

经典的回声 · ECHO OF CLASSICS

THE TRUE STORY OF AH Q

阿Q正传

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译

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出版前言

本社专事外文图书的编辑出版,几十年来用英文翻译出版了大量的中国文学作品和文化典籍,上自先秦,下迄现当代,力求全面而准确地反映中国文学及中国文化的基本面貌和灿烂成就。这些英译图书均取自相关领域著名的、权威的作品,英译则出自国内外译界名家。每本图书的编选、翻译过程均极其审慎严肃,精雕细琢,中文作品及相应的英译版本均堪称经典。

我们意识到,这些英译精品,不单有对外译介的意义,而且对国内英文学习者、爱好者及英译工作者,也是极有价值的读本。为此,我们对这些英译精品做了认真的遴选,编排成汉英对照的形式,陆续推出,以飨读者。

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Publisher's Note

Foreign Languages Press is dedicated to the editing, translating and publishing of books in foreign languages. Over the past several decades it has published, in English, a great number of China's classics and records as well as literary works from the Qin down to modern times, in the aim to fully display the best part of the Chinese culture and its achievements. These books in the original are famous and authoritative in their respective fields, and their English translations are masterworks produced by notable translators both at home and abroad. Each book is carefully compiled and translated with minute precision. Consequently, the English versions as well as their Chinese originals may both be rated as classics.

It is generally considered that these English translations are not only significant for introducing China to the outside world but also useful reading materials for domestic English learners and translators. For this reason, we have carefully selected some of these books, and will publish them successively in Chinese-English bilingual form.

Foreign Languages Press

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第一章

序

我要给阿Q做正传,已经不止一两年了。但一面要做,一面又往回想,这足见我不是一个“立言”的人,因为从来不朽之笔,须传不朽之人,于是人以文传,文以人传——究竟谁靠谁传,渐渐的不甚了然起来,而终于归结到传阿Q,仿佛思想里有鬼似的。



然而要做这一篇速朽的文章,才下笔,便感到万分的困难了。第一是文章的名目。孔子曰,“名不正则言不顺”。这原是应该极注意的。传的名目很繁

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

For several years now I have been meaning to write the true story of Ah Q. But while wanting to write I was in some trepidation too, which goes to show that I am not one of those who achieve glory by writing; for an immortal pen has always been required to record the deeds of an immortal man, the man becoming known to posterity through the writing and the writing known to posterity through the man — until finally it is not clear who is making whom known. But in the end, as though possessed by some fiend, I always came back to the idea of writing the story of Ah Q.



And yet no sooner had I taken up my pen than I became conscious of tremendous difficulties in writing this far-from-immortal work. The first was the question of what to call it. Confucius said, "If the name is not correct, the words will not ring true"; and this axiom should be most scrupulously observed. There are many types of biographies: offi-



多：列传，自传，内传，外传，别传，家传，小传……，而可惜都不合。“列传”么，这一篇并非和许多阔人排在“正史”里；“自传”么，我又并非就是阿 Q。说是“外传”，“内传”在那里呢？倘用“内传”，阿 Q 又决不是神仙。“别传”呢，阿 Q 实在未曾有大总统上谕宣付国史馆立“本传”——虽说英国正史上并无“博徒列传”，而文豪迭更司也做过《博徒别传》这一部书，但文豪则可，在我辈却不可的。其次是“家传”，则我既不知与阿 Q 是否同宗，也未曾受他子孙的拜托；或“小传”，则阿 Q 又更无别的“大传”了。总而言之，这一篇也便是“本传”，但从我的文章着想，因为文体卑下，是“引车卖浆者流”所用的话，所以不敢僭称，便从不入三教九流的小说家所谓“闲话休

cial biographies, autobiographies, unauthorized biographies, legends, supplementary biographies, family histories, sketches. . . but unfortunately none of these suited my purpose. "Official biography"? This account will obviously not be included with those of many eminent people in some authentic history. "Autobiography"? But I am obviously not Ah Q. If I were to call this an "unauthorized biography," then where is his "authenticated biography?" The use of "legend" is impossible because Ah Q was no legendary figure. "Supplementary biography"? But no president has ever ordered the National Historical Institute to write a "standard life" of Ah Q. It is true that although there are no "lives of gamblers" in authentic English history, the well-known author Conan Doyle nevertheless wrote *Rodney Stone*; but while this is permissible for a well-known author it is not permissible for such as I. Then there is "family history"; but I do not know whether I belong to the same family as Ah Q or not, nor have his children or grandchildren ever entrusted me with such a task. If I were to use "sketch," it might be objected that Ah Q has no "complete account." In short, this is really a "life," but since I write in vulgar vein using the language of hucksters and pedlars, I dare not presume to give it so high-sounding a title. So I will take as my title the last two words of stock phrase of the novelist, who are not reckoned among the Three Cults and Nine Schools. "Enough of this





题言归正传”这一句套话里，取出“正传”两个字来，作为名目，即使与古人所撰《书法正传》的“正传”字面上很相混，也顾不得了。

第二，立传的通例，开首大抵该是“某，字某，某地人也”，而我并不知道阿Q姓什么。有一回，他似乎是姓赵，但第二日便模糊了。那是赵太爷的儿子进了秀才的时候，锣声镗镗的报到村里来，阿Q正喝了两碗黄酒，便手舞足蹈的说，这于他也很光彩，因为他和赵太爷原来是本家，细细的排起来他还比秀才长三辈呢。其时几个旁听人倒也肃然的有些起敬了。那知道第二天，地保便叫阿Q到赵太爷家里去；太爷一见，满脸赭朱，喝道：

“阿Q，你这浑小子！你说我是你的本家么？”

阿Q不开口。

赵太爷愈看愈生气了，抢进几步说：“你敢胡说！我怎么会有你这样的

digression, and back to the true story"; and if this is reminiscent of the *True Story of Calligraphy* of the ancients, it cannot be helped.

The second difficulty confronting me was that a biography of this type should start off something like this: "So-and-so, whose other name was so-and-so, was a native of such-and-such a place"; but I don't really know what Ah Q's surname was. Once, he seemed to be named Zhao, but the next day there was some confusion about the matter again. This was after Mr. Zhao's son had passed the county examination and, to the sound of gongs, his success was announced in the village. Ah Q, who had just drunk two bowls of yellow wine, began to prance about declaring that this reflected credit on him too, since he belonged to the same clan as Mr. Zhao and by an exact reckoning was three generations senior to the successful candidate. At the time several bystanders even began to stand slightly in awe of Ah Q. but the next day the bailiff summoned him to Mr. Zhao's house. When the old gentleman set eyes on him his face turned crimson with fury and he roared:

"Ah Q, you miserable wretch! Did you say I belonged to the same clan as you?"

Ah Q made no reply.

The more he looked at him the angrier Mr. Zhao became. Advancing menacingly a few steps he said, "How dare you talk such nonsense! How



本家？你姓赵么？”

阿Q不开口，想往后退了；赵太爷跳过去，给了他一个嘴巴。

“你怎么会姓赵！——你那里配姓赵！”

阿Q并没有抗辩他确凿姓赵，只用手摸着左颊，和地保退出去了；外面又被地保训斥了一番，谢了地保二百文酒钱。知道的人都说阿Q太荒唐，自己去招打；他大约未必姓赵，即使真姓赵，有赵太爷在这里，也不该如此胡说的。此后便再没有人提起他的氏族来，所以我终于不知道阿Q究竟什么姓。



第三，我又不知道阿Q的名字是怎么写的。他活着的时候，人都叫他阿Quei，死了以后，便没有一个人再叫阿Quei了，那里还会有“著之竹帛”的事。若论“著之竹帛”，这篇文章要算第一次，所以先遇着了这第一个难关。我曾经仔细想：阿Quei，阿桂还是阿贵呢？

could I have such a relative as you? Is your surname Zhao?"

Ah Q made no reply and was planning a retreat, when Mr. Zhao darted forward and gave him a slap on the face.

"How could you be named Zhao? Are you worthy of the name Zhao?"

Ah Q made no attempt to defend his right to the name Zhao but rubbing his left cheek went out with the bailiff, once outside, he had to listen to another torrent of abuse. He then by way of atonement paid him two hundred cash. All who heard this said Ah Q was a great fool to ask for a beating like that. Even if his surname were Zhao — which wasn't likely — he should have known better than to boast like that when there was a Mr. Zhao living in the village. After this no further mention was made of Ah Q's ancestry, thus I still have no idea what his surname really was.

The third difficulty I encountered in writing this work was that I don't know how Ah Q's personal name should be written either. During his lifetime everybody called him Ah Gui, but after his death not a soul mentioned Ah Gui again; for he was obviously not one of those whose name is "preserved on bamboo tablets and silk." If there is any question of preserving his name, this essay must be the first attempt at doing so. Hence I am confronted with this difficulty at the outset. I have given the

