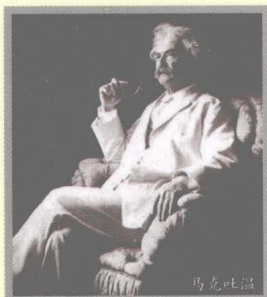


美国文学名家 作品赏析



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前 言

独立完成一部编著并能获得读者的认同，是我的一大奢求。出于对英美文学的情有独钟以及多年来在该文学领域的研究，终于在年轮转入公元 2007 年之时，使这束《美国文学名家作品赏析》脱稿，了却了我多年以来的一个愿望，希望它能带着您畅游神秘、美妙的英美文学世界。

在所有的文学领域中，英美文学无疑是大放异彩的一朵奇葩。自莎士比亚带来的戏剧鼎盛时代并影响到全世界无数个伟大作者的文化思想。从赞美欧洲民族美德的 Beowulf 到中世纪时期充满神秘感的 Fairy Queene；从赞美上帝宽大心怀的 Paradise Lost，直到 William Blake 勇敢的质疑 Milton 的思想；从讽刺政治腐败、种族歧视的马克吐温的《哈克·贝里·芬历险记》，到更深层的反思人性本身、反映爵士时代人们的醉生梦死的弗茨杰拉德的《了不起的盖茨比》。英美文学的硕大，真像一只从古至今都环绕着我们的方舟，带领着人们不断地探索文化的新世界。

本书共介绍了 15 位美国文学史上的著名作家及他们的作品。分 15 章，每章中除“文学史”的部分有简略扼要的叙述以外，作家作品部分有：(1) 作者生平与创作介绍；(2) 代表作内容提要及评论；(3) 创作视角与艺术特色分析；(4) 主要作品介绍；(5) 选读与注释。通过“史”、“选”结合进行学习，可事半功倍，收到良好的学习效果。

本书可供高校外语系英语专业用作英美文学选读教材或参考

书，也可供广大中学英语教师及具有一定程度的英语自学者和英美文学爱好者作为进修读物，另外本书还可作为有志于攻读英语专业硕士研究生的广大青年备考的参考书。

本书在编写过程中，曾参考了国内外出版的一些文学史和作品选读方面的书籍，在此不一一列举。由于水平所限，书中错误缺点和考虑不周之处在所难免，恳切希望读者和专家们批评指正。

编者 裴瑞成

2007 年 9 月于沈阳

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Washington Irving 华盛顿·欧文 (1783—1859)

Washington Irving (1783—1859) was one of the first American writers to earn an international reputation, and regarded as an early Romantic writer in the American literary history and father of the American short stories.

Washington was born in New York City, the youngest of eleven children of a wealthy merchant. From a very early age he began to read and write juvenile poems, essays, and plays. In 1789, he concluded his education at private schools and entered a law office, but he loved writing more. In the years between 1802 and 1803, Irving contributed several letters under the name of "Jonathan Oldstyle" to *The Morning Chronicle*, a newspaper edited by his brother Peter, and these letters were published in 1803 as *The Letters of Jonathan Oldstyle, Gent.*, a series of youthful satires on New York society. Irving, as Oldstyle, fashioned a style which reduces all to foolishness, including the author's persona. Five years later he joined with a brother and with his friends in another such series, *Salmagundi*, which commended on the phenomena of the day like waltzing, tea—drinking, and feminine nudity. His contributions were signed "Anthony Evergreen."

Irving's hope, plan and dreams came to a crashing halt after the loss of his only love, Miltilda Hoffman, yet he found his refuge from the grief in the researches on *A History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty*,

which, written under the name of Diedrich Knickerbocker, was a great success and won him wide popularity after it came out in 1809. the book is a parody of the Dutch colony, in which Irving ridicules the human activity by combining true history with imagination, with a good deal of reference to contemporary events and personalities, particularly political ones. With the publication of *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* in serials between 1819 and 1820, Irving won a measure of international fame on both sides of the Atlantic. The book contains familiar essays on the English life and Americanized versions of European folk tales like "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Geoffrey Crayon is a carefully contrived persona and behind Crayon stands Irving, juxtaposing the Old World and the New, and manipulating his own antiquarian interest with artistic perspectives.

Following *The Sketch Book*, Irving published *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), and *Tales of a Traveler* (1824), both of which lacked the creative energy and appeal of *The Sketch Book*. In 1826, he was sent to Spain as an American attaché; he was secretary of the United States Legation in London from 1829 to 1832; later on he made an adventurous trip to the Western frontier on horseback and wrote three books, which celebrated the adventure of exploring the West in "Sunnyside", his home on the Hudson River, except for a period of four years when he was away from home as Minister to Spain, living a life of leisure and comfort. During these years Irving never stopped writing, yet none of them could acclaim the same admiration and recognition *The Sketch Book*.

Irving's taste was essentially conservative. Yet, Irving never forgets to associate a certain place with the inward movement of a person and to charge his sentences with emotion so as to create a

true and vivid character. He is worth the honor of being “the American Goldsmith” for his literary craftsmanship.

Artistic Features 艺术特色

(1) Washington Irving has “perfected the best classic style that American Literature ever produced.” The style is characterized by simplicity, lucidity, poise, and ease flow. Humor is at the root of almost everything that was significant in them. The tales of Irving are, like the “endless sleepy stories” told by Rip Van Winkle, often discursive and leisurely, therefore deceptively artless, but the slow, graceful representation of his arresting stories is properly expressed in careful phrases and cadences. The language he used best reveals what a Romantic writer can do with words. We hear rather read, for there is musicality in almost every line of his prose.

(2) Irving creates a world that is permeated with a dreaming quality, with Gothic elements and surrounded by the supernatural atmosphere that we readers could become so engaged and involved in what is happening in a seemingly exotic place.

(3) He was also absorbed in “the rich mine of German Literature” and got ideas from German legends for two of his famous stories “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.” Most of the thirty—three essays in The Sketch Book were written in England, filled with English scenes and quotations from English authors and faithful to British orthography.

(4) However exotic his tales are, everyone who reads “Rip Van Winkle” or “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” will know instantly that they are among the treasures of the American

language and culture. These two stories easily trigger off American imagination with their focus on American subjects, American landscape, and in Irving's case, the legends of the Hudson River region of the fresh young land. It is not the sketches about the Old World but the tales about America that made Washington Irving a household word and his fame enduring.

(5) In the history of American literature Irving is remembered particularly for his literary innovations. The Sketch Book consisted of the first modern short stories in American literature, and the first great juvenile literature. It was him who introduced the familiar essay from Europe to America.

Major works 主要作品

(1) A History of New York (from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty) written under the name of Diedrich Knickerbocker, won him wide popularity after it came out in 1809. A History of New York is a patchwork of references, echoes, and burlesques, in which Irving parodies or imitates Homer, Cervantes, Fielding, Swift and many other favorites of his (模仿荷马、塞万提斯、菲尔丁、斯威福特及其所喜爱的其他作家). The book is a parody of the Dutch colony, in which Irving ridicules the human activity by combining true history with imagination, with a good deal of reference to contemporary events and personalities, particularly political ones.

(2) The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent. (1819—1820) won him a measure of international fame on both sides of the Atlantic.

(3) His characters: Irving carefully contrives two famous

personae Diedrich Knickerbocker (*A History of New York*) and Geoffrey Crayon (*The Sketch Book*), juxtaposing the Old World and the New, manipulating his own antiquarian interest with artistic perspectives. Washington Irving brought to the nation what its people desired most in a man of letters—the respect of the Old World.

These two stories trigger off American imagination with their focus on American subjects, American landscape, and in Irving's case, the legends of the Hudson River region of the fresh young land.

Selected readings 选读

An Excerpt from “Rip Van Winkle” (《瑞普·凡·温克尔》)

Rip Van Winkle

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy, eat white bread or brown, which ever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away in perfect contentment; but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and every thing he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had hut one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head,

cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his wife; so that he was fain to draw off his forces, and take to the outside of the house—the only side which, in truth, belongs to a henpecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent was his dog Wolf, who was as much henpecked as his master; for Dame Van Winkle regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye, as the cause of his master's going so often astray. True it is, in all points of spirit befitting an honorable dog, he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods—but what courage can withstand the ever — during and all — besetting terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house, his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground, or curled between his legs, he sneaked about with a gallows air, casting many a sidelong glance at Dame Van Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broomstick or ladle, would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on; a tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edge tool that grows keener by constant use. For a long while he used to console himself, when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village, that held its sessions on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of his majesty George the Third. Here they used to sit in the shade, of a long lazy summer's day, talking listlessly over village gossip, or tell endless sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions that sometimes took place, when by chance an old news paper fell into their hands, from some passing

traveler. How solemnly they would listen to the contents, as drawled out by Derrick Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, a dapper learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary; and how sagely they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junto were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch of the village, and landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took his seat from morning till night, just, moving sufficiently to avoid the sun, and keep in the shade of a large tree; so that the neighbors could tell the hour by his movements as by a sun dial. It is true, he was rarely heard to speak, but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however, (for every great man has his adherents,) perfectly understood him, and knew how to gather his opinions. When any thing that was read or related displeased him, he was observed to smoke his pipe vehemently, and send forth short, frequent, and angry puffs; but when pleased, he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly, and emit it in light and placid clouds, and sometimes taking the pipe from his mouth, and letting the fragrant vapor curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this strong hold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquility of the assemblage, call the members all to naught, nor was that august personage, Nicholas Vedder himself, sacred from the daring tongue of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair; and his only alternative, to escape from the labor of the farm and the clamor of his wife, was to take gun in hand, and stroll away into the woods

would. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share the contents of his wallet with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow sufferer in persecution. "Poor Wolf," he would say, "thy mistress leads thee a dogs' life of it; but never mind, my lad, while I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee!" Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity, I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

On waking, he found himself on the green knoll from whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He rubbed his eyes it was a bright sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling aloft, and breasting the pure mountain breeze. "Surely," thought Rip, "I have not slept Here all night." He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with a keg of liquor—the mountain ravine—the wild retreat among the rocks—the woe—begone party at nine pins—the flagon—"Oh! that flagon! that wicked flagon!" thought Rip—"What excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle?"

He looked fowling round for his gun, but in place of the clean well-oiled fowling-piece, he found an old firelock lying by him, the barrel encrusted with rust, the lock falling off, and the stock worm-eaten. He now suspected that the grave roysters of the mountain had put a trick and having dosed him with liquor, had robbed him of his gun after a squirrel or partridge. He whistled after him, shouted his name, but all in vain; the echoes repeated his whistle and shout, but no dog was to be seen.

At length he reached to where the ravine had opened through the cliffs, to the amphitheatre; but no traces of such opening remained. The rocks presented a high impenetrable wall, over which

the torrent came tumbling in a sheet of feathery foam, and fell into a broad deep basin, black from the shadows of the surrounding forest. Here, then, poor Rip was brought to a stand. He again called and whistled after his dog; he was only answered by the cawing of a flock of idle crows, sporting high in air about a dry tree that over — hung a sunny precipice; and who, secure in their elevation, seemed to look down and scoff at the poor man's perplexities. What was to be done? the morning was passing away, and Rip felt famished for his breakfast. He grieved to give up his dog and his gun; he dreaded to meet his wife; but it would not do to starve among the mountains. He shook his head, shouldered the rusty firelock, and, with a heart full of trouble and anxiety, turned his steps homeward.

As he approached the village he met a number of people, but none that he knew, which somewhat surprised him, for he had thought himself acquainted with every one in the country round. Their dress, too, was of a different fashion from that to which he was accustomed. They all stared at him with equal marks of surprise, and whenever they cast their eyes upon him, invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture induced Rip, involuntarily, to do the same, when, to his astonishment, he found his beard had grown a foot long!

He had now entered the skirts of the village. A troop of children ran at his heels, hooting after him, and pointing at his gray beard. The dogs, too, not one of which he recognized for his old acquaintances, barked at him as he passed. The very village seemed altered; it was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over

the doors strange faces at the window—every thing was strange. His mind now began to misgive him, that both he and the world around him were bewitched. Surely this was his native village, which he had left but the day before. There stood the Kaatskill mountains there ran the silver Hudson at a distance—there was every hill and dale precisely as it had always been—Rip was sorely perplexed—“That flagon last night,” thought he, “has addled my poor head sadly!”

It was with some difficulty which he found the way to his house, which he approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of Dame Van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay the roof fallen in, the windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges. A half starved god, that looked like Wolf, was skulking about it. Rip called him by name, but the cur snarled, showed his teeth, and passed on. This was an unkind cut indeed “My very dog,” sighed poor Rip, “has forgotten me!”

He entered the house, which, to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn, and apparently abandoned. This desolateness overcame all his connubial fears he called loudly for his wife and children the lonely chambers rung for a moment with his voice, and then all again was silence.

He now hurried forth, and hastened to his resort, the little village inn but it too was gone. A large rickety wooden building stood in its place, with great gaping windows, some of them broken, and mended with old hats and petticoats, and over the door was painted, “The Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle.” Instead of the great tree that used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there now was reared a tall naked pole, with

something on top that looked like a red night cap, and from it was fluttering a flag, on which was a singular assemblage of stars and stripes—all this was strange and incomprehensible. He recognized on the sign, however, the ruby face of King George, under which he had smoked so many a peaceful pipe, but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The red coat was changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was stuck in the hand instead of a scepter, the head was decorated with a cocked hat, and underneath was painted in large characters, GENERAL WASHINGTON.

There was, as usual, a crowd of folk about the door, but none that Rip recollected. The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquility. He looked in vain for the sage Nicholas Vedder, with his broad face, double chin, and fair long pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco smoke, instead of idle speeches; or Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, doling forth the contents of an ancient newspaper. In place of these, a lean bilious looking fellow, with his pockets full of handbills, was haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens — election—members of congress—liberty—Bunker's hill—heroes of Seventy—six and other words, that were a perfect Babylonish Jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle.

The appearance of Rip, with his long grizzled beard, his rusty fowling piece, his uncouth dress, and the army of women and children that had gathered at his heels, soon attracted the attention of the tavern politicians. They crowded around him, eyeing him from head to foot, with great curiosity. The orator bustled up to him, and drawing him partly aside, inquired "which side he voted?" Rip stared in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy