

王佐良 著



英国散文的 流变

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王佐良 著

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序

散文似乎可有两义：1. 所有不属于韵文的作品都是散文，这是广义；2. 专指文学性散文，如小品文之类，这是狭义。我是倾向于广义的，也难说有多少科学根据，只是感到如果范围广些，更易看出散文的各种表现，而且广狭两义的散文都需达到某些共同要求，如都应首先把内容说清楚；也有一些共同的问题，如都有文风问题，而一种体裁的文风改进了也会提高整体散文的质量。

我的专业是英文，所以此书专谈英国散文，但不限于文学性散文，文学性散文也不限于小品随笔之类，还包括同类书通常不涉及的小说中的散文。方面广有好处，但也带来困难，即古今作品如此之多，如何选择？自己所知有限，可能谈到的并不重要，而更好的却忽略了。

其次，谈法也须斟酌。仅仅作语法、词汇分析往往浮于表面，而仅仅作文学品评又易流于印象。我的谈法——我的试验——是想把语言分析同文学阐释结合起来，而且尽量引用原作，让读者可以自己判断。叙述依据时代前后，古略今详，必要的史实有所交代，而由于引文较多较长，又近似历代名篇展览，可说是散文史与名篇选读的结合。

为了便利未必有志深造英文但对好的散文感兴趣的读者，引文一般都附译文，有的取自已出书刊，有的请朋友新译，都有注明，

在此一并致谢;多数系我自译,推敲不够,未尽妥当,连同我的选材和评论方法一起,并请读者批评指正。

此书之成,从提供译文到编制索引,得自杨君国斌之助者殊多,谨此志谢。最后,我之能够写出任何一书,背后都有我妻徐序的支持和帮助,这就不是一二句话就能表达我的感激之情的了。

王 佐 良

1990年11月,北京

第 一 章

引论: 莫尔的历史著作和风格

英国文散文始于何时? 这是文学史家感兴趣的问题。

一般说来,散文的起始迟于韵文。最初的诗歌实际是远古丛林里、大海边、高山上人们宣泄情感的呼叫,是口头的;散文则是用来讲道理、记事、翻译宗教及其它经典等等的,是书面的,要等书面文字形成一个体系才能出现。从这个意义上说,散文是文明的产物。

许多民族的早期文学选本,总是诗歌的比例大大超过散文,也许原因就在这里。

英国散文的特殊情况还在于:它经历了三个语言时期,即古英语、中古英语、近代英语。三种语言有联系,然而差别很大,在古英语、中古英语时期,散文收获似乎不及韵文,而散文中的重要著作还是用拉丁文写的,比德的《英国人民宗教史》就是一例。所以用拉丁文,是因为它是欧洲知识分子共有的文字,用它便于交流思想和学术,且不说作者想替自己建立全欧的声誉了。

迟至十六世纪,已是近代英语时期,培根还用拉丁文写他的哲学著作,只在他认为次要作品的《随笔》里,他才用了英语。

但是事情的另一面却是在每个时期,都有人坚持用本土语言写作。这些有志之士当中,第一个重要的是九世纪的阿尔弗雷特国王(King Alfred)。他为了振兴本土学术,组织人——并且亲自

动手——把一些拉丁文著作译成了古英语。对此，凯尔(W. P. Ker)教授曾说：

那位伟大的国王常遭被除名的危险，然而政治史和文学史都少不了他，而英国的文学史同政治史一样是前后连贯的。^①

这个“前后连贯”论是有争议的，但是凯尔的继任者、也是伦敦大学英国文学教授的钱伯斯(R. W. Chambers)不仅坚持此说，而且把由阿尔弗雷特开始的英国散文传统从九世纪延伸到了十六世纪，并指出其中的关键人物是莫尔。

汤玛斯·莫尔(Thomas More, 1478—1535)是英国文艺复兴的重要人物，其名著《乌托邦》(1516)是用拉丁文写的，但是他也用英文写了《理查三世史》(1543, 1557)。从此书和莫尔的其它英文著作，钱伯斯引了大量例子，说明莫尔在叙事、辩论、写对话等方面的能力，以及在形成《圣经》英文译本中的影响，结论是：

莫尔是发展出一种有力的散文的第一个英国人，这种散文适合他的时代的一切用途：有雄辩力量，有戏剧性，多样化。莫尔的散文既善辩论，又善叙述，能够构筑出有持续说服力的段落，又能迅捷地开展对话，时而活泼，口语化，时而精雕细刻，甚至近乎绮丽。这当中有些方面已是当时的英文所能做到，……但是莫尔是第一个具有能满足十六世纪英国的一切要求的散文风格的人。当时英国特别缺乏一样东西。别的作家……能够掌握雄辩文和说明文的风格，而那时英国最需要的是的一种能把当代事件用生动、有戏剧性的叙述文体记录下来的散文风格。^②

① 亨利·克雷克编：《英国散文选》卷一，第16页。

② R. W. 钱伯斯：《英国散文的连续性》，1932，第liv页。此书原是“早期英文文献学会”丛书之一的尼科拉斯·哈卜斯菲尔所作《汤玛斯·莫尔爵士传》的序言，后又单本发行，公认为突破旧说的出色之作。

莫尔提供了这样的风格;不仅如此,批评家还发现他的《理查三世史》是“一个精心设计、细心完成的整体,比例恰当,无懈可击”。^①钱伯斯还进而论述莎士比亚的历史剧《理查三世史》也得益于莫尔的这部同名史书。^②

既然如此,让我们读读莫尔的文章本身。这里是《理查三世史》的一个片断,是关于已故国王爱德华四世的情妇琪恩·肖厄的:

From The History of King Richard III

A King's Mistress¹

Now then, bye and bye, as it were for anger not for covetise,² the Protector sent into the house of Shore's wife (for her husband dwelled not with her) and spoiled her of all that ever she had, above the value of two or three thousand marks,³ and sent her body to prison. And when he had a while laid unto her for the manner' sake,⁴ that she went about to bewitch him, and that she was of counsel with the Lord Chamberlain⁵ to destroy him; in conclusion when that no color⁶ could fasten upon these matters, then he laid heinously to her charge that thing that herself could not deny, that all the world wist was true, and that natheles⁷ every man laughed at to hear it then so suddenly so highly taken, that she was naught of her body.⁸ And for this cause (as a goodly continent prince clean and faultless of himself, sent out of

① 转引钱伯斯:《英国散文的连续性》,第 liv 页。

② 同书,clxv-clxv ii 页。

heaven into this vicious world for the amendment of men's manners) he caused the Bishop of London to put her to open penance, going before the cross in procession upon a Sunday with a taper in her hand.⁹ In which she went in countenance and pace demure, so womanly, and albeit she were out of all array save her kirtle only,¹⁰ yet went she so fair and lovely, namely while the wondering of the people cast a comely rud in her checks (of which she before had most miss)¹¹ that her great shame won her much praise among those that were more amorous of her body than curious of¹² her soul. And many good folk also that hated her living and glad were to see sin corrected, yet pitied they more her penance than rejoiced therein when they considered that the Protector procured it, more of a corrupt intent than any virtuous affection.¹³

This woman was born in London, worshipfully friended, honestly brought up, and very well married, saving somewhat too soon, her husband an honest citizen, young and goodly and of good substance. But forasmuch as they were coupled ere she were well ripe, she not very fervently loved for whom she never longed. Which was haply¹⁴ the thing that the more easily made her incline unto the King's appetite when he required¹⁵ her. Howbeit that respect of his royalty, the hope of gay apparel, ease, pleasure and other wanton wealth was able soon to pierce a soft tender heart. But when the king had abused her, anon¹⁶ her husband (as he was an honest man and one that could his good,¹⁷ not presuming to touch a King's concubine) left her up to him altogether. When the king died, the Lord Chamberlain took her, which in

the King's days, albeit he was sore¹⁸ enamored upon her, yet he forbore her, either for reverence or for a certain friendly faithfulness. Proper¹⁹ she was, and fair: nothing in her body that you would have changed, but if you would have wished her somewhat higher. Thus say they that knew her in her youth. Albeit some that now see her (for yet she liveth) deem her never to have been well visaged. Whose judgment seemeth me somewhat like as though men should guess the beauty of one long before departed by her scalp taken out of the charnel house;²⁰ for now she is old, lean, withered and dried up, nothing left but rivelled²¹ skin and hard bone. And yet being even such, whoso well advise²² her visage might guess and devise which parts how filled might make it a fair face. Yet delighted men not so much in her beauty as in her pleasant behavior. For a proper wit had she, and could both read well and write, merry in company, ready and quick of answer, neither mute nor full of babble, sometime taunting without displeasure and not without disport.²³ The King would say that he had three concubines, which in three divers²⁴ properties diversly excelled: one the merriest, one the wiliest, and one the holiest harlot in his realm, as one whom no man could get out of the church lightly²⁵ to any place but it were to his bed. The other two were somewhat greater personages, and natheles²⁶ of their humility content to be nameless and to forbear the praise of those properties. But the merriest was this Shore's wife, in whom the King therefore took special pleasure. For many he had, but her he loved, whose favor,²⁷ to say the truth, (for sin it were to belie

the devil) she never abused to any man's hurt, but to many a man's comfort and relief. Where the King took displeasure, she would mitigate and appease his mind. Where men were out of favor, she would bring them in his grace. For many that had highly offended, she attained pardon. Of great forfeitures she gat men remission.²⁸ And finally in many weighty suits, she stood many men in great stead, either for none or very small rewards, and those rather gay than rich, either for that she was content with the deed²⁹ self well done, or for that she delighted to be sued unto and to show what she was able to do with the king, or for that wanton women and wealthy be not always covetous.

I doubt not some shall think this woman so slight a thing to be written of and set among the remembrances of great matters, which they shall specially think that haply shall esteem her only by that³⁰ they now see her. But me seemeth³¹ the chance so much the more worthy to be remembered, in how much she is now in the more beggarly condition, unfriended and worn out of acquaintance,³² after good substance, after as great favor with the prince, after as great suit³³ and seeking to with all those that those days had business to speed, as many other men were in their times, which be now famous only by the infamy of their ill deeds. Her doings were not much less, albeit they be much less remembered, because they were not so evil. For men use if they have an evil turn to write it in marble; and whoso doth us a good turn, we write it in dust, which is not worst proved³⁴ by her; for at this day she beggeth of many at this day living, that at this day had begged

if she had not been.

1. Jane Shore, wife of a London merchant and mistress of the late king, Edward IV, persecuted by Richard Duke of Gloucester, "the Protector" during the minority of Edward's sons. After their mysterious death in the Tower of London he ascended the throne as Richard III.
2. Greed.
3. A mark equals $2/3$ of a pound.
4. Accused her, to justify arrest.
5. Lord Hastings, beheaded by Richard.
6. Plausibility.
7. Nevertheless.
8. Unchaste.
9. The standard punishment for a harlot.
10. Dressed only in a loose gown.
11. Lack.
12. Concerned about.
13. Motive.
14. Perhaps.
15. Attempted to seduce.
16. Immediately.
17. Knew what was good for him.
18. Very.
19. Handsome.
20. Common burial place.
21. Shrivelled.
22. Would like to reconstruct.
23. Playfulness.
24. Different.
25. Easily.
26. Nevertheless.
27. Influence.
28. I. e., got cancellation of orders to forfeit property.
29. Deed's.
30. That which.
31. I think.
32. Without friends.
33. Influence at court.
34. I. e., is a good example.

接着,逐渐地,似乎是出于愤怒而不是贪婪,护国公派人去到肖厄的媳妇家里(因为她丈夫并不与她同居),把她所有的财物搜刮一空,价值在三千马克以上,并把她本人投进监狱。然后按章对她进行了审问,说她到处奔走,想迷惑他,又说她同王室大臣合谋想杀害他;等到一看这些罪名无法成立,就恶毒地提出一条她本人无法否认,而且全世界都知道是确有其事的罪名,不过在这时突然地郑重其事地提出只使所有的人听了发笑罢了——这罪名就是她不贞。因此之故,他作为

一位有节操、不乱来、洁身无垢的王爷，自命是上天派到这邪恶的世界来纠正人们的道德的，下令伦敦区主教责成她当众赎罪，办法就是要她在星期日手持蜡烛走在十字架前，跟随一队人游街。结果她走在队里，面容娴静，步伐规矩，虽然身上只穿一件宽大的袍子，可是显得十分秀美，连她那原本苍白的双颊也在众人好奇的注视下出现了可爱的赭红，于是她那可耻的大罪反而赢得群众中那些看上了她的身体远于她的灵魂的人的纷纷赞美。不喜欢她的行为的良善的人对于罪恶得到纠正是高兴的，但也对她的赎罪感到同情，而不是感到庆幸，因为他们考虑到护国公之所以这样惩罚她并非出自道德感，而是另有卑劣用心的。

这个女人生在伦敦，来往都是体面人物，从小受到良好家教，婚姻也合适，只是嫁得早了一点，丈夫是良善市民，年轻，和气，有钱。但由于他们结婚时她还不够成熟，她并不热爱他，对他从无热恋之心。这可能是一个原因，使她容易在国王引诱她的时候，愿意满足他的胃口。当然，对国王的尊敬，对美丽的衣饰、优裕、愉快的生活和大量钱财的指望也能迅速地打动一颗温柔多情的心。当国王勾上了她，她丈夫天性良善，懂得怎样对自己有利，不敢碰国王的小老婆一下，马上把她完全让给了国王。国王死后，宫廷大臣收纳了她，其实国王在世之日他早已垂涎于她，只是不敢接近，或是出于尊敬，或是由于一种友好的忠诚。她长得标致，白皙，身上无一处不合式，如能身高略增一点就更美了，凡是在她年轻时见过她的人都这样说。当然也有某些人现在看了她（因为她还活着），觉得她绝不可能曾经漂亮。我认为这种判断类似把一个死了多年的人从坟墓里挖出头骨，凭这一点来猜想此人过去是否美丽一样，因为她现在当然老了，瘦了，干瘪枯缩了。但就是这样，如

果想重构她的面容，还是可以看出只须把某些部分充实一下仍然可以现出美貌。喜欢她的人不仅爱她的美貌，更爱她的愉快的举止。因为她有才智，能读会写，客人面前表情愉快，问什么话说，既不都有一声不响，也不唠叨，有时还不伤大雅地说说笑话。国王常说他有三妾，各有所长：一个最愉快，一个最有心计，一个最虔诚，可称是他那王国里最信神的娼妇，因为很难使她离开教堂，除非是立刻上他的御床。这三人中两个是有身分的人，但由于谦虚自愿做无名氏，也放弃别人对她们特长的赞美。最愉快的那位就是肖厄家的媳妇，国王也因这一点特别喜欢她。他有许多女人，但只爱她一个，而说实话（不然即使对魔鬼也是罪孽），她从不用她的影响去害人，而是使许多人得到了安慰或解救。国王不高兴了，她会使他宽解，息怒；某些人失去国王的欢心了，她会使他们重获恩宠。有些人犯了大罪，她可以为他们取得赦免。有些人的财产快被没收，她能使命令收回。最后，她帮许多人递上对国王的重要请求，不收任何报酬，或虽收小量也只是为了好玩而不是攒钱，象是她只要能将一件事做好也就满意了，或为了表明她有能力强左右国王，或表明有钱的浪荡女人并不总是贪婪的。

我料定会有人想，这个女人无足轻重，不值得浪费笔墨，不该将她夹在重要事务之间来一起追忆，特别是那些只凭她的现状来估量她的人更会这样想。但是我认为正因为她现在沦为乞丐，无人照顾，缺朋少友，她更值得我们追忆。想当年她有钱，得国王欢心，在朝廷有势，帮许多人办成了事情。许多别人也有过这种时候，只不过由于干了坏事才至今留名。她所做不比这些人少，但因没有干多少坏事就被人忘怀。人们总是把作恶的人刻在大理石上，而对行善的人则委名于尘土。这个女人的遭遇就是一个好例子，因为她今天所乞求的