手”自我纠正（科恩，2011, p. 63）。《拉米亚》所演示的恰是这一自我纠正机制的反面：自利一旦不被任何相反力量制衡，系统便不再趋向再均衡。

仙女以“不行动者”的身份补全了诗作的经济行动者类型学。与主动操控的赫尔墨斯和拉米亚不同，仙女全然被动，是诱惑的客体，却是全诗价值最密集的对象：“所有的森林神都向她跪拜礼尊”；海神特里同（Triton）们“向她的裸踝把珍珠倾倒 / 在陆上他们爱慕得形容枯槁”；她沐浴闲游之处“撒满了华丽的礼物，缪斯都不知道 / 只有从幻想的宝盒里可以挑选到”（241）。膜拜在此一律采取支付的形式，珍珠是爱慕的通货，厚礼超出幻想自身的库藏，而爱慕者为此形容枯槁。在诗作的经济学里，引动欲望的价值本身即已是一种诱惑，无论其拥有者是否有意如此。

科林斯场景则展示了失衡如何由家庭蔓延为城邦的危机。沃尔夫森径直称这座城市为颓靡的希腊城邦，其富庶经济由奴隶支撑（Wolfson, 2022, p. 363）。诗中的科林斯有“驾

车竞赛”（249）、“豪华的宴会”（255）与高大的门廊（256），表面繁华之下原已埋着劳役与不平等的暗影。拉米亚的现身向这座城市引入崭新而具腐蚀性的力量，当婚宴宾客抵达这座凭空出现的宫殿时，惊奇和艳羡在整场宴席间渐渐变质：

人群来了；每一个客人都忙乱，
走到大门前，猛然向里面观看，
惊奇地走进来：他们熟识这条街
……但以前从来没看见
堂皇的门廊，建筑宏丽的庄园；
他们全拥入，惊呆了，好奇，敏感……（263—264）

奢华由惊奇变为期待，标志着消费主义传染的完成。起初拉米亚的财富激起惊奇与艳羡；但当宾客们经沐浴、涂油与美酒款待之后，赞叹便演变为共谋，“一切灵魂都已经／摆脱人世的束缚”（266），那曾令人惊异的辉煌也渐渐显得“不足为奇”（266）。这一递进精确而冷酷：一次局部的失衡，沿着社会的纹理放大为系统性的失衡，最终威胁社会稳定。济慈的诗歌文本邀请我们追溯更古老的权威：柏拉图（Plato）在《理想国》第八卷中论及，城邦内乱源于经济阶级差异所激起的妒忌与敌意（Plato, 1892, pp. 255–256）。无节制的奢侈消费并非只有私人后果的私人恶习，而是侵蚀共同体纽带的公共危害。

济慈的理想国度构想与微观经济学的动态均衡逻辑彼此呼应。理想之国并非弃绝欲望与交换，而是使相反力量重归平衡、使价值重新锚定于真实需要的政体；浪漫主义文学以想象力参与了对这一均衡社会的构想（Crosthwaite et al., 2022），正如布朗克所说，经济学家与艺术家同样需要想象力与创造力（Bronk, 2009, pp. 1–2）。更进一层，这一国度想象也牵涉东西关系图式：浪漫主义所张扬的想象力既可能被帝国主义吸纳为扩张的思想资源（Makdisi, 1998, pp. 166–167；参 萨义德，1999, pp. 147–149），也可能反过来纠正“西方理性／东方感性”的二元偏见。《拉米亚》将东方奢华呈现为城邦失衡的根源，其锋芒既指向无节制消费，也隐含对浪漫东方主义自身的审视。围绕自利的私人化与消费主义传染而组织起来的国家不可能是理想之国，济慈以负像勾勒出他所肯定的动态均衡政体。

结语

从外在的商业生成，到内在的消费沉溺与交易计算，《拉米亚》为文学经济学“互构、同形、同归”的三层框架提供了文本印证。诗人的财务焦虑与商业语境的互构为《拉米亚》提供了生成条件；宫殿奢华与利西乌斯欲望的递减回报确立了诗与经济学的同形；拉米亚、赫尔墨斯的商业谈判情节则把失衡从私人领域推展至社会整体，使诗作介入城邦秩序的公共论题。诗作以悲剧收场，拉米亚消失、利西乌斯身死，这并非无端的悲情，而是世界观

崩塌的叙事形式。济慈刻意改写了素材的结局：伯顿笔下幻象揭穿，人与屋宇器物顷刻俱散；而济慈笔下宫殿无恙，拉米亚消失，利西乌斯身着婚服死于高榻，被消费的最终是消费者自身。杰文斯的边际主义以精确的分析绘制效用递减的曲线，却将道德判断悬置于经济学之外；《拉米亚》补足了这一悬置，它把消费欲望追至毁灭性的终点，并在灾难所清出的空间里，以否定的方式勾勒出济慈所肯定的共同体——不是弃绝快乐的世界，而是消费重新锚定于真实需要、价值不再由奢侈与炫耀制造、私人欲求不再侵蚀公共善的世界。济慈深知匮乏与过度之双重代价，他所秉持的不是道德家的禁欲，而是来之不易的节制。文学与经济学本自同源，皆以人的命运与福祉为怀。《拉米亚》表明，浪漫主义诗歌并非置身经济思想之外的反商业潮流，而是以想象力参与了对均衡社会与理想国度的构想。维护一个共同体的均衡，终究有赖于想象力对欲望的照亮与节制。

基金项目：本文系国家社会科学基金重大项目“英国文学经济思想史”（项目编号：22&ZD289）的阶段性成果之一。

Funding: This research is supported by the Major Project of the National Social Science Fund of China “History of Economic Thought in British Literature” (Grant No. 22&ZD289).

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Cheng Wen ID https://orcid.org/0009-0007-2221-5140

Ye Ke ID https://orcid.org/0009-0000-6197-0551

References

Bronk, Richard (2009). *The Romantic Economist: Imagination in Economics*. Cambridge University Press.

斯坦利·L·布鲁、兰迪·R·格兰特（2008）：《经济思想史》，邸晓燕等译。北京大学出版社。

[Brue, Stanley L., & Grant, Randy R. (2008). *The History of Economic Thought*, translated by Di Xiaoyan et al. Peking University Press.]

Brydges, Samuel Egerton (1834). *The Autobiography of Sir Egerton Brydges*. Cochrane and M’Crone.

程文（2024）：“布莱克《耶路撒冷》中的边际主义与东西关系重构”，《外国文学研究》（04）：86-98。

[Cheng Wen (2024). “Marginalism and the Reconstruction of East-West Relations in Blake’s Jerusalem.” *Foreign Literature Studies* (04): 86-98.]

索尔·伯纳德·科恩（2011）：《地缘政治学：国际关系的地理学》（第二版），严春松译。上海社会科学院出版社。

[Cohen, Saul Bernard (2011). *Geopolitics: The Geography of International Relations* (2nd ed.), translated by Yan Chunsong. Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press.]

Comyn, Sarah (2018). *Political Economy and the Novel: A Literary History of “Homo Economicus”*. Palgrave

Macmillan.

Connell, Philip (2001). *Romanticism, Economics, and the Question of "Culture"*. Oxford University Press.

Crosthwaite, Paul, Knight, Peter, & Marsh, Nicky (Eds.) (2022). *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Economics*. Cambridge University Press.

Fermanis, Porscha (2006). "*Isabella*, *Lamia*, and 'Merry Old England.'" Essays in Criticism (02): 139-162.

Fermanis, Porscha (2009). *John Keats and the Ideas of the Enlightenment*. Edinburgh University Press.

Gagnier, Regenia (2000). *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society*. University of Chicago Press.

Gallagher, Catherine (2009). "The Romantics and the Political Economists." In James Chandler (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, Cambridge University Press: 71-100.

Goux, Jean-Joseph (1990). *Symbolic Economies: After Marx and Freud*, translated by Jennifer Curtiss Gage. Cornell University Press.

威廉·斯坦利·杰文斯（1984）：《政治经济学理论》，郭大力译。商务印书馆。

[Jevons, William Stanley (1984). *The Theory of Political Economy*, translated by Guo Dali. The Commercial. Press.]

约翰·济慈（1997）：《济慈诗选》，屠岸译。人民文学出版社。

[Keats, John (1997). *Selected Poems by John Keats*, translated by Tu An. People's Literature Publishing House.]

Keats, John (2002). *Selected Letters of John Keats* (Rev. ed.), edited by Grant F. Scott. Harvard University Press.

Makdisi, Saree (1998). *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity*. Cambridge. University Press.

Makdisi, Saree (2009). "Romantic Cultural Imperialism." In James Chandler (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of. English Romantic Literature*, Cambridge University Press: 601-620.

Plato (1892). *The Dialogues of Plato*, translated by B. Jowett. Oxford University Press.

Robertson, William (1769). *The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V*. W. Strahan.

Roe, Nicholas (2012). *John Keats: A New Life.* Yale University Press.

Roncaglia, Alessandro (2017). *A Brief History of Economic Thought*. Cambridge University Press.

爱德华·W·萨义德（1999）：《东方学》，王宇根译。生活·读书·新知三联书店。

[Said, Edward W. (1999). Orientalism, translated by Wang Yugen. SDX Joint Publishing Company.]

Shell, Marc (1978). *The Economy of Literature.* Johns Hopkins University Press.

Smith, Adam (1979). *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Clarendon Press.

Stillinger, Jack (1974). *The Texts of Keats's Poems*. Harvard University Press.

Tagore, Proma (2000). "Keats in an Age of Consumption: The 'Ode to a Nightingale.'" *Keats-Shelley Journal.* (49): 67-84.

Watkins, Daniel P. (1989). *Keats's Poetry and the Politics of the Imagination*. Fairleigh Dickinson University. Press.

Williams, Raymond (1960). *Culture and Society 1780–1950*. Doubleday.

Wolfson, Susan J. (2015). *Reading John Keats*. Cambridge University Press.

Wolfson, Susan J. (2022). *A Greeting of the Spirit: Selected Poetry of John Keats with Commentaries*. Harvard. University Press.

Woodmansee, Martha, & Osteen, Mark (Eds.) (1999). *The New Economic Criticism: Studies at the Intersection. of Literature and Economics.* Routledge.

JESL

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

JESL, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026, pp.140-150.

Print ISSN: 3107-3492; Online ISSN: 3107-3506

Journal homepage: https://www.jesljournal.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.64058/jesl260110cncfp

HIEP
Academic Publishing

论《威尔士歌谣》中的危机叙事与虚拟地方建构

龙瑞翠（Long Ruicui）

摘要：19世纪初，工业化与城市化急剧改变威尔士地理景观，大量承载民族认同的历史遗迹随之湮没。长达两百余年的被殖民史使威尔士在政治与经济上长期依附英格兰。曾经植根于独特地方特性的本土经济文化想象，不断被英格兰主导的资本秩序所压制，威尔士的文化话语权日益边缘化。于是，威尔士精英转而诉诸文化实践，发掘传统记忆中的“地理基因”，构建虚拟的“古威尔士”世界，以期在象征层面重塑民族经济文化想象，应对威尔士文化长期被英格兰主流叙事遮蔽的困境。赫曼斯正是这一文化抵抗的重要实践者。本文以其诗集《威尔士歌谣》为研究对象，探讨诗人如何通过书写具有威尔士地理基因特质的景观，编织以虚拟地方为载体的危机叙事，参与威尔士文化圈培育虚拟古威尔士世界的集体实践。研究发现，在持续重构的不列颠政治经济秩序之下，诗人借诗意书写重建民族经济文化想象，为威尔士塑造独具特色的文化标识，助力其争取文化独特性与发展话语权。

关键词：费利西亚·赫曼斯；《威尔士歌谣》；危机叙事；虚拟地方

作者介绍：**龙瑞翠**，教授，博士，广西师范大学外国语学院，研究方向为英国文学，电子邮箱：445824077@qq.com

Title: On Crisis Narrative and the Construction of Fictitious Place in *Welsh Melodies*

Abstract: At the beginning of the 19th century, rapid industrialization and urbanization drastically transformed Wales's geographical landscape, resulting in the loss of numerous historical relics that underpinned its ethnical identity. Subject to over two centuries of colonial domination, Wales had been subordinating to England politically and economically. The indigenous economic-cultural imaginaries, once deeply rooted

---

Received: 05 May 2026 / Revised: 21 May 2026 / Accepted: 01 Jun. 2026 / Published online: 15 Jun. 2026 / Print published: 25 Jun. 2026.

in Wales's distinctive regional traits, were increasingly suppressed by the English-led capital order, marginalizing Welsh cultural discourse as a consequence. Confronted with this crisis, Welsh intellectual elites resorted to cultural revival practices. Namely, by excavating geographical genes embedded in traditional cultural memory and constructing a fictitious world of "ancient Wales", they endeavored to reshape, at a symbolic level, the national economic and cultural imagination, to counter the persistent erasure of Welsh culture within England's dominant meta-narrative. Felicia Hemans stands as a pivotal practitioner of such cultural resistance. Taking her poetry collection *Welsh Melodies* as the research focus, this paper explores how the poet portrays landscapes imbued with authentic Welsh geographical essences, and weaves crisis narratives embodied by fictitious places, to engage in the collective cultural endeavor of cultivating a fictitious ancient Welsh world. The study indicates that, amid the continuously reconfigured politico-economic order of Britain, Hemans reinvents Wales's national economic-cultural imaginaries via poetic writing, carves out a unique cultural identity for the Welsh, and facilitates its strive for cultural distinctiveness and discursive autonomy.

Keywords: Felicia Hemans; *The Welsh Melodies*; crisis narrative; fictitious place

Author Biography: Long Ruicui, PhD, Professor of The School of Foreign Studies, Guangxi Normal University; her research interest is British literature; her e-mail address is 445824077@qq.com.

正如文化政治经济学奠基人杰索普所言："不同的经济想象会催生出差异化的危机叙事与政策应对方案。"（Jessop，2015，p. 97）虽然威尔士民族曾拥有悠久的文明，但自 16 世纪实际沦为英格兰殖民地后，经济便日趋依附于英格兰。18 世纪下半叶起，来自英格兰的工业化与城市化浪潮席卷威尔士，在重塑地理景观的同时，也因对经济增长的片面追求导致承载民族文化记忆与地域认同的历史遗迹随之湮灭。为维系本民族文化的存续活力，同时回应经济转型进程中出现的族群凝聚力弱化困境，威尔士精英群体开始主动挖掘传统文化记忆中蕴含的地理基因，并以这一核心要素为根基，虚构出一个具有象征意义的"古威尔士世界"，以此凝炼并强化"威尔士性"的核心内涵。他们期望通过这一文化建构实践，唤醒族群成员内心深处的地方归属感与民族认同感，进而在持续重构的不列颠政治经济秩序之下，打造专属威尔士的文化符号，为威尔士争夺文化话语权、拓展差异化发展空间注入核心动力。

在这一文化实践中，被誉为"19世纪最娴熟掌握地理知识的说书人"（Simpson，p. 176）的赫曼斯（Felicia Dorothea Hemans，1793-1835）又是重要战将。邓肯•吴在《浪漫主义选集》中曾说，尽管赫曼斯生于英格兰，但她视养育她的威尔士为故乡，她的作品中贯穿着对威尔士的深沉热爱（Wu, p. 1294）。然而学界却常常忽视她作品中的威尔士性。桑奇兹甚至认为赫曼斯是一个英格兰民族诗人，将英格兰认定为是自己的家，在其作品中极力将这个"家"设定为战争的避难所和个体精神与情感重生之地（Sanchez，p. 410）。事实上，赫曼斯的创作深度契合威尔士精英的文化诉求，在她的代表作《威尔士歌谣》（*Welsh Melodies*，1822）中更是将威尔士地理景观书写与历史想象、民族情感深度融合，参与威尔士族裔民族重塑和不列颠国家民族建构。因此本文以文化政治经济学为研究视角，从《威尔士歌谣》入手，探讨诗人如何通过编织以虚拟地方为载体的危机叙事，来参与威尔

士文化圈的虚拟古威尔士世界培育运动，为威尔士塑造自己的专属文化标识，助力其争取文化独特性与发展话语权。

一、危机叙事的催生：虚拟地方培育

位于不列颠岛西部的威尔士东接英格兰，南临布里斯托海峡，西面和北面被爱尔兰海环绕，纵贯威尔士的坎伯兰山脉使威尔士境内遍布贫瘠荒芜的崎岖山地和丘陵。——据琼斯的考证，大概从三叠纪时期开始，威尔士群山（Welsh massif）就已经是威尔士地理景观的主要特征和威尔士地方特性的重要表征[①]。

多山地的自然环境和诸子均分遗产的独特习俗使威尔士境内从罗马不列颠到诺曼英格兰时期一直并存着多个王国政权。这些政权长期为争夺“威尔士国君”（Prince of Wales）的称号而征战不休，不仅给了外族入侵的可乘之机，更削弱了威尔士人抵御外敌的能力。1066 年，征服者威廉（William I，1066-1087 在位）控制了进入威尔士的三条最主要道路，英格兰开始权力渗透、操纵乃至蚕食威尔士。1282-1283 年，英王爱德华一世（Edward I，1272-1307 在位）更是发动威尔士远征，彻底消灭了威尔士境内最强大的格温内思王国（Kingdom of Gwynedd），促成了《威尔士法典》（*The Statute of Wales*，1284）的订立——该法案规定被征服的威尔士王国的土地及居民均合并于英格兰王国，直接隶属于英王，改革土著威尔士人的法律习惯，推行英格兰的郡县制和司法制度；以官职奖赏的方式[②]彻底改变威尔士的政治与权力结构；大量屠杀在威尔士宗教和政治生活中扮演极其重要角色同时也是威尔士文化传承者的游吟诗人巴德。

都铎王朝的开创者亨利七世（Henry VII，1485-1509 在位）为巩固君权合法性，极力证明自己的威尔士血统，并一反以往“不准威尔士人在城市或城市周边拥有土地，不得担任王庭官职，不能承担陪审团职责，更不得与英格兰人通婚”的严厉政策（Rowse，p. 45），以各种怀柔政策换取威尔士人心甘情愿地归顺英格兰。然而《威尔士法律和司法法案（其施行形式与制度和英格兰等同）》（*An Acte for Laws & Justice to be ministred in Wales in like fourme as it is in this Realme*，1535）和《针对君王陛下在威尔士领地和公国的某些条例之法案》（*An Act for certain Ordinances in the King's Majesty's Dominion and Principality of Wales*，1543）的接连出台，表面上赋予威尔士人与英格兰人同等的行政、经济和司法权，实则标志着威尔士被完全并入英格兰。正如杰索普所言，“霸权[……]是依托并经由国家，对文化、政治与经济进行战略选择性接合的系统性建构。”（Jessop，2008，p. 23）此后，英格兰依托政府力量运用多重策略牢牢把控其在英—威关系中的话语主导权：所有关于威尔士人口、经济的官方和学术统计数据，均归入英格兰数据体系一并公布；英语取代威尔士语成为威尔士官方语言，以确保英语文化自上而下的权威；英格兰人编纂的威尔士编年史将威尔士的内政外交事件悉数设置为英格兰历史事件的陪衬。威尔士被彻底置于以英格兰为权力主体的英国政府的管辖之下，逐渐沦为英格兰在不列颠本岛的第一个内殖民地（internal colony）。

到 18 世纪末，英国迅速从农业向工业社会转型，旧传统或被彻底摧毁或正艰难维系。

[①]详见琼斯在《威尔士及其邻近地区的地质演变》（Jones, Owen Thomas. “The Geological Evolution of Wales and the adjoining regions.” *Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society of London*, vol.111, 1956, pp. 323–351.）中的相关描述。

[②] 即将有影响力又能为己所用的威尔士前贵族及宗族头领逐步吸纳到威尔士权力中心，而后又鼓励他们将其权力范围内的小官职分派给认同英格兰统治的威尔士乡绅，最终在 1300 年前后形成了认同英格兰君王统治的威尔士官吏阶层雏形。

为缓解社会矛盾并适应新的社会模式，社会精英纷纷借用传统社会中的旧材料来组织、建构出貌似“古老”却顺应时代所需的文化传统。威尔士精英也试图重新发现“过去”，期望借助古老的威尔士文化传统来消解现实困顿。据格鲁姆的研究，威尔士精英首先自视为古布列吞人的后裔，在不列颠民族形成初期沉浸于自我营造的民族优越感之中（Groom，p. 371）。然而，英威联合中弱势合作伙伴的身份却越来越猛烈地消解着这一优越感，并最终“引发了威尔士民族的内部分裂和身份困扰”（Jenkins，p. 46）。

恰逢其时的凯尔特复兴热潮（Celtic Revival）似乎为他们提供了新出路。但不幸的是，几百年的内殖民史切断了他们直接追溯凯尔特文化渊源的途径。众所周知，威尔士文化主要通过巴德的口头叙述以及僧侣与抄写员的文献书写来传承延续。18 世纪下半叶之后，英格兰主导的英国政府为了在威尔士顺利推行内殖民政策，加强实施语言高压政策力度，导致威尔士语人口锐减，巴德口头传承几近绝迹。与此同时，英威合并之前的连年战火，合并后传统威尔士乡绅阶层（Welsh gentry）的迅速消亡，以及新乡绅阶层因倾慕英格兰文化而摒弃威尔士语言文化，使得原本珍藏于乡绅私人图书室中的威尔士历史文献几乎被销毁殆尽，威尔士纸质传承濒临灭绝。在英格兰文化威权下，威尔士历史正在被遮蔽、篡改甚至抹杀，威尔士人对民族连续性、共享记忆与集体命运的感知日益钝化。这不仅极可能导致民族文化的传承中断乃至灭绝，更使威尔士人参与“不列颠国家民族”秩序建构的合法性危机空前加剧。

正如民族史家史密斯在《民族认同》中所指出的，民族性本质上不仅是一种风格或政治学说，更是一种文化形式；其形成的核心前提是族群的独特性，即“所保有的那些与众不同的神话、记忆、象征符号与价值中内含的文化亲缘性”（p. 40）。其中，关于共同祖先的神话尤为关键，而祖地则是孕育和承载这些神话、记忆与传统文化的核心场所——个体在此获得身份认同与归属感。史密斯进一步强调，族群精英常常会识别出一块能够实现历史性集体救赎的神圣祖地，赋予自然景观以历史意蕴，同时将历史遗迹自然化，从而培育出富有诗意的“地方”，由此激发族群的怀旧与认同之情（p. 157）。威尔士精英的实践恰好印证了这一逻辑。但正如卢梭所言：“每个人群都拥有或必须拥有一个特性；倘若它没有，我们就必须从‘赋予它一个’开始。”（Rousseau，p. 319）以诗人、古籍收藏家、研究者和伪造者穆尔甘纽格（Iolo Morganwg，本名爱德华·威廉斯，1747-1826）为代表的威尔士文化圈，便是这一民族特性的主动“赋予者”。

受古文物研究者罗兰兹（Henry Rowlands，1655-1723）影响，穆尔甘纽格早年曾奉安格尔西岛（Anglesey）为威尔士的发祥地。然而 18 世纪末他亲赴该岛考察时却发现，罗兰兹的描述过于浮夸，甚至包含大量虚构成分。但罗兰兹的历史虚构行为也启发了他：与其被动接受不可靠的叙事，不如主动虚构一段更为可信和系统的威尔士辉煌史。穆尔甘纽格这一虚构冲动从根本上说是威尔士长期经济依附于英格兰、在工业化浪潮冲击下族群凝聚力不断弱化所催生出的文化自救行为。他意识到，回溯与反思民族历史是展望和探索民族未来的必要前提。就像史密斯所言，“利用任何可获得的文化材料，为一个历史与文化共同体创造一套条理清晰的神话体系和象征符号”（p. 54）是一个民族生存与统一的关键条件，穆尔甘纽格以家乡南威尔士的格拉莫干郡（Glamorgan）为中心，想象建构巴德传统，并通过编创诗歌、伪造历史文稿等方式，大量制作描述古德鲁伊德教义教规的文献，虚构出一个庞杂而富有诗意的古德鲁伊德世界。

这一德鲁伊德世界及其所秉承的哲学思想，在 19 世纪威尔士文化圈中影响极广，甚至被当时的学界认定为凯尔特民族文化与精神遗产的一部分。它不仅赢得了大批威尔士文化精英的认可，也吸引了许多亲威尔士的英格兰精英参与其中，成功掀起了威尔士文化的第

一次复兴（Eisteddfod Revival）——一场以创造性复古德鲁伊德文化传统和神话哲学体系为特征、对威尔士文化发展影响深远的“新德鲁伊德”运动（Neo-Druid Movement）。该运动的参与者通过系统整合威尔士的独特文化符号与物质维度，将铁器时代信奉多神教的凯尔特人奉为先祖，宣称自己是旧有神话传说的“搜集者”、“整理者”与“编纂者”，选择性收集甚至伪造族群记忆的神圣源泉，包括民族祖地的自然景观及其所关联的“黄金时代”的神话传说，并将其视为体现本族群独特性的最重要元素。由此，生存焦虑被转化为文化重构的动力。凭借一种超越文化猎奇与怀旧感伤的历史想象，他们书写并构建出一个异质于英格兰主流文化的“诗意地方”，为长期处于依附地位的威尔士争取文化自主性与话语权，以重获新生并持续发展。这一建构既回应了杰索普所说的“危机叙事”，也践行了史密斯所揭示的“祖地-神话-认同”建构路径，为威尔士人提供了一幅民族认知地图，重建了族群的集体感与尊严感。

赫曼斯便是这场运动的重要参与者。她在《威尔士歌谣》开篇即申明，自己的歌谣集并非为了再现真实历史，而是“为鲁思音威尔士文学圈（Ruthin Welsh Literary Society）所作”（Hemans，1860，p. 145）。在威尔士经济长期依附于英格兰、工业化和城市化浪潮不断侵蚀其文化记忆的背景下，这一声明本身便是她以歌谣为媒介进行象征文化生产、回应现实危机叙事的生动例证。而且她在《威尔士歌谣》中以极具威尔士特性的地理景观为创作起点，娴熟运用歌谣韵律，从历史、信仰、语言及其文化传承者巴德等多个维度紧扣威尔士“地理基因”，想象构建一个既保有传统民族文化特质、又具有动态发展能力的诗意威尔士世界，也事实上参与了威尔士文化圈对“诗意虚拟威尔士地方”的集体培育，为威尔士人重新确立民族文化的归属点，修补了因殖民与工业化而断裂的民族历史。因此，从地理景观入手勾勒歌谣集中的地理影像图，可以清晰厘析诗人对威尔士民族情感结构的认知，及其对威尔士文化身份定位与命运走向的思索，进而窥探赫曼斯所代表的威尔士作家群的创作内核与价值成果：立足本土地理空间、以诗意景观重构地方经济文化叙事，即，借象征性文化生产消解威尔士的现实依附困境、以诗意地方书写争夺文化自主权的威尔士现代民族建构实践。

二、危机叙事的回应：虚拟地方构筑

事实上，在威尔士经济长期依附英格兰、工业化浪潮不断侵蚀本土文化的背景下，对民族黄金岁月的建构不仅是一种情感慰藉，更是由特定经济想象所催生的危机叙事。赫曼斯在《威尔士歌谣》中以诗学手段编织的就是这样一套危机叙事：从集引《威尔士竖琴》（*The Harp of Wales*）到结篇《查得尔山脉》（*The Rock of Cader Idris*），21 首诗通过对具有典型民族内涵的地理名称进行历史想象，再现威尔士被压迫、被边缘化乃至被抹除的民族记忆，期望能唤醒族群的本土依恋，捍卫民族/地方本色；由此将依附处境下的生存焦虑转化为地理诗学的抗争，在英格兰主导的国家秩序中为威尔士争取文化上的自主表达空间。

根据段义孚的观点，当恋地情结变得强烈时，“地方与环境其实已经成为了情感事件的载体，成为了符号”（p. 140）。赫曼斯在《汪洋绿岛》（The Green Isles of Ocean）中便是如此：她以广角镜头呈现一座“汪洋黑屿”——被茂密森林覆盖、静卧于大洋安详怀抱的绿色仙岛，洒满阳光，散发神性光芒，直抵英灵安息之处。诗人以此唤醒读者对那曾有勇士与巴德驻留的、如梦如幻的往昔记忆。这座黑屿实为威尔士圣岛安格尔西岛，罗马人称之为“蒙纳”（Mona）。历史上的蒙纳岛承载着深重创伤：公元 61 年布狄卡起义爆发后，不列颠总督保里努斯在此大肆屠杀德鲁伊德祭司与信徒，最终于公元 78 年将整个威尔士纳入罗马帝国版图。信奉太阳、独立自由的德鲁伊德威尔士（“我即是我的中央”）从此沦为罗

马帝国的附庸（“我只是中心之外的一个小地方”）。这场冲突不仅是军事征服，更是两种经济想象的碰撞：一方是中心榨取边缘以实现帝国积累的模式，另一方是依赖分散自治来维持地方生存的模式。

赫曼斯的诗歌正是对威尔士历史创伤及其经济文化想象遭受挤压的深刻文化回应。她拒绝重复英格兰征服叙事中的屠杀与牺牲，转而以神话化的笔触将血腥历史中的蒙纳岛化为“阳光仙岛”，为威尔士人建构一套独立、正面的岛屿记忆，从而让威尔士历史叙述摆脱对英格兰征服逻辑的依赖。而当威尔士拥有了自身的神圣空间与英雄谱系，英格兰“文明开化”的叙事便失去了合法性，威尔士长期经济依附的文化根基也随之动摇。于是，那座曾经沦陷的岛屿升华为既扎根于神话与民族记忆、又映照在现实威尔士人身边风景中的神圣空间。由此，蒙纳岛超越了物理意义上的景观（landscape），成为威尔士人的心灵景观（mindscape）[①]，向其居民“提供诸如梦想、思想和情感之类的东西……而且它本身也是构成我们的性格和身份的要素”（史密斯, p. 58）。通过这种诗意转化，赫曼斯在英格兰主导的秩序中为威尔士开辟出一片文化自主的象征领地。

此外，赫曼斯还大量书写以蒙纳岛作为地理中心的各种德鲁伊德庆典、习俗和文化符号等。以歌谣集首诗《德鲁伊德赞歌：罗马人登陆》（*Druid Chorus on the Landing of the Romans*）为例。虽然该诗以“罗马人登陆”为名，却既不致力于赞颂罗马文明之光，也不哀书罗马军团铁蹄所到之处的生灵涂炭，而是细致描绘德鲁伊德信徒在蒙纳岛古老橡树下祭祀祈祷的图景，鲜活复现与希腊多神教具有高相似度的德鲁伊德信仰生活：与基督教信仰不同，他们奉大自然为母，视之为家园所归，与自然界万物为友，将“橡树”视为圣物，所有神圣祭祀活动都在圣树下举行；当彪悍的罗马人来犯时，视国土为神的土地、誓死捍卫国土的德鲁伊德信徒自然也聚集在圣树下，祈求诸位神明的护佑，坚信

凭那端自黑屿秘林，
风暴渊海亦得听令
之可畏无形威势力，
罗马人！滚出吾疆！（Hemans，1860，p. 145）

他们祈求这令人畏惧的黑屿秘林能够赐予自己力量，从而把号称所向披靡的罗马军团驱逐出威尔士。赫曼斯通过复现德鲁伊德信徒的战争危机叙事模式——外敌入侵→祭祀→求助多方神明→成功/失败，赋予了德鲁伊德文化一种与希腊文化相同的神性光芒，而威尔士人作为德鲁伊德后裔，也因之具有了泛着神性的文化之根。

赫曼斯诗中提及的德鲁伊德信徒原是地中海凯尔特人的一支。他们携多神信仰定居威尔士，其经验与思想在历史长河中逐渐塑成了威尔士文化。德鲁伊德信仰因此被视为威尔士民族精神的灵魂，“德鲁伊德”也成为《威尔士歌谣》的高频词。这种精神印记在诗集中随处可见：不仅复现了德鲁伊德信徒的祭祀仪式，还再现了那些陪伴他们走过无数黑暗岁月、早已成为威尔士文化记忆底色的民谣、民乐器以及歌者。作为威尔士音乐专家，赫曼斯深知音乐是威尔士人生活中永不缺席的存在，是凝聚民族情感的精神财富。她在诗集中

[①] 南威尔士历史学家戴·史密斯以“心灵”（mind）一词来替掉“景观”（landscape）一词中的“土地”，提出“心灵景观”（mindscape）一词，他认为心灵景观由特定区域内的物理、地理特性决定，但同时也受文化、想象和建筑等因素影响（see Smith, Dai. *Aneurin Bevan and the World of South Wales*. University of Wales Press, 1993, pp. 92-93.）

反复书写威尔士竖琴（The Harp of Wales），坚信罗马人或撒克逊人都无法让高贵的竖琴之音停歇；描绘可奏乐可盛酒的号角，高扬德鲁伊德信徒捍卫国土的决心；更大量着墨威尔士民乐的灵魂——游吟诗人巴德。集题“歌谣”本身便昭示诗人与巴德的渊源：从玛多格（Madog）、格林多（Glyndŵr）、豪厄尔（Howel）到安奈林（Aneurin），古威尔士巴德与赫曼斯这位当代巴德的吟唱共同构成了歌谣集的主体。正如贝利和阿提金森在《发现不列颠》中所言，作为威尔士民族文化传承的歌手，巴德通过弹竖琴吟唱远古故事传承威尔士习俗，影响威尔士人的生活（Berry & Atkinson，p. 272）。就连威尔士国歌也称威尔士是“歌者云集的土地”。此外，赫曼斯在《卢沃奇・亨的哀悼》（The Lament of Llywarch Hen）、《塔利耶森的预言》（Taliesin’s Prophecy）、《欧文・哥林多的战争之歌》（Owen Glyndwr’s War-Song）、《豪厄尔之歌》（Howel’s Song）等诗中还模拟凯尔特音乐风格，诗意复现巴德边弹竖琴边高歌英雄传奇的场景。这既让读者深切感受到了先辈为民族自由付出的卓绝代价，也透露出她对现实中威尔士人生活的深切悲悯。

结合威尔士依附于英格兰的经济格局、工业化进程不断侵蚀本土文化记忆的历史语境，从经济文化想象的维度审视赫曼斯对德鲁伊德信仰、巴德传统及竖琴、号角、凯尔特音乐风格等的密集复现可以发现，她的创作实践早已超越单纯的文化怀旧，实则是对威尔士本土经济文化图景的符号重塑。工业革命在推动英格兰崛起的同时，将威尔士固化为其农产品与矿业原料的附庸产地，资本主导的经济秩序不仅以烟囱、矿井摧毁了威尔士的自然地理风貌，更从根源上瓦解了依托土地而生的本土经济文化想象。而且，正如汤友云与季水河所言，“土地维系着特定的历史、承载着特定的文化……保障了社会稳定性、生活确定性、身份认同感和生理安全感”（p. 128）。然而铁路扩张与城市化浪潮却迫使大量威尔士青年为生计远赴英格兰，在经济裹挟下背弃母语与传统，族群凝聚力日渐涣散，原本扎根乡土的经济文化共同体逐步瓦解。正是在这一英格兰资本逻辑支配的经济依附与文化失语危机中，赫曼斯以威尔士地理景观为载体，借助游吟诗人的历史想象重构德鲁伊德平和坚毅的民族原型，诗性复现其信仰传统与抗争历程，建构起抗衡外来主流叙事的德鲁伊德精神世界。这种对德鲁伊德精神传统的诗意重构，不仅为威尔士人重塑了文化身份与精神坐标，更在殖民化的经济文化秩序之外，重新唤醒民族自主的经济文化想象，为威尔士民族存续提供了重要的精神动力。

于是，赫曼斯在称呼绝大部分承载威尔士历史文化内蕴的地名时都用威尔士语，却在称呼威尔士圣岛时更愿意用罗马人的称法“蒙纳”（Mona）而非威尔士语“安格尔西”（Anglesey）的谜团也解开了。史密斯曾说，族群精英在复现传统诗意地方时，其兴趣“并不在于为了历史本身而去探寻‘他们的’过去，而是要对‘他们的人民’如何与特定领土相联系的历史神话予以重新解释”（p. 157）。英威合并以来，英格兰主导的政府表面上积极支持威尔士语的发展，实际上却始终认为，“让威尔士语继续存在既不安全也无法实现其政治目的，因此政府极力[……]以各种冠冕堂皇的理由阻碍、限制乃至禁止使用威尔士语”（Jones & Williams & Pughe，pp. ix-x）。雷蒙・威廉斯在《谁为威尔士发声？：民族、文化与身份认同》中也指出，自 18 世纪下半叶以来，英国政府不仅大量建设各种英语学校来推行政治与文化殖民，还以行政命令和舆情导向等诸多手段在民间广泛推行“禁止讲威尔士语”（Welsh Not）政策[①]，使得讲威尔士语的人口锐减（Williams，p. 22）。为了

[①] 该政策的典型施行方法是，学校（尤其是在小学）备有刻着“WN”标记的木牌、戒尺或棍子。学校里第一个被发现说威尔士语的孩子被迫戴上这一标记物，直到他发现并向老师揭发有另一个说威尔士语的孩子，他就可以将这一标记物转到那个孩子身上，然后获得解脱。持有这一标志物的孩子不仅会被体罚，还会遭受同学老师的孤立和冷眼。尽管这一做法只是民间政策，但对威尔士语破坏性极大，因为它在孩子中间生

推行或顺应吻合本民族生存发展的政策，很多英格兰人都支持该项政策，将威尔士地区语言的英语化作为改良运动在语言发展领域的主要目标，他们在将英语包装成进步与现代化代名词的同时，“把威尔士语贬低为荒谬历史的垃圾场”（Jenkins，p. 39），导致讲威尔士语的威尔士人沦为自己家园的他者。

讽刺的是，威尔士人最初对这一政策并没有太大争议。在功利化的生存逻辑面前，原本依托语言与乡土共同体形成的传统经济文化想象，迅速让位于英格兰主导的经济文化秩序。对普通劳工而言，会英语意味着更多的就业机会，因此他们不仅自己趋向于讲英威双语，也愿意让自己的子女学英语，导致讲威尔士单语的人口迅速被稀释。更严重的是，大部分威尔士精英阶层也未意识到全民英语化的危害，反而认为威尔士语阻碍了威尔士的发展。其时，一个致力于内部统一的大不列颠民族正在形成，意味着旧的民族身份与民族关系正在重新洗牌。语言作为实现民族凝聚的隐在方式，在这一重新洗牌中具有举足轻重的地位，不列颠民族内各族群均意识到，“只有消除语言障碍才能真正形成不列颠民族”（Jones，p. 15）。由于英格兰在不列颠民族中占据绝对强势的政治、经济与文化地位，英语顺理成章地成为大不列颠民族通用语。出于经济及自身发展考虑，很多威尔士精英主动放弃威尔士语，并纷纷远走伦敦以获取更好资源，导致威尔士人才流失日愈严重，以威尔士语创作的威尔士题材作品锐减速度惊人，威尔士严重缺乏能够记录威尔士民族特性的当代巴德，这不仅意味着威尔士文学无法在新不列颠民族文学中获得有分量的地位，更意味着威尔士文化传承者的缺失。换言之，以去威尔士语的方式来获取新民族身份的做法不仅没有让威尔士摆脱自己的殖民地命运，反而使之丧失民族自我叙事能力，从而越来越深地沦为英格兰的一个“地方”，其独特的政治、经济、思想文化甚至生活方式都在日益英格兰化。基于此我们有理由怀疑，赫曼斯在歌谣集中反复使用“蒙纳”代替“安格尔西”，是在以一种历史戏讽的方式“应和”这场英语化的“语言障碍消除运动”，隐晦地批判英格兰对威尔士施行的强权内殖民政策和当时威尔士民众以去威尔士化谋求新文化身份的做法：英语通用化正如当年的罗马语通用化，正在并将更深广地破坏威尔士语及其文化的生存空间，倘若威尔士人尤其是精英们继续扮演扼杀威尔士语/文化共谋的角色，而不思改变现状，必将导致威尔士语/文化的彻底消亡，最终将连威尔士民族圣岛的本名亦为人所忘，这是怎样一种民族耻辱？！

在史密斯看来，即使古老的族群语言衰落了，但通过返归族群方言，挖掘族群历史，甚至是“创造一种关于民族共同体的神话、历史和语言传统的普遍自觉意识”(p. 19)，可以使族群观念具象化地保留在族群成员认知之中。因此和其他威尔士游吟诗会成员一样，赫曼斯也将巴德作为她复现威尔士文化的重要一步，认为他们是诚实高贵的和平爱好者[①]，恰是他们对古老故事的回忆与赞颂，使久远的历史历历在目（《森林之焰》，*The Mountain-Fires*），也只有他们的小调才能将日暮中美丽而荒凉的祖国唤醒（《王子玛多格的告别》，*Prince Madog's Farewell*）。而巴德的歌谣自然离不开孕育它的地方——威尔士尤其是突显威尔士地理景观特性的山地。因此赫曼斯在《巴德的临终预言》(*The Dying Bard's Prophecy*)、《塔里耶森的预言》(*Taliesin's Prophecy*）等诗中坚称，尽管传承威尔士历史的巴德已经亡故，但因为我们的语言、历史和文化都揉在我们的血液传承里，只要青山依旧在，那令人骄傲的语言（文化）便一直都在：

成并强化“英语更高级”的思想。

[①] 海曼斯在 1823 年 5 月 14 日的信中描述了古游吟诗人的衣着与身份，认为他们是信奉真理的完全和平使者，所到之处，战争会立即终止。(see Chorley, Henry Fothergill. *Memorials of Mrs. Hermans with Illustrations of Her Literary Character from Her Private Correspondence* (vol.1). Saunders and Otley, 1836. pp. 98-99.)

一句预言在爆裂声中由远及近，
告之我这高贵言语将永不消音
自由者将拨动蒙纳秘林之竖琴。
[…………]
只要亚文群山仍高耸入云，
只要群山仍覆主宰风雨之秘林，
则帝国犹存，则高贵言语不消音
自由者将拨动蒙纳秘林之竖琴！（Hemans，1860，pp. 148-149）

此时的威尔士已经不仅是“一方土地的地理方位与物理空间”，也“是人与自然地点建立意义的精神空间”（罗易扉，pp. 148-149）。尽管外来入侵者严重破坏了威尔士人的生产方式、生活方式、语言文化和宗教信仰等，但只要作为威尔士人地理基因的青山秘林犹在，作为历史传承与地理叙事的载体——威尔士语便始终都在，威尔士人便可以通过一次次重拾神性的民谣，重读“印刻在地理标志和地图上的社会关系”（Azaryahu & Golan，p. 181），内化具有民族意识形态潜文本的族群记忆，重归民族历史之根，在回忆中再构自我的当下身份认同，以延续和复兴威尔士文化。

因此，赫曼斯在诗中以深切的恋地之情呼吁文学同仁重归威尔士本土，回到圣山斯诺登山顶的圣岩厄雷利、巴德朝圣地卡德伊德里斯山——那些承载着民族独特文化记忆的文学圣地。她主张与地方结成有机整体，在独特的地理景观中寻获叙事的才思，继续讲述这片土地的久远传说，以此传承民族的历史文化。借由这种人地关系的呈现，她诗意地申明了自己的创作志向：成为当代的巴德，重返诗魂故里，以想象书写威尔士的地理景观，追溯威尔士的抗争史，构建一个充满诗意的古老世界，高歌先辈为民族自由而不懈求索的精神。在英格兰工业化浪潮不断侵蚀威尔士土地与语言的背景下，此举本质上是对威尔士人民的“方言动员”（vernacular mobilization）（Smith，p. 4），即以故土的地理意象与威尔士语为依托，凝聚族群认同，共筑民族共同体，复兴民族文化。赫曼斯在《威尔士歌谣》中对威尔士地理、语言与文化之关联的理解，以及对威尔士语传承的期许，在威尔士国歌创作者埃文・詹姆斯（Evan James，1856）那里得到了有力的回应：国歌最后两句唱道——“只要大海依然守护我们圣洁的大地，愿古老的语言得以延续。”

然而赫曼斯这一对“原生性”族裔情感的唤起，并非意在政治分离，而是在不列颠共同框架内的为威尔士争取文化识别与表征自主。赫曼斯将罗马入侵史作为歌谣集的书写对象，赞颂为威尔士民族自由而浴血奋战的英雄先辈，因为这段历史是威尔士人耳熟能详的民族记忆，是所有威尔士人在历史寻根中特有的共同意识与交流基础（Hemans，1841，p. 5），也是他们共享的情感结构的重要组成部分；但她在《凯萨伦的凯旋》（*Casallon's Triumph*）中又看似矛盾地说：

自熠熠闪光之南境，
太阳神安家之堂殿，
罗马军团冠簪红缨
涉重洋，扎营不列颠。（Hemans，1860，p. 150）

太阳神是古希腊与古罗马共同尊奉的重要神祇，执掌光明与艺术，能够为人间消灾祛厄、驱散阴霾，亦是向世间播撒文明之光的神祇。罗马军团来自太阳神的故乡，意味着他们是理性与光明的使者，必将为他们所驻跸的不列颠带来文明的荣光。由此，赫曼斯似乎在暗示：尽管罗马军团带来了被奴役的现实，但那却是文明进步所必须付出的代价。值得注意的是，她在此处将此前频繁使用的“威尔士”悄然替换为“不列颠”，不仅点明威尔士是不列颠民族的一部分，更隐晦地申明威尔士作为不列颠文明火种播撒源的自豪感。与此同时，诗人对待罗马入侵的矛盾心理，又有意无意间折射出她对英格兰入侵的复杂态度：罗马治下的威尔士在政治、经济、语言与宗教等方面发生了剧变，恰如英格兰入侵对威尔士传统文化造成的近乎灭绝的冲击；然而作为第一个被工业英格兰入侵、接受工业革命洗礼的民族，威尔士似乎又应当感到骄傲，因为这意味着它有望甩掉落后的标签，成为工业文明火种的播撒者。在这一逻辑下，赫曼斯为已然失势的威尔士指认了一条在新生不列颠民族中复兴自我身份的路径——落后地方（威尔士）应积极接受先进地方（英格兰）的启蒙与帮助。赫曼斯这套叙事事实上为威尔士的经济依附地位提供一种道德与历史的合理化包装：它将不平等的中心—边缘关系美化为文明传播的阶梯，将本土原本追求独立发展的文化愿景，置换为依附英格兰文明秩序的被动想象，从而在符号层面消解了本土经济文化想象中潜藏的抵抗意识。于是，她的“复兴之路”在无意间暴露出她已沦为英格兰对内施行殖民强权政策的共谋者。正是从这个意义上说，布里韦称赫曼斯为“不列颠世界主义者”是有道理的（Brewer，p. 169）。

正如约翰斯通所言，“每个人对威尔士性的理解由他对关于威尔士概念的理解及其亲身经历组成”（Johnstone，p. 51）。19 世纪初，工业革命与社会改良深刻冲击着威尔士的地理风貌，也瓦解了其历史记忆、语言传统与文化根基，原本依托乡土形成的本土经济文化想象，在经济依附英格兰的格局下不断被消解，威尔士族群在不列颠民族的宏大叙事中逐渐丧失话语空间。为走出这一困境，威尔士精英阶层开始主动建构充满诗意的古典威尔士图景，重塑“威尔士性”，试图借此修复日渐破碎的民族经济文化想象，凝聚涣散的族群认同。赫曼斯的创作正是这一文化自救工程的典型体现：她以历史想象铺陈山顶圣岩、汪洋圣岛、黑屿秘林等极具威尔士特质的地理意象，虚构出人与自然相融共生的德鲁伊德诗意世界，重新塑造契合时代的民族精神内核。她希望以此唤醒威尔士人的民族自尊，使其在不列颠国家体系内重新确立文化身份，获得参与不列颠国家民族建构的合法地位。

赫曼斯在建构这一虚拟地域时所展现的浪漫想象，以及对自然与早期凯尔特文化的推崇，奠定了其浪漫主义诗人的特质；而她在书写威尔士地理图景时流露的文化认同与民族忧患，又赋予其强烈的现实关怀，使她的创作兼具了时代与民族使命感。正是在浪漫想象与现实关切的交织中，赫曼斯以虚拟地方书写重构民族经济文化想象，将民族危机转化为诗学力量，为威尔士探索出一条以文化符号争夺话语权、以地理诗学对抗经济依附的民族发展路径。

基金项目：本文系国家社科基金项目“英国浪漫主义文学中的地方书写研究”（项目编号：18BWW061）的阶段性成果之一。

Funding: This work was supported by the National Social Science Fund of China (Grant No. 18BWW061) entitled *A Study on Place Writing in British Romantic Literature*.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID
Long Ruicui[ID] https://orcid.org/0009-0007-1442-3927

References

Azaryahu, Maoz & Arnon Golan (2001). "(Re)Naming the Landscape: The Formation of the Hebrew Map of Israel 1949-1960." *Journal of Historical Geography* (02): 178-195.

Berry, Oliver & David Atkinson (2010). *Discover Great Britain*. Lonely Planet Publications.

Brewer, William (2003). "Felicia Hemans, Byronic Cosmopolitanism and the Ancient Welsh Bards." In Gerard Carruthers & Alan Rawes (Eds.), *English Romanticism and the Celtic World*. Cambridge University Press: 167-181.

Chorley, Henry Fothergill (1836). *Memorials of Mrs. Hermans with Illustrations of Her Literary Character from Her Private Correspondence* (vol.1). Saunders and Otley.

段义孚（2019）：《恋地情结》，志丞&刘苏译。商务印书馆。

[Tuan, Yi-Fu (2019). *Topophilia*, translated by Zhi Cheng & Liu Su. The Commercial Press.]

Groom, Nick (2014). "Gothic and Celtic Revivals: Antiquity and the Archipelago." In Robert Demaria & Heesok Chang & Samantha Zacher (Eds.), *A Companion to British Literature Volume III: Long Eighteenth-Century Literature 1660-1837*. John Wiley & Sons: 361-379.

Hemans, Felicia (1841). *The Poetical Works of Mrs. Felicia Hemans*. Grigg and Elliot.

--- (1860). *Poems of Felicia Hemans*. William Blackwood and Sons.

Jenkins, Bethan Mair (2009). *Concepts of Prydeindod (Britishness) in 18th century Anglo-Welsh Writing*. With Special Reference to the Works of Lewis Morris, Evan Evans, and Edward Williams. PhD Dissertation: University of Oxford.

Jessop, Bob (2008). *State Power: A Strategic-Relation Approach*. Polity Press.

--- (2015). "Crisis construal in the North Atlantic Financial Crisis and the Eurozone crisis." *Competition & Change* (02): 95-112.

Johnstone, Jennifer (2012). *Reinterpreting Welshness: Songs and Choral Membership in Cultural Identity*. PhD Dissertation: Kent State University.

Jones, John Robert (1966). *Prydeindod*. Christopher Davies.

Jones, Owen & Edward Williams & William Owen Pughe (Eds.) (1870). *The Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales*. Thomas Gee.

罗易扉（2023）：“地方、记忆与艺术：回到地方场所与往昔的历史经验”，《清华大学学报（哲学社会科学版）》（02）：148-157。

[Luo Yifei (2023). "Place, Memory and Art: A Return to Local Places and Past Historical Experiences." *Journal of Tsinghua University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* (02): 148-157.]

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1915). *The Political Writings of Rousseau*, vol.2, edited by C. E. Vaughan. Cambridge University Press.

Rowse, Alfred Leslie (1955). *The Expansion of Elizabethan England.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Sanchez, Juan (2014). "'England and Spain' and 'The Domestic Affections': Felicia Hemans and the politics of literature." *New Directions in Romanticism and Gender: Essays in Honor of Anne K Mellor*. The Johns Hopkins University Press: 399-416.

Simpson, David (2013). *Romanticism and the Question of the Stranger.* University of Chicago Press.

安东尼·D·史密斯（2018）:《民族认同》，王娟译。译林出版社。

[Smith, Anthony (2018). *National Identity*, translated by Wang Juan. Yilin Press.]

Smith, Dai (1993). *Aneurin Bevan and the World of South Wales*. University of Wales Press.

汤友云、季水河（2018）：“雷蒙·威廉斯小说《为马诺德而战》中的共同体意识”，《湘潭大学学报（哲学社会科学版）》（04）：127-131。

[Tan Youyun & Ji Shuihe (2018). "On Raymond Williams' Consciousness of Community in *Fight for Manod*." *Journal of Xiangtan University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* (04): 127-131.]

Williams, Raymond (2003). *Who Speaks for Wales?: Nation, Culture, Identity*. Edited by Daniel Williams, University of Wales Press.

Wu, Duncan (2012). *Romanticism: An Anthology.* Wiley-Blackwell.

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

JESL, **Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026, pp.151-161.**

Print ISSN: 3107-3492; Online ISSN: 3107-3506

Journal homepage: https://www.jesljournal.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.64058/jesl260111mwise

A Milestone Work in the Interdisciplinary Study of English Literature and Medicine: A Review of *Research on Disease Awareness and National Anxiety in 16th and 17th Centuries' English Literature*

Liu Lihui

Abstract: Tao Jiusheng's *Research on Disease Awareness and National Anxiety in the 16th and 17th Centuries' English Literature* is a pioneering academic work. The book aligns with the development trend of interdisciplinary research, systematically examining the complex relationship between disease metaphors and national anxiety in early modern English literature from the intersecting perspectives of literature and medicine. The work not only expands the scope of domestic Renaissance literature research but also constructs a literary pathological criticism paradigm with distinctive Chinese characteristics, drawing on Western theoretical frameworks. It provides a methodological model for interdisciplinary literary studies and demonstrates the theoretical awareness and innovative potential of Chinese scholars in participating in international academic dialogue.

Keywords: the 16th and 17th Centuries' English Literature; Interdisciplinary Research; Literary Pathology; Disease Awareness; National Anxiety

Author Biography: Liu Lihui, PhD, Professor and Doctoral Supervisor, School of Foreign Languages, Southwest University, China. Research interests: Early modern

Received: 20 Apr. 2026 / Revised: 15 May 2026 / Accepted: 01 Jun. 2026 / Published online: 15 Jun. 2026 / Print published: 25 Jun. 2026.

English literature, literary geography, Anglo-American modernist literature, and cognitive literary studies. E-mail: liulihui99@163.com.

标题：英国文学与医学跨学科的里程碑著作——评《英国 16、17 世纪文学中的疾病意识与国家焦虑研究》

摘要：陶久胜的《英国 16、17 世纪文学中的疾病意识与国家焦虑研究》是一部具有开创性意义的学术著作。著作顺应跨学科研究的发展趋势，从文学与医学的交叉视角系统考察早期现代英国文学中疾病隐喻与国家焦虑之间的复杂关系。著作不仅拓展了国内文艺复兴文学研究视域，亦在借鉴西方理论的基础上，构建了具有中国特色的文学病理学批评范式，为跨学科文学研究提供了方法论的示范，并展现出中国学者在参与国际学术对话中的理论自觉与创新潜力。

关键词：英国 16、17 世纪文学；跨学科研究；文学病理学；疾病意识；国家焦虑

作者简介：刘立辉，博士，西南大学外国语学院教授，博士生导师，目前的学术研究兴趣：早期现代英国文学、文学地理学、英美现代主义文学、认知文学。邮箱：E-mail: liulihui99@163.com.

1. Introduction

Interdisciplinary research on literature and medicine in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. The physician John Charles Bucknill, in his work, *The Medical Knowledge of Shakespeare* (1860), systematically catalogued the various disease motifs in Shakespeare's plays and analyzed early modern English conceptions of health and recovery from a professional medical perspective. At this stage, scholarship was largely grounded in medical empiricism, focusing on identifying specific illnesses represented in literary texts and correlating them with contemporary therapeutic practices. From the twentieth century onward, the rise of postmodernism, semiotics, rhetoric, and modern psychology opened new avenues for interdisciplinary inquiry between literature and medicine. Scholarly attention gradually shifted toward the metaphorical functions of disease and its cultural and political implications, with particular emphasis on the role of medicine in shaping identity, power relations, and emotional expression. For instance, Margaret Healy, in her monograph *Fictions of Disease in Early Modern England: Bodies, Plagues and Politics* (2001), offers a comprehensive analysis of representations of plague, syphilis, and obesity across early modern literature, medical treatises, travel narratives, and political pamphlets. She examines the relationship between disease narratives and social transformation in England, demonstrating how early modern writers employed notions of the natural body to interpret forms of disorder in political, religious, and economic spheres, and thereby revealing the complex cultural and psychological dimensions embedded in the rhetoric of disease.

However, existing scholarship has paid relatively limited attention to the relationship between disease consciousness and national anxiety in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature, and has not yet provided a systematic account of how early medical humanities intersect with notions of nationhood in this period. The monograph *Research on Disease Awareness and National Anxiety in the 16th and 17th Centuries' English Literature*, published in 2025 by Peking University Press and authored by Tao Jiusheng, undoubtedly fills this scholarly gap and stands as a pioneering academic contribution. Integrating perspectives from medicine, theology, political science, and economics, the book offers an in-depth investigation into how disease metaphors in early modern English literature reflect the anxiety surrounding the formation of an emergent national identity. The study not only provides a novel theoretical framework and methodological approach for interdisciplinary literary research, thereby deepening scholarly understanding of early modern English literature, but also innovatively establishes a distinctively Chinese paradigm for the study of literary pathology. The following section outlines the main contents of the book and subsequently evaluates its distinctive features from three perspectives.

2. Overview of Contents

Chapter One, "Disease, the Theory of the Body Politic, and National Anxiety in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" takes a wide range of contemporary medical treatises as its primary corpus and offers a systematic account of early modern theories of disease alongside the concept of the body politic. By tracing the legacy of ancient Greek humoral theory, the medieval theological tradition that moralized disease, and the Renaissance revival and development of classical medicine, the chapter demonstrates how disease gradually evolved from a purely physiological phenomenon into a discursive construct laden with ethical and political significance. It further provides a focused exposition of the theory of the body politic, situating it within the historical context of recurrent plague outbreaks and crises of monarchy in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. In doing so, it shows how this particular conjuncture fostered a powerful social imaginary of the "diseased body of the nation." The chapter not only establishes the theoretical framework for the study as a whole, but also reveals the deep entanglement of medical discourse and political imagination in early modern England, thereby laying a solid intellectual foundation for interpreting disease metaphors in the literature of the period.

Chapter Two, "Melancholy Bodies and Monarchical Anxiety in Revenge Tragedy" takes revenge drama as its central object of analysis, examining how melancholic figures in plays such as *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Hamlet*, and *The Revenger's Tragedy* deploy the metaphor of the sword to register crises of kingship. The chapter begins with a review of transformations in England's political structure during this period, arguing that, against the backdrop of increasing monarchical centralization and bureaucratic corruption, revenge tragedy emerged as a crucial literary form for interrogating the legitimacy of rule. At the same time, the influx into England of the European theory of the "melancholic genius" furnished the intellectual elite with a discursive framework through which to articulate disappointment, resentment, and political anxiety. Within this context, the chapter offers a close reading of melancholic avengers, who assume the role of "surgeons" to the body politic, wielding swords as "scalpels" to perform a kind of bloodletting on a diseased political body. The chapter also addresses the limitations of a static analogy between the individual body and the body politic. Taking *Julius Caesar* as a case study, it demonstrates how the body politic undergoes dynamic transformation in the aftermath of regicide, intensifying Brutus's melancholy and thereby revealing the profound anxiety experienced by the avenger both before and after the act of killing the monarch.

Chapter Three, "Madness of the Body and Anxiety over National-Religious Identity in the Poetry of John Milton" takes Milton's poetry as its primary focus and explores how he constructs a Protestant national identity through the experience of trauma. The chapter begins with a systematic examination of the dual meanings of "madness" in the period surrounding the English Civil War, showing that it functioned both as a form of divine ecstasy in theological discourse and as a category of mental illness in medical thought. Against this backdrop, the chapter analyzes how Milton mobilizes the trope of madness to narrate national failure and collective trauma, aligning the collapse of the Puritan republic with the Fall of humankind, and thereby exposing the hypocrisy, fanaticism, and self-corrosive tendencies within England itself. It then turns to a close reading of *Samson Agonistes,* demonstrating how the ambivalent nature of madness—poised between the divine and the pathological—is generated by traumatic melancholy and ultimately transformed into a force for self-repentance and redemption. In this sense, the chapter argues that Milton wields "madness" as a disciplinary and redemptive instrument, through which he seeks to forge a purified Protestant nation, while simultaneously articulating deep anxieties surrounding national religious identity.

Chapter Four, "Garrulous Rumor as a Metaphor of National Disease and Anxiety over Governmental Authority in the Poetry of John Donne" takes Donne's works as its central focus and examining how social maladies such as judicial corruption and misinformation threaten governmental authority. The chapter begins with a comprehensive consideration of the historical and intellectual contexts of Donne's writings, noting that his early satires frequently deploy images of vomiting and plague to allegorize corruption within the judicial system and injustices in land distribution. By contrast, his later works and sermons turn toward defending the doctrine of the divine right of kings, recasting rumor, slander, and other forms of "loquacious speech" as diseases that erode the political body. In this way, Donne's works expose the crisis of public opinion faced by the early Stuart dynasty and convey a profound sense of anxiety over political disorder. The chapter further demonstrates that in *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, the loss of control over public discourse forms an intertextual parallel with the poet's own physical illness. Exaggerated and excessive rumor is likened to a surplus of bodily humors, while the threat posed by social disease to national security mirrors the suicidal impulses arising from Donne's own bodily affliction. Through this parallel, the chapter reveals Donne's deep-seated anxiety over the erosion of governmental authority.

Chapter Five, "Utopian Worlds in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Prose and Anxiety over the Church of England" takes the works of Thomas More and Robert Burton as its primary case studies, examining how utopian imagination articulates visions of the ideal state. The chapter argues that, in a context marked by recurrent plague outbreaks and intense religious conflict, utopia should not be understood as a purely fantastical construct, but rather as a form of literary intervention into the "diseases" of contemporary society. In *Utopia,* More constructs an ideal commonwealth that combines religious piety with sanitary rationality. Its strict systems of public hygiene and moral discipline not only respond to the realities of epidemic disease, but also implicitly encode a Catholic vision for reforming the Church of England. By contrast, in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Burton imagines a healthy polity through geometrically ordered and rationalized spatial arrangements, positioning this ideal against the social "pathologies" produced by Puritan extremism. The chapter further observes that the utopian visions articulated by More and others ultimately remain unrealizable due to the monopolization of authority and the stagnation of reform within the Church of England. The widening gap between visionary projection and historical reality, the author suggests, lays bare a profound unease regarding the trajectory of the Church of England.

Chapter Six, "External Forces as Metaphors of National Disease and Anxiety over State Security in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Drama" takes the plays of Thomas Dekker and his contemporaries as its central focus, examining how governments appropriate a logic akin to "countering poison with poison" in order to preserve the health of the state. The chapter offers a detailed account of the influence of Paracelsus's pharmacological principle of using toxins therapeutically on early modern functionalist theories of the political organism. Within this framework, foreign groups and heterodox forces are construed as "pathogens" invading the national body, while the state sustains its vitality by resisting and managing such threats, thereby contributing to the consolidation of a national community. The discussion then turns to close readings of *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Witch of Edmonton*, and *The Whore of Babylon*, analyzing how Jews, Catholic forces, and other external agents are represented as dangerous yet manipulable "toxins." It further demonstrates how both state and church deploy such representations to legitimize repressive measures against these groups. In this way, the chapter reveals how early modern English drama mobilizes pathological metaphors to articulate anxieties over national security amid religious conflict and international pressures.

Chapter Seven, "Foreign Polities as Metaphors of National Disease and Anxiety in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Drama" takes the plays of Ben Jonson and other dramatists as its primary corpus, examining how disease discourse is mobilized to imagine international relations with England positioned at the center of an emergent imperial order. The chapter begins by situating this development within the historical context of the post–Age of Exploration world, when medical discourse increasingly permeated political and cultural thought. It argues that early modern playwrights, by integrating frameworks drawn from pathology, geography, and political economy, reconfigured the international order as a dynamic medical geography structured by binaries of "health" and "disease," as well as center and periphery. Within this conceptual matrix, *Richard II* and *Henry VI, Part 2* construct relations between England and Ireland as a "patient–disease" dynamic, thereby legitimizing colonial intervention as a form of therapeutic treatment. *The Comedy of Errors*, by contrast, binds narratives of plague to those of commerce, enabling England to be repositioned as both "healthy" and central within the European geopolitical imagination. In *Volpon*e, the dual capacity of medicine to heal and to poison reflects a miasmatic understanding of disease causation, revealing how commodity exchange may insidiously erode the integrity of the political body. Collectively, these dramatic texts register a persistent anxiety regarding England's position within an expanding network of international relations.

3. Brief Review

3.1 A Masterwork in Interdisciplinary Studies of English Literature and Medicine

As a major trend in contemporary scholarship, interdisciplinary research has propelled literary studies from the analysis of isolated texts toward a culturally oriented mode of interpretation grounded in multiple fields. In 1926, psychologist Robert S. Woodworth first articulated the concept of "interdisciplinarity" at the inaugural meeting of the U.S. Social Science Research Council, emphasizing that the Council's mission was to promote synthesis among two or more disciplines that have been separated by specialization (Frank, 1988, p. 92). This formulation challenged the rigid boundaries of disciplinary division and facilitated a shift in the social sciences from closed, specialized systems toward more open forms of intellectual exchange and integration. By the mid-twentieth century, interdisciplinary approaches had become a significant theoretical turn in the humanities. In 1961, the American scholar Henry H. Remak systematically defined the interdisciplinary nature of literary studies, arguing that comparative literature is "the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and the study of the relationships between literature on the one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, architecture, music), philosophy, history, the social sciences (e.g., politics, economics, sociology), the sciences, religion, etc., on the other" (Remak, 1961, p. 3). This definition expanded literary studies from textual analysis within national boundaries to a comprehensive cultural inquiry, positioning literature as a key medium for understanding social, historical, and intellectual development. In 1965, the *Levin Report* issued by the American Comparative Literature Association further underscored the importance of interdisciplinary approaches, advocating close engagement between comparative literature and fields such as linguistics, art history, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and anthropology (Bernheimer, 1995, p. 22). From this point onward, interdisciplinary literary studies evolved from spontaneous convergence to theoretical self-consciousness and systematic formation, becoming a defining tendency in contemporary literary scholarship.

Research on Disease Awareness and National Anxiety in the 16th and 17th Centuries' English Literature represents a significant contribution by Chinese scholarship to the interdisciplinary field of literature and medicine. Responding to the contemporary trend toward integration within the humanities, the study draws upon multiple disciplines—including literary studies, medicine, political science, theology, and economics—to investigate the relationship between the "diseases of the natural body" and those of the "body politic" in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature. In doing so, it reveals how disease metaphors function as a lens through which the national anxieties of early modern England are refracted. Adopting a New Historicist critical approach, the book places the literary works of authors such as William Shakespeare, John Milton, and John Donne in dialogue with a wide range of contemporaneous "non-literary" texts, including medical treatises, official documents, sermons, and economic pamphlets, thereby offering a systematic account of the dynamic interactions among medicine, literature, and politics in early modern England. At the same time, the study engages with a range of modern critical frameworks—such as literary pathology, theories of disease metaphor, body criticism, psychoanalysis, and cultural studies—to examine how various forms of social anxiety, including monarchical corruption, religious extremism, the circulation of rumor, and the perceived infiltration of heretical and foreign forces, are articulated within literary texts. It demonstrates how early modern English writers mobilized the language of disease to reflect upon the crises confronting the kingdom in religious, political, and economic domains. By situating literary texts within the intersecting discursive fields of medical history, political philosophy, religious thought, and economic discourse, the book establishes a clear and operational paradigm for interdisciplinary research at the intersection of literature and medicine, underscoring the critical importance of such approaches for uncovering the deeper intellectual and cultural meanings embedded in literary works.

3.2 Early Modern English Literary Studies from an Interdisciplinary Perspective of Literature and Medicine

Research on Disease Awareness and National Anxiety in the 16th and 17th Centuries' English Literature represents a pioneering contribution to the study of early modern English literature within Chinese scholarship. For a considerable period, research on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature in China has primarily focused on areas such as humanism, Western cosmology, garden culture, Baroque art, textual scholarship, discourses of power, legal studies, astronomy, geography, and psychology. Since the 1980s, propelled by the development of multidisciplinary approaches and diverse theoretical paradigms, scholars have produced a wealth of insightful interpretations of early modern English literature. These studies have achieved notable progress in both scope and depth, broadening the intellectual horizon of the field and laying a solid theoretical foundation for subsequent research. Nevertheless, relatively little attention has been paid to medical discourse and the representation of disease in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature. Existing studies are largely confined to analyses of disease metaphors in the plays of William Shakespeare. On the whole, interdisciplinary research exploring the relationship between early modern English literature and medical culture remains comparatively underdeveloped in the Chinese academic context and calls for further systematic investigation. In this regard, *Research on Disease Awareness and National Anxiety in the 16th and 17th Centuries' English Literature* undoubtedly fills a significant gap in the field.

The work approaches Renaissance English literature from an interdisciplinary perspective that brings together literary and medical inquiry, offering a systematic examination of disease consciousness and national anxiety in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. During this period, recurrent outbreaks of epidemics such as the Black Death and syphilis contributed to a shift from humoral theory toward etiological explanations that emphasized external causes of disease, whereby illness came to be understood as an invasive and transmissible substance. This transformation in medical thinking provided a conceptual foundation for political metaphor: foreign powers, heterodox ideologies, and social unrest were increasingly figured as "pathogens" invading the body of the nation. At the same time, the theory of the "body politic" gained wide circulation, conceptualizing the state as an organic entity analogous to the human body. Within this intellectual framework, writers drew upon medical discourse to articulate social disorder, employing bodily illness as a metaphor for political corruption and moral decay, and thereby establishing disease as a central trope for expressing national anxiety. Building on this premise, the monograph by Tao Jiusheng offers a systematic account of the roots of disease discourse in classical medicine, Christian ethics, and political theology, while also exploring how recurrent plagues and the corruption of monarchy in Renaissance England shaped social perceptions of the "diseased body of the nation." It proceeds to analyze in depth how different literary genres of the Renaissance deploy disease metaphors to represent national anxiety: revenge tragedy reflects crises of kingship through motifs of melancholy and violence; the poetry of John Milton uses "madness" to articulate anxiety over national religious identity; the works of John Donne map rumor and disease onto judicial corruption and the erosion of governmental authority; the utopian writings of Thomas More and Robert Burton respond to the institutional impasse of ecclesiastical reform; and dramatic works more broadly express concerns over national security by pathologizing foreign forces under conditions of religious and international pressure. By situating Renaissance English literature within an interdisciplinary framework that integrates literary studies and the history of medicine, the book offers a comprehensive account of the cultural and political meanings of disease representation. It demonstrates how literature in early modern England participated in the imagining of the nation, diagnosed social maladies, and contributed to the shaping of national consciousness. In doing so, the study not only expands the scope of Renaissance literary scholarship but also provides an illuminating methodological pathway for analyzing the representation of disease in literature.

3.3 A Distinctively Chinese Paradigm of Literary Pathological Criticism

At present, Western scholarship has developed a relatively mature theoretical framework in the field of literary pathology. In *Illness as Metaphor* (1978), Susan Sontag offers an in-depth exploration of the metaphorical meanings of disease across different contexts, arguing that any serious illness whose causes remain obscure and whose treatment proves ineffective has historically been invested with specific cultural significance (Sontag, 1978, p. 58). In this sense, disease is not merely a physiological condition but also a symbolic construct embedded within broader socio-cultural frameworks. Accordingly, Sontag reexamines representations of illness in literature through an interdisciplinary lens encompassing medicine, political science, theology, economics, and military studies. She traces the shifting cultural meanings of disease from ancient Greece through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and onward through Romanticism and modernism to contemporary society, demonstrating how illness has continually been reconfigured as a latent language for interpreting the body, power, and moral order within different historical contexts. Sontag's work significantly advanced the study of disease narratives in literature and opened new avenues for analyzing the political, economic, religious, and cultural dimensions of early modern English texts. Subsequent scholarship has further enriched this field. The concept of "social pathology" proposed by Jonathan Gil Harris, the study of disease fictions in early modern England by Margaret Healy, and the analysis of plague culture as "sign systems" by Ernest B. Gilman have all contributed to the expansion of Western literary pathology. However, existing Western approaches to literary pathology have often overlooked the dynamic relationship between disease discourse and the formation of the nation, and have yet to fully examine how literature, through medical metaphor, participates in the construction of national identity and political order.

Research on Disease Awareness and National Anxiety in the 16th and 17th Centuries' English Literature responds to the limitations of Western scholarship on literary pathology by constructing a distinctively Chinese critical paradigm in this field. In contrast to the dominant Western tradition of cultural criticism centered primarily on "disease as metaphor", the monograph moves beyond the mere inheritance of existing theoretical frameworks. Through a systematic reading of early modern English literature, it expands the study of disease from the level of individual bodily experience to broader dimensions such as national identity, religious politics, and social anxiety, thereby proposing what may be termed a "Chinese approach to literary pathology" with greater intellectual-historical depth. Tao Jiusheng explicitly argues that "early modern medical theory is not a scientific language, but a form of discourse and rhetorical terminology with strong ideological tendencies and clear orientations toward state values. Physicians, monarchs, political commentators, clergy, lawyers, and economists all employed the language of disease to express their understanding, reflection, and critique of various problems in English society" (Tao Jiusheng, 2025, p. 413). On this basis, he emphasizes that disease discourse in early modern England operates not only at the level of physiological reference but also as a crucial metaphorical resource for articulating the body politic, social order, and cultural identity. Accordingly, through close textual analysis of disease imagery in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature, Tao reveals a dual structure of pathology in both the natural body and the body politic, and examines the literal, metaphorical, and metonymic dimensions of disease across different historical contexts. He demonstrates how disease becomes a representational form through which the operations of state power, religious conflict, and social psychological unrest are articulated. From this interdisciplinary vantage point, Tao reconstructs the analytical nexus of disease, body, and nation, guided by a distinctly Chinese scholarly sensibility and problem-consciousness, and thereby formulates a critical paradigm of literary pathology that is both differentiated from Western models and marked by its own intellectual and cultural specificity.

4. Conclusion

Research on Disease Awareness and National Anxiety in the 16th and 17th Centuries' English Literature responds to contemporary intellectual developments by actively constructing a literary pathological critical paradigm with distinct Chinese characteristics. The study's interdisciplinary orientation and strong sense of historical consciousness align closely with current efforts to build an autonomous Chinese academic discourse. By situating disease discourse within the broader contexts of state governance and national identity, the work moves beyond the traditional emphasis in literary pathology on metaphor alone, opening up new theoretical possibilities for reexamining representations of illness within China's own literary tradition. Indeed, Chinese literature itself sustains a rich and continuous tradition of disease narrative: from the notion of "malady " (cuo) in *The Book of Songs*, to the motif of frailty in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, from the depiction of tuberculosis in the writings of Lu Xun to contemporary "cancer narratives." These representations of illness have remained deeply intertwined with the historical transformations, ethical orders, and psychological structures of Chinese society, serving as vehicles for profound reflection on national destiny, social pathology, and individual existence. By constructing a critical framework of literary pathology through the study of early modern English literature, Tao Jiusheng not only provides a new analytical lens for understanding disease discourse in Western literary traditions, but also offers valuable methodological resources for Chinese scholars seeking to reinterpret and theorize disease narratives within their own cultural context. Through its integrated approach—placing disease within the interconnected domains of the body politic, social governance, and cultural identity—the study lays a solid foundation for the development of a literary pathological criticism rooted in Chinese intellectual traditions while possessing cross-cultural explanatory power. In doing so, it highlights the originality and theoretical self-awareness of Chinese scholarship in its engagement with global humanities discourse.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Liu Lihui ID https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9569-2565

References

Bucknill, J. C. (1860). *The Medical Knowledge of Shakespeare*. Longman & Co., Paternoster Row.

Ernest, B. G. (2009). *Plague Writing in Early Modern England*. The University of Chicago Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226294117.001.0001

Frank, R. (1988). "'Interdisciplinary': the first half-century". In E. G. Stanley, & T. F. Hoad (Eds.), *Words: for Robert Burchfield's Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (pp. 91-102). D. S. Brewer.

Harris, J. G. (1998). *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England*. Cambridge University Press.

Healy, M. (2001). *Fictions of Disease in Early Modern England: Bodies, Plagues and Politic*s. Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230510647

Levin, H. (1995). "The Levin Report, 1965". In C. Bernheimer (Ed.), *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism* (pp. 21-27). Johns Hopkins University Press.

Remak, H. H. H. (1961). "Comparative Literature, its Definition and Function". In N. P. Stallknecht & H. Frenz (Eds.), *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective* (pp. 3-37). Southern Illinois University Press.

Sontag, S. (1978). *Illness As Metaphor*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

陶久胜（2025）：英国 16、17 世纪文学中的疾病意识与国家焦虑研究。北京大学出版社。

[Tao Jiusheng (2025). *Research on Disease Awareness and National Anxiety in the 16th and 17th Centuries' English Literature*. Peking University Press.]

JESL

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

JESL, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026, pp.162-170.

Print ISSN: 3107-3492; Online ISSN: 3107-3506

Journal homepage: https://www.jesljournal.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.64058/jesl260112ivsrd

HIEP Academic Publishing

Idolatry, Value, and Signs: A Review of David Hawkes's *Idols of the Marketplace*

Shen Xianmin

Abstract: *Idols of the Marketplace* offers a new interpretation of early modern English thought by showing how writers from Shakespeare to Bunyan understood the emerging commercialization as conceptually homologous to religious idolatry. Hawkes traces this logic through Aristotelian teleology and the prohibition of idolatry, contending that the violation of natural ends (telos) by human custom (nomos) was seen as a shared problem across economics, aesthetics, theology, and politics. The review summarizes Hawkes's main argument across nine chapters, places it within debates over Marxist historiography and the economic humanities, and assesses its contributions and limitations. The review concludes that Hawkes's analysis of representation, value, and signification remains highly relevant to the cultural logic of modern capitalism.

Keywords: idolatry; commodity fetishism; early modern English literature; Marxist historiography; economic humanities

Author Biography: Xianmin Shen, Associate Professor, School of Foreign Studies, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, Shanghai, China. Research direction: contemporary American literature, Ecocriticism, gender studies. E-mail: shen.xianmin@mail.sufe.edu.cn.

Received: 01 May 2026 / Revised: 20 May 2026 / Accepted: 05 Jun. 2026 / Published online: 15 Jun. 2026 / Print published: 25 Jun. 2026.

标题： 偶像、价值与符号：大卫·霍克斯《市场中的偶像》述评

摘要： 大卫·霍克斯的《市场中的偶像》揭示了从莎士比亚到班扬的早期英国作家将新兴商业化理解为与宗教偶像崇拜的同构。这一发现为早期现代英国思想提供了新的阐释。霍克斯通过亚里士多德目的论和禁止偶像崇拜的传统追溯这一同构背后的逻辑。他认为人类习俗（nomos）对自然目的（telos）的违背在经济、美学、神学和政治等领域被视为一个共通的问题。本综述概括了霍克斯在九个章节中的主要论点，将其置于马克思主义史学与经济人文学等学科话语体系中，并评估其贡献与局限。本综述认为，霍克斯对表征、价值与指意过程的分析对现代资本主义的文化逻辑具有重要意义。

关键词： 偶像崇拜、商品拜物教、早期英国文学、马克思主义史学、经济人文学

作者简介：沈娴敏，上海财经大学外国语学院副教授，研究方向为：当代美国文学、生态批评、性别研究。邮箱：shen.xianmin@mail.sufe.edu.cn。

1. Introduction

Scholars have long been interested in the relationship between religious idolatry and economic value in early modern English thought. Since Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism in *Capital* and Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926), it has been clear that Reformation theology and the emergence of modern commercial practices were deeply intertwined. However, much of the existing research has tended to treat literary texts as secondary evidence of ideological or economic change instead of an independent site in which such interactions are reflected upon. Relatively little attention has been paid to the ways in which early modern English writers themselves conceptualized the homology between religious idolatry and emerging commercial practices, let alone a systematic account of how theological debates over representation and value intersected with economic transformation in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England.

The monograph *Idols of the Marketplace: Idolatry and Commodity Fetishism in English Literature, 1580-1680*, published in 2001 by Palgrave and authored by David Hawkes, fills this scholarly gap and makes a significant contribution to the field. Integrating theology, political economy, aesthetics, and literary criticism, the book investigates how writers from Shakespeare to Bunyan understood the emerging commercialization as conceptually homologous to religious idolatry. Rather than treating idolatry and commodity fetishism as distinct phenomena, Hawkes demonstrates that the theological critique of the autonomy of representation and the ethical condemnation of financial reification were grounded in a shared logic traceable to Aristotelian teleology and the Hebrew-Christian prohibition against idolatry. In doing so, the book provides a novel theoretical framework for reinterpreting early modern English intellectual history, while also foregrounding literary production as a central arena in which conceptual, symbolic, and material transformations are actively negotiated rather than passively reflected. The following sections summarize the main contents of the book and then evaluate its contributions from three perspectives.

2. Overview of Contents

Chapter One, “Idolatry and Political Economy,” establishes the book’s theoretical framework by tracing the conceptual relationship between idolatry and commodity fetishism. Beginning with Lucy Hutchinson’s description of her husband’s love as “less idolatrous” (Hawkes, 2001, p. 4), Hawkes contends that idolatry was understood in early modern England as a confusion of means and ends, a violation of natural teleology that extended far beyond the worship of images. He revisits Tawney’s account of Protestantism and capitalism but rejects the progressive narrative advanced by later British Marxists, arguing instead that the growing autonomy of economic life appeared profoundly unsettling to contemporary writers. The chapter also traces the transition from intrinsic to nominal conceptions of value through debates over usury, credit, and exchange, showing how the rise of financial value detached money from its natural function. Hawkes also connects this development to Bacon’s rejection of final causes, suggesting that the decline of teleological thinking weakened traditional objections to commercial practices. These developments together explain why commodity fetishism was understood as a secular form of religious idolatry.

Chapter Two, “Commodity Fetishism and Theology,” turns from political economy to theology, with a focus on the intellectual history of iconoclasm and sacramental debates. Hawkes claims that controversies surrounding religious images and the Eucharist were fundamentally disputes about representation, both of which were concerned with the relationship between signs and the realities they signify. Beginning with the patristic tradition, he cites Tertullian’s claim that “all sins are found in idolatry and idolatry in all sins” (quoted in Hawkes, 2001, p. 57). Hawkes then examines Luther’s attack on indulgences as a critique of the commodification of salvation before moving on to discuss Calvin’s sacramental theology, which, according to Hawkes, provided a model in which conventional signs nevertheless possessed genuine efficacy. This leads to a critical shift in understanding signs, for “the distinction between literal and symbolic signification no longer holds” (Hawkes, 2001, p. 75). Together, the first two chapters lay the theoretical foundation for Hawkes’s central argument throughout the rest of the book.

Based upon this framework, Hawkes turns to a range of literary case studies. Chapter Three, “Idolatry and Commodity Fetishism in the Antitheatrical Controversy,” examines how Puritan polemicists such as Stephen Gosson, William Prynne, John Northbrooke, and Francis Rous condemned the commercial stage. Hawkes asserts that their objections were not simply moral but ontological, on the grounds that commercial theatre was regarded as a corruption of art’s proper purpose according to Aristotelian teleology and Tertullian’s distinction between “use” and “abuse.” To the antitheatrical polemicists, the commercial theater “is intrinsically corrupting” because it relied on a “visual, sensual medium of signification” (Hawkes, 2001, p. 87). This chapter also analyzes how Marston used the theater as a metonym in *Histrio-Mastix* to expose the market's corrosive effects on social hierarchy and personal identity. Hawkes shows that Marston explicitly links "the fortunes of the aspiring merchants with the vogue for the buffoonish commercial playing company" (Hawkes, 2001, p. 89). Commercial theater and the market, from this perspective, become representations of the same logic of idolatry.

Chapter Four, "Sodomy, Usury, and the Narrative of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*," is arguably the book's most original contribution. Hawkes rejects both the reading of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* as a celebration of same-sex desire and conventional interpretations of frustrated love. Instead, by uncovering the systematic usury imagery that runs through the sequence, Hawkes reveals how Shakespeare delicately negotiates two incompatible logical systems: reproductive teleology, which demands heterosexual procreation, and financial speculation, which renders human relationships exchangeable. Hawkes associates usury with sodomy and discovers a common ground between them as both "share the further similarity of confusing what is fruitful with what is barren" (Hawkes, 2001, p. 98). This is precisely the logic initially adopted by the speaker, who attempts to position himself as a creditor, encouraging the young man to "invest" his beauty through reproduction. Yet this economic fantasy collapses in later sonnets. By Sonnet 134, the speaker has become a debtor, the young man his pledged surety, and the dark lady the usurer who calls in the debt. In this way, Shakespeare exposes the speaker's attempt to legitimize homoerotic desire through the logic of usury as a doomed failure, because usury, like sodomy, was itself condemned as a violation of natural teleology.

Chapter Five, "Typology and Objectification in George Herbert's *The Temple*," explores how Herbert's work links Jewishness with literalism, legalism, usury, and the fetishization of material value through Christian typology. Herbert does not avoid the anti-Judaic implications of this framework. On the contrary, in poems such as "The Jews," Judaism is repeatedly associated with barrenness, carnality, and financial exchange, imagery already employed by Shakespeare and Marlowe. However, Herbert's broader poetic project seeks to interiorize value by driving the "money-changers" out of the spiritual temple of the heart. In another poem "Jordan (II)," Herbert rejects elaborate poetic ornament, which Hawkes reads as "a protest against the commodification of language" (Hawkes, 2001, p. 141). Yet this attempt to purify language depends upon a typological opposition that identifies Judaism with literalism and materialism. Herbert's effort to transcend commodification is ultimately trapped in the typological logic it seeks to overcome.

Chapter Six, "Alchemical and Financial Value in the Poetry of John Donne," looks into Donne's alchemical imagery as a means of distinguishing intrinsic worth from imputed financial value. Hawkes argues that genuine alchemy regarded gold as the natural telos of all metals and therefore a symbol of spiritual perfection, whereas corrupted alchemy reduced gold to a commodity, mirroring the logic of usury and financial speculation. In "The Bracelet," Donne exploits the double meaning of "angel" as both coin and celestial being, forcing readers to negotiate competing systems of value. Hawkes extends this analysis to the "Anniversaries," where the death of Elizabeth Drury is figured as a process of "negative alchemy" (Hawkes, 2001, p. 156), a reverse transmutation that turns gold into dross. Elizabeth functions as the philosopher's stone, whose death signals the loss of intrinsic value from the world, in which financial value increasingly displaces intrinsic worth.

Chapter Seven, "The Politics of Character in Milton's Divorce Tracts," examines Milton's divorce tracts as part of a broader theory of political and spiritual freedom. Hawkes argues that Milton combines Aristotle's notion of natural slavery with Paul's opposition between flesh and spirit, treating servility as a condition in which reason is subordinated to carnal desire. The proper end of marriage, therefore, lies not merely in procreation but in spiritual "conversation." To insist upon the indissolubility of an unhappy marriage is, in Milton's words, "to make an Idol of marriage" (Hawkes, 2001, p. 170). Moreover, Hawkes shows that Milton extends this domestic argument into the public sphere. Individuals enslaved by disordered passions are incapable of sustaining civic liberty and may reproduce private forms of domination within the commonwealth. Marriage consequently functions as a political analogy through which Milton imagines the proper ordering of both the household and the commonwealth.

Chapter Eight, "Thomas Traherne: A Critique of Political Economy," reads Traherne's ecstatic celebrations of childhood perception as a sustained meditation on use-value versus exchange-value, one that precedes the "false or artificial mode of perception" of adults imposed by custom and commercial society (Hawkes, 2001, p. 199). For example, gold possesses no monetary significance for the child but is appreciated simply as part of God's creation. This vision is linked to Traherne's Aristotelian conception of value, which holds that the true source of alienation lies not in material objects themselves but in the distortions produced by opinion, custom, and exchange. Yet, Traherne's resistance to political economy, in Hawkes's view, represents a last stand for teleological ethics, since his critique could no longer be argued on purely religious grounds, yet he lacked the vocabulary of modern materialist critique.

The final chapter, "John Bunyan's One-Dimensional Man," reads *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* as a proto-novelistic critique of the emerging figure of *homo economicus*. Hawkes shows how "Mr. Badman" is a walking idol: a man who believes himself to be a free, autonomous agent but who is in fact determined by his pursuit of self-interest. The formal genius of the work, Hawkes argues, lies in its generic ambiguity between pure allegory and full realism. Faced with the growing dominance of political economy, Bunyan chose to defend the scholastic "just price," which puts him at odds with the market logic that was beginning to dominate economic practice. The hybrid form of Mr. Badman reflects a transitional moment when older moral economies coexisted uneasily with an expanding market society. "With the birth of Mr. Badman," Hawkes writes, "Western society embarks on its long journey towards the hyper-real" (Hawkes, 2001, p. 230).

3. Brief Review

3.1 Religion, Political Economy, and Literary Form

Idols of the Marketplace does not simply relate religion to political economy, but investigates how literary form mediates between them. Since the publication of *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, it has been widely recognized that the English Reformation and the rise of capitalism are historically interconnected. Much of this scholarship, however, has focused on explaining how religious doctrines facilitated economic transformation or how changing economic conditions reshaped religious thought. Literary texts have served merely as supporting evidence for broader historical arguments rather than an independent site of intellectual production.

Hawkes adopts a different approach. Instead of asking whether Protestantism produced capitalism or whether capitalism secularized Protestantism, he examines how early modern writers themselves understood the conceptual relationship between religious idolatry and commodity fetishism. His central concern is not historical causation but conceptual mediation. Literary texts become the medium through which inherited theological vocabularies were adapted to interpret an emerging commercial society whose economic practices increasingly challenged traditional understandings of value, representation, and social order.

This methodological shift distinguishes Hawkes from earlier scholarship. He does not treat literature as a passive reflection of economic or religious change, but approaches literary writing as an active force in negotiating these transformations. During 1580-1680, a crucial transitional period from feudalism to capitalism, established systems of meaning had not yet disappeared, while new economic conceptual language had not fully taken shape. Writers therefore relied upon the theological discourse of idolatry, sacramental representation, and Aristotelian teleology to make sense of financial speculation, commodity exchange, and the growing autonomy of the market. During this process, literature functions as a form of intellectual inquiry through which the relationship between religion and political economy could be reimagined. Through metaphor, allegory, typology, dramatic conflict, and poetic language, writers such as Shakespeare, Donne, Herbert, Milton, and Bunyan deployed existing vocabularies to explore the uncertainties generated by commercial expansion. Their works register the intellectual tensions created by a society in transition.

In this sense, *Idols of the Marketplace* makes an important methodological contribution to early modern studies. Hawkes demonstrates that religious discourse, political economy, and literary form are not separate domains as they are often institutionalized in contemporary academia, but mutually constitutive ways of understanding a historical moment in which inherited theological concepts continued to shape perceptions of an increasingly commercial world.

3.2 Against Teleological Marxist Historiography

Although *Idols of the Marketplace* draws extensively upon Marxist concepts, particularly commodity fetishism, Hawkes departs significantly from the teleological tradition of British

Marxism. Hawkes does not regard the transition from feudalism to capitalism as a necessary stage in historical progress. Instead, he reconstructs the intellectual experience of those who witnessed this transformation without assuming its eventual outcome. His concern is therefore less with explaining why capitalism emerged than with recovering how its emergence was perceived, debated, and contested by early modern writers.

This position sets Hawkes apart from influential Marxist historians such as Christopher Hill and Perry Anderson. Hill characterizes the seventeenth century as a "century of revolution," emphasizing the magnitude of political and religious upheaval in early modern England (Hill, 1961). Anderson, by contrast conceptualizes the transition from feudalism to capitalism as a long-term structural transformation of European state formation. He contends that the crisis of English absolutism "was felled at the centre by a commercialized gentry, a capitalist city, a commoner artisanate and yeomanry: forces pushing beyond it" (Anderson, 1974, p. 142). Despite their differences, both approaches ultimately describe capitalism as a historical development whose emergence, however conflict-ridden, forms part of a broader narrative of modernity.

Hawkes challenges this retrospective perspective. In his account, the commercial expansion of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was not viewed as progress but as a profound crisis of value. Across the writers examined in the book, the increasing autonomy of money, credit, and exchange repeatedly calls into question inherited distinctions between use and abuse, intrinsic and nominal value. What later economic theory would normalize as market rationality was frequently experienced by contemporaries as the erosion of moral, theological, and epistemological stability. The so-called economic modernization therefore did not generate confidence but anxiety over the dissolution of established systems of meaning.

The writers analyzed in this book repeatedly refer to commercial practices as violations of natural teleology because value increasingly derived from custom, circulation, and financial abstraction rather than from intrinsic purpose. This common framework does not imply that Shakespeare, Donne, Herbert, Milton, and Bunyan shared a single ideological position. Their responses vary considerably in theological commitment, literary form, and political orientation. Nevertheless, they consistently recognized that the expanding market had begun to challenge the traditional relationship between representation and value.

At the same time, Hawkes avoids romanticizing these literary critiques. The texts he examines expose the contradictions of an emerging commercial society, yet they cannot reverse the historical processes they diagnose. Neither did they offer an alternative to capitalism. In spite of this, their attempts to preserve the conceptual struggles should not be underestimated. Literature records this moment when older religious and ethical vocabularies were still capable of articulating resistance even as they were gradually losing their explanatory authority. It is precisely this tension between literary critique and historical transformation that contributes to the historiographical significance of *Idols of the Marketplace*.

3.3 Economic Humanities and the Problem of Representation

The broader significance of *Idols of the Marketplace* becomes particularly apparent when viewed from the perspective of the economic humanities. Rather than treating economic systems as autonomous material structures, this interdisciplinary field emphasizes that markets, money, and value are inseparable from the symbolic forms through which they are imagined, represented, and legitimized. As Crosthwaite, Knight, and Marsh observe, "economic discourses, narratives, visualizations, and other forms of cultural mediation actively constitute what we call 'the economy' in the process of representing it" (Crosthwaite, Knight, & Marsh, 2019, p. 661). Thus, economic life is not reducible to material structures but is shaped through language, narrative, and other forms of representation.

Among the scholars who have shaped this field, Marc Shell and Jean-Joseph Goux have offered two particularly influential accounts of the relationship between economic and symbolic exchange. Shell argues that language and money operate through comparable processes of abstraction and substitution, suggesting that "money, which refers to a system of tropes, is also an 'internal' participant in the logical or semiological organization of language, which itself refers to a system of tropes" (Shell, 1982, p. 3). Goux extends this insight by showing that symbolic authority itself is organized through the logic of the "general equivalent," whereby systems of value become stabilized around privileged forms of representation (Goux, 1990, p. 3). Although their theoretical concerns differ, both scholars challenge any rigid separation between economic value and symbolic meaning.

Hawkes approaches these questions from a different direction. Whereas much work in the economic humanities begins with theoretical models of representation, Idols of the Marketplace traces the genealogy of those problems within a specific intellectual and historical context. He reconstructs the historical conditions under which economic and religious forms of representation became conceptually intertwined. Through his analysis, Hawkes presents early modern English literature (1580-1680) as a privileged archive in which changing conceptions of value, representation, and social order could be continuously observed, renegotiated, and reconfigured. His originality lies in demonstrating that anxieties surrounding money, commodities, and exchange were inseparable from debates over idolatry, sacramental signs, and the legitimacy of representation itself. The emergence of commodity fetishism, in his account, cannot be understood solely as an economic phenomenon, since it was already embedded within a much older theological vocabulary concerning the relationship between signs and the realities they signify. This argument is more than a historical recovery. The central claim that commodity fetishism is inseparable from the theological logic of the sign continues to inform contemporary work in the field.

4. Conclusion

Thanks to its interdisciplinary methodology, *Idols of the Marketplace* remains a significant contribution to early modern studies. It successfully integrates literary criticism, intellectual history, theology, and political economy into a coherent interpretative framework. Rather than treating idolatry and commodity fetishism as unrelated concepts, Hawkes reconstructs their shared concern with representation and value, demonstrating how theological debates continued to shape the cultural logic of an emerging market society. Through a series of sophisticated readings of canonical authors, he shows that literary texts were not merely reflections of historical transformation but active participants in redefining the conceptual foundations of modernity. More than two decades after its publication, many of the questions raised in the book concerning value, exchange, and the symbolic power of commodities continue to resonate within early modern studies and the broader field of economic humanities.

At the same time, certain limitations should also be acknowledged. Hawkes's emphasis on a unified teleological framework occasionally underplays the diversity of religious thought and literary practice in early modern England. His discussion pays relatively little attention to issues of gender, social difference, and the wider political contexts that also shaped the relationship between religion and economic life. Nevertheless, these limitations do not diminish the book's originality or its scholarly significance.

Overall, *Idols of the Marketplace* offers a stimulating and theoretically ambitious reinterpretation of early modern English literature (1580-1680). Its ability to bridge disciplinary boundaries while maintaining close engagement with literary texts ensures that it remains an important reference for scholars interested in the intersections of religion, political economy, and literary criticism.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID ID
Shen Xianmin ID https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3622-1389

References

Anderson, P. (1974). *Lineages of the Absolute State*. New Left Books.

Crosthwaite, P., Knight, P., & Marsh, N. (2019). "The Economic Humanities and the History of Financial Advice." *American Literary History, 31*(4), 661-686.

Goux, J. J. (1990). *Symbolic Economies: Capitalism and Psychoanalysis* (J. Gage, Trans.). Cornell University Press.

Hawkes, D. (2001). *Idols of the Marketplace: Idolatry and Commodity Fetishism in English Literature, 1580-1680*. Palgrave.

Hill, C. (1961). *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714*. Thomas Nelson and Sons.

Shell, M. (1982). *Money, Language, and Thought: Literary and Philosophical Economies from the Medieval to the Modern Era*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Tawney, R. H. (1926). *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study*. Harcourt, Brace and Company.

JESL

Journal of Economic Studies in Literature

JESL, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2026, pp.171-180.

Print ISSN: 3107-3492; Online ISSN: 3107-3506

Journal homepage: https://www.jesljournal.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.64058/jesl260113wrplp

HIEP
Academic Publishing

Writers·Readers·Publishers: On Literary Production in *The Business of the Transcendentalists*

Duan Yini

Abstract: *The Business of the Transcendentalists* breaks new ground in literary studies by examining 19th-century American Transcendentalism through economic and market lenses. By analyzing the creative practices and subsistence strategies of Concord writers including Emerson, Thoreau, and Hawthorne, the book recontextualizes literary creation as socioeconomic activity, revealing how market forces continually help to shape Transcendentalist literature. Drawing on its core arguments, this article examines the market logic underlying Transcendentalist literature from three perspectives: the writer's existential paradox as an "intellectual laborer", the reader's role as a "market-vane" creating literary demand, and the publisher's function as a "commercial strategist" constructing literary reputation. It further explores the symbiotic relationship between literature and economy. The book's significance lies in bridging literary and economic inquiry, thus offering a methodological framework for understanding the complex interplay between literature and the market.

Keywords: *The Business of the Transcendentalists*; market logic; literary production; writer's identity

Author Biography: Duan Yini, Postgraduate student, The School of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Nanjing Normal University, English and American Literature, E-mail: 2217773059@qq.com.

Received: 06 May 2026 / Revised: 17 May 2026 / Accepted: 05 Jun. 2026 / Published online: 15 Jun. 2026 / Print published: 25 Jun. 2026.

标题：作家·读者·出版商：评《超验主义的生意》中的文学生产

摘要：《超验主义的生意》跳出传统文学研究的藩篱，从经济与市场维度切入，重新审视 19 世纪美国超验主义文学的发展脉络。该书通过梳理爱默生、梭罗、霍桑等康科德作家的创作与生存实践，将文学创作还原为具体的社会经济行为，揭示出超验主义文学的发展从未脱离市场的滋养与制约。本文以该书的核心理念为依托，从作家作为“精神劳动者”的生存悖论、读者作为“市场风向标”的需求塑造、出版商作为“商业操盘手”的名声生产三个维度，剖析超验主义文学背后的市场逻辑，进而探讨文学与经济的深层共生关系。该书的价值在于打破了文学研究与经济研究的壁垒，为理解文学与市场的复杂互动提供了方法论范例。

关键词：《超验主义的生意》；市场逻辑；文学生产；作家身份

作者介绍：段旖旎，硕士研究生，南京师范大学外国语学院，英美文学，电子邮箱：2217773059@qq.com.

Around the mid-19th century, the American literary scene witnessed the remarkable rise of Transcendentalism, represented by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and other prominent figures, leaving an enduring legacy for posterity. For a long time, academia has largely focused on the philosophical core and spiritual values of this intellectual movement, regarding the members of the “Concord Club” as unworldly “spiritual saints.” However, Professor Yang Jing’s book *The Business of the Transcendentalists: The Concord Circle and the American Literary Market* (Guangdong People’s Publishing House, 2026) carves out a new path, approaching the subject through the lens of economics and market dynamics to explore the actual conditions and evolution of Transcendentalist literature within American society of that era.

The book unfolds in eight chapters, detailing the market practices of the Concord writers: Emerson renounced his ministry to embark on a career as a public lecturer, translating Transcendentalist ideas into commercially popular speeches and striking a balance between spiritual pursuit and material gain; Thoreau advocated a distinctive economic philosophy in *Walden*, yet his work saw disappointing sales, which plunged him into considerable debt; Nathaniel Hawthorne forged close ties with publishers such as James T. Fields, achieving dual success in literary fame and wealth through strategic packaging and promotional campaigns; Margaret Fuller distanced herself from the elite circle of Concord to join *The New-York Tribune*, shifting her focus to public issues and addressing the concerns of mass readership, thereby transforming from a Transcendentalist into a public intellectual; Louisa May Alcott, driven by family financial hardship, navigated between highbrow literature and popular writing, ultimately embodying and realizing the ideal of “self-reliance” championed by Emerson; Elizabeth Peabody, using her Boston foreign bookstore as a hub, promoted Transcendentalist ideas through publishing *The Dial*, fueling the social reform in New England; William Ellery Channing entered the literary scene with Emerson's endorsement but faded into obscurity for failing to break free from the constraints of Transcendentalist poetics; George Ripley's Brook Farm, plagued by financial hardship, evolved from a Transcendentalist utopia into a Fourierist "phalanx", only to collapse due to such "unnatural associations."

Following the framework of this book, the article probes into the market logic underlying Transcendentalist literature from three progressive dimensions—writers, readers, and publishers—offering insights into the profound symbiosis between literature and economy, with a view to providing a new perspective for understanding the social nature of literature.

1. From "Intellectual Preacher" to "Intellectual Laborer": The Existential Paradox of the Writers' Identity

Transcendentalist writers have long been celebrated for their lofty spiritual pursuits. Emerson is hailed as the "American Prophet", and Louisa May Alcott, with her notion of "sentimental economy", envisions an ideal society. They were supposed to be "intellectual preachers" unbound by material concerns. Yet the rise of the American literary market in the nineteenth century swept them into the tides of survival, forcing them to be more pragmatic and turning them into "intellectual laborers" obliged to earn a living. Literary production thus shifted from a literati's "avocation" of self-cultivation to a "profession" for survival, concealing a profound existential paradox between ideal and reality.

This predicament of the writers' identity is not an abstract concept. Emerson's life trajectory embodies this paradox concretely. Poverty in his early years obliged him to run errands to cover his tuition fees at Harvard; the loss of one dollar in childhood became a wound he "regretted for life." The sting of destitution steeled him to pursue wealth. After resigning from the pastoral duties at the Second Church in Boston, which was Unitarian, he keenly seized the market opportunity brought by the Lyceum movement and presented esoteric Transcendentalist doctrines through accessible public lectures. His topics ranged from literature and culture to social reform, all of which reflected public concerns. As he said, "Who would not like to write something which all can read, like Robinson Crusoe?" (22)[①] His speeches brought him not only substantial income—no less than one hundred dollars per appearance in the 1860s—but also financial independence, which in turn sustained his philosophical inquiries. The same thinker who once decried "trade as the ruler of the world today" ultimately achieved, as F. O. Matthiessen pointed out, "the moderate balance between Transcendentalism and Franklin" (51), becoming a representative figure who fused Puritan idealism with pragmatic enterprise. His experience proved that "without the bank's interest of $1,200 a year, how could I dare speak of 'self-reliance'?" (20)—intellectual preaching divorced from material

---

[①] Quoted in Yang Jing (2026). *The Business of the Transcendentalists*. Guangdong People's Publishing House. Subsequent citations are annotated by page number only.

support is nothing but an illusion. Only by confronting the need for survival can a writer sustain his spiritual pursuit.

Nonetheless, not all the Transcendentalist writers achieved the same "success" as Emerson did. For Louisa May Alcott, the pressure of survival was even heavier. The family's financial burdens, as heavy as a grindstone, weighed her down. To repay the debts and support her family, she had to navigate between highbrow literature and pulp fiction. On the one hand, through works like *Little Women* and *Flower Fables*, she conveyed warmth and ideals while shaping images of diligent and virtuous women. On the other hand, in pursuit of quick money, she wrote many thrillers under pseudonyms, becoming a "hack writer" for the market. The metaphor of "busy bee" runs throughout her works, symbolizing both her devotion to work and the alienation she experienced through labor—the worker bee toils but cannot enjoy the fruits of its labor, just as Alcott squandered her creative spirit in commercial writing. She proposed a "sentimental economy" to counter capitalist competition, yet she remained in the market's grip. This "dual writing" reveals the reluctant compromise between spiritual aspiration and material necessity, and highlights the writer's agonizing choice between ideal and reality. As Emerson himself acknowledged, "society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion" (26).

If the above addresses individual struggles, then Brook Farm, founded by George Ripley, enacts this paradox on a collective level. Conceived as a Transcendentalist social experiment, the Farm initially sought to build a utopia where a "Natural Union" between intellectual and manual labor could be realized in pursuit of spiritual freedom. Yet economic pressure shadowed it from the start. The refusal by Emerson and his circle to purchase initial shares forced the Farm to operate on a weak economic foundation. To survive, Ripley had to transform the Transcendentalist association into a Fourierist "Phalanx" to secure financial backing from the North American Phalanx and introduce industrial production models. However, ideological conflicts and mismanagement ultimately led to its dissolution. In 1846, the uninsured phalanstery was destroyed by fire, extinguishing the Farm's last hope. The collapse of this utopian experiment profoundly demonstrates that purely spiritual pursuits divorced from economic foundation can neither survive nor thrive. Ripley later wrote in an elegy: "The day I was buried! In tears of pain / I sit beside your grave, I and the ghosts of passing years / sweep through the gloom of my soul" (281)—not merely a dirge for the Farm but a lament for spiritual ideal defeated by material reality.

Taken together, the transformation of the Transcendentalist writer's identity reflects a fundamental paradox of literary production within the capitalist market system. The rise of the American literary market in the nineteenth century recast writers from "dependents of aristocratic patronage" into "laborers in the marketplace." Their works became "commodity-vehicles", which are carriers of ideas produced for survival. The so-called transcendental spiritual pursuit ultimately depends on material support. As Karl Marx observed, in Hegel's bürgerliche Gesellschaft, the abstract citizen and the concrete egoistic individual fail to achieve harmony. The struggles of the Transcendentalist writers vividly enact this proposition in the literary field—they longed to be pure intellectual preachers but were forced to be pragmatic material seekers. Yet paradoxically, this "forced labor" driven by economic necessity nourished literary flourishing, allowing Transcendentalist literature to acquire both intellectual depth and earthly warmth through the interplay of spiritual aspiration and the practice of survival.

2. From Passive to Active Evaluation: To Meet the Readers' Demand as "Market-Vane"

In traditional literary studies, readers are often regarded as mere followers and worshippers of the author's artistic craftsmanship. However, in the literary market of the nineteenth-century America, with the expansion of the readership and the diversification of reading tastes, readers emerged from the background and took center stage, becoming the "market vane" that determines the trend of literature. Readers' demand acts as an invisible baton, guiding the writers' creations and even influencing the trajectory of literary movements and the shift of literary power.

With this power shift in influence, the journey of Thoreau's *Walden* in the marketplace stands as a telling illustration of the adjudicating force of readers' demand. In this work, Thoreau advocates for an economic vision of "voluntary poverty" and practices spiritual freedom through a minimalist lifestyle; his profound thoughts and concise writing ought to have made it a gem in literary history. However, in the mid-nineteenth-century America, readers favored sentimental novels and adventure stories, such as Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World*. Statistics indicate that at that time, "sentimental sub-novels, despite being seen as trash, still had a market," with Warner's work earning $4,500 in royalties within just six months of publication. (47) In contrast, Thoreau's *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* printed a thousand copies but saw sales stagnate—with as many as seven to eight hundred copies remaining unsold, ultimately all returned to the author. Not only did Thoreau fail to gain any profit from the project, but he also incurred "enormous debts" to the publisher. He refused to "devalue himself" to appease readers, insisting that "anything that is widely popular among audience is merely cliché" (22), yet he could not escape the punitive backlash of the market. Apparently, readers' demand had become the "invisible judge" of the literary market; if authors dare to ignore it, they will be severely punished. Thoreau would rather fill his shelves with his own writings and sacrifice market success than compromise his freedom; his lofty stance is admirable while his plight is indeed lamentable.

In contrast to Thoreau's choice to resist the market, Margaret Fuller exemplifies literary wisdom by adapting to readers' demand. In her early years, Fuller delved deeply into Transcendentalist thought, engaging in discussions of ancient Greek mythology and German philosophy with Bostonian ladies at the Peabody Bookstore's "Conversations", earning a net income of about $500 per year. However, the cessation of *The Dial* in 1844 and the closure of the

“Conversations” made her acutely aware that art disconnected from the public could not endure. After she joined *The New York Tribune*, Fuller resolutely transformed her focus from “transcendental self” to public issues, addressing social realities such as prison reform, women’s rights, and urban poverty. Her columns resonated with the concerns of the masses, fulfilling readers’ needs for awareness of contemporary issues, and the newspaper’s 50,000 subscribers provided a broad audience for her ideas, which earned her reputation as “the public conscience of New York” (147). As Michael T. Gilmore states in *American Romanticism and the Marketplace*, “The American Romantic era was the era of the marketplace” (46). In this era, every coin held by readers constitutes a vote for the works of authors and largely directs and shapes changes in creative trajectories; they serve unequivocally as “market-vane”. Therefore, it is not surprising that Sacvan Bercovitch concludes, “Romantic authors had to adjust their writing strategies to market concerns” (4).

After the 1820s, the American reading population grew rapidly; “by 1850, over 90% of adult males could read and write” (4), creating the largest public readership in history. Having long recognized this trend, Alexis de Tocqueville pointed out that, in democratic nations, “democratic thoughts merge with commercial spirit in literature” (47). This implies that literature was no longer a luxury exclusive to a few elites but had to cater to the interests of the general public. Between 1831 and 1860, the proportion of adventure novels in America rose to 60%, while sentimental novels dropped to 20%, which serves as a direct reflection of the change of readers’ taste. The flourishing of Transcendentalist literature in mid-nineteenth century can be attributed to its core principles of “self-reliance” and “spiritual freedom”, which resonated with the American public’s psychological need to pursue democratic independence and dispel European cultural constraints; however, as readers shifted their focus toward social reform and contemporary issues around the time of the Civil War, Transcendentalist literature also began to decline.

Thus, readers are no longer merely the terminal of literary dissemination but rather the threshold of literary production, with their demands permeating the whole process of creation, dissemination, and reception. However, this fact indicates a deeper-reaching process of literary democratization than the inexorability of market logic. In the previous ages, the value of literature was adjudicated by the church or aristocracy whereas readers remained as passive recipients; in the emerging literary market, the reading choices of enormous ordinary readers coalesced into an unignorable force that smashed the monopoly of literary discourse held by the minority. This “power shift” is a direct extension of the democratic spirit in the cultural realm. As an ancient Chinese saying goes, “The very water that can carry a boat can also capsize it.” The “water” of readers can both support those authors who adapt to the times and capsize those works that remain complacent. For literati to establish their voice, they must first build their connection with readers; to build that connection, they must first comprehend them—comprehend what readers love and appreciate what they need. This is not pandering but rather the survival wisdom exhibited by Emerson and his circle.

3. From Printing and Distribution to Fame-Making: The Promotion of Publishers as "Commercial Strategists"

In the chain of literary production, publishers were once simply regarded as printers and distributors, whose sole responsibility was transforming writers' manuscripts into printed books for market circulation. Nevertheless, amid the tide of Transcendentalist literature in the nineteenth-century America, publishers had long transcended such mere technical roles and evolved into "commercial strategists" holding sway over the literary market. Through precise market positioning, elaborate writer packaging, and efficient promotional campaigns, they constructed the literary reputations of authors and accurately estimated their cash value in the literary market, thus becoming a key force in popularizing Transcendentalist literature.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's rise to fame was inseparable from the careful stewardship of his publisher James T. Fields. Though endowed with remarkable literary talent in his early years, Hawthorne remained unknown in the literary market, even mocking himself as "the obscurest man of letters in America" (8), and was forced by economic pressures to turn to children's literature. In 1849, Fields visited the unemployed Hawthorne and soon published his novel *The Scarlet Letter*. To cater to market demands, Fields suggested Hawthorne expand *The Custom-House* as the preface to the novel, infusing the work with topicality and authenticity through an autobiographical narrative style. To boost the appeal of *The House of the Seven Gables*, Fields designed an exquisite cover for the book, captivating readers with visual aesthetic elements. Fields was also exceptionally adept at publicity campaigns: he not only invited literary acquaintances to write praiseworthy book reviews, but also preheated the market by publishing advertisements and excerpts in newspapers. More notably, together with his business partner William Ticknor, Fields provided all-round support for Hawthorne's literary creation and daily life, ranging from financial planning and travel arrangements to purchasing cigars and wine on his behalf, allowing Hawthorne to devote himself entirely to writing. Thanks to Fields' packaging and promotion, Hawthorne rose from an obscure customs officer to a preeminent national writer in the United States. Hawthorne once expressed his heartfelt thanks to Fields, which reveals the core role of publishers in constructing writers' reputations. Thus, "Fields's company reaped huge profits while Hawthorne gained literary reputation, a model of mutual benefit" (49). This deeply bonded partnership illustrates how publishers endow literature with value through commercial means.

Hawthorne's sister-in-law Elizabeth Peabody was both a writer and a publisher. Running a foreign bookstore in Boston, the cultural center of America, she built an ideological dissemination network for Transcendentalism centered on her bookstore and periodical business. As an astute bookseller, she kept a close eye on market trends and sustained her business through in-store book sales and overseas procurement of foreign books and journals. Meanwhile, as "the chief patron and principal chronicler" of Transcendentalism (14), she self-financed the publication of *The Dial*, the organ of Transcendentalism, single-handedly sustaining its operation for a year and a half despite knowing that it was an unprofitable venture. She also edited *Aesthetic Papers*, which, though only one issue was published, included masterpieces such as Hawthorne's *Main Street* and Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*. She actively solicited contributions from writers, delivered newly published books to cultural celebrities, and leveraged commercial channels to popularize Transcendentalist ideas. Peabody's extraordinary insight lay in her mastery of promoting ideological advancement through business, and her success was "adapting Transcendentalism to the expanding capitalist literary market" (194). Though her bookstore operated for merely over a decade, it functioned as a crucial hub for spreading Transcendentalist thought, translating niche philosophical speculations into widespread cultural influence. In essence, the value of publishers extends far beyond pursuing commercial gains. By means of commercial operation, they construct bridges for ideological communication, enabling literary trends to win public recognition and achieve enduring vitality.

In contrast to the above cases, Ellery Channing's literary career corroborates from another perspective how publishers (and mentor-style publishers) exert a decisive influence on reputation construction, which could bring both positive advancement and negative constraints to writers. Endowed with poetic talent from an early age, Channing gained the appreciation of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson not only guided his writing personally but also paved the way for his career with his own prestige: he published advertisements and book reviews in *The Dial* to boost Channing's fame, strongly recommended him to publisher Mathew Carey, hailed Channing as a "poetic genius" while dismissing himself as merely "an amateur poet", and even proposed attaching his own poems as an appendix to Channing's poetry collection to amplify the latter's popularity (36). Fueled by Emerson's full endorsement, Channing's two poetry collections drew immediate critical acclaim upon publication, establishing him as a leading figure among Transcendentalist poets. However, unlike Henry David Thoreau, who dared to break free from his mentor's ideological constraints, Channing rigidly followed the Transcendentalist poetics advocated by Emerson and never blazed a unique creative path of his own. Consequently, as Transcendentalist literature declined and Emerson shifted his attention elsewhere, Channing lost his core commercial strategist, and his creation lapsed into stagnation. Apart from a biography of Thoreau, he produced no other major works ever after. Channing's fluctuating career mirrors the supreme power of publishers as "value givers": they shape not only writers' instant fame, but their long-term literary influence. Once such external endorsement fades away, a writer's reputation will inevitably dwindle.

All these instances demonstrate that publishers deeply understand the market logic. They excel at tapping writers' creative potential and attracting readers through publicity and promotion. They are both pursuers of commercial interests and discoverers and disseminators of literary value. It was under their strategic operation that Transcendentalist writers stepped out of the niche Concord circle to reach the national readership, with their ideas gaining wide circulation and ultimately securing a prominent place in American literary history. As stated in the book, in the mid-nineteenth-century literary market, the decisive factor was neither "the meticulous writers" nor "the blindly enthusiastic readers", but the "domineering publishers" (33). Whether a work can stand the test of time hinges not only on its intrinsic artistic quality but also on whether there are strategists to endorse its value and pave the way for its reputation. Nevertheless, this phenomenon does not signify the degeneration of literature; instead, it reflects the social nature of literary production. Walter Benjamin argued that in the era of advanced capitalism, writing has evolved into commodity production (43), yet this does not mean the extinction of literary spirit. On the contrary, it is tempered by commercial operation that private manuscripts are transformed into public cultural assets, and individual philosophical contemplations evolve into ideologies influencing an era. In this sense, the "business" of publishers is also a "business" that sustains the prosperity and perpetuity of literature itself.

Conclusion

From the transformation of writers' identities and the rise of reader power to the value construction by publishers, *The Business of the Transcendentalists* sketches the landscape of American literary production in the 19th century through the practices of the Concord writers. The struggles of Transcendentalist writers between idealism and livelihood, the shaping of creative directions by reader demands, and the assignment of literary value by publishers collectively confirm a universal truth: literature has never existed in isolation from the market, and economic logic has long been deeply embedded in the texture of literary development. In other words, literature and the market stand not in opposition, but in a mutually dependent relationship. The material support of the market makes spiritual pursuits realizable; economic pressures compel innovations in literary form; and the spiritual substance of literature infuses humanistic warmth into the market, elevating commercial activity beyond mere profit-seeking. The vitality of Transcendentalist literature lies precisely in the balance it strikes between spiritual aspiration and market logic—neither reduced to material gain nor deprived of broad dissemination and enduring vitality.

As the author observes at the end of the book: "The literary creations of Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, and others were inextricably bound up with the mid-19th-century American literary market. Without such commercial culture and market forces, their works at the very least would have lacked a certain dimension, their breadth and depth would likely have been severely diminished, and the outlook of American literary history might have been greatly altered" (303). In this sense, literary studies must return to the historical context and confront the profound shaping of literary creation by economic forces. Only then can we truly understand the mechanisms by which literary works are produced and the nature of their value. In short, the market logic behind literary production is no desecration of literature, but rather its fulfillment. This is the profound insight of *The Business of the Transcendentalists* and the central argument of this article.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Duan Yini ID https://orcid.org/0009-0007-7971-8312

References

Alexis de Tocqueville (1989). *Democracy in America*, trans. Dong Guoliang. The Commercial Press.

瓦尔特・本雅明（1992）:《发达资本主义时代的抒情诗人》，张旭东，魏文生译。生活·读书·新知三联书店。

[Benjamin, Walter (1992). *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. Zhang Xudong, & Wei Wensheng. Life·Reading·Knowledge SDX Joint Publishing Company.]

Bercovitch, Sacvan (Ed.) (1995). *The Cambridge History of American Literature, Vol.2 Prose Writing, 1820-1865*. Cambridge University Press.

Charvat, William (1968). *The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800-1870: The Papers of William Charvat*. edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli. Ohio State University Press.

Gilmore, Michael T. (1985). *American Romanticism and the Marketplace*. The University of Chicago Press.

卡尔・马克思（2000）:《1844 年经济学哲学手稿》。人民出版社。

[Marx, Karl (2000). *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. People's Publishing House.]

Matthiessen, F. O. (1988). *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*. Oxford University Press.

杨靖（2026）:《超验主义的生意：康科德作家群与美国文学市场》。广东人民出版社。

[Yang Jing (2026). *The Business of the Transcendentalists：The Concord Circle and the American Literary Market*. Guangdong People's Publishing House.]

Information Education Publishing Company Limited
Hong Kong

ISSN 3107-3492
01
9 773107 349266