



培根随笔选

曹明伦 译



四川人民出版社

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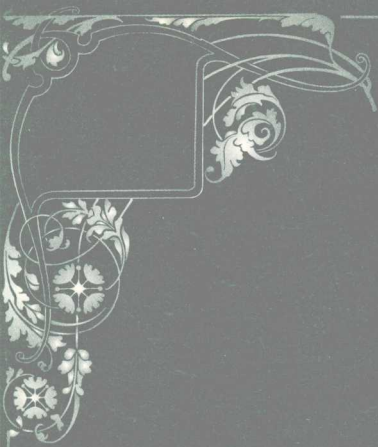
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英 汉 对 照 名 篇 文 丛
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前言

弗兰西斯·培根 (Francis Bacon) 是英国杰出的哲学家和文学家。他于 1561 年 1 月出生在伦敦一个官僚家庭, 12 岁时入剑桥大学三一学院 (Trinity College, Cambridge), 15 岁时作为英国驻法大使的随员到巴黎供职, 1579 年因父亲病故而辞职回国, 同年入格雷律师学院 (Gray's Inn) 攻读法学, 1582 年获得律师资格, 从此步入浩瀚的学海和坎坷的仕途。培根在伊丽莎白一世时代仕途屡屡受挫, 直到詹姆斯一世继位 (1603) 后他才开始走运, 1603 年受封为爵士, 1604 年被任命为皇家法律顾问。1607 出任首席检察官助理, 1613 年升为首席检察官, 1617 年入内阁成为掌玺大臣, 1618 年当上大法官并被封为男爵, 1620 年又被封为子爵。1621 年, 身为大法官的培根被控受贿, 他认罪下野, 从此脱离官场, 家居著述, 1626 年在一次冷冻防腐的科学实验中受寒罹病, 于同年 4 月去世。

二

虽说培根大半生都在官场沉浮, 但他从青年时代起就开

前言

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始了他终生未辍的哲学思考和文学写作。他才华出众且雄心勃勃，立志要对人类知识全部加以重构，为此他计划写一套巨著，总书名为《大复兴》（*Instauratio Magna*）。培根只完成了这一计划的两个部分。第一部分是两卷本的《学术之进步》（*The Advancement of Learning*, 1605），书中抨击了中世纪的经院哲学，论证了知识的巨大作用，揭示了人类知识不如人意的现状以及补救的方法；该书的拉丁文版扩大成9卷，书名为《论知识的价值和发展》（*De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum*, 1623）。《大复兴》之第二部分是单卷本的《新工具》（*Novum Organum*, 1620），这是培根最重要的哲学著作，在近代哲学史上具有重大的意义和广泛的影响。培根于1622年出版的《自然及实验史》（*Historia Naturalis et Experimentalis*）可被视为《大复兴》第三部分的序章。除此之外，培根的主要著作还有《论古人的智慧》（*De Sapientia Veterum*, 1609）和《新大西岛》（*New Atlantis*, 1627）等等。

三

培根在文学方面的代表作就是他的《随笔》（*Essays*）。这本书1597年初版时只收有10篇文章，1612年版增至38篇，1625年版（即末版）增至58篇。在培根逝世31年后的1657年，有一个Rawley版将培根的未完稿《论谣言》（*Of Fame*）作为第59篇收入其《随笔》，但由于该篇只有“启承”尚无“转合”，故后来的通行本仍多以58篇为标准。《随笔》的内容涉及到政治、经济、宗教、爱情、婚姻、友谊、艺术、教育、伦理等等，几乎触及了人类生活的方方面面。作为一名学识渊博且通晓人情世故的哲学家和思想家，培根对他谈及的问题均有发人深省的独到之见。《随笔》语

言简洁，文笔优美，说理透彻，警句迭出，几百年来深受各国读者欢迎，据说有不少人的性格曾受到这本书的熏陶。于今天的青年读者，读《随笔》就像听一位睿智的老人侃侃而谈，因为《随笔》里包含着这位先哲的思想精髓。

四

应四川人民出版社译文室邀约，笔者从由该社出版的拙译《培根随笔》中选出 36 篇，以英汉对照的形式编成这本小书，以供大学生或具有相当程度的读者阅读欣赏。笔者认为译散文作品的原则也应和译诗原则一样，即在神似的基础上追求最大限度的形似。对译文的语言表达，笔者有这样一种考虑：若令原作者用中文表达其原意，他当作何语？正是这种考虑使笔者将 “it is a prince's part to pardon” 译成 “高抬贵手乃贵人之举”（见《论复仇》），或将 “Seek not proud riches, but such as thou mayest get justly, use soberly, distribute cheerfully, and leave contentedly” 译成 “千万别为摆阔炫耀而追求财富，只挣你取之有道、用之有度、施之有乐且遗之有慰的钱财”（见《论财富》）。用英汉对照的形式出版《培根随笔选》对笔者的译文是一种检验。笔者在此衷心感谢策划这个版本的朱蓉贞女士和韩波先生，同时也期待读者对这本书的译文提出批评。

曹明伦

一九九八年五月

目 录

Of Truth	论真理	(2)
Of Death	论死亡	(8)
Of Revenge	论复仇	(14)
Of Adversity	谈厄运	(18)
Of Simulation and Dissimulation	论伪装与掩饰	(22)
Of Parents and Children	谈父母与子女	(30)
Of Marriage and Single Life	谈结婚与独身	(34)
Of Envy	论嫉妒	(40)
Of Love	论爱情	(52)
Of Great Place	论高位	(58)
Of Goodness, and Goodness of Nature	论善与性善	(66)
Of Travel	论远游	(72)
Of Cunning	论狡诈	(78)
Of Wisdom for a Man's Self	谈利己之聪明	(88)
Of Innovations	谈革新	(92)
Of Seeming Wise	谈貌似聪明	(96)

Of Friendship	论友谊	(100)
Of Expense	谈消费	(118)
Of Regimen of Health	谈养生之道	(122)
Of Suspicion	说疑心	(126)
Of Riches	论财富	(130)
Of Prophecies	论预言	(138)
Of Ambition	论野心	(146)
Of Nature in Men	说人之本性	(152)
Of Custom and Education	谈习惯和教育	(156)
Of Fortune	谈走运	(162)
Of Youth and Age	论青年与老年	(168)
Of Beauty	论美	(174)
Of Deformity	论残疾	(178)
Of Suitors	谈求情说项	(182)
Of Studies	谈读书	(188)
Of Ceremonies and Respects	谈礼节与俗套	(192)
Of Praise	谈赞誉	(196)
Of Vainglory	论虚荣	(202)
Of Anger	谈愤怒	(208)
Of Negotiating	说洽谈	(214)



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Of Truth

What is truth? said jesting Pilate; and would not stay for an answer. Certainly there be that delight in giddiness; and count it a bondage to fix a belief; affecting freewill in thinking as well as in acting. And though the sects of philosophers of that kind be gone, yet there remain certain discoursing wits which are of the same veins, though there be not so much blood in them as was in those of the ancients. But it is not only the difficulty and labor which men take in finding out of truth, nor again that when it is found, it imposeth upon men's thoughts, that doth bring lies in favor; but a natural though corrupt love of the lie itself. One of the later school of the Grecians examineth the matter, and is at a stand to think what should be in it that men should love lies; where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets; nor for advantage, as with the merchant, but for the lie's sake. But I cannot tell; this same truth is a naked and open daylight that doth not show the masks and mummeries and triumphs of the world half so stately and daintily as candle lights. Truth may perhaps come to the

论真理

何为真理？彼拉多曾戏问，^①且问后不等回答。世上确有人好见异思迁，视固守信仰为枷锁缠身，故而在思想行为上都追求自由意志。虽说该类学派的哲学家均已作古，^②然天下仍有些爱夸夸其谈的才子，他们与那些先贤一脉相承，只是与古人相比少些血性。但假象之所以受宠，其因不止于世人寻求真理之艰辛，亦非觅得之真理会对人类思维施加影响，而是缘于一种虽说缺德但却系世人与生俱有的对假象本身的喜好。希腊晚期学派中有位哲人^③对此进行过研究，而思索世人为何好假令他感到困惑，因其既非像诗人好诗一般可从中获取乐趣，亦不像商人好商那样可从中捞得利润，爱假者之爱假仅仅是为了假象本身的缘故。但我不能妄下结论，因上述真理是种未加遮掩的日光，若要使这世间的种种假面舞会、化装演出和胜利庆典显得优雅高贵，此光远

① 见《新约·约翰福音》18章37节～38节，耶稣受审时声称他来世间之目的是为了证明真理，于是彼拉多问“何为真理？”。

② 指源于皮浪（Pyrrhon，前360—前272）的古希腊怀疑论诸学派。

③ 指希腊讽刺作家卢奇安（Lucian，120—180）。

price of a pearl that showeth best by day, but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves? One of the fathers, in great severity, called poesy *the wine of evil spirits* because it filleth the imagination, and yet it is but with the shadow of a lie. But it is not the lie that passeth through the mind, but the lie that sinketh in, and setteth in it, that doth the hurt, such as we spake of before. But howsoever these things are thus in men's depraved judgments and affections, yet truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last was the light of reason; and his Sabbath work ever since is the illumination of his Spirit. First, he breathed light upon the face of the matter or chaos; then he breathed light into the face of man; and still he breatheth and inspireth light into the face of his chosen. The poet that beautified the sect, that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well: *It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore and to see ships tossed upon the sea; a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle and to see a battle and the adventures thereof below; but no pleasure is comparable to the*

不及灯烛之光。在世人眼里，真理或许可贵如在光天化日下最显璀璨的珍珠，但绝不可能贵如在五彩灯火中最显辉煌的钻石或红玉。错觉假象之混合物总是能为世人添乐。假如从世人头脑中除去虚幻的印象、悦人的憧憬、错误的估价、随意的空想以及诸如此类的东西，那恐怕许多人都只会剩下个贫乏而干瘪的头脑，充于其间的只有忧郁不安和自厌自烦，对此假设有谁会置疑呢？一位先人曾因诗能满足想象力而将其称为“魔鬼的酒浆”，^①其实诗不过是带有假象的影子罢了。大概有害的并非脑子里一闪即逝的错觉，而是上文所说的那种沉入心底并盘踞心中的假象。但纵有这些假象如此根置于世人堕落的观念与情感之中，只受自身评判的真理依然教导吾辈探究真理，认识真理并相信真理。探究真理即要对其求爱求婚，认识真理即要与之相依相随，而相信真理则可享受真理的乐趣，此乃人类天性之至善。在创天地万物的那几日中，上帝的第一创造是感觉之光，最后创造是理智之光；^②从那时暨今，他安息日的工作便一直是以其圣灵启迪众生。起初他呈现光明于万物或混沌之表面，继而他呈现光明于世人面庞，如今他依然为其选民^③的面庞注入灵光。那个曾为伊壁鸠鲁学派增光，从而使其不逊于别派的诗人^④说得极好：登高岸而濒水伫观舟楫颠簸于海上，不亦快哉；踞城堡而倚窗凭眺两军酣战于脚下，不亦快哉；然断无任何

① 圣哲罗姆 (St Jerome, 347-420) 曾曰“诗乃魔鬼之佳肴”，圣奥古斯丁 (St Augustine, 354-430) 则言“诗乃谬误之琼浆”。培根合二为一自有其道理。

② 见《旧约·创世记》1章3节及2章7节。

③ 上帝的选民原指以色列人，后指信奉上帝的芸芸众生。

④ 古罗马诗人及哲学家卢克莱修在长诗《物性论》中以形象的语言阐述伊壁鸠鲁学说中抽象的哲学概念。下文即引自《物性论》第2卷。

standing upon the vantage-ground of truth (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene), *and to see the errors and wanderings and mists and tempests in the vale below*; so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling or pride. Certainly it is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.

To pass from theological and philosophical truth to the truth of civil business, it will be acknowledged, even by those that practice it not, that clear and round dealing is the honor of man's nature, and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it. For these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent; which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious; and therefore Montaigne saith prettily, when he inquired the reason why the word of the lie should be such a disgrace, and such an odious charge; saith he, *If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth is as much as to say that he is brave towards God and a coward towards men. For a lie faces God and shrinks from man.* Surely the wickedness of falsehood and breach of faith cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men: it being foretold that when *Christ cometh*, he shall not *find faith upon the earth*.

快事堪比凌真理之绝顶（一巍然高耸且风清气朗的峰顶），一览深谷间的谬误与彷徨、迷雾与风暴。如此常凌常览，这番景象也许会诱发惻隐之心，而非引出自命不凡或目无下尘。毋庸置疑，若人心能随仁爱而行，依天意而定，且绕真理之轴而转，尘世当为人间乐园。

从神学和哲学上的真理说到世俗交往中的诚实，连那些不信奉真理者也得承认，行为光明磊落乃人性之保证，而弄虚作假则犹如往金银币里掺合金，此举或更利于钱币流通，但却降低了钱币的成色。盖此类三弯九转的做法乃蛇行之法，蛇行无足可用，只能卑贱地用其肚腹。最令人无地自容的恶行莫过于被人发现其阳奉阴违，背信弃义；因此蒙田的说法可谓恰如其分，他探究谎言为何这般可耻这般可恨时说：细细想来，说人撒谎就等于说他不畏上帝而惧世人。因谎言直面上帝而躲避世人。^①想必撒谎背信之恶不可能被揭示得比这更淋漓尽致了，依照此说，撒谎背信将是唤上帝来审判世人的最后钟声；盖预言曾云：基督重临之日，他在这世间将难觅忠信。^②

① 见《蒙田随笔》卷二第18篇《论说谎》。

② 见《新约·路加福音》18章8节。

Of Death

Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other. Certainly, the contemplation of death, as the wages of sin, and passage to another world, is holy and religious; but the fear of it, as a tribute due unto nature, is weak. Yet in religious meditations there is sometimes mixture of vanity and of superstition. You shall read in some of the friars' books of mortification, that a man should think with himself, what the pain is, if he have but his finger's end pressed or tortured; and thereby imagine what the pains of death are, when the whole body is corrupted and dissolved; when many times death passeth with less pain than the torture of a limb, for the most vital parts are not the quickest of sense. And by him that spake only as a philosopher and natural man, it was well said, *The trappings of death are more terrifying than death itself*. Groans and convulsions, and a discolored face, and friends weeping, and blacks and obsequies, and the like, show death terrible.

论死亡

成人畏惧死亡犹如儿童怕进黑暗；儿童对黑暗之天然惧怕因妄言传闻而增长，成人对死亡之畏怯恐惧亦复如此。无可否认，对死亡凝神沉思，视其为罪孽之报应或天国之通途^①，实乃圣洁虔诚之举；而对死亡心生畏怯，视其为应向自然交纳的贡物，则属懦弱愚陋之态。不过在虔诚的沉思中偶尔亦有虚妄和迷信混杂。在某些天主教修士的禁欲书中可读到这样的文字：人当自忖，思一指被压或被拶痛当如何，进而想死亡将使全身腐烂分解，此痛又当如何。其实死上千遭也不及一股受刑之痛，盖维系生命之最重要器官并非人体最敏感的部位。故那位仅以哲学家和正常人身份立言的先哲所言极是：伴随死亡而来的比死亡本身更可怕。^②呻吟与痉挛、面目之变色、亲友之哀悼、丧服与葬礼，诸如此类的场面都显出死亡之可怖。但应注意的是，人类的种种激情并非

① 《新约·罗马书》第6章23节云：“罪孽的报应乃死亡，但上帝通过基督耶稣赐予我们的恩惠却是永生。”

② 语出塞内加所著《道德书简》第24篇。