

莎士比亞簡介

陳敬旻

威廉·莎士比亞(William Shakespeare)出生於英國的史特拉福(Stratford-upon-Avon)。莎士比亞的父親曾任地方議員,母親是地主的女兒。莎士比亞對婦女在廚房或起居室裡勞動的描繪不少,這大概是經由觀察母親所得。他本人也懂得園藝,故作品中的植草種樹表現鮮活。

1571年,莎士比亞進入公立學校就讀,校內教學多採拉丁文,因此在其作品中到處可見到羅馬詩人奧維德(Ovid)的影子。當時代古典文學的英譯日漸普遍,有學者認為莎士比亞只懂得英語,但這種說法有可議之處。舉例來說,在高登的譯本裡,森林女神只用 Diana這個名字,而莎士比亞卻在《仲夏夜之夢》一劇中用奧維德原作中的 Titania 一名來稱呼仙后。和莎士比亞有私交的文學家班·強生(Ben Jonson)則曾說,莎翁「懂得一點拉丁文,和一點點希臘文」。

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姐姐瑪麗 (Mary Lamb) 生於 1764 年,弟弟查爾斯 (Charles Lamb) 於 1775 年也在倫敦呱呱落地。因為家境不夠寬裕,瑪麗沒有接受過完整的教育。她從小就做針線活,幫忙持家,照顧母親。查爾斯在學生時代結識了詩人柯立芝 (Samuel Taylor Coleridge),兩人成為終生的朋友。查爾斯後來因家中經濟困難而輟學, 1792 年轉而就職於東印度公司 (East India House),這是他謀生的終身職業。

查爾斯在二十歲時一度精神崩潰,瑪麗則因為長年工作過量,在 1796 年突然精神病發,持刀攻擊父母,母親不幸傷重身亡。這件人 倫悲劇發生後,瑪麗被判為精神異常,送往精神病院。查爾斯為此 放棄自己原本期待的婚姻,以便全心照顧姐姐,使她免於在精神病 院終老。

十九世紀的英國教育重視莎翁作品,一般的中產階級家庭也希望孩子早點接觸莎劇。1806年,文學家兼編輯高德溫(William Godwin)邀請查爾斯協助「少年圖書館」的出版計畫,請他將莎翁的劇本改寫為適合兒童閱讀的故事。

查爾斯接受這項工作後就與瑪麗合作,他負責六齣悲劇,瑪麗負責 十四齣喜劇並撰寫前言。瑪麗在後來曾描述說,他們兩人「就坐在 同一張桌子上改寫,看起來就好像《仲夏夜之夢》裡的荷米雅與海 蓮娜一樣。」就這樣,姐弟兩人合力完成了這一系列的莎士比亞故 事。《莎士比亞故事集》在 1807 年出版後便大受好評,建立了查爾 斯的文學聲譽。



Merchant of Venice

威尼斯商人





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故事的來源

《威尼斯商人》又名《威尼斯的猶太人》($\it The Jew of Venice$)。這齣 戲於 $\it 1598$ 年首演,可能是莎士比亞在 $\it 1596-97$ 年間寫成的,主要情節由兩個常見的故事改編而成:

- 1 巴薩紐和波兒榭的故事:從一本名為 Il Pecorone (意指「大綿羊」或「笨蛋」)的義大利故事集之中獲得靈感。
- 2 賽拉客向安東尼索求一磅肉作為賠償的故事:有多個來源,其中之一是 1596 年出版的《雄辯家》(*The Orator*)英譯本,作者為希爾維(Alexander Silvayn)。

猶太人取基督徒的肉並在逾越節(Passover)食用的説法,在中古時代早期就已流傳。基督徒相信猶太人曾加害耶穌基督,在伊莉莎白時期的劇場舞台上,賽拉客總是留著紅鬍鬚,長著鷹鉤鼻,模樣十足邪惡。莎翁當時代的人普遍認為:除非猶太人放棄其異教信仰和行為,否則基督徒很難原諒或接納他們。









Shylock, the Jew, lived at Venice. He was an usurer¹, who had amassed² an immense fortune by lending money at great interest to Christian merchants.

Shylock, being a hard-hearted man, exacted the payment of the money he lent with such severity³ that he was much disliked by all good men, and particularly by Antonio, a young merchant of Venice; and Shylock as much hated Antonio, because he used to lend money to people in distress, and would never take any interest for the money he lent; therefore there was great enmity⁴ between this covetous⁵ Jew and the generous merchant Antonio. Whenever Antonio met Shylock on the Rialto⁶(or Exchange), he used to reproach⁷ him with his usuries and hard dealings, which the Jew would bear with seeming patience, while he secretly meditated revenge.

¹ usurer ['juxʒərər] (n.) 放高利貸者

² amass [ə'mæs] (v.) 積聚財富

³ severity [sɪ'verɪti] (n.) 嚴厲

⁴ enmity ['enmiti] (n.) 仇恨

⁵ covetous ['kʌvɪtəs] (a.) 貪圖的

⁶ Rialto [rɪ'ælto] (n.) 交易場所

⁷ reproach [rɪ'prout∫] (v.) 斥責

Antonio was the kindest man that lived, the best conditioned, and had the most unwearied spirit in doing courtesies; indeed, he was one in whom the ancient Roman honor more appeared than in any that drew breath in Italy. He was greatly beloved by all his fellow-citizens; but the friend who was nearest and dearest to his heart was Bassanio, a noble Venetian, who, having but a small patrimony⁸, had nearly exhausted his little fortune by living in too expensive a manner for his slender means, as young men of high rank with small fortunes are too apt to do. Whenever Bassanio wanted money, Antonio assisted him; and it seemed as if they had but one heart and one purse between them.

One day Bassanio came to Antonio, and told him that he wished to repair his fortune by a wealthy marriage with a lady whom he dearly loved, whose father, that was lately dead, had left her sole heiress to a large estate; and that in her father's lifetime he used to visit at her house, when he thought he had observed this lady had sometimes from her eyes sent speechless messages, that seemed to say he would be no unwelcome suitor; but not having money to furnish himself with an appearance befitting the lover of so rich an heiress, he besought Antonio to add to the many favors he had shown him, by lending him three thousand ducats.

⁸ patrimony ['pætrɪmouni] (n.) 祖產

⁹ ducat ['dʌkət] (n.) 舊時流通於歐洲、價值不一的金銀幣