

凤凰出版传媒集团 译林出版社

刘炳善 译注

〔英国〕弗吉尼亚·伍尔夫 著

Books and Portraits

A Selection of Virginia Woolf's Essays

Virginia Woolf

书和画像

伍尔夫散文精选

双语译林

Books and Portraits

Innovative novelist, perceptive critic, and pioneering
contribution to the development of the novel with her

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Innovative novelist, perceptive critic, and pioneering feminist essayist, Virginia Woolf made a major contribution to the development of the novel with her impressionistic style.

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

书和画像: 伍尔夫散文精选: 英汉对照 / (英) 伍尔夫 (Woolf, V.) 著;
刘炳善译注. —南京: 译林出版社, 2008.7

(双语译林系列)

书名原文: Books and Portraits: A Selection of Virginia Woolf's Essays

ISBN 978-7-5447-0673-5

I. 书… II. ①伍… ②刘… III. ①英语-汉语-对照读物 ②散文-作品集-英国-现代 IV. H319.4:I

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2008) 第 097589 号

- | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|
| 书 名 | 书和画像 |
| 作 者 | [英]弗吉尼亚·伍尔夫 |
| 译 注 | 刘炳善 |
| 责任编辑 | 何本国 |
| 出版发行 | 凤凰出版传媒集团
译林出版社(南京湖南路 47 号 210009) |
| 电子信箱 | yilin@yilin.com |
| 网 址 | http://www.yilin.com |
| 集团网址 | 凤凰出版传媒网 http://www.ppm.cn |
| 印 刷 | 通州市印刷总厂有限公司 |
| 开 本 | 718 × 1000 毫米 1/16 |
| 印 张 | 17 |
| 插 页 | 4 |
| 版 次 | 2008 年 7 月第 1 版 2008 年 7 月第 1 次印刷 |
| 书 号 | ISBN 978-7-5447-0673-5 |
| 定 价 | 22.50 元 |

译林版图书若有印装错误可向承印厂调换

小引

弗吉尼亚·伍尔夫 (Virginia Woolf, 1882—1941) 是 20 世纪著名的英国“意识流”小说家。她的小说不注重情节, 而着重以抒情散文的形式写出人物内心世界的活动、进行细致的心理描写。同时, 她也是一位散文家, 善于用轻灵活泼的文笔写出她对于自己所喜爱的作家和作品的印象。她这方面的文章主要收入题为《普通读者》和《普通读者二集》两书 (*The Common Reader*, 1925; *The Second Common Reader*, 1932)。这些文章乃是一个具有高度文化修养和丰富创作经验的女作家, 在创作之余所写的一批富有个人独特风格的随笔散文。本书选译其中的十三篇。

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1 THE COMMON READER

There is a sentence in Dr Johnson's *Life of Gray* which might well be written up in all those rooms, too humble to be called libraries, yet full of books, where the pursuit of reading is carried on by private people. '... I rejoice to concur with the common reader; for by the common sense of readers, uncorrupted by literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtilty and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours.' It defines their qualities; it dignifies their aims; it bestows upon a pursuit which devours a great deal of time, and is yet apt to leave behind it nothing very substantial, the sanction of the great man's approval.

The common reader, as Dr Johnson implies, differs from the critic and the scholar. He is worse educated, and nature has not gifted him so generously. He reads for his own pleasure rather than to impart knowledge or correct the opinions of others. Above all, he is guided by an instinct to create for himself, out of whatever odds and ends he can come by, some kind of whole—a portrait of a man, a sketch of an age, a theory of the art of writing. He never ceases, as he reads, to run up

1 普通读者¹

在那些设备寒伦，不配称为图书馆，而收藏书籍倒也不少，可供平民百姓阅览求知的地方，很值得把约翰逊博士²《格雷传》里的一句话特别抄写出来，引起注意：“能与普通读者的意见不谋而合，在我是高兴的事。因为，在决定诗歌荣誉的权利时，尽管高雅的敏感和学术的教条也起着作用，但一般来说应该根据那未受文学偏见污损的普通读者的常识。”这句话对普通读者的素质加以阐明，赋予他们的读书宗旨以一种神圣意味，并且使得这么一种既要消耗大量时光，又往往看不出实效的活动，由于这位大人物的赞许而受到认可。

约翰逊博士心目中的普通读者，不同于批评家和学者。他没有那么高的教养，造物主也没有赏给他那么大的才能。他读书，是为了自己高兴，而不是为了向别人传授知识，也不是为了纠正别人的看法。首先，他受一种本能指使，要根据自己能捞到手的一星半点书本知识，塑造出某种整体——某位人物肖像，某个时代略图，某

1 这篇小文章原来放在《普通读者》初集的开头，实际上是弗吉尼亚·伍尔夫的自序。

2 英国18世纪的著名学者、作家。此处所说的《格雷传》是他写的《英国诗人传》里的一篇。

some rickety and ramshackle fabric which shall give him the temporary satisfaction of looking sufficiently like the real object to allow of affection, laughter, and argument. Hasty, inaccurate, and superficial, snatching now this poem, now that scrap of old furniture, without caring where he finds it or of what nature it may be so long as it serves his purpose and rounds his structure, his deficiencies as a critic are too obvious to be pointed out; but if he has, as Dr Johnson maintained, some say in the final distribution of poetical honours, then, perhaps, it may be worth while to write down a few of the ideas and opinions which, insignificant in themselves, yet contribute to so mighty a result.

种写作艺术原理。他在阅读时不停地为自己匆匆搭起某种建筑物，它东倒西歪、摇摇欲坠，然而看来又像是真实的事物，能引人喜爱、欢笑、争论，因此也就能给他带来片刻的满足。他一会儿抓住一首诗，一会儿抓住一个旧书片断，也不管它是从哪儿弄来的，也不管它属于何等品类，只求投合自己的心意，能使自己心造的意象结构圆满就成，又总是这么匆匆忙忙，表述又不准确，而且肤浅——所以，作为批评家来看，他的缺陷是太明显了，无须指出了。但是，既然约翰逊博士认为，在诗歌荣誉的最终分配方面，普通读者有一定的发言权，那么，将自己这些想法、意见记录下来，也还值得一做，因为它们本身尽管微不足道，却对于那么一种重要结果的形成还能产生一定的影响。

2 MONTAIGNE

Once at Bar-le-Duc Montaigne saw a portrait which René, King of Sicily, had painted of himself, and asked, 'Why is it not, in like manner, lawful for every one to draw himself with a pen, as he did with a crayon?' Off-hand one might reply, not only is it lawful, but nothing could be easier. Other people may evade us, but our own features are almost too familiar. Let us begin. And then, when we attempt the task, the pen falls from our fingers; it is a matter of profound, mysterious, and overwhelming difficulty.

After all, in the whole of literature, how many people have succeeded in drawing themselves with a pen? Only Montaigne and Pepys and Rousseau perhaps. The *Religio Medici* is a coloured glass through which darkly one sees racing stars and a strange and turbulent soul. A bright polished mirror reflects the face of Boswell peeping between other people's shoulders in the famous biography. But this talking of oneself, fol-

2 蒙田¹

一天，蒙田在巴勒迪克²看到西西里国王勒内³的一幅自画像，于是，他提出了一个问题：“既然他能用蜡笔为自己画像，难道我们每人拿起笔来描绘一下自己就不合法吗？”⁴我们可以立刻回答：这不仅合法，而且再容易不过。对于别人我们素昧平生，对于自己的相貌特征，我们简直太熟悉了。那就开始吧。可是，刚一动手，那笔可就从我们指头缝儿里掉下来了——原来这是一件极难、极奥妙、人力不能胜任的事情。

说到底，在整个文学领域里，拿笔来描绘自己获得成功的，究竟有几个人呢？或许只有蒙田、佩皮斯和卢梭⁵。《医生的宗教》⁶一书像是一片色彩斑斓的玻璃，透过它，我们可以看到飞速转动的星辰和一个古怪而骚动不安的灵魂。还有那一部大名鼎鼎的传记⁷，像一面明亮亮、光闪闪的镜子，映照出那一位躲在别人肩膀后边窥看世界的鲍斯威尔的面目。但是，像这样随自己兴之所至地讲说自己，

1 文艺复兴时期的著名法国作家，其代表作《随笔集》(Essais)为近代欧洲随笔散文的肇始，对英国散文发展有很大影响。

2 法国地名，在法国东北部梅斯行政区。

3 即法国国王路易二世之子勒内公爵，拥有那不勒斯和西西里国王的名义，其本人为诗人和艺术爱好者，其宫廷为当时一个文艺活动中心。

4 出自《论自大》(以下引文均出自蒙田《随笔集》)。

5 佩皮斯，英国日记作家。卢梭，法国著名思想家，著有《忏悔录》一书。

6 英国医生和散文作家勃朗的著作。

7 指英国鲍斯威尔所著的《约翰逊传》。

lowing one's own vagaries, giving the whole map, weight, colour, and circumference of the soul in its confusion, its variety, its imperfection—this art belonged to one man only: to Montaigne. As the centuries go by, there is always a crowd before that picture, gazing into its depths, seeing their own faces reflected in it, seeing more the longer they look, never being able to say quite what it is that they see. New editions testify to the perennial fascination. Here is the Navarre Society in England reprinting in five fine volumes Cotton's translation; while in France the firm of Louis Conard is issuing the complete works of Montaigne with the various readings in an edition to which Dr Armaingaud has devoted a long lifetime of research.

To tell the truth about oneself, to discover oneself near at hand, is not easy.

We hear of but two or three of the ancients who have beaten this road [said Montaigne]. No one since has followed the track; 'tis a rugged road, more so than it seems, to follow a pace so rambling and uncertain, as that of the soul; to penetrate the dark profundities of its intricate internal windings; to choose and lay hold of so many little nimble motions; 'tis a new and extraordinary undertaking, and that withdraws us from the common and most recommended employments of the world.

There is, in the first place, the difficulty of expression. We all indulge in the strange, pleasant process called thinking, but when it comes to saying, even to some one opposite, what we think, then how little we are able to convey! The phantom is through the mind and out of the window before we can lay salt on its tail, or slowly sinking and returning to the profound darkness which it has lit up momentarily with a wandering

把自己这混乱、多变、有缺陷的灵魂的整个面貌、分量、色彩、范围，都统统呈现出来——这种本领，只有一个人有，那就是蒙田。一个世纪又一个世纪过去了，在他这幅画像前总是聚集着大群的人，向它凝神细看，看出了其中反映出自己的面貌；而且，愈看啊，就看出更多的名堂，简直说不清自己所看到的究竟是什么。层出不穷的新版表明了它那永久的魅力。如今，在英国，那伐尔书社把柯顿的译文¹重印为精美的五卷本；同时，在法国，柯纳尔公司也正在发行一套把种种异文都搜罗在内的新版蒙田全集，为此，阿曼古博士献出了自己漫长一生的研究成果。

然而，道出自己的真情实况，从身边来暴露自己，可不是一件简单的事。蒙田说：

我们知道，只有两三位古人走过这条道路。但后来就没有人跟踪前往了；因为，追随灵魂那漫无边际、变化不定的步伐，揭破它那深藏内部的迂回曲折，掌握它那许许多多细微、灵活的变动——这是一条崎岖不平的路，比表面看来要难走得多。这是一种新奇而特殊的工作，要进行它，须得脱离开世上那些一般的、最受赞许的事务。²

首先，是表达方面的困难。耽迷于那种叫做思考的奇妙有趣的过程之中，是我们大家都爱做的事；但是，一旦要说出自己所想的东西，哪怕是向和自己对面的人谈一谈，我们就发现自己能表达出来的东西少得何等可怜！思想的幻影，往往不等我们把它抓住，一从心头出现，就又从窗口溜掉，要不然它那一线游移不定的光芒倏然一闪，就又慢慢沉落，复归于黑暗的深渊。人说话时，面目、声

1 指英国诗人、作家柯顿所译的蒙田《随笔集》（初版于1685年）。

2 出自《论训练》。

light. Face, voice, and accent eke out our words and impress their feebleness with character in speech. But the pen is a rigid instrument; it can say very little; it has all kinds of habits and ceremonies of its own. It is dictatorial too: it is always making ordinary men into prophets, and changing the natural stumbling trip of human speech into the solemn and stately march of pens. It is for this reason that Montaigne stands out from the legions of the dead with such irrepressible vivacity. We can never doubt for an instant that his book was himself. He refused to teach; he refused to preach; he kept on saying that he was just like other people. All his effort was to write himself down, to communicate, to tell the truth, and that is a 'rugged road, more than it seems'.

For beyond the difficulty of communicating oneself, there is the supreme difficulty of being oneself. This soul, or life within us, by no means agrees with the life outside us. If one has the courage to ask her what she thinks, she is always saying the very opposite to what other people say. Other people, for instance, long ago made up their minds that old invalidish gentlemen ought to stay at home and edify the rest of us by the spectacle of their connubial fidelity. The soul of Montaigne said, on the contrary, that it is in old age that one ought to travel, and marriage, which, rightly, is very seldom founded on love, is apt to become, towards the end of life, a formal tie better broken up. Again with politics, statesmen are always praising the greatness of Empire, and preaching the moral duty of civilising the savage. But look at the Spanish in Mexico, cried Montaigne in a burst of rage. 'So many cities levelled with the ground, so many nations exterminated ... and the richest and most beautiful part of the world turned upside down for the traffic of pearl and pepper! Mechanic victories!' And

音、腔调倒还可弥补语言之不足，使得软弱无力的语言带有一定的性格特征。笔却是一种呆板生硬的工具，它能表达出的东西很少，还带着自己的旧习惯、脱不开老路子。它又爱发号施令，让普通人摆出先知的架势；人平常说话的调子本来是嗑嗑巴巴、犹犹豫豫，一到笔下就变成了庄严堂皇的进行曲。正是因为这样，在数不清的逝者当中，只有蒙田这种不可抑制的栩栩如生的特点才显得格外突出。我们毫不怀疑：他书写的正是他自己。他不训人，也不说教，他不断表明他只是跟别人一样的人。他要做的事就是把自己描写下来，告诉别人，说出真实情况，而这却是“一条崎岖不平的路，比表面看来要难走得更多”。

因为，除了自我表达的困难之外，还存在着保持自己心灵独立的极大困难。我们的灵魂，或者说，我们内在的生命，常常跟我们外在的生活格格不入。如果我们有勇气问问她¹在想些什么，她所说的话总是跟其他人说的恰恰相反。譬如说，其他人自古以来就认定了年老体弱的绅士们理应待在家里，夫妻忠贞厮守，以此为榜样教诲世人。但是，蒙田的心灵却说道：一个人，正是到了老年才应该出外旅行，而婚姻嘛（这话也没有说错），本来很少以爱情为基础，到了人的晚年往往变成一种徒有其表的束缚，倒不如拆散了好。再有，说到了政治，政治家们总是颂扬帝国的伟大，鼓吹对于野蛮民族进行教化的道德责任。但是，蒙田却愤然说，看看西班牙人在墨西哥干些什么吧：“多少城市被夷为平地，多少民族被灭绝……世界上最富饶、最美丽的地方因为珍珠和胡椒贸易而被搅得混乱一团！这是粗野力量的胜利！”²还有，一些农民来告诉他：他们看见一个人受

1 指灵魂。

2 出自《论马车》。