

绝妙好英文

——名作解析与欣赏

(上)

朱乃长 评 注

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出版说明

学好英语需要语言积累,对于中国大多数没有英语环境的学习者来说,这种积累最根本也是最有效的途径就是大量的阅读。我社曾推出了几个系列的英汉对照读物,受到了广大读者的热烈欢迎和高度评价。这次,我们又向大家奉献出《绝妙好英文——名作解析与欣赏》。首批推出的两册收入了若干英美名家的短篇小说,都是想要达到一定水平的英语学习者必读的。今后收录的范围将会更宽。

两册都先从作者入手,介绍其生平、创作历程及风格。接着刊录原文,逐段注释讲解,最后是全文的赏析。解析部分包括单词、词组的解释,语法现象的分析,修辞方面的评点直至写作手法、篇章结构、文章意蕴的分析等等。解析部分由朱乃长教授撰写。朱乃长教授长期从事英美文学的翻译、评论和教学,有很深的语言功底和很高的文学修养。他以深厚的功力,把原作的绝妙之处向读者一一揭示。

解析十分详细深入,因此我们采用了一种新的编排方式,即英文和解析穿插编排。每读一段英文,都有一段解析娓娓道来。对照阅读,便可加深理解。读者不必正襟危坐,不必摊开厚厚的字典,便可徜徉于英语世界,既能为自己充电,更不失欣赏名著的悠然韵味——让阅读把休闲和欣赏变成学习的两翼。

希望《绝妙好英文》能给大家带来英语水平的提升和读书的愉悦。

华东师范大学出版社

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目 录

Ambrose Bierce 安布罗斯·皮尔斯

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge 梟河桥上 1

Nathaniel Hawthorne 纳撒尼尔·霍桑

Young Goodman Brown 年轻的布朗大爷 36

James Joyce 詹姆斯·乔伊斯

Araby 阿拉比 81

D. H. Lawrence D. H. 劳伦斯

The Horse Dealer's Daughter 马贩的女儿 106

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge

枭河桥上

Ambrose Bierce

安布罗斯·皮尔斯(1842—1914),美国记者,作家。出生于美国俄亥俄州一个贫苦的农民家庭,由于是九个孩子中最小的一个,因此受的常规教育很少。皮尔斯十九岁那年(1861),在第九印第安纳志愿兵团入伍当了一名鼓手,升迁很快,到南北战争结束时,因功晋升少校。他曾参加过几次激烈的战役,两次负伤,积累了不少日后写短篇小说的素材。南北战争结束后,皮尔斯开始从事新闻和文学事业。他因遭遇坎坷,而生愤世嫉俗、悲观厌世之念。1913年是他一生之中最悲观的时期,皮尔斯把事务料理妥当以后,去了内战方殷的墨西哥。他的最优秀的短篇小说均收在两本小说集里:《军人和老百姓的故事》(*Tales of Soldiers and Civilians*, 1891; 1898年重新出版,改名为《在生活之间》[*In the Midst of Life*]),和《这样的事情可能发生吗?》(*Can Such Things Be?*, 1893)。

《枭河桥上》情节简单,以美国南北战争(1861—1865)为背景,讲述一个因对北军从事破坏活动而被判处绞刑的南方种植园主在临刑时的心理活动和遭遇。皮尔斯有丰富的战争经验,如以寻常的手法来处理这个他所熟悉的题材,绝非难事,可是他却打破当时的写作常规,进行新的尝试,写出这一篇不同凡响的小说,成为传世之作。这篇小说和另外两篇脍炙人口的作品《空中骑士》(*A Horseman in the*

Sky)以及《奇卡莫加人》(*Chickamauga*)使皮尔斯跻身于短篇小说大师之林。

《泉河桥上》分三个部分,第一、第二部分篇幅较短,分别介绍叙事现场的情景和缘起。第三部分是小说主体,紧接在第一部分的后面,叙述主人公似真似幻的惊人经历。

I

A man stood upon a railroad bridge in Northern Alabama, looking down into the swift waters twenty feet below. The man's hands were behind his back, the wrists bound with a cord. A rope loosely encircled his neck. It was attached to a stout cross-timber above his head, and the slack fell to the level of his knees. Some loose boards laid upon the sleepers supporting the metals of the railway supplied a footing for him and his executioners—two private soldiers of the Federal Army, directed by a sergeant, who in civil life may have been a deputy sheriff. At a short remove upon the same temporary platform was an officer in the uniform of his rank, armed. He was a captain. A sentinel at each end of the bridge stood with his rifle in the position known as “support,” that is to say, vertical in front of the left shoulder, the hammer resting on the forearm thrown straight across the chest—a formal and unnatural position, enforcing an erect carriage of the body. It did not appear to be the duty of these two men to know what was occurring at the centre of the bridge; they merely blockaded the two ends of the foot plank which traversed it.

小说一开头,就以细致、写实的手笔,描绘主人公即将受刑、命在旦夕的处境,临时装置的绞刑架的构造,和参与执行绞刑的人物,制造出悬疑跌宕的气氛。

Alabama: 亚拉巴马,美国南方州名。美国南北战争时期,最早加入南方同盟的州。**railroad bridge**: (铺有铁轨,供火车行驶的)铁路桥。**wrists**: 腕部。**bound** 为 **bind** (捆绑)的过去分词。**the wrists bound with a cord** 叫作 **nominative absolute participial construction** (独立主格分词结构),作为修饰语,这里用来表示伴随主句所述的事情而发生的情况,所以称为 **adverbial of attendant circumstances** (伴随情况修饰语)。

encircled: 套住。**attached**: 拴住。**stout**: 结实的。**cross-timber**: 横木。**slack**: (绳子)松弛而下垂的部分。**level**: 高度。绳子下垂与双膝相齐。

sleepers: (铁轨下的)枕木。**executioners**: 行刑人。**footing**: 立脚的地方。**the Federal Army**: (北方)联邦军。**private soldiers**: 列兵,士兵。**sergeant**: 士官,中士。**deputy sheriff**: 副警长。**may have been** 表示过去可能存在的状况。

remove: 间隔,路程。**at a short remove**: 不远的地方。**temporary platform**: 临时搭就的平台。此处指执行绞刑的行刑台。**in the uniform of his rank**: 身穿带有军衔的制服。

句末的 **armed** 是过去分词,是 **who was armed** 的省略,**armed** 是单音节的词,用来结束全句,突出了“身怀武器”的含意,表达十分有力。若移到 **officer** 的前面,使全句成为 **... was an armed officer in the uniform of his rank**,纵然在意义方面无甚区别,但文句平淡,语气弱了许多。

sentinel:哨兵。**support**:持枪(姿势)。**vertical**:垂直的。**hammer**:(步枪上的)枪机。**chest**:胸口。枪机抵住横在胸前的前臂上,也是用来说明伴随情况的独立主格分词结构,描绘“持枪”这个姿势的具体细节。

破折号(**dash**, ——)表示语气的转折,引导出对这个姿势的评论(句中的 **a formal and unnatural position** 和同句中的 **the position** 同位):是一种使身体挺直(**enforcing an erect carriage of the body**)正式而不自然的姿势。

blockaded:封锁。**the foot plank that traversed it**:临时铺在铁路桥上供行刑官兵走路的木板。

Beyond one of the sentinels nobody was in sight; the railroad ran straight away into a forest for a hundred yards, then, curving, was lost to view. Doubtless there was an outpost further along. The other bank of the stream was open ground—a gentle acclivity crowned with a stockade of vertical tree trunks, loop-holed for rifles, with a single embrasure through which protruded the muzzle of a brass cannon commanding the bridge. Midway of the slope between bridge and fort were the spectators—a single company of infantry in line, at “parade rest,” the butts of the rifles on the ground, the barrels inclining slightly backward against the right shoulder, the hands crossed upon the stock. A lieutenant stood at the right of the line, the point of his sword upon the ground, his left hand resting upon his right. Excepting the group of four at the centre of the bridge not a man moved. The company faced the bridge, staring stonily, motionless. The sentinels, facing the banks of the stream, might have been statues to adorn the bridge. The captain stood with folded arms, silent, ob-

serving the work of his subordinates but making no sign. Death is a dignitary who, when he comes announced, is to be received with formal manifestations of respect, even by those most familiar with him. In the code of military etiquette silence and fixity are forms of deference.

curving: 拐弯。 **lost to view**: 看不见。 **outpost**: 前哨。
farther along: 更远的地方。

open ground: (视野) 开阔的地带。 **acclivity**: 斜坡。
stockade: (防御工事的) 栅栏。 **loop-holed**: 开有(射击用的) 枪眼。 **embrasure**: 炮眼。 **protruded**: 探出在(栅栏的) 外面。
muzzle: 炮口。 **commanding**: (居高临下地) 控制着。

fort: 要塞。 **spectators**: 旁观者。后面的破折号相当于冒号, 引导出对 **spectators** 作具体说明的同位语 **company** 及其修饰语。 **a single company of infantry in line**: 排队形的一连步兵。他们奉命前来参观行刑过程。 **at "parade rest"**: 处于“校阅时稍息”姿势。下文描述这姿势的细节: 枪托(**butts**) 抵在地上, 枪管略略向右倾斜(**inclining**), 靠在右肩上, 而双手则交叉着搁在枪身(**stock**) 上。

lieutenant: 中尉。 **the group of four**: 两个行刑的士兵, 指挥行刑的中士, 和那个身穿戎装的上尉。

stonily: 石头似地。 **statues to adorn the bridge**: 像竖在桥头作装饰的雕像。 **might have been** 是虚拟语气, 这里表示“看上去好像是雕像, 实际上却不是”。

with folded arms: 双臂交叉在胸前。 **subordinates**: 属下。 **making no sign**: 不动声色。

dignitary: 贵人。 **when he comes announced**: 当他经人预先通报而到达时。

formal manifestations of respect: (表示尊敬的)隆重的仪式。those 后面省去了 who are 两个词,指的是常和死神(him 所代表的是句首的 Death)打交道的士兵和军官。

In the code of military etiquette: 按照军规。silence and fixity are forms of deference: 静默肃立是表示尊敬的方式。

这两段文辞简练明快,语气客观而超脱,内容实事求是,毫无感情的成分,强烈表现战争冷酷的本质。

The man who was engaged in being hanged was apparently about thirty-five years of age. He was a civilian, if one might judge from his habit, which was that of a planter. His features were good—a straight nose, firm mouth, broad forehead, from which his long, dark hair was combed straight back, falling behind his ears to the collar of his well-fitting frock coat. He wore a moustache and pointed beard, but no whiskers; his eyes were large and dark grey and had a kindly expression which one would hardly have expected in one whose neck was in the hemp. Evidently this was no vulgar assassin. The liberal military code makes provision for hanging many kinds of people, and gentlemen are not excluded.

这里笔锋一转,开始描写主人公——那个即将被绞死的家伙(The man who was engaged in being hanged)。

civilian: 平民。habit: 装束。planter: 种植园主。

features: 五官,相貌。well-fitting frockcoat: 非常合身的长礼服。

moustache: 唇髭。pointed beard: 山羊胡须。
whiskers: 络腮胡子。hemp 的原意为大麻, 此处解作绞索。

this was no vulgar assassin: 他并非寻常的刺客。

The liberal military code ... and gentlemen are not excluded: 尺度很宽的军事法典规定可以绞死许多不同的人, 而绅士先生并不排除在外。

除了上面一段最后一句和这段最后一句是题外话外, 作者都在详尽描绘刑场和犯人的情景。这两个句子安排得很巧妙, 语气和情调融合无间, 不露痕迹地加强了烘托紧张迫人的氛围: 要发生的事并非人的意志所能左右。

The preparations being complete, the two private soldiers stepped aside and each drew away the plank upon which he had been standing. The sergeant turned to the captain, saluted and placed himself immediately behind that officer, who in turn moved apart one pace. These movements left the condemned man and the sergeant standing on the two ends of the same plank, which spanned three of the cross-ties of the bridge. The end upon which the civilian stood almost, but not quite, reached a fourth. This plank had been held in place by the weight of the captain; it was now held by that of the sergeant. At a signal from the former, the latter would step aside, the plank would tilt and the condemned man go down between two ties. The arrangement commended itself to his judgment as simple and effective. His face had not been covered nor his eyes bandaged. He looked a moment at his "unsteadfast footing," then let his gaze wander to the swirling water of the stream racing madly beneath his feet. A piece of dancing driftwood caught his attention and his eyes fol-

lowed it down the current. How slowly it appeared to move!
What a sluggish stream!

saluted: 敬礼。 **in turn**: 接着就……。

spanned three of the cross-ties: 横跨三根枕木的。

fourth 后面省去 **cross-tie**。

signal: 信号。 **tilt**: 翘起来。 **condemned**: 被判罪的。

arrangement 指临时搭起的绞刑台。 **commended it-self to his judgment as simple and effective**: 在他(指上句中的 **the condemned man**)看来, 这装置倒是简单有效。

bandaged: (用绷带等) 扎住的。

unsteadfast footing: 不牢靠的立足点。原意是社会、经济等方面的地位而言, 这里指犯人脚下的活动脚踏板, 所以前后有引号作为标志。 **swirling**: 转着漩涡的。

driftwood: 浮木。 **sluggish**: (溪流) 移动缓慢的。

主人公觉得他脚下流过的河水湍急 (**the water ... racing madly beneath his feet**), 旋即又发现一段浮木漂得很慢, 因而认为河水流淌得多么费劲。对于一个知道自己命在须臾的人来说, 这种感觉上的矛盾, 突出当时他是多么紧张慌乱。

这里, 小说的叙事角度逐渐从纯粹客观的视角转移到主人公的视角, 转移的技巧十分自然, 若不仔细审察, 几乎难以发觉。

He closed his eyes in order to fix his last thoughts upon his wife and children. The water, touched to gold by the early sun, the brooding mists under the banks at some distance down the

stream, the fort, the soldiers, the piece of drift—all had distracted him. And now he became conscious of a new disturbance. Striking through the thought of his dear ones was a sound which he could neither ignore nor understand, a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion like the stroke of a blacksmith's hammer upon the anvil; it had the same ringing quality. He wondered what it was, and whether immeasurably distant or near by—it seemed both. Its recurrence was regular, but as slow as the tolling of a death knell. He awaited each stroke with impatience and—he knew not why—apprehension. The intervals of silence grew progressively longer; the delays became maddening. With their greater infrequency the sounds increased in strength and sharpness. They hurt his ear like the thrust of a knife; he feared he would shriek. What he heard was the ticking of his watch.

前一段说到主人公凝视脚下的河水,心里奇怪河水流淌得多么缓慢。现在,为了想要在临终前的最后一刻,集中精神来想念他的妻子儿女,就闭目定神,努力排斥外界的干扰和杂念。就在他的眼睛闭合之际,时间尽管十分短暂,什么事情却都可能发生。要说人生遭际之变幻莫测,恐怕这也可以算是一桩。问题是这变化是否过于突兀,是否合于情理,是否足以令人信服,这就要看叙事的艺术技巧是否高明了。

touched to gold by the early sun;因朝阳之抚弄而变得金光闪闪。brooding:低低地覆盖(在水面或地面上)的。drift = driftwood。distracted:分散(注意力)。

不料主人公闭上眼睛之后仍受到新的干扰(a new disturbance)。在他思念亲人(dear ones)的时候,一直听到一

个声音在敲响(**striking**)。这声音他既不能充耳不闻(**ignore**),又感到莫名其妙(**nor understand**)。

a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion(尖厉、清晰、铿锵的敲击声)和 **a sound** 同位,对声音作具体的说明或描绘。**anvil**:铁砧。**ringing quality**:清脆、激越的音色。

immeasurably:难以估量地(遥远或者邻近)。

recurrence:重复的敲响。**regular**:规则的。**the tolling of a death knell**:(缓慢得犹如)丧钟之敲响。

apprehension:恐惧。**intervals**:(沉寂的)间歇。**grew progressively longer**:变得愈来愈长久。**the delays became maddening**:停顿的时间长得使他差点发疯。

greater infrequency:(敲响的)次数愈来愈少。

最后一句,叙事视角又有转变,主人公并不知道他听见的只是手表的声音。这里对事件的清楚交代,是对主人公的感觉和思想合理的解释,作为对往后事件进展的铺设。唯有如此,主人公后来奇妙的遭遇才不会令人感到怀疑。

He unclosed his eyes and saw again the water below him. "If I could free my hands," he thought, "I might throw off the noose and spring into the stream. By diving I could evade the bullets, and, swimming vigorously, reach the bank, take to the woods, and get away home. My home, thank God, is as yet outside their lines; my wife and little ones are still beyond the invader's farthest advance."

unclosed:睁开(眼睛)。**noose**:绞索。**diving**:潜泳。
evade:避开。**vigorously**:使劲地,用力地。**take to the**

woods; 跑进森林。get away home; 逃回家。lines; 战线。
invaders; 入侵者(指北军)。farthest advance; 推进得最远的地区。

As these thoughts, which have here to be set down in words, were flashed into the doomed man's brain rather than evolved from it, the captain nodded to the sergeant. The sergeant stepped aside.

set down in words; 用文字写出来。

这些念头不得不用文字写出来,可是对那个行将归天(the doomed man)的人说来,并非是从他的头脑里想出来的(rather than evolved from it),而是从外界闪进去的(flashed into ...)。就在这一刹那,上尉对中士点了点头。中士往旁边横跨了一步。

这个不幸的主人公是谁? 是什么样的身份? 他怎么会遇到如此悲惨的结局? 在第二部分,作者用纯粹客观的叙事视角,介绍主人公的出身背景。

II

Peyton Farquhar was a well-to-do planter, of an old and highly-respected Alabama family. Being a slave owner, and, like other slave owners, a politician, he was naturally an original secessionist and ardently devoted to the Southern cause. Circumstances of an imperious nature which it is unnecessary to relate

here, had prevented him from taking service with the gallant army which had fought the disastrous campaigns ending with the fall of Corinth, and he chafed under the inglorious restraint, longing for the release of his energies, the larger life of the soldier, the opportunity for distinction. That opportunity, he felt, would come, as it comes to all in war time. Meanwhile he did what he could. No service was too humble for him to perform in aid of the South, no adventure too perilous for him to undertake if consistent with the character of a civilian who was at heart a soldier, and who in good faith and without too much qualification assented to at least a part of the frankly villainous dictum that all is fair in love and war.

佩顿·法夸尔(Peyton Farquhar)是绞刑犯的姓名。

an original secessionist: 一个最早的分离主义者。指美国南北战争前就主张南方十一州脱离联邦政府的人。**ardently devoted to the Southern cause**: 热忱地献身给南方邦联(the Confederate States of America)的理想。

Circumstances of an imperious nature: 某种紧迫的情况。**taking service with the gallant army**: 在这支英勇的军队(指南军)里服役。**disastrous campaigns**: 遭到惨败的战役。**Corinth**: 柯林斯, 美国密西西比州城市, 奥尔康郡首府。战略要地和交通枢纽, 在南北战争时, 1862年10月3日到14日, 南北军在柯林斯城北进行了激烈的战斗, 是北军击败南军一场决定性的战役。**chafed**: 忿懣, 恼怒。**inglorious restraint**: 不光彩的限制(指敌军攻占家乡的处境)。

longing for(渴望)的后面有三个词组作宾语: **the**

release of his energies(英雄有用武之地), the larger life of the soldier(体验粗犷豪迈的军旅生涯), the opportunity for distinction(一举成名的机会)。

humble: 卑微的。perilous: 危险的。consistent: 一致的。a civilian who was at heart a soldier: 骨子里是军人的一个平民。in good faith: 毫不含糊、真心实意地。without too much qualification: 没有太多保留。assented: 赞成。the frankly villainous dictum: 毫不避讳的邪说异词。fair: 公平的, 公正的。在情场上和战场上都可以不择手段地打败情敌或敌人。All is fair in love and war 是一度为西方人广泛接受的格言, 含意和“兵不厌诈”有点相近。

One evening while Farquhar and his wife were sitting on a rustic bench near the entrance to his grounds, a grey-clad soldier rode up to the gate and asked for a drink of water. Mrs. Farquhar was only too happy to serve him with her own white hands. While she was gone to fetch the water, her husband approached the dusty horseman and inquired eagerly for news from the front.

rustic bench: 以连着树皮的圆木制成的长凳。a grey-clad soldier: 一个身穿灰色军服的士兵。南北战争时期, 北军的军服为深蓝色, 南军则为灰色。approached: 走近去。news from the front: 从前线传来的消息。

“The Yanks are repairing the railroads,” said the man, “and are getting ready for another advance. They have reached the