

双语译林

On the Cries of London:

A Selection
of British Essays

伦敦的 叫卖声

英国散文精选

● 约瑟夫·艾迪生等 著 / 刘炳善 译注



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JONATHAN SWIFT

斯威夫特

《格列佛游记》的作者乔纳森·斯威夫特（Jonathan Swift, 1667—1745）生在爱尔兰一个英国移民家庭。自幼父死母去，他靠叔父资助，在都柏林三一学院读书。毕业后，他给一门远亲、退休外交官威廉·邓普尔做私人秘书，实际上过的是寄人篱下的生活。他希望通过邓普尔找一个好工作，但做了十年秘书，这个目的终未达到。不过他在邓普尔家里写了两部使他在文坛初露头角的作品：《木桶的故事》（关于基督教中天主教、英国国教和清教三派的讽喻故事）和《书籍之战》（关于古代作品和近代作品优劣比较的寓言）。

此后，他担任了英国国教会的职务，在爱尔兰做牧师，有时也到伦敦。1707年，他在伦敦结识了艾迪生、斯梯尔、蒲柏等著名作家，参加文学活动。他在政治上本来属于辉格党，后来转到托利党立场，担任其党刊《考察者》的主笔，成为托利党的舆论台柱。这时斯威夫特声威日隆，托利党又是执政党，以他的威望本应得到高官，但由于他生性孤傲，鄙视权贵，加之他在《木桶的故事》中所流露的宗教观点为正统的绅士们所疑惧，所以就连托利党的掌权者对于把这么一个能够左右社会舆论

而性格又不同流俗的大才子放在英国的重要位置上，也不那么放心。因此，在1713年，斯威夫特被派回爱尔兰，在都柏林圣派屈立克教堂担任副主教，直到他在1745年去世。

回爱尔兰任职后，斯威夫特对于多难的爱尔兰人民产生了强烈的同情，并且投入了保卫他们权利的正义斗争。

原来，爱尔兰人民是一个非常不幸的民族。爱尔兰与伦敦三岛一水之隔，从十二世纪开始就受到英国侵占，沦为英国的第一个殖民地。凡百年间，不管英国国内如何改朝换代，哪一个党派当权，历代英国统治者都以爱尔兰人民为镇压、剥削、欺凌的对象。英国殖民者任意圈占土地，使爱尔兰农民流离失所，变成乞丐；英国工厂主在爱尔兰办炼铁所，砍伐森林烧炭做燃料，把大片森林烧光；英国政府任意禁止爱尔兰产品出口，断绝爱尔兰工农业产品的国外销路；爱尔兰人民的任何反抗，都被残暴镇压。此外，爱尔兰人大部分信仰天主教，受到宗教歧视。爱尔兰人民在国内无法生存，大量逃亡海外，远到西印度群岛，为种植园主做奴隶。

斯威夫特眼见故乡人民所遭受的深重苦难，奋起如椽之笔，写出一系列关于爱尔兰的文章。这些文章，统称为“爱尔兰政论”（the Irish Pamphlets），与他的杰作《格列佛游记》一起被当作斯威夫特的重要代表作品。而在这些政论中最常为人称引的则是《布商信札》（The Drapier's Letters）和此处所介绍的《育婴刍议》（A Modest Proposal）。

《布商信札》共四篇，写于1724年。当时一个名叫威廉·伍德的英国商人向国王的情妇行贿，取得权利，铸造成色不足的半便士铜币（Wood's Halfpenny），准备在爱尔兰流通，谋取四万英镑的暴利。斯威夫

特假托一个爱尔兰布商的名义，发表了四篇书信体的政论，揭穿英国的骗局。他指出：如果使用这种钱币，就意味着爱尔兰人民的进一步贫困；而且，英国国王根本无权强迫爱尔兰接受这种贬值钱币。书信向英国在爱尔兰的统治权提出挑战，呼吁爱尔兰人民掌握自己国家的命运。《布商信札》一出，不胫而走，在爱尔兰全国点燃起反英的怒火。英国总督悬赏寻找这几封信的匿名作者。在都柏林，尽管人人知道作者是谁，却没有一个人说出斯威夫特的名字。英国政府不得不撤消已经发给伍德的特许状。

为了爱尔兰的民族利益，斯威夫特劳心焦思，写了许多文章，提过许多建议，英国统治者自然不会采纳，爱尔兰的绅士贵妇也豪奢如故，人民依然陷在水深火热之中，乞丐成群，哀鸿遍野，大批人逃亡国外求生。义愤之火促使斯威夫特写出他震撼人心的政论名作《育婴刍议》（1729）。在这篇文章中，作者假托为一个向英国统治者献策的谋士，采用一副悲天悯人、同情爱尔兰人民的口吻，提出自己解决爱尔兰问题的“理论”和“建议”，最后拿出来的“使爱尔兰穷人子女不但不拖累其父母国家而且能为社会造福”的方案——原来竟是建议把爱尔兰穷人的小孩子，除“留种”者外，一律卖给英国地主贵妇做餐桌上的食物！全文用反语冷嘲的手法，把这么一种血淋淋的计划说得理由十足，轻轻松松，好像一件十分平常的事情一样。然而，把文章读完以后，英国殖民者及其帮凶的吃人面目也就昭然若揭了！

以往国外有的评论者谈到这篇文章，往往说作者过于刻毒，甚至说斯威夫特是“憎恨人类的人”。这未免是皮相之见。近来的评论比较客观公允了。例如，《诺顿英国文学选集》的编者在此文的题解中说它“表达出斯威夫特对于受压迫、愚昧无知、人口众多、忍饥挨饿、信仰天主教

的爱尔兰人民的同情，以及对于住在国外的、贪得无厌的英国地主的愤怒——他们在英国议院、大臣和国王的默许下把这个国家的全部膏血都榨干了”。确实，冷酷刻毒的并不是斯威夫特，而是英国殖民主义者和地主。斯威夫特在《育婴刍议》中所写的穷人婴儿被当作食料，也和鲁迅在《狂人日记》中所写的人吃人一样，都是作者在对于某种社会罪恶进行长期深刻观察之后，用形象加以概括，向恶势力发出的一种“诛心之论”。

最后，必须一提的是：斯威夫特的散文在平淡、朴实之中蕴藏着巨大的威力。他是英国最重要的散文大师之一。

A MODEST PROPOSAL

*For Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from Being a
Burden to Their Parents or Country, and for Making
Them Beneficial to the Public*

It is a melancholy¹ object to those who walk through this great town² or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads and cabin doors crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers, instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants, who, as they grow up, either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country to fight for the Pretender³ in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes⁴.

I think it is agreed by all parties that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom⁵ a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap, and easy method of making these children sound, useful members of the commonwealth would deserve so well of the public⁶ as to have his

1 melancholy: sad, gloomy.

2 this great town: 指爱尔兰首都 Dublin.

3 the Pretender: 指英王 James II 的儿子 James Edward Stuart. 1688 年英国“光荣革命”后, 荷兰的奥伦治亲王威廉 (William, Prince of Orange) 成为英国国王。斯图亚特王室失去王位, 但其子孙企图复辟。James Edward Stuart 在法国和西班牙的支持下曾先后于 1708 及 1715 年起事, 均告失败, 被称为

the Pretender (僭位者, 自称有王位继承权者)。

4 the Barbadoes: 西印度群岛中的一个岛屿, 英国的殖民地。当时在国内无以为生的爱尔兰人多逃往西印度群岛为种植园主做苦工。

5 the kingdom: 指爱尔兰。

6 deserve so well of the public: deserve to be treated well by the public (理应受到社会奖励)。

育婴刍议

——关于如何使爱尔兰穷人子女不但不拖累其父母
国家且能为社会造福的一个小小的建议

凡从这个大城市走过或在乡间旅行的人，常常看见街头、路边、小屋门口挤满了女乞丐，后边跟着三四个、五六个小孩子，全都衣衫褴褛，哀求过路人施舍，这真是一种凄惨的景象。这些做母亲的人，不能去做工以谋求正当的生计，只得天天四处漂流，为她那些哀哀无告的婴儿讨一口饭吃；而这些婴儿长大以后，不是因为无工可做而去做贼，便是离乡背井去为躲在西班牙的冒牌国王当兵打仗，再不然就自愿卖身远到巴巴多斯岛去。

我想，各方人士定会一致同意，这些母亲们（时常也是父亲们）怀里抱着、身上背着、脚后跟着的多得惊人的小孩子，在我国当前的可悲状况下实在是一个很大的额外灾难。因此，若有人能够想出一个周到、省钱、简单可行的办法，使得这些小孩子也能成为国家中健壮有用的分子，大家理当对他奖赏，甚至应该把他当作民族救星，为他建立雕像。

statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars¹: it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years upon this important subject, and maturely² weighed the several schemes of other projectors³, I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true, a child just dropped from its dam⁴ may be supported by her milk for a solar year, with little other nourishment; at most not above the value of two shillings, which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging⁵, and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner as instead of being a charge upon their parents or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall on the contrary contribute to the feeding, and partly to the clothing, of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas, too frequent among us, sacrificing the poor innocent babes, I doubt, more to avoid the expense than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls⁶ in this kingdom⁷ being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand couple⁸ whose wives are breeders⁹; from which number I sub-

1 professed beggars: professional beggars.

2 maturely: carefully.

3 projectors: plan-makers, devisers of schemes (献策人)——当时有人以关心国计民生为名,向统治者献策献计,以捞取个人私利。斯威夫特此文即模拟这种招摇撞骗之徒的口吻,对于英国统治者和献策人都进行冷嘲热讽。

4 dropped from its dam: dam指母兽, dropped指动物下仔。在这里表示献策人不把穷人及其子女当作人

5 lawful occupation of begging: 根据英国传统法律,一部分因老弱而失去劳动力的人求乞是合法的,青壮年乞丐(sturdy beggars)则严厉禁止。

6 souls: persons, people.

7 this kingdom: Ireland.

8 couple: 这里把人当作兽类来看。

9 breeders: 生殖者, 种畜。

但是，我这种意图并非专为那些职业乞丐设想，其范围要广泛得多，在某种年龄以内的全体婴儿都要包括在内，因为他们的父母养活不起他们，一如那些在街头告怜的人。

说到我自己，对于这样一个重要问题，敝人业已动了多年脑筋，而且连其他献策人的种种方案也都加以细细掂量，不过，我发现他们在计算方面都有严重失误之处。确切地说，一个刚刚落地的婴儿，只要靠着母乳，没有别的什么养料也可以活上整整一个阳历年，其用度至多不超过两先令，即使再加上一点别的琐屑花费，也统统可以靠着母亲的合法乞讨来取得。我所要提出解决的却是那些满了一周岁的小儿。只要按照我这种办法，他们不但不会成为父母和教区的累赘，而且自己一辈子也不再缺吃少穿，相反，还能给数千人提供食品甚至一部分衣着。

同时，我这个方案还有另外一种莫大的好处，它可以阻止自愿堕胎以及有些妇女弄死自己私生婴儿的骇人行为——可惜，这在我们同胞当中发生的次数太多了。我想，她们拿那些可怜无辜的小生命做牺牲，与其说是为了遮羞，不如说是为了省钱。这样的事，即使让那些最无人性的野蛮人听了，也不免要流下怜悯的泪水！

爱尔兰的人口一般计算为一百五十万。我估计，其中大约有二十万对能够生养；从这个数字当中，我除去有抚养子女能力者三万对——虽

tract thirty thousand couple who are able to maintain their own children, although I apprehend there cannot be so many under the present distresses of the kingdom; but this being granted, there will remain a hundred and seventy thousand breeders. I again subtract fifty thousand for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remain a hundred and twenty thousand children of poor parents annually born. The question therefore is, how this number shall be reared and provided for, which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed. For we can neither employ them in handicraft or agriculture; we neither build houses (I mean in the country) nor cultivate land. They can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing till they arrive at six years old, except where they are of towardly parts¹; although I confess they learn the rudiments² much earlier, during which time they can however be looked upon only as probationers, as I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the county of Cavan³, who protested to me that he never knew above one or two instances under the age of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art.

I am assured by our merchants that a boy or a girl before twelve years old is no salable commodity; and even when they come to this age they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and half a crown⁴ at most on the Exchange⁵; which cannot turn to account⁶ either to the parents or the kingdom, the charge of nutriment and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing⁷ American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted,

1 of towardly parts: 发育早熟。

2 the rudiments: the rudiments in the art of stealing.

3 Cavan: 爱尔兰北部的郡名。

4 crown: 英国货币名, 值五先令。

5 the Exchange: the market.

6 turn to account: be useful or profitable.

7 knowing: well-informed (深知内情的)。

然，现今国家灾难深重，恐怕未必能有这么多；即便如此，仍然还有十七万对生殖者。我再除去五万，包括那些小产的，或者在一周岁之内因事故、疾病而死亡的婴儿。这么一来，穷人的年产子女就只剩下十二万了。问题在于拿什么来供养这么多小孩子——这个，我已经说过，在目前局面下，无论什么办法也都不能解决。因为，我们既不能使唤这些小孩子做手艺、种田，也不能（我说的是乡下）叫他们去盖房、开荒。他们不到六岁，也很难依靠盗窃为生，除非某些地方小孩子特别早熟。虽然，我也承认，在这方面的基本知识他们很早就已无师自通，不过他们那时候顶多只能算是练习生罢了。卡文郡一位要人对我说过，即使在那么一个以精通此道名闻全国的地方，他所知道的案例中，六岁以下的也仅有那么一两起。

商人们告诉我说，十二岁以下的男孩、女孩根本不可能上市；即使到了十二岁，行市也超不过三镑，最多三镑零半克朗。这对于父母或国家都无利可图，因为光拿他们的嚼谷和破衣烂衫这么两项来说，价钱就起码四倍于此数。

准此，我谨略陈愚见，希望不至引起任何异议。

我在伦敦认识的一位深明内情的美国人对我说，一个喂养得壮壮实实的一岁小儿，无论炖、烤、烘、煮，都是一种非常可口、营养、卫生的

baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee or a ragout¹.

I do therefore humbly offer it to public consideration that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males, which is more than we allow to sheep, black cattle², or swine; and my reason is that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages³, therefore one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may at a year old be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune through the kingdom, always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends; and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter⁴ will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned upon a medium⁵ that a child just born will weigh twelve pounds, and in a solar year if tolerably nursed increaseth to twenty-eight pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

Infant's flesh will be in season throughout the year, but more plentiful in March, and a little before and after. For we are told by a grave author, an eminent French physician⁶, that fish being a prolific⁷ diet, there are more children born in Roman Catholic countries about nine months after Lent⁸ than at any other season; therefore, reckoning a year after

1 a fricassee [fɹɪkə'si:] or a ragout ['rægu:]: 对这两种菜名, 各家说法不一。此处暂译为“炸丸子”和“炒肉丝”, 以与上文的“炖、烤、烘、煮”稍示区别。

2 black cattle: 黑牛(oxen of Scotch and Welsh high-land breed, originally black)。

3 our savages: 指爱尔兰的穷人, “乡野愚民”。

4 the fore or hind quarter: 前腿、后腿(指兽类)。

5 upon a medium: on an average (平均来说)。

6 a grave author, an eminent French physician: 指法国大作家拉伯雷(1494—1553), 《巨人传》的作者。他是一个讽刺、滑稽的作家, 此处说他“严肃”, 是反话。

7 prolific: 有助生育的。

8 Lent: 四旬斋, 指复活节前四十日间, 在此期间, 天主教徒不能吃肉, 只能吃鱼。