

全新双语

HUMANITIES IN ENGLISH

[美] 拉尔夫·沃尔多·爱默生◎著

Ralph Waldo Emerson

高永◎译

生活的准则

THE CONDUCT

of Life



美国精神先知的经典畅销名著，一部改变世界上千万人命运的旷世之作……

经济科学出版社

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双语读物  
HUMANITIES IN ENGLISH ⑦




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高 永 译

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# 前 言

*Humanities in English*

## 培养人文素质 成就国际通才

若想精通一门语言，没有对其文化背景的深入了解恐怕永远难登大雅之堂。在全球化日益成为国际主流的今天，英语作为西方文化头牌语言的重要性已日益凸显——今日世界，恐怕在地球上的任何角落，人们都可以用英语问路、用英语聊天、用英语购物、用英语交友、用英语在跨文化间作深度交流。

正如许多西方人热切地想了解中国文化一样，中国的英语学习者对西方文化及人文的了解也处于热切的需求中。是的，如果对西方的历史、文学、艺术、宗教、哲学没有一个最基本的了解，就连好莱坞大片想要看懂都会成为一个问题；而西方文化贡献给社会的普世价值恰恰是它深厚的人文传统及“民主、自由、博爱”等现代理念，不了解这些，则与任何稍有层次和品位的西方人的交流都将难以顺畅。

另一方面，国内的英语学习及爱好者如再停留在日常生活的 **English In General** 的层次上，将难以适应深度沟通和交流的需要，因此，对专业英语及文化背景的深入了解及学习将是提升英语能力的必由之路。有鉴于此，我们编写了本套丛书——《人文英语双语读物》，为读者奉上原汁原味的人文阅读精华，其或选自原典正文、或选自专业教材、或选自网络热帖，由精研此业者掇菁撷华，辑录成册，希望能帮助读者在学习英语的同时又能品味西方文化的独特魅力。

读万卷书行万里路，在我们无法踏上万里之路以愉耳目的时候，我们可以用阅读来滋养心灵，拓展人生版图。于某一日午后，抛开世俗的纷扰，挑一静谧之处，一杯香茗，几卷书册，品文化，长知识，学英语，在书页和文字之间触摸大千世界的真谛，在阅读中将知识内化成自己的修养，此为人生至乐。

文化共语言同飞，思想与阅读共舞。让我们的目光穿越时光、穿越语言，在原汁原味的英语阅读中品味人类文明共有的人文素质、人文素养、人文情怀、人文理念……并在此过程中成就自己的文化修养及完美人生。

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谨以此书献给  
美国精神先知拉尔夫·沃尔多·爱默生





## Chapter I FATE

Delicate omens traced in air,  
To the lone bard true witness bare.  
Birds with auguries on their wings,  
Chanted undeceiving things.  
Him to beckon, him to warn,  
Well might then the poet scorn.  
To learn of scribe or courier,  
Hints writ in vaster character.  
And on his mind, at dawn of day,  
Soft shadows of the evening lay,  
For the prevision is allied,  
Unto the thing so signified.  
Or say, the foresight that awaits,  
Is the same Genius that creates.

It chanced during one winter a few years ago, that our cities were bent on discussing the theory of the Age. By an odd coincidence, four or five noted men were each reading a discourse to the citizens of Boston or New York, on the Spirit of the Times. It so happened that the subject had the same prominence in some remarkable pamphlets and journals issued in London in the same season. To me however the question of the times resolved itself into a practical question of the conduct of life. How shall I live?

We are incompetent to solve the times. Our geometry cannot span the huge orbits of the prevailing ideas, behold their return and reconcile their opposition. We can only obey our own polarity. It is fine for us to speculate and elect our course, if we must accept an irresistible dictation.

## 第一章 命运

那些孤单的吟游诗人，  
是吉星高照的历史见证人。  
鸟儿翅膀上承载着吉祥，  
吟唱之中看破红尘。  
他在召唤，他在警告，  
却可能招致诗人的嘲笑。  
为更多地了解作家或信使，  
他以更广阔的字符书写暗示的令状。  
而在他的心上，在每天破晓时分，  
在暮色降临投下柔和阴影的时候，  
他的眼光富有远见，  
对事物也是如此重要。  
或说，美好的景色在远方，  
同样的天才将被创造。

那是几年前的一个冬天，当时我们城里的人正在热衷于探讨所谓的时代理论。凑巧的是，当时有四五个名人接连或向波士顿或向纽约市民发表了各自关于时代精神的演讲。而与此同时，伦敦出版的一些著名学术期刊和小册子上也出现了同样醒目的标题。然而，对我来说，时代问题本身其实可以用生活准则这样更具现实意义的方式来表述，亦即：我应当怎样生活？

我们个人是无力解决时代问题的。我们的社会结构不能超越主流观念的轨道，而只能向其回归，或者与不同的观念顺从一致。我们只能奉行各自的行为准则。当然，如果我们不得不接受时代观念，这对于我们思考和选择我们的事业也是有益的。



In our first steps to gain our wishes we come upon immovable limitations. We are fired with the hope to reform men. After many experiments we find that we must begin earlier, —at school. But the boys and girls are not docile; we can make nothing of them. We decide that they are not of good stock. We must begin our reform earlier still, — at generation: that is to say there is Fate, or laws of the world.

But if there be irresistible dictation, this dictation understands itself. If we must accept Fate, we are not less compelled to affirm liberty, the significance of the individual, the grandeur of duty, the power of character. This is true, and that other is true. But our geometry cannot span these extreme points and reconcile them. What to do? By obeying each thought frankly, by harping, or, if you will, pounding on each string, we learn at last its power. By the same obedience to other thoughts we learn theirs, and then comes some reasonable hope of harmonizing them. We are sure that, though we know not how, necessity does comport with liberty, the individual with the world, my polarity with the spirit of the times. The riddle of the age has for each a private solution.

If one would study his own time, it must be by this method of taking up in turn each of the leading topics which belong to our scheme of human life, and by firmly stating all that is agreeable to experience on one, and doing the same justice to the opposing facts in the others, the true limitations will appear. Any excess of emphasis on one part would be corrected, and a just balance would be made.

But let us honestly state the facts. Our America has a bad name for superficialness. Great men, great nations, have not been boasters and buffoons, but perceivers of the terror of life, and have manned themselves to face it. The Spartan, embodying his religion in his country, dies before its majesty without a question. The Turk, who believes his doom is written on the iron leaf in the moment when he entered the world, rushes on the enemy's sabre with undivided will. The Turk, the Arab, the Persian, accepts the foreordained fate: On the first, neither balm nor physician can save, Nor thee.

在我们为实现自己的愿望迈出第一步时，总会遇到一些不可避免的问题。我们受激励于改良人士的伟大希望，然而在经历多次实验之后，我们发现必须从更早的学校教育开始。但是，如果小姑娘小伙子们不听话，我们也无能为力，却会由此断定他们天资不佳，继而我们就必须更早地实施改革——从下一代开始：这或许就是所谓的命运，或称自然规律。

如如果真存在像接受主流观念那样不可抗拒的命运安排，那么它也要言之成理才能让人们信服。即便我们不得不接受命运的安排，我们也不可不强调自由的价值、个人的重要性、责任的神圣和个性的力量。然而生活中经常出现这种情况：这种观念是对的，那种也是对的。但是，我们的社会结构不能兼容这些极端的观念，而且主流观念也不能与这些极端观点协调一致。那该怎么办？我们只能坦率地认同每一种思想和观念，并反复宣传我们的主张。或者，如果你愿意，你也可以为你所认同的观念进行广泛有力的宣传和坚持不断的灌输，从而使我们从下一代人的流行观念中最终认识到它的力量。通过这样的教育，加之对其他观念的学习，我们才有了一些整合这些观念的希望。我们确信，虽然我们不知道个人与世界的关系如何，但选择信仰的自由是必不可少的。我相信，尽管对于时代精神的阐述众说纷纭，上述这一去其糟粕，取其精华的立场应该是体现时代精神的。时代之谜给每个人不同的选择。

如果一个人想要读懂他自己所处的时代，那他就必定要采取对时代主流话题进行依次分析的方法。他需坚定地申明自己可以全盘接受所有观点，并做相同的正义之事去纠正他人的行为，此时，他会发现先入为主的思维会影响自己对其他观念的接受，亦即真正的限制将会出现。

但是请让我们客观地陈述下列事实：我们美国有个肤浅的坏名声。伟大的人、伟大的国家，已然无所谓吹牛者和丑角，而都是直面惨淡人生的勇士。尽管斯巴达人也有坚定的宗教信仰，并将这种信仰散布在了国家的各个角落，但遗憾的是斯巴达在到达鼎盛之前就已经消失了，使得我们没能看到这种信仰发挥作用。土耳其人相信在他们来到这个世界的时候他们的命运就被写在了铁树叶上，就是凭着这种专一的意志，他们冲向敌人的阵营，英勇无畏。土耳其人、阿拉伯人、波斯人都接受了宿命论的世界观，但是我们知道，首先，既没有什么灵魂，也没有任何医生能挽救得了这样的人。



On the second, the Universe slay. The Hindoo under the wheel, is as firm. Our Calvinists in the last generation had something of the same dignity. They felt that the weight of the Universe held them down to their place.

The Greek Tragedy expressed the same sense. "Whatever is fated, that will take place. The great immense mind of Jove is not to be transgressed." Savages cling to a local god of one tribe or town. The broad ethics of Jesus were quickly narrowed to village theologies, which preach an election or favoritism. And now and then an amiable parson, like Jung Stilling or Robert Huntington, believes in a pistareen - Providence, which, whenever the good man wants a dinner, makes that somebody shall knock at his door and leave a half-dollar. But Nature is no sentimentalist, — does not cosset or pamper us.

We must see that the world is rough and surly, and will not mind drowning a man or a woman, but swallows your ship like a grain of dust. The cold, inconsiderate of persons, tingles your blood, benumbs your feet, freezes a man like an apple. The diseases, the elements, fortune, gravity, lightning, respect no persons. The way of Providence is a little rude. The habit of snake and spider, the snap of the tiger and other leapers and bloody jumpers, the crackle of the bones of his prey in the coil of the anaconda, — these are in the system, and our habits are like theirs. You have just dined, and however scrupulously the slaughterhouse is concealed in the graceful distance of miles, there is complicity, expensive races, — race living at the expense of race.

The planet is liable to shocks from comets, perturbations from planets, rendings from earthquake and volcano, alterations of climate, precessions of equinoxes. Rivers dry up by opening of the forest. The sea changes its bed. Towns and counties fall into it. At Lisbon an earthquake killed men like flies. At Naples three years ago ten thousand persons were crushed in a few minutes. The scurvy at sea, the sword of the climate in the west of Africa, at Cayenne, at Panama, at New Orleans, cut off men like a massacre. Our western prairie shakes with fever and ague.

其次,也不是你就可以使宇宙消亡,有信仰的印度教教徒依然十分刚强。我们基督教的加尔文派教徒在最后一代多少有了些同样的尊严。他们认为万有引力使他们脚踏实地地生活在这片幸福的土地上。

古希腊悲剧也表达了类似的宿命观:“无论如何,凡是命定的事终将会发生。神的意志不得违背。”野蛮人总是以一个种族或城镇为单位皈依于一个地方性的神。主耶稣广博的基督教义虽得以在乡村迅速传播,却由于布道者竭力用以宣传选民或博爱思想,从而变为了内涵浅薄的神学。有时也会有像乔·斯蒂尔凌或罗伯特·亨廷顿那样和蔼可亲的教区牧师,他们作为上帝的信徒在乡村传播基督教义,并教导人们在饥肠辘辘的时候被和善的人们邀请共进晚餐,为此应该要留下0.5美元作为答谢。然而,原罪并不多愁善感,它不会宠爱或是纵容我们。

我们必须看到世界的野蛮粗暴,从而学会不再介意一两个男女的沉沦。然而它究竟残酷到足以吞没你的生命仿如拂去一粒微尘,因而你变得冷漠、不关心他人,成为了冷血动物。你的脚丧失感觉,冷到足以把身边的人冻得像一个皱皮苹果。疾病、要素、财富、重力、闪电通通不尊敬任何人,诸如此类,可见上帝的生活方式的确是有些粗鲁无礼。蛇与蜘蛛的习性、老虎与其他食肉动物的彼此撕咬、尚在盘卷中的水蟒面对它的捕食者骨头发出“咔咔”的响声,这些都是大自然动物系统中普遍存在的现象,并且我们的生活习惯其实和它们很像。某天你刚用完餐,然而此时,在几公里外的优美环境中小心掩映着的屠宰场里正在进行着一场串通好了的生死殊斗。

每当有彗星划过,我们居住的行星就会产生震动,其他行星的异常运动也会使地球环境变得混乱,地震爆发、火山喷发、气候变化、昼夜交替。河流由于陆地上森林的过度砍伐而干涸,而海洋反过来又冲刷着陆地,许多城镇和村庄被它吞没。在里斯本的一次地震中,人们像苍蝇一样大批惨死。三年前在意大利城市那不勒斯大地震中,数万人在短短几分钟内粉身碎骨。海上的坏血病和非洲西部锋如剑芒的恶劣气候,使卡宴(法属圭亚那首府,最大城市,位于大西洋岸卡宴河口卡宴岛西北岸,译者注)、巴拿马和新奥尔良等地的人口像是遭受大屠杀了似的减少。我们西部的大草原则因经常使人感冒发烧和染上疟疾而令人不寒而栗。



Will you say, the disasters which threaten mankind are exceptional, and one need not lay his account for cataclysms every day? Aye, but what happens once may happen again, and so long as these strokes are not to be parried by us they must be feared. But these shocks and ruins are less destructive to us than the stealthy power of other laws which act on us daily. An expense of ends to means is fate; — organization tyrannizing over character. The menagerie, or forms and powers of the spine, is a book of fate; the bill of the bird, the skull of the snake, determines tyrannically its limits. So is the scale of races, of temperaments; so is sex; so is climate; so is the reaction of talents imprisoning the vital power in certain directions. Every spirit makes its house; but afterwards the house confines the spirit.

People seem sheathed in their tough organization. Ask Spurzheim, ask the doctors, ask Quetelet if temperaments decide nothing? — or if there be anything they do not decide? Read the description in medical books of the four temperaments and you will think you are reading your own thoughts which you had not yet told. Find the part which black eyes and which blue eyes play severally in the company.

How shall a man escape from his ancestors, or draw off from his veins the black drop which he drew from his father's or his mother's life? It often appears in a family as if all the qualities of the progenitors were potted in several jars, — some ruling quality in each son or daughter of the house; and sometimes the unmixed temperament, the rank unmitigated elixir, the family vice, is drawn off in a separate individual and the others are proportionally relieved. We sometimes see a change of expression in our companion and say his father or his mother comes to the windows of his eyes, and sometimes a remote relative. In different hours a man represents each of several of his ancestors, as if there were seven or eight of us rolled up in each man's skin, — seven or eight ancestors at least; and they constitute the variety of notes for that new piece of music which his life is.

你或许会说，那些能够威胁到人类生存的大灾难总是偶然事件，人们无需整天担忧。是的，我们不该杞人忧天。但是，无论是什么，既然已经发生了一次，就一定还会再次发生，只要这些自然灾害还未被征服，就足以继续令我们感到害怕。但是，这些冲击和毁灭性事件相比于每天作用在我们身上的其他规律的无形力量来说，破坏性还是比较小的。无论做什么事情，我们终究是需要付出代价的，这是因为社会组织的力量凌驾于个人天性之上。供人们观赏的珍稀野生动物，或腿骨的外形与力量，都是命运的记录。鸟的喙和蛇的头盖骨严格地限定了它们一生活动的极限。这也就是竞争的尺度、性别的尺度、气候的尺度和人的智力在不同方向上受限的尺度。每种精神都在创造它自己独立的世界，但是，所创造出来的这个世界不久就会反过来成为精神的束缚。

人们仿佛是被铜墙铁壁的社会组织包裹了起来。咨询一下斯伯兹黑姆，或者去看医生，或者向昆提莱特提问：气质是否并未表示什么？或者说，是不是并没有什么事由气质来决定？读到医书中对四种气质类型的描述，你会认为你是在了解你自己内心中那些尚未说明的想法。你若能在公司治理中发现黑色眼睛的人和蓝色眼睛的人各自最适合扮演的角色，则将使你的公司效率倍增。

一个人要怎样克服其祖先遗传的性格基因？一个人又该如何排除自己身上经由家庭注入的素质和气质？先知们的不同素质通常会一家子的不同人身上体现，通常儿子或女儿身上会有一些独特素质，有时是纯真而未混杂其他因素的气质，有时是坦诚而未加修饰的品格，但又时常具备使自己与其他人相隔阂的家族弱点等。有时候，我们看到同伴表情变化，就说好像是看到他的父母一样，有时候他又好像我们的一个远亲。一个人可以在不同时间表现出他的若干位不同性格的祖先，就好像至少七八位祖先已经在我们的生命中融入了自己一样，他们已经为我们生命的每一段都谱写了自己的乐章。





People are born with the moral or with the material bias; — uterine brothers with this diverging destination; and I suppose, with high magnifiers, Mr. Fraunhofer or Dr. Carpenter might come to distinguish in the embryo, at the fourth day,— this is a Whig, and that a Free-soiler.

It was a Poetic attempt to lift this mountain of Fate, to reconcile this despotism of race with liberty, which led the Hindoos to say, "Fate is nothing but the deeds committed in a prior state of existence." I find the coincidence of the extremes of Eastern and Western speculation in the daring statement of Schelling, "There is in every man a certain feeling that he has been what he is from all eternity, and by no means became such in time." To say it less sublimely, —in the history of the individual is always an account of his condition, and he knows himself to be a party to his present estate.

A good deal of our politics is physiological. Now and then a man of wealth in the heyday of youth adopts the tenet of broadest freedom. In England there is always some man of wealth and large connection, planting himself, during all his years of health, on the side of progress, who, as soon as he begins to die, checks his forward play, calls in his troops and becomes conservative. All conservatives are such from personal defects. They have been effeminated by position or nature, born halt and blind, through luxury of their parents, and can only, like invalids, act on the defensive. But strong natures, backwoodsmen, New Hampshire giants, Napoleons, Burkes, Broughams, Websters, Kossuths, are inevitable patriots, until their life ebbs and their defects and gout, palsy and money, warp them.

The strongest idea incarnates itself in majorities and nations, in the healthiest and strongest. Probably the election goes by avoirdupois weight, and if you could weigh bodily the tonnage of any hundred of the Whig and the Democratic party in a town on the Dearborn balance, as they passed the hay-scales, you could predict with certainty which party would carry it. On the whole it would be rather the speediest way of deciding the vote, to put the selectmen or the mayor and aldermen at the hay-scales.