
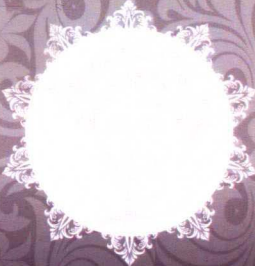



Miles Franklin's "Career" Novels and Their Aftermath



迈尔斯·弗兰克林的 “生涯”小说及其 影响研究

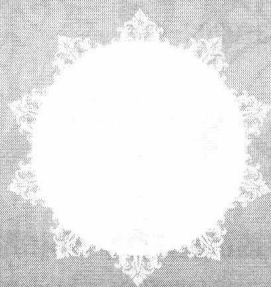
田耀 刘哲 著

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前言

18 世纪 70 年代,澳大利亚成为英国殖民地,逐渐产生了见于文字的文学作品。澳大利亚文学起始于 18 世纪的殖民时期。这个时期的创作,基本上囿于英国作家和文学流派的影响,没有形成澳大利亚文学的特色,经过 100 年的开发,澳大利亚社会发生了深刻变化。由此,于 19 世纪 90 年代蓬勃兴起的民族民主运动使澳大利亚文坛面目焕然一新。民族主义文学新人辈出。这一时期的特点是以创新为主,力图摆脱对英国文学的拙劣模仿,运用澳洲本地的方言土语着力描写丛林人的悲欢离合和创业艰辛,表现他们崇高的民族精神,从而塑造出澳大利亚独特、鲜明的民族形象。澳大利亚女作家迈尔斯·弗兰克林(1879—1954)早期的系列小说《我的光辉生涯》(*My Brilliant Career*, 1901)、其续篇《我的生涯被毁掉了》(*My Career Goes Bung*, 1946)和《凡人和瑛恩》(*Some Everyday Folk and Dawn*, 1909)即是这一时期丛林小说风格的杰出诠释和完美演绎。

上述三部小说是弗兰克林表现男女平等的传世经典文学著作,为丛林题材书写了浓墨重彩的一笔。这几部作品的文学价值和其在全球范围内的知名度不亚于任何其它的名家名著,在澳洲尤其脍炙人口。特别是《我的光辉生涯》后来还被改编成为电

影剧本,拍摄于1979年,获得了不俗的票房成绩。读者在被贯穿全书浓郁的丛林气息深深感染吸引的同时,也惊诧于弗兰克林这位少女时代就表现出超凡文学天赋的作家十六岁笔端所迸发出的灵感火花和不朽魅力。作为世界文学名著之一的《我的光辉生涯》的中文译本在1989年由江西人民出版社出版发行。书中的女主人公西比拉(Sybylla)生动、丰满、追求独立人格的成长历程自小说1901年出版问世以来持续影响着文坛创作和广大文学爱好者的审美情趣,颇得评论界关注和偏爱,其势头较夏洛蒂·勃朗特笔下的《简·爱》毫不逊色。因此,弗兰克林这部代表作当之无愧地被誉为“第一部澳大利亚小说”。尽管《我的光辉生涯》享有如此盛誉,较之国人耳熟能详的《简·爱》,虽同属不屈抗争的励志作品,西比拉在中国却鲜为人知,也就无从去鉴赏和品评弗兰克林女士文学著作的艺术价值,实在令人扼腕叹息。因而再次彰显了澳大利亚文学这一课题研究的前瞻性与紧迫性。

目前,国内外学者对迈尔斯·弗兰克林小说作品的系统研究成果为数不多,而且多局限于其前两部作品,即《我的光辉生涯》和《我生涯的破灭》。大多数学者普遍认为,《我的光辉生涯》中所反映的是作者对男性主宰世界的憎恨,对传统婚姻观的反抗以及作者男女必须平等的思想。在社会众多因素的挤压下,小说的主人公西比拉的心理产生了变态,特别是她对婚姻的态度上产生了悲观情绪,从此决定永远不嫁。这本身也反映了作者内心世界。

迈尔斯·弗兰克林的第二本小说《我生涯的破灭》较之《我的光辉生涯》有了细微的变化。作品通过西比拉在事业上的成功,反映出作者的内心世界,即妇女在事业和婚姻中只能选择其一,

而放弃其二。要不嫁人,要不干事业。《我生涯的破灭》中的西比拉在朋友的介绍下终于获得了施展自己写作才华的机遇,但事业上的成功,又使她不快,因为写文章为富人歌功颂德不是西比拉的理想追求。最终她认为这种所谓的成功和失败几乎没有什么不同。

弗兰克林的第一部小说《我的光辉生涯》发表不久,社会的反应十分强烈,有人认为小说的内容就是作者自己身世的真实写照,是一部自传体小说,甚至有人认为故事的情节是作者自己编造出来的。弗兰克林对这些批评的反应十分强烈。学者们普遍认为迈尔斯·弗兰克林所发表的第二部小说《我生涯的破灭》就是对社会各界评论的回应。

本书的研究重点是围绕迈尔斯·弗兰克林的三部作品同时展开的,因为弗兰克林对外界批评和对婚姻观的最大的转变是发生在她发表的第三部作品《凡人和珥恩》中。该作品实际完成于《我的光辉生涯》之后,《我生涯的破灭》之前。在《凡人和珥恩》中,作者对男人主宰的世界有了根本性的改变,小说中出现了在前两部作品中不常见的好男人,作家成功地刻画了一位青春少女主人公珥恩(Dawn)。珥恩凭借着乐观主义的态度,与传统的婚姻观斗争,最终她不仅在婚姻上获得了幸福,而且在事业上也取得了成功。这是作者世界观质的飞跃。

本书分为五部分。第一章是研究内容和研究意义。第二章主要分析《我的光辉生涯》中主人公西比拉异性格及婚姻观的形成和原因。第三章重点分析《我生涯的破灭》中西比拉的性格及婚姻观的形成原因,以及两部小说中主人公婚姻观的异同。第四章通过对比分析三部小说主人公,揭示出弗兰克林笔下的珥恩,

其婚姻观已经发生了根本的改变，这也正反映出作家不断成熟的创作思想。第五章是本书的结论部分。

本书第一、二章由田耀教授撰写，第三、四、五章由刘哲副教授撰写。鉴于作者水平有限，本书尚存许多不足之处，敬请国内外专家、学者不吝赐教。

田耀

2015年3月于天津外国语大学

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Chapter One

Introduction

Colonial Australia witnessed the rise of a group of women novelists, such as Barbara Baynton, Henry Handel Richardson and Miles Franklin. Among these women writers, Miles Franklin attracted the attention of readers with *My Brilliant Career* and its lesser known sequel, *My Career Goes Bung*.

Miles Franklin's full name was Stella Maria Sarah Miles Franklin and she was born on October 14, 1879 on the grazing property, Talbingo, belonging to her maternal grandmother near Tumut in New South Wales. She spent the early part of her life at Brindabella, the family home station in the Monaro region of New South Wales. For Miles Franklin the years that she spent at Talbingo and Brindabella would always be the golden years. "Nothing ever has surpassed them in her view and she never really came to terms with the world outside these two beautiful, isolated and enchanted places." (Brunton 2003: 19). In 1889 the family moved from Brindabella to a property, Stillwater, 20 kilometers south-west of Goulburn, New South Wales, then in 1903 to Penrith, a (then) town on the western outskirts of Sydney. *My*

Brilliant Career was written when Franklin was in Stillwater.

When Stella Maria Miles Franklin started her writing career she had scarcely ever been out of the bush in her life. She was barely eighteen years old when she began writing *My Brilliant Career* in late 1898. Readers are very surprised to find that the first draft of the novel was finished only in six months. Besides, this talented girl was in fact not born into a family influenced by literature but an ordinary family living on a farm in the Australian bush. Miles Franklin met a great number of difficulties having *My Brilliant Career* published. According to Webby's introduction to *My Brilliant Career*, she sent her manuscript to several publishers and was turned down on each occasion. Fortunately, "Henry Lawson, to whom Miles Franklin wrote, offered to read the manuscript" (Webby 2002: vi).

Lawson spoke highly of the manuscript, believing Franklin had "done a big thing" (Webby 2002: vi). He wrote a strong letter of recommendation to George Robertson, the publisher, "praising the 'truth and vividness' of the novel and comparing it to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*" (Webby 2002: vi). Later Lawson arranged for his literary agent, J.B. Pinker, to contact the publisher in order to have this book published. The original title of the book was to be "*My Brilliant (?) Career*". During their correspondence Miles Franklin told J.B. Pinker that the note of interrogation should not be omitted from the title, but Pinker claimed that her letter reached him too late for the title to be as

she wished and so the title became *My Brilliant Career* (Webby 2002: vii–viii).

Unfortunately, the publication of *My Brilliant Career* did not bring Miles Franklin the happiness she might have expected. The book brought her “fame in the cities” but “notoriety in the district in which she had to live” and Franklin eventually “withdrew the book ‘because of the stupid literalness with which it was taken to be her own autobiography’” (Mathew, p.8—quoting Franklin in *Laughter Not for a Cage*). Critic Ray Mathew suggests that the actions of Havelock Ellis may have played a key role in creating Franklin’s problem:

Havelock Ellis, who had been resident in Australia, used the book before its withdrawal as an example of unconscious abnormality; a rumour referred to perhaps as ‘the dubious guesses of psychoanalysis’ in the introduction to My Career Goes Bung (1946). (Mathew 1963: 8)

This is only “rumor”, as Mathew candidly states, but Mathew goes on to cite a passage of Havelock Ellis which does make reference to Franklin and her novel, culminating in the claim that “in the eagerness of her own embittered and egoistical mood she [Franklin] tramples underfoot the things that really make Australia” (Mathew 1963: 8). Mathew notes that this sounds “more like ‘literalness’ than ‘dubious guesses’” (Mathew 1963: 8).

Whatever the role of Havelock Ellis might have been, it is clear that the reaction to the novel had a lifelong impact on Miles Franklin.

In the words of Marjorie Barnard, "Miles was hurt and humiliated in a way she could not bear":

Miles had sinned against the privacy of the family. She had libeled it. She had broken all her clan's rules of reserve and self-control. Or she appeared to have done so, which was nearly as bad. Her family, all those adored aunts and uncles, not to mention her beloved grandmother, was uncompromising. Its standards were fixed, and dear little Stella had broken every rule.

[...] [Franklin] had done wrong and it was not a youthful peccadillo easily forgiven or wiped out by punishment, but a sin against the family so that she was hardly one of them anymore. (Barnard 1967: 67–68)

Franklin later refused to allow Angus and Robertson to republish *My Brilliant Career* until ten years after her death (in 1954) (Webby 2002: ix, xviii).

This book considers the impact of this event on Franklin's writings. Readers cannot of course know what was in Miles Franklin's mind, but we can line up the ideas and viewpoints in her fiction and look at how they are expressed before this calamity and how they are expressed after. Other critics have already written on this topic, but they have tended to focus their discussions on the two "Career" novels, *My Brilliant Career* and *My Career Goes Bung*. This book will devote space to a discussion of both these novels, but it will also devote considerable space to *Some Everyday Folk and Dawn* (1909).

The importance of *Some Everyday Folk and Dawn* is that it was written much later than *My Career Goes Bung* and therefore represents a more considered viewpoint. Scholarly research has shown that the earliest version of *My Career Goes Bung* was in existence in 1902 (Webby 2002: xiv, xv) and this means it must have been written in the heat of reaction to the furore over *My Brilliant Career*. By contrast, *Some Everyday Folk and Dawn* was written some years later.

How did Franklin's ideas and reaction change during that time? This book will try to form an answer by closely examining the evidence offered on the pages of these novels. That will involve discussing *My Brilliant Career* in order to be clear about the ideas and attitudes which caused the initial reaction, and then looking at the ways in which those ideas and attitudes change (or remain the same) in the two novels that were written in the aftermath of Franklin's upset. When this is done it can be seen that *Some Everyday Folk and Dawn* offers a more mature and considered revision of some of the offending attitudes, and a mature and considered re-affirmation of many others. It is as if Miles Franklin in *Some Everyday Folk and Dawn* (1909) was setting out the beliefs she truly and deeply held and which she was fully willing to defend against the criticisms of family and society; this novel seems to show us her final, resolved stance on the issues which caused her so very much grief.

During the earlier period of the twentieth century America was considered as a promising land for many ambitious young writers, so

in 1906 at the age of twenty-six Franklin went to the United States to further her writing career there. She tried many different jobs, working for the National Women's Trade Union League in Chicago for about seven years and was assistant editor of the League's Journal, *Life and Labor* (Brunton 2003: 19). Although she was busily involved in many of the activities in the League, "she still tried her writing secretly, she tried to write short stories, plays and novels and sent them to publishers but they were almost all rejected" (Brunton 2003: 20). *Some Everyday Folk and Dawn* was published in 1909, "when its author was safe in America" (Mathew 1963: 13). Ray Mathew describes it as "a determined effort to escape from the pain of local notoriety" (Mathew 1963: 13).

Disappointed about her career in the US, "she went to London in 1915. She spent 17 years in London doing many different jobs" (Brunton 2003: 20). But to her, writing was still her first priority. She wrote a series of novels under the pen-name of "Brent of Bin Bin" and by 1933 she had completed six novels but found it very difficult to get them published, so in November 1932 she returned to Australia permanently (Brunton 2003: 20). It was in Australia that her later works were published. Generally Franklin could be considered as one of a small group of Australian women who, born into a colonial society in the ultra-conservative Victorian era, attempted to fulfill themselves according to their own lights and in defiance of the accepted conventions of the day.

Critical Reception

Many scholars and critics have studied *My Brilliant Career*, though fewer of them have noticed the importance of *My Career Goes Bung*, and very few indeed have written about *Some Everyday Folk and Dawn*. Scholars and critics voice their ideas through the analysis of the novels from different angles and different approaches. Thus one recent scholar emphasizes the complexity of Franklin's work: "*My Brilliant Career* is a complex mix of realism and romance, but one where romance is continually undercut and subverted, threatening at times to fall into parody" (Garton 2002: 336) – whereas other scholars have explored the desire to ground the novels in an emerging nationalist ethos of the bush, and the problems this creates in fusing the emotional and realist elements of the novels. Stephen Garton in his "Contesting Enslavement: Marriage, Manhood and *My Brilliant Career*" says: "*My Brilliant Career* is also a savage political indictment of heterosexual relations in Australian colonial society, and a remarkably intriguing one, especially given her age and social and political context" (Garton 2002: 338).

A.G. Stephens believed that *My Brilliant Career* was the first novel reflecting Australian attitudes instead of English attitudes. In his 1903 review he wrote: "the author has the Australian mind, she

speaks Australian language, utters Australian thoughts, and looks at things from an Australian point of view absolutely" (Stephens, quoted in Sheridan, p.331). Nettie Palmer regards *My Brilliant Career* as one of the significant novels of the twentieth century:

It is a vehement, irregular and somehow unforgettable tale of a young woman's life in a country district of New South Wales. At the time, and later, it had its own success, but it was not what the circulating library expects a novel to be. It lit up a new landscape by showing what manner of human beings could be tortured or enraptured under the sky. (Palmer 1924: 13–14)

In recent decades, Caroline Moorhead follows Stephens' interest in "Australianness" by linking *My Brilliant Career* with *Maurice Guest* and *The Getting of Wisdom* (two other modern classics by Australian woman writer Henry Handel Richardson), claiming that the authors share a critical perspective on the "confined snobberies of Australian society" (Moorhead 1981: 24–25). By contrast, Frances McInherny regards Sybylla's rebellion as a challenge against patriarchal power (McInherny 1983: 72). Delys Bird argues that *My Brilliant Career* depicts the difficulty of being a woman in a particular kind of Australian society (Bird 1983: 175) and Susan Gardner demonstrates that "*My Brilliant Career* showed that in being feminist she was outside the mainstream society's attitudes and expectations, and could sharply question the agrarian life from which the national myth supposedly derived" (Gardner 1985: 25–26). Frances McInherny places

Miles Franklin within a female rather than an Australian tradition: “her biography suggests that this is where she saw herself, as part of an international movement of women” (McInherny 1983: 72).

In his paper, “The Rebellious Young Artist in the Bush”, Professor Chen Maosheng from East China Normal University has made a thorough analysis of the main character, Sybylla, on the basis of exploration into the natural and social environment, and reveals the distinct individual character of Sybylla who is in pursuit of an artistic life. He points out:

When discussing the resistant spirit of Sybylla, we need to have a broader horizon. Her extraordinary gift made her in pursuit of a brilliant career, but the natural and social environment she was involved in were all against her in realizing her dream. Her individual character was distorted. Her external character was depressed and the stability of the character was dampened and that increased her nervousness, which frustrated her much more. Under such circumstance Sybylla tried to seek for a way to give vent to her pent-up pains. So she found that writing is the best way for her to relieve her pain. (Chen Maosheng 2002: 88)

Chen Maosheng evaluates the heroine highly. He explores Sybylla's special characteristics as an artist struggling in the bush. The special natural and social surroundings described in his essay provided me with further background information about Miles Franklin and her writings.