



英美文学经典作品 赏析与导读

—— 美国篇 ——

郑野 李雯 主编



中国出版集团



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前 言

严格地说，美国文学的形成应从美国立国开始。但实际上，在此以前一二百年的殖民时期的文学虽然并不发达，主要以模仿为主，没有自己鲜明的特色，但那时的政治、经济和社会的发展对美国文学的形成还是有很大的影响的。例如，由于殖民者大量屠杀原来居住在北美大陆的印第安人，使他们的文化和民间口头文学的传统受到致命的摧残，因此美国文学没有英国《贝奥武甫》那样的口头文学遗产。另一方面，当年的美洲大陆移民基本上属于两种人，一类是为了逃避国内政治迫害、追求宗教自由的英国清教徒，他们来到新英格兰地区扎根发展；另一类是谋求发财致富的欧洲老百姓，包括野心勃勃的冒险家。不论哪一种人都相信在新大陆可以得到自由平等，都有机会实现自己的理想。这种观点使“美国梦”成为日后美国文学一个永恒的主题。清教主义有关人生来有罪及上帝主宰一切等思想也影响着美国作家不断地思考人性与原罪、人与上帝的关系。作为一个由移民组成的国家，美国受各种文化的影响，这又决定了美国文学要比其他西方文学更具有多样性。

美国文学的历史不长，但发展较快，20世纪以来，在世界上的影响越来越大。我国早在19世纪70年代就翻译了朗费罗的《人生颂》(*A Psalm of Life*)。1901年，林纾翻译出版了第一部美国小说——斯托夫人的《黑奴吁天录》(*Uncle Tom's Cabin*，今译《汤姆叔叔的小屋》)，在读者中引起极大的震动，使他们从黑奴身上看到自己亡国灭种的危险。根据小说改编的话剧对我国话剧运动的发展也起到了很大的推动作用。五四运动前后，惠特曼对郭沫若等诗人，奥尼尔对曹禺、洪深等戏剧家都产生过影响。马克·吐温、辛克莱、德莱塞等人都曾受到鲁迅等左翼作家的好评。改革开放以来，美国文学对我国新时期的作家们有着巨大的吸引力。盛行一时的朦胧诗恐怕就是在美国及西方现代派诗歌的影响下产生的。海明威、福克纳及塞林格等人几乎成为我们年轻一代作家的楷模。至于在世界上，埃德加·爱伦·坡曾被法国象征派诗人称为他们的诗歌之父，福克纳对法国的萨特和加缪以及拉丁美洲的加西亚·马尔克斯的影响也是有目共睹的。美国作家喜爱

描述初涉人世、寻求生活道路和人生真谛的“成长小说”，此类文体形式受到加拿大女作家的欣赏，也正在被我国的儿童文学作家所采用。美国作家的探索、试验、创新的精神也激励着世界各国的作家不断革新，超越前人。今天，在改革开放的时代，在我们加强跟美国交往的时候，我们有必要学一点美国文学，了解他们的文化以促进与美国人民的交流、沟通和理解，同时也借以丰富我们的知识，充实我们的文化修养，提高我们的精神素质。

本套丛书为读者奉上原汁原味的人文阅读精华，或选自原典正文、专业教材，或选自网络热点、文学史纲目，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助其领略西方人文经典的独特魅力。书稿中的学术见解和经典名句均转引自陶洁教授主编的《美国文学选读》(高等教育出版社，2001年版)，特此说明。

文学共语言同飞，阅读与思想共舞。让我们在书页和文字之间体味大千世界的真谛，在原汁原味的英语经典阅读中品文化、学英语、长知识，并在分享人类文明的过程中成就自己的文化修养、人文理念及完美人生。

郑野 李雯

2015年6月于郑州龙子湖畔

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第一章

本杰明·富兰克林 (Benjamin Franklin)

作者简介

本杰明·富兰克林 (Benjamin Franklin, 1706—1790年), 作家、科学家、政治家、发明家。出身低微, 10岁起受过两年的小学教育, 12岁开始在印刷厂当学徒, 但利用业余时间刻苦自学, 除母语之外, 还能够熟练地阅读法语、西班牙语、意大利语和拉丁语著作。16岁开始在《新英格兰周报》发表小品文, 评论时务。24岁成为印刷厂的业主后, 致力于社会公共事业, 先后创建费城公共图书馆, 主编《宾夕法尼亚报》, 还于1751年协助创办了宾夕法尼亚大学。中年之后, 他发奋研究物理、化学、数学、天文学等自然科学, 取得了重要成就, 后成为美国革命中的核心人物之一, 参与起草《独立宣言》。1776年至1785年, 他作为美国的全权代表出使法国, 寻求欧洲盟友在政治、经济、军事等方面的支持和援助, 出色地完成了使命。富兰克林一生著述丰富, 内容涉及时政、科学、经济、教育、个人生活阅历等诸多方面。1732年, 他用笔名发表了《格言历书》(*Poor Richard's Almanac*), 内容除历书之外还附有谚语、格言、警句, 非常畅销, 后作为系列出版物发行25年。他的《自传》(*The Autobiography*) 著于1771年至1790年, 生动而深刻地记载了他个人的生活经历, 历来被公认为美国文学的经典之作。

内容提要

选篇出自《自传》第一章。1771年, 时年65岁的富兰克林在英国回忆自己前半生的生活经历, 并以“自传”的形式记载下来, 以传后人。《自传》的

写作前后历时近20年。该书共由四个部分组成，第一部分主要讲述了他一生前25年的生活经历，包括短暂的学校读书生活、在印刷厂的学徒经历、如何在艰苦的环境中勤奋自学、匿名为报纸撰稿，以及开始在印刷业获得成功并结婚成家。1784年，第二部分成文于巴黎，侧重描写作者在科学研究方面的兴趣和成就，还涉及他所从事的社会公共事业。第三、四两个部分分别在1788年、1789年至1790年写于富兰克林的家乡费城，先后记叙了他从25岁至51岁的生活。至于作者后半生33年的生活，尤其是在欧洲和本国政界、外交界的经历和成就，作者只是在最后两个部分略有提及。换言之，《自传》并非作者一生完整的传记。富兰克林去世后，该书的部分章节未经授权曾在法国和英国出版，文字及内容均有失实之处，全部手稿直至1868年在巴黎发现后，才在当年出版了该书最为完整的版本。

赏 析

《自传》不仅是美国第一部成功的传记体作品，而且也是美国民族文学的早期代表作。自1868年全书问世之后，其价值和影响经久不衰。对于这部在美国文学史上占有重要地位的作品，可以从若干不同的视角解读和赏析。从传记文学的角度来说，《自传》的作者是一位土生土长的美国人，出身寒微，没有受过良好的正规教育，没有浪漫的爱情，没有权贵的提携，完全借助于自己不懈的努力而获得了成功。这有别于欧洲文学中传统的传记作品，不像它们以君王、重臣或者英雄为主人公，描写远离普通人见识的经历，字里行间充满了宫廷争斗、颠覆夺权、战争杀戮、神秘莫测的命运以及政治化事件。在富兰克林的笔下，一个原本普通的美国平民逐步从幼年走向青年和成年，从幼稚变得成熟，从致力于工业过渡到投身科学研究，从个人奋斗转而为国家独立发挥重要作用，而他所经历的所有一切，都是平凡而简单的生活故事。他之所以成功，一方面依靠自身的勤奋和信念的力量，另一方面还在于时代的造就。但是对于18世纪前半叶美国相对自由、宽松的社会环境，富兰克林并没有着力渲染，而是将其作为一种背景衬托他个人的成长

历程。

《自传》不仅描写了一个成功者在美国建国前期取得的成就，其价值和意义还在于揭示了这一人物内在道德品性的塑造过程。清教主义中勤奋、务实、上进的精神，以及启蒙时期美国人民对于自己民族未来发展的想象与信心，都凝聚于他的个性之中，从而表现为一种强大的生命活力。富兰克林以此自豪，而且自觉地设法将其道德伦理信念传达给读者。这一点明显见于书中的第二、三、四部分。作为一个典型的美国人的写照，《自传》展示了18世纪美国的社会图景以及启蒙时代的精神风貌，塑造了一个全新的美国人的形象，并以个人的发展和成就再现了社会孕育的活力。对于美国民族个性的形成，这一人物形象起到了重要而长久的影响，同时也在一定程度上开始扭转欧洲人对美国人的蔑视与偏见。

从叙事语言来看，《自传》真实感人，个性化的文笔洗练清新，风格纯朴，少有18世纪英国乃至整个欧洲文坛所崇尚的雕琢的文风。但在该书的四个部分中，显然富兰克林心目中拥有不同的读者，因此各个部分的叙事风格也有所差异。在第一部分，富兰克林以“亲爱的儿子”开篇，读者为他的后嗣，纯朴亲切的字句可以使人领略到父子深情。从第二部分开始，读者以社会大众为对象，作者与读者之间的对话开始保持一定的距离，说教的意味也溢于字面。此外，由于《自传》写作的时间漫长，各个部分只是按照时间顺序衔接，在叙事结构上略显松散。

The Autobiography¹

(Excerpt)

TO HIS SON

Twyford², at the Bishop of St. Asaph's, 1771

Dear Son³,

I have ever had a pleasure in obtaining any little anecdotes of my ancestors. You may remember the enquiries I made among the remains of my relations⁴ when you were with me in England and the journey I undertook for that purpose.

Imagining it may be equally agreeable to you to know the circumstances of my Life—many of which you are yet unacquainted with—and expecting a week's uninterrupted Leisure in my present country retirement, I sit down to write them for you. Besides, there are some other inducements that excite me to this undertaking. From the poverty and obscurity in which I was born and in which I passed my earliest years, I have raised myself to a state of affluence⁵ and some degree of celebrity in the world. As constant good fortune has accompanied me even to an advanced period of life, my posterity will perhaps be desirous of learning the means, which I employed, and which, thanks to Providence⁶, so well succeeded with me. They may also deem them fit to be Imitated, should any of them find themselves in similar circumstances. That good fortune, when I reflected on it, which is frequently the case, has induced me sometimes to say that were it left to my choice, I should have no objection to go over the same life from its beginning to the end, only asking the advantage authors have of correcting in a second edition some faults of the first. So would I also wish to change some incidents of it for others more favourable. Notwithstanding, if this condition were denied, I should still accept the offer. But as this repetition is not to be expected, that which resembles most living one's life over again, seems to be to recall all the circumstances of it; and, to render this remembrance more durable, to record them in writing, in thus employing myself I shall yield to the inclination so natural to old men of talking of themselves and their own actions, and I shall indulge it, without being tiresome to those who, from respect to my age, might conceive themselves obliged to listen to me, since they will be always free to read me or not. And lastly (I may as well confess it, as the denial of it would be believed by nobody) I shall perhaps not a little gratify my own vanity. Indeed, I never heard or saw the introductory words, "Without Vanity I may say," etc., but some vain thing immediately followed. Most people dislike vanity in others whatever share they have of it themselves, but I give it fair quarter⁷ wherever I meet with it,

being persuaded that it is often productive of good to the possessor and to others who are within his sphere of action. And therefore, in many cases it would not be altogether absurd if a man were to thank God for his vanity among the other comforts of life. And now I speak of thanking God, I desire with all humility to acknowledge that I owe the mentioned happiness of my past life to his divine providence, which led me to the means I used and gave them success. My belief of this induces me to hope, though I must not presume, that the same goodness will still be exercised towards me in continuing that happiness or in enabling me to bear a fatal reverse, which I may experience as others have done—the complexion of my future fortune being known to him only, and in whose power it is to bless to us even our afflictions.

THE ARRIVAL IN PHILADELPHIA

[Following the altercation with his older brother to whom Franklin had been apprenticed (and whose oppressive treatment of Franklin, the latter says, gave him “that aversion to arbitrary power that has stuck to me through my whole life”), and after a brush with the law, the seventeen-year-old lad leaves Boston and comes to Philadelphia, the city whose first citizen he would eventually become.]

This might be one occasion of the differences we⁸ began to have about this time. Though a brother, he considered himself as my master and me as his apprentice, and accordingly expected the same services from me as he would from another; while I thought he degraded me too much in some he required of me, who from a brother expected more indulgence. Our disputes were often brought before our father, and I fancy I was either generally in the right or else a better pleader, because the judgment was generally in my favour. But my brother was passionate and had often beaten me, which I took extremely amiss. I fancy his harsh and tyrannical treatment of me might be a means of impressing me with that

aversion to arbitrary power that has stuck to me through my whole life. Thinking my apprenticeship very tedious, I was continually wishing for some opportunity of shortening it, which at length offered in a manner unexpected.

One of the pieces in our newspaper on some political point which I have now forgotten, gave offence to the Assembly⁹. He was taken up, censured, and imprisoned for a month by the Speaker's warrant, I suppose because he would not discover the author. I, too, was taken up and examined before the Council; but though I did not give them any satisfaction, they contented themselves with admonishing me and dismissed me, considering me, perhaps, as an apprentice who was bound to keep his master's secrets. During my brother's confinement, which I resented a good deal notwithstanding our private differences, I had the management of the paper, and I made bold to give our rulers some rubs in it, which my brother took very kindly, while others began to consider me in an unfavourable light as a young genius that had a turn for libelling and satire. My brother's discharge was accompanied with an order from the House (a very odd one) that "James Franklin should no longer print the paper called the New England Courant." There was a consultation held in our printing house amongst his friends in this conjuncture. Some proposed to elude the order by changing the name of the paper; but my brother seeing inconveniences in that, it was finally concluded on as a better way to let it be printed for the future under the name of "Benjamin Franklin" ; and to avoid the censure of the Assembly that might fall on him as still printing it by his apprentice, the contrivance was that my old indenture¹⁰ should be returned to me with a full discharge on the back of it, to show in case of necessity; but to secure to him the benefit of my service, I should sign new indentures for the remainder of the term, which were to be kept private. A very flimsy¹¹ scheme it was, but, however, it was immediately executed, and the paper went on accordingly under my name for several months. At length a fresh difference arising between my brother and me, I took upon me to assert my

freedom, presuming that he would not venture to produce the new indentures. It was not fair in me to take this advantage, and this I therefore reckon one of the first errata¹² of my life. But the unfairness of it weighed little with me, when under the impressions of resentment for the blows his passion too often urged him to bestow upon me, though he was otherwise not an ill-natured man. Perhaps I was too saucy and provoking.

When he found I would leave him, he took care to prevent my getting employment in any other printing house of the town by going round and speaking to every master, who accordingly refused to give me work. I then thought of going to New York as the nearest place where there was a printer; and I was the rather inclined to leave Boston when I reflected that I had already made myself a little obnoxious¹³ to the governing party; and from the arbitrary proceedings of the Assembly in my brother's case, it was likely I might if I stayed soon bring myself into scrapes, and further that my indiscreet disputations about religion began to make me pointed at with horror by good people as an infidel or atheist. I determined on the point, but my father now siding with my brother, I was sensible that if I attempted to go openly, means would be used to prevent me. My friend Collins therefore undertook to manage my flight. He agreed with the captain of a New York sloop for my passage, under pretence of my being a young man of his acquaintance that had had an intrigue with a girl of bad character, whose parents would compel me to marry her and therefore I could not appear or come away publicly. I sold some of my books to raise a little money, was taken on board the sloop privately, had a fair wind, and in three days found myself at New York, near three hundred miles from my home, at the age of seventeen, without the least recommendation to or knowledge of any person in the place, and with very little money in my pocket.

The inclination I had had for the sea was by this time done away, or I might now have gratified it. But having another profession and conceiving myself a

pretty good workman, I offered my services to the printer of the place, old Mr. Wm. Bradford (who had been the first printer in Pennsylvania, but had removed thence in consequence of a quarrel with the Governor, Geo. Keith). He could give me no employment, having little to do and hands enough already. “But,” says he, “my son at Philadelphia has lately lost his principal hand, Aquila Rose, by death. If you go thither I believe he may employ you.”

Philadelphia was a hundred miles farther. I set out, however, in a boat for Amboy¹⁴, leaving my chest and things to follow me round by sea. In crossing the bay we met with a squall that tore our rotten sails to pieces, prevented our getting into the kill, and drove us upon Long Island. In our way a drunken Dutchman, who was a passenger, too, fell overboard; when he was sinking, reached through the water to his shock pate and drew him up so that we got him in again. His ducking sobered him a little, and he went to sleep, taking first out of his pocket a book which he desired I would dry for him. It proved to be my old favourite author *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress*¹⁵ in Dutch, finely printed on good paper with copper cuts, a dress better than I had ever seen it wear in its own language. I have since found that it has been translated into most of the languages of Europe, and suppose it has been more generally read than any other book except, perhaps, the Bible. Honest John¹⁶ was the first that I know of who mixes narration and dialogue, a method of writing very engaging to the reader, who in the most interesting parts finds himself, as it were, admitted into the company and present at the conversation. Defoe¹⁷ has imitated him successfully in his *Robinson Crusoe*¹⁸, in his *Moll Flanders*¹⁹, and other pieces; and Richardson has done the same in his *Pamela*²⁰, etc.

On approaching the island, we found it was in a place where there could be no landing, there being a great surf on the stony beach. So we dropped anchor and swung out our cable towards the shore. Some people came down to the water edge and hallooed to us, as we did to them, but the wind was so high and the

surf so loud that we could not understand each other. There were some canoes on the shore, and we made signs and called to them to fetch us, but they either did not comprehend us or thought it impracticable so they went off. Night approaching, we had no remedy but to have patience till the wind abated, and in the meantime the boatman and I concluded to sleep if we could, and so we crowded into the scuttle²¹ with the Dutchman who was still wet, and the spray breaking over the head of our boat leaked through to us, so that we were soon almost as wet as he. In this manner we lay all night with very little rest; but the wind abating the next day, we made a shift to reach Amboy before night, having been thirty hours on the water without victuals or any drink but a bottle of filthy rum, the water we sailed on being salt.

In the evening I found myself very feverish and went to bed; but having read somewhere that cold water drank plentifully was good for a fever, I followed the prescription, sweat plentifully most of the night, my fever left me, and in the morning crossing the ferry, I proceeded on my journey on foot, having fifty miles to Burlington²², where I was told I should find boats that would carry me the rest of the way to Philadelphia.

It rained very hard all the day, I was thoroughly soaked and by noon a good deal tired, so I stopped at a poor inn, where I stayed all night, beginning now to wish I had never left home. I made so miserable a figure, too, that I found by the questions asked me I was suspected to be some run-away servant, and in danger of being taken up on that suspicion. However, I proceeded the next day, and got in the evening to an inn within eight or ten miles of Burlington, kept by one Dr. Brown²³.

He entered into conversation with me while I took some refreshment and, finding I had read a little, became very sociable and friendly. Our acquaintance continued all the rest of his life. He had been, I imagine, an itinerant doctor, for there was no town in England or any country in Europe of which he could not give a very particular account. He had some letters and was ingenious, but he was an infidel and wickedly undertook some years after to travesty the Bible in

doggerel verse as Cotton had done with Virgil²⁴. By this means he set many of the facts in a very ridiculous light and might have done mischief with weak minds if his work had been published, but it never was. At his house I lay that night, and the next morning reached Burlington, but had the mortification to find that the regular boats were gone a little before and no other expected to go before Tuesday, this being Saturday. Wherefore²⁵, I returned to an old woman in the town of whom I had bought some gingerbread²⁶ to eat on the water and asked her advice; she invited me to lodge at her house till a passage by water should offer; and being tired with my foot travelling, I accepted the invitation. Understanding I was a printer, she would have had me remain in that town and follow my business, being ignorant of the stock necessary to begin with. She was very hospitable, gave me a dinner of ox cheek with great goodwill, accepting only of a pot of ale in return. And I thought myself fixed till Tuesday should come. However, walking in the evening by the side of the river, a boat came by, which I found was going towards Philadelphia with several people in her. They took me in, and as there was no wind, we rowed all the way; and about midnight, not having yet seen the city, some of the company were confident we must have passed it and would row no farther; the others knew not where we were, so we put towards the shore, got into a creek, landed near an old fence, with the rails of which we made a fire, the night being cold in October, and there we remained till daylight. Then one of the company knew the place to be Cooper's Creek, a little above Philadelphia, which we saw as soon as we got out of the creek, and arrived there about eight or nine o'clock, on the Sunday morning and landed at the Market Street wharf.

I have been the more particular in this description of my journey, and shall be so of my first entry into that city, that you may in your mind compare such unlikely beginnings with the figure I have since made there. I was in my working dress, my best clothes being to come round by sea. I was dirty from my journey; my pockets were stuffed out with shirts and stockings; I knew no soul, nor where

to look for lodging. Fatigued with walking, rowing, and want of sleep, I was very hungry, and my whole stock of cash consisted of a Dutch dollar and about a shilling in copper coin, which I gave to the boatmen for my passage. At first they refused it on account of my having rowed, but I insisted on their taking it. A man is sometimes more generous when he has little money than when he has plenty, perhaps through fear of being thought to have but little. I walked towards the top of the street, gazing about till near Market Street, where I met a boy with bread. I have often made a meal of dry bread, and inquiring where he had bought it, I went immediately to the baker's he directed me to. I asked for biscuit, meaning such as we had in Boston, but that sort, it seems, was not made in Philadelphia. I then asked for a threepenny loaf and was told they had none such. Not knowing the different prices nor the names of the different sorts of any bread, I told him to give me three pennyworth of any sort. He gave me accordingly three great puffy rolls. I was surprised at the quantity but took it, and having no room in my pockets, walked off with a roll under each arm and eating the other. Thus I went up Market Street as far as Fourth Street, passing by the door of Mr. Read, my future wife's father, when she, standing at the door, saw me, and thought I made—as I certainly did—a most awkward, ridiculous appearance. Then I turned and went down Chestnut Street and part of Walnut Street, eating my roll all the way, and coming round, found myself again at Market Street wharf near the boat I came in, to which I went for a draught of the river water, and being filled with one of my rolls, gave the other two to a woman and her child that came down the river in the boat with us and were waiting to go farther. Thus refreshed, I walked again up the street, which by this time had many clean dressed people in it who were all walking the same way; I joined them, and thereby was led into the great meetinghouse of the Quakers²⁷ near the market. I sat down among them, and after looking round awhile and hearing nothing said, being very drowsy through labour and want of rest the preceding night, I fell fast asleep and continued so