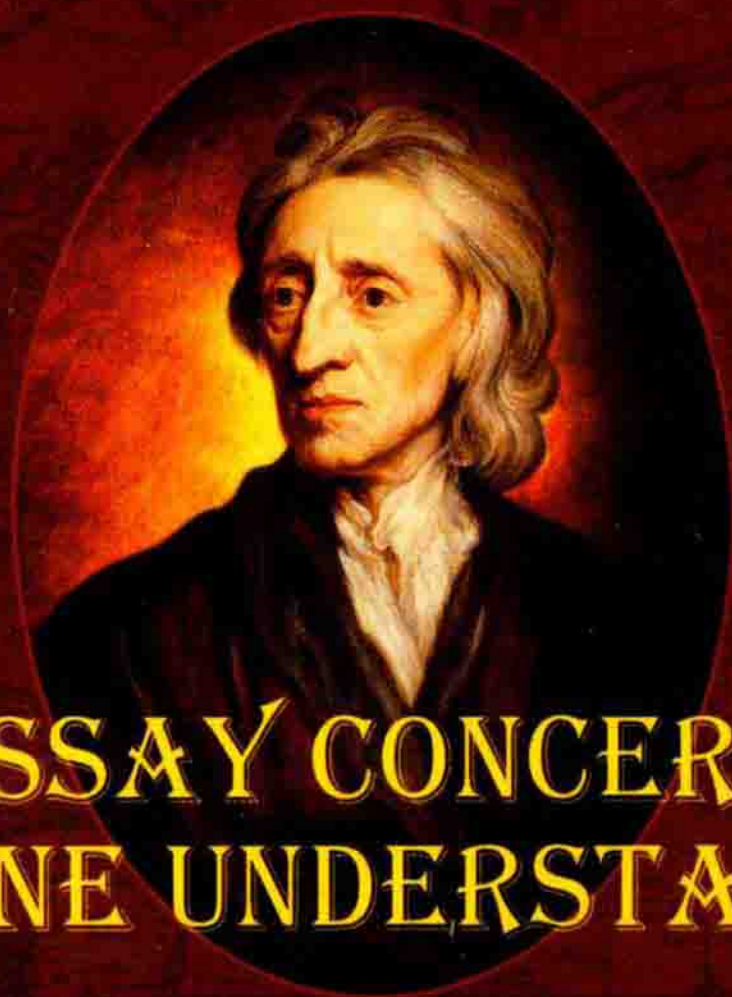


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AN ESSAY CONCERNING HUMANE UNDERSTANDING

by

John Locke

人类理解论

[英] 约翰·洛克 著



Liaoning People's Publishing House, China

辽宁人民出版社



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In Two Books

VOLUME I

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John Locke

John Locke (1632-1704) was an English philosopher and physician, widely regarded as one of the most influential of Enlightenment thinkers and commonly known as the "Father of Liberalism". Considered one of the first of the British empiricists, following the tradition of Sir Francis Bacon, he is equally important to social contract theory. His work greatly affected the development of epistemology and political philosophy. *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* is the masterpiece for mankind.

His writings influenced Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, many Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, as well as the American revolutionaries. His contributions to classical republicanism and liberal theory are reflected in the United States Declaration of Independence.

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General Preface

Millions of Chinese are learning English to acquire knowledge and skills for communication in a world where English has become the primary language for international discourse. Yet not many learners have come to realize that the command of the English language also enables them to have an easy access to the world literary classics such as Shakespeare's plays, Shelley's poems, Mark Twain's novels and Nietzsche's works which are an important part of liberal-arts education. The most important goals of universities are not vocational, that is, not merely the giving of knowledge and the training of skills.

In a broad sense, education aims at broadening young people's mental horizon, cultivating virtues and shaping their character. Lincoln, Mao Zedong and many other great leaders and personages of distinction declared how they drew immense inspiration and strength from literary works. As a matter of fact, many of them had aspired to become writers in their young age. Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.) is said to take along with him two things, waking or sleeping: a book and a dagger, and the book is *Iliad*, a literary classic, by Homer. He would put these two much treasured things under his pillow when he went to bed.

Today, we face an unprecedented complex and changing world. To cope with this rapid changing world requires not only communication skills, but also adequate knowledge of cultures other than our own home culture. Among the most important developments in present-day global culture is the ever increasing cultural exchanges and understanding between different nations and peoples. And one of the best ways to know foreign cultures is to read their literary works, particularly their literary classics, the soul of a country's culture. They also give you the best language and the feeling of sublimity.

Liaoning People's Publishing House is to be congratulated for its foresight and courage in making a new series of world literary classics (Bedside Classics) available to the reading public. It is hoped that people with an adequate command of the English language will read them, like them and keep them as their lifetime companions.

I am convinced that the series will make an important contribution to the literary education of the young people in China. At a time when the whole country is emphasizing "spiritual civilization", it is certainly a very timely venture to put out the series of literary classics for literary and cultural education.

Zhang Zhongzai

Professor

Beijing Foreign Studies University

July, 2013 Beijing

总序

经典名著的语言无疑是最凝练、最优美、最有审美价值的。雪莱的那句“如冬已来临，春天还会远吗？”让多少陷于绝望的人重新燃起希望之火，鼓起勇气，迎接严冬过后的春天。徐志摩一句“悄悄的我走了，正如我悄悄的来；我挥一挥衣袖，不带走一片云彩”又让多少人陶醉。尼采的那句“上帝死了”，又给多少人以振聋发聩的启迪作用。

读经典名著，尤其阅读原汁原味作品，可以怡情养性，增长知识，加添才干，丰富情感，开阔视野。所谓“经典”，其实就是作者所属的那个民族的文化积淀，是那个民族的灵魂缩影。英国戏剧泰斗莎士比亚的《哈姆雷特》和《麦克白》等、“意大利语言之父”的但丁的《神曲》之《地狱篇》《炼狱篇》及《天堂篇》、爱尔兰世界一流作家詹姆斯·乔伊斯的《尤利西斯》及《一个艺术家的肖像》等、美国风趣而笔法超一流的著名小说家马克·吐温的《哈克历险记》以及《汤姆索亚历险记》等，德国著名哲学家尼采的《查拉图斯特拉如是说》及《快乐的科学》等等，都为塑造自己民族的文化积淀，做出了永恒的贡献，也同时向世界展示了他们所属的民族的优美剪影。

很多著名领袖如林肯、毛泽东等伟大人物，也都曾从经典名著中汲取力量，甚至获得治国理念。耶鲁大学教授查尔斯·希尔曾在题为《经典与治国理念》的文章，阐述了读书与治国之间的绝妙关系。他这样写道：

“在几乎所有经典名著中，都可以找到让人叹为观止、深藏其中的治国艺术原则。”

经典名著，不仅仅有治国理念，更具提升读者审美情趣的功能。世界上不同时代、不同地域的优秀经典作品，都存在一个共同属性：歌颂赞美人间的真善美，揭露抨击世间的假恶丑。

读欧美自但丁以来的经典名著，你会看到，西方无论是在漫长的黑暗时期，抑或进入现代进程时期，总有经典作品问世，对世间的负面，进行冷峻的批判。与此同时，也有更多的大家作品问世，热情讴歌人间的真诚与善良，使读者不由自主地沉浸于经典作品的审美情感之中。

英语经典名著，显然是除了汉语经典名著以外，人类整个进程中至关重要的文化遗产的一部分。从历史上看，英语是全世界经典阅读作品中，使用得最广泛的国际性语言。这一事实，没有产生根本性变化。本世纪相当长一段时间，这一事实也似乎不会发生任何变化。而要更深入地了解并切身感受英语经典名著的风采，阅读原汁原味的英语经典作品的过程，显然是必不可少的。

辽宁人民出版社及时并隆重推出“最经典英语文库”系列丛书，是具有远见与卓识的出版行为。我相信，这套既可供阅读，同时也具收藏价值的英语原版经

典作品系列丛书，在帮助人们了解什么才是经典作品的同时，也一定会成为广大英语爱好者、大中学生以及学生家长们的挚爱的“最经典英语文库”。

北京外国语大学英语学院
北外公共外交研究中心
欧美文学研究中心主任
全国英国文学学会名誉会长

张中载 教授
2013年7月于北京

Is This Book for You?

人类今天有更好的认知能力吗

——“最经典英语文库”第七辑之
《人类理解论》导读

胥 英

约翰·洛克（1632—1704），英国著名哲学家、思想家和政治家。毕业于英国牛津大学，信奉基督教。

洛克在自己将近60岁时，出版了这部对后人极具影响力的著作《人类理解论》，它也是洛克一生中最值得关注也是最具代表性的著作。它主要就“人类知识的起源、定性以及范围”进行了深入的科学的研究，尤其对所谓的“先天存在于人脑里的真理”部分进行了驳斥。洛克以为，是“经验”“经历”，而不是“天生物”或被称作“上帝”的事物首先存在于人的大脑之中。正是“经验”或“经历”才成为人的道德的源泉。因此，洛克得出结论认为，所谓知识、观念也都源于此。

洛克在《人类理解论》这部书里大胆地假设，知识是通过科学手段，通过感官接收到的信息而获取到的。所以，也从中暗示，宗教要对社会哲学给予宽容。人类进入21世纪了，洛克在几百年前所写就的这本《人类理解论》，其中所阐释的观点仍然散发着某种智

慧的光辉。

洛克早在年近40岁时，就开始着手写作此著作。他先写就了两部草稿。这时，他还只是在给别人当秘书。后来，他把书稿搁置了好多年。46岁时，他重拾这个工作。之所以有时间重新打理此稿子，是因为他不得不向荷兰发出避难请求。英国政府有关部门怀疑他可能是个激进分子。他在这一段时间里，不仅重新整理了书稿，还写出了后来著名的书信体作品《论宽容》(*Epistola de tolerantia*)。

事情过后，洛克从荷兰回到英国。一回到英国，他就将这部《人类理解论》手稿交给了出版社。此书出版后，在同时代人中引发强烈关注。后来，洛克在有生之年，一直对这部著作进行不间断的修订，到耄耋之年，他一共出版了五个修订版。

总体而言，洛克一生执着于对政治、教育、宗教 and 知识方面的研究并发表自己独具特点的见解。《人类理解论》最重要的观点是：洛克首次提出人的头脑里系统性的、详实的、充满理性的、宽广的哲学思想和认知，一切的一切都来自于经验，而不是先天自有的。这一观点正好与当时流行的思想与认知都是“先天具备的”的观点相悖。这也正是洛克刻意着力之处，也从知识获取意义上，具备了现代思想意识。其实，我们中国教育界的老祖宗孔夫子早于公元前几百年就有“学而时习之”的提法。一切知识都来自于学与习过程中，而不是先天存在的，这种观点对于中国人来说，可能就是常识。但对于千百年来一直浸淫于宗教思想里的西方人来说，不啻一记重重的巴掌，打到了昏睡的人们的脸上，并强迫其面对这个最基本的常识。洛克进一步认为，道德、价值以及信仰，这一

切也因之统统要透过人的经验而获取。因此，对世界的认识也要经过观察与经验而形成。

其实，关于认知，西方一直存在着先天还是后天获取的争论，这种争论从来没有停歇过。与认知相对应的，则是绝对真理。当然，洛克并没有胆量否定“绝对真理”的存在，只不过他认为，所谓的“绝对真理”，靠人的感官，几乎是不可能判断出其存在与否的。所以，他提出对宗教要宽容，因为宗教（他所信奉的基督教）强调，认识上帝的途径，并不是通过认知，而是信仰。而信仰有时是不能用理性来加以诠释和支撑的。

总之，洛克在《人类理解论》里讨论的是人类认知方面的重大问题，也是一直困扰人类到今天的重大问题。社会已经进入21世纪，但时间的累加，并不等于说人类的聪明程度就自然而然上升。人类要不断地扪心自问，对认知问题的理解比洛克到底多了多少，抑或根本就不管17世纪的洛克说什么，而只强调信仰通达“绝对真理”的重要性与唯一性。



INTRODUCTION

1. An Inquiry into the Understanding pleasant and useful.

Since it is the UNDERSTANDING that sets man above the rest of sensible beings, and gives him all the advantage and dominion which he has over them; it is certainly a subject, even for its nobleness, worth our labour to inquire into. The understanding, like the eye, whilst it makes us see and perceive all other things, takes no notice of itself; and it requires an art and pains to set it at a distance and make it its own object. But whatever be the difficulties that lie in the way of this inquiry; whatever it be that keeps us so much in the dark to ourselves; sure I am that all the light we can let in upon our minds, all the acquaintance we can make with our own understandings, will not only be very pleasant, but bring us great advantage, in directing our thoughts in the search of other things.

2. Design.

This, therefore, being my purpose—to inquire into the original, certainty, and extent of HUMAN KNOWLEDGE, together with the grounds and degrees of BELIEF, OPINION, and ASSENT;—I shall not at present meddle with the physical consideration of the mind; or trouble myself to examine wherein its essence consists; or by what motions of our spirits

or alterations of our bodies we come to have any SENSATION by our organs, or any IDEAS in our understandings; and whether those ideas do in their formation, any or all of them, depend on matter or not. These are speculations which, however curious and entertaining, I shall decline, as lying out of my way in the design I am now upon. It shall suffice to my present purpose, to consider the discerning faculties of a man, as they are employed about the objects which they have to do with. And I shall imagine I have not wholly misemployed myself in the thoughts I shall have on this occasion, if, in this historical, plain method, I can give any account of the ways whereby our understandings come to attain those notions of things we have; and can set down any measures of the certainty of our knowledge; or the grounds of those persuasions which are to be found amongst men, so various, different, and wholly contradictory; and yet asserted somewhere or other with such assurance and confidence, that he that shall take a view of the opinions of mankind, observe their opposition, and at the same time consider the fondness and devotion wherewith they are embraced, the resolution and eagerness wherewith they are maintained, may perhaps have reason to suspect, that either there is no such thing as truth at all, or that mankind hath no sufficient means to attain a certain knowledge of it.

3. Method.

It is therefore worth while to search out the bounds between opinion and knowledge; and examine by what measures, in things whereof we have no certain knowledge, we ought to regulate our assent and moderate our persuasion. In order whereunto I shall pursue this following method:— First, I shall inquire into the original of those ideas, notions, or whatever else you please to call them, which a man observes,

and is conscious to himself he has in his mind; and the ways whereby the understanding comes to be furnished with them.

Secondly, I shall endeavour to show what knowledge the understanding hath by those ideas; and the certainty, evidence, and extent of it.

Thirdly, I shall make some inquiry into the nature and grounds of FAITH or OPINION: whereby I mean that assent which we give to any proposition as true, of whose truth yet we have no certain knowledge. And here we shall have occasion to examine the reasons and degrees of ASSENT.

4. Useful to know the Extent of our Comprehension.

If by this inquiry into the nature of the understanding, I can discover the powers thereof; how far they reach; to what things they are in any degree proportionate; and where they fail us, I suppose it may be of use to prevail with the busy mind of man to be more cautious in meddling with things exceeding its comprehension; to stop when it is at the utmost extent of its tether; and to sit down in a quiet ignorance of those things which, upon examination, are found to be beyond the reach of our capacities. We should not then perhaps be so forward, out of an affectation of an universal knowledge, to raise questions, and perplex ourselves and others with disputes about things to which our understandings are not suited; and of which we cannot frame in our minds any clear or distinct perceptions, or whereof (as it has perhaps too often happened) we have not any notions at all. If we can find out how far the understanding can extend its view; how far it has faculties to attain certainty; and in what cases it can only judge and guess, we may learn to content ourselves with what is attainable by us in this state.