

博士文丛（第三辑）

A Study of Artistic and
Cultural Expression of American Bildungsroman



美国成长小说 艺术与文化表达研究



孙胜忠 著

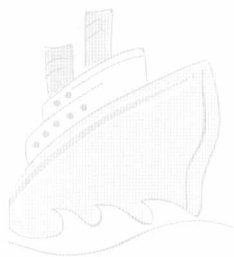
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All of those mentioned and unmentioned have combined to prove Goethe’s idea that “men, in spite of all their follies and confusions, may at last be guided by a *higher power* to some fortunate goal.”

fails to take place.

Perhaps transforming and reworking traditional forms characterizes part of the genius of the “modernist” writing of each age in general. One of the great strengths of American writers of the Bildungsroman such as Mark Twain, William Faulkner and J. D. Salinger is their ability to breathe new life into stock fictional forms. The ways in which the artists adhere to or depart from the Bildungsroman conventions generate our interest in the genre. This dissertation is meant to be an artistic and cultural critique of Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Faulkner’s “The Bear” and Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*, and accordingly a formulation of the main features of the American Bildungsroman. The research starts with the reflection on the following questions:

Are American novels of this kind the appropriations of the Bildungsroman tradition? If so, how do we account for Huckleberry Finn’s refusal to be accepted into the society, the impotent career of Isaac McCaslin, who seems to have learned something essential in the woods but fails in the society, or the tragedy of Holden Caulfield, who undergoes heartbreaking experiences in his wandering around New York but refuses to draw any conclusion? The answers to these questions entail an exploration of the relationship and the differences between the classical Bildungsroman and its American counterpart. But the answers, instead of bringing any conclusive end, will trigger off other questions: what is the social and historical milieu of the evolution of the genre and what are the cultural implications in the American Bildungsroman?

This study will wrestle with these questions, and, perhaps, may point to some possible answers. In so doing, the project will examine the origin and evolution of the genre and approach the three works in terms of the modes and features of Bildungsroman. In addition, the author will draw upon cultural and psychoanalytical

Abstract

Youth worship, or the cult of youth, has a history which can be traced back at least to the 18th century in Europe. Early in 1802, William Wordsworth wrote: "The child is father of the man," which entrenches childhood in a key position of man's development. It seems to be a response to the nineteenth-century belief in the importance of conditioning of childhood and interest in the psychology of the child that led to the popularity of Bildungsroman, the story of youths struggling for identity, maturation, and a place in society. But the Bildungsroman as a genre of novel originated in Germany, marked and highlighted especially by the publication of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, 1795 - 1796). It is regarded as the prototype of the genre today. Perhaps because Americans think of themselves as a youthful nation, their fiction has dealt preponderantly with youth, too. But if a cult of youth characterizes the nineteenth-century European fiction, America's own cult of youth extends into our own era. And if most traditional novels labeled as Bildungsroman consider an accommodation between the individual and the society an essential characteristic of the genre, many American apprenticeship novels doubt or deny the possibility of achieving a gratifying result. The story of a child's initiation into adulthood obviously has a large place in American fiction, but often, and just as obviously, something goes wrong: the initiation

theories, bearing in mind that a fictional character is more or less a case history, and that literature is to a certain extent the reflection of the culture and society from which it results, in the hope of enriching our understanding of the American apprenticeship novel and American society. The study is intended to bring together literary analysis and cultural observation. In accordance with the main features of Bildungsroman as a peculiar novel genre, the dissertation analyzes the three novels in great details concerning the theme, structure and characterization, etc. and makes clear the subtle differences among them. Based on the comments on specific novels, the paper further digs out the hidden cultural implications in them. Artistic and cultural analysis is used as the main means of research but the study is open to other approaches such as dialectical thinking, philosophical considerations, and psychoanalytical criticism which are used in the corresponding parts of the study.

So far, much criticism on the American maturation novels has focused on the European influence and on the persistent similarities between the European or classical Bildungsroman and the American apprenticeship novel. This study, hopefully, will break new ground by pointing to the profound differences between the classical or European and the American views of the maturing subject and the process of formation, and by initiating the formulation of the distinctly American features of the genre.

In accordance with the aims, the dissertation falls into two major parts, which are further divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 deals mainly with the origin and characteristics of the Bildungsroman, and makes a comparison between the classical Bildungsroman and its American counterpart, from which the attributes of American Bildungsroman stand out. It is to make theoretical preparations for the analyses of American apprenticeship novels. Detailed textual analysis follows in natural course. Chapters

2 to 4 focus on close interpretation of two novels and one novella. These three works roughly mirror the development of the American Bildungsroman and represent its three types or the three stages of the hero's growth. Twain's novel belongs to the genteel tradition, focusing on the expression of the agonized conscience and morality. The works of Faulkner and Salinger represent the new tradition of frankness and iconoclasm, with the former presenting an original, almost freakish character, and the latter describing a desperate and lost adolescent. Theory is based on practice. After the practical criticism of the three works, therefore, it is the task of Chapter 5 to analyze the three stages, taking the three separate works as a whole, with an intention to describe the process of youth's initiation into society as the authors see it, and the process in which the writers transform and rework the traditional forms with the passage of time, thus forming the ideas into something like a theory. It is believed that there must be something hidden under the appearance of the transformation, so the paper further probes into the motive forces of the development of the genre. The interrelationship between literature and society or culture is highlighted in such a novel genre as Bildungsroman, and therefore Chapter 6 is meant to explore the cultural implications in the novels. The dissertation is so structured that Chapter 1 and the last two chapters are intended to echo each other over a distance, and to be mutually complementary, with the former being the theoretical preparation and the latter conclusive examination of the application of the theories. The middle three chapters, forming a body of its own, are step-by-step textual examinations, which support the theoretical discussions before and after it with essential evidences on the one hand, and function as a bridge to connect them on the other. As usual, the study ends with a conclusion, which sums up the observations made in the earlier chapters and briefly surveys the late

twentieth-century novels of the genre. Based on these, it ventures a prophecy as to the future trends in the Bildungsroman.

The research shows that the Bildungsroman mainly deals with the idea of *Bildung*, or formation, cultivation, education, shaping of a single main character, normally a young man, who either moves in a direct line from error to truth, ending up with the realization of his selfhood and his assimilation into society, or develops in a circular path returning to the beginning of his search in the end or simply lost in uncertainty. It depends on the cultural goal or social milieu whether the novel emphasizes the adaptation or rebellion, accordingly the protagonist's reconciliation with the society or his alienation from it with a result of either his confusion or his renewed search in the world.

By comparative study in respects of theme, characterization and structure, the dissertation points out the main differences between the classical Bildungsroman and its American counterpart: the former presents the moral and spiritual development of a child from subjective pre-occupations to the affirmation of objective activities, concluding with the hero assimilating into society—a happy ending, while the latter narrates the story of a child pausing on the threshold of adulthood without finishing his initiation into life and the real world, staying out of society and usually walking to unknowable future—a tragic ending. The linear textual structure of the former shows a clear path of the hero's advancement toward a goal, whereas the circular textual structure of the latter deconstructs the presupposition of a definite attainable goal.

Based on the close reading of the three works, the dissertation concludes that they represent three kinds of initiation in the American Bildungsroman—the uncompleted initiation, the ritualistic initiation and the lost initiation. Accordingly, the artistic expression of the apprenticeship pattern unfolds on three tracks: the first one

on which the apprentice progresses from unawareness toward some consciousness, ready finally for another journey; the second one on which the hero, who is initiated into nature with noble but outdated values, walks from epiphany to escapism, immersed in the ancient morality while living in the modern world; the third one on which the protagonist, who cherishes his love for childhood and holds a hostile attitude to adulthood, encounters various hardships and failures, and is shocked finally into realizing the illusory nature of his idealism but loses the direction of progress.

In view of the belief that "the history of literature's cultural life is never the history of its establishment alone, but always too of its continual reestablishment in changing cultural position," the study delineates the cultural milieu of the evolution of the American Bildungsroman, and comes to the conclusion: the genteel tradition, the modernism as an international movement, Freudian psychology and some other modern theories, these cultural phenomena have altered the logic of the novel's structure and the protagonist's destiny in the story. Out of the realization that "literature will always in some manner reflect the state of society," the dissertation further explores the cultural expression in the American Bildungsroman—freedom, individualism, innocence, etc., the concepts or ideals always cherished by American people, and points out that all these concepts combined constitute the elusive but consistent American dream.

Through a brief survey of the late twentieth-century Bildungsroman, we find both the inheritance of the tradition and the evolution of the form, but innocence lost dominates the recent works of the genre. Even extreme reversal of the traditional symbols of innocence corrupted by experience can be found, which may indicate a new tendency in the development of the American apprenticeship novel towards anti-Bildungsroman.

By formulating the main features of the American Bildungsroman and analyzing the specimens in the project, this study is intended to combine theory with practice, to bring a Chinese critic's view into the Western discourse of Bildungsroman and finally to offer a frame of reference for the comparative study of the American Bildungsroman and the Chinese novels of this genre. The author is aware that it is a bold attempt and an ambitious plan, which risks failure, but as Goethe says, "man would often attempt something for which nature has denied him the capacity [...] yet it is possible that all his false steps lead him to something inestimably good."

Demanding and reckless as the project is, the author finds it a task that brings ample rewards.

Key words: Bildungsroman; American Bildungsroman; Mark Twain; Faulkner; Salinger

摘 要

青春膜拜在欧洲已有较长的历史。早在 1802 年华兹华斯 (William Wordsworth, 1770 - 1850) 就在诗中写道：“孩童乃成人之父。”这在一定意义上确立了孩童在人的成长过程中的关键地位。19 世纪的欧洲重视对儿童的熏陶和教化，人们对儿童的心理颇感兴趣，这或许是成长小说——关于儿童或青年渴望成熟、维护自身的独立性和努力争取社会地位的故事——在这一时期得以流行的原因之一。成长小说作为一种文学样式起源于德国，它至少可以追溯到歌德 (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1749 - 1832) 的小说《威廉·麦斯特的学习时代》(Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, 1795 - 96)。自此之后，它就成为了此类小说的典范之作。或许是因为美国人自以为他们属于一个年轻的国度，成长和青年主题在他们的小说中也占据着十分突出的地位。如果说青春膜拜是 19 世纪欧洲小说的特色，那么，美国人对青春的迷恋却一直延续到当代。然而，大多数打上了成长小说火漆印的传统小说都把个人和社会之间冲突的调和视为此类小说的基本特征，而我们的考察却发现许多美国成长小说怀疑或否定获取这种令人满意的结果的可能性。关于孩童步入成人阶段的故事显然已经成为美国文学的传统之一，但这些作品常常表现出这样一个引人注目的现象：儿童在进入成人社会的进程中失败了。

总的来说，改造和重构传统的文学形式或许部分地彰显了每个时代“现代”作家的天资和过人之处。像马克·吐温（Mark Twain）、福克纳（William Faulkner）和塞林格（J. D. Salinger）这样的美国成长小说作家其天赋和实力的一个方面就表现在他们能够做到“旧瓶装新酒”，把新鲜的生活内容注入传统的小说形式，使之焕发出时代的气息。艺术家们或坚持或背离成长小说传统的现象激起了我们对这一小说样式的兴趣。本书旨在对马克·吐温的《哈克贝里·费恩历险记》（*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 1883）、福克纳的《熊》（“The Bear”, 1942）和塞林格的《麦田里的守望者》（*The Catcher in the Rye*, 1951）进行艺术和文化批评并藉此阐述美国成长小说的主要特色和文化内涵。而这一研究的起点是基于对如下这些问题的思考：

美国成长小说是否照搬了传统成长小说的模式？如若是，我们将如何解释《哈克贝里·费恩历险记》中的哈克拒绝融入社会？《熊》中的艾萨克·麦卡斯林似乎在林中已掌握了基本的行为规范，而在社会中却难以立足，对他这种徒有满腔抱负而在现实面前又感到无能为力的现象又当如何理解？《麦田里的守望者》中的霍尔顿·考菲尔德经历了在纽约那刻骨铭心的游荡之后却拒绝对问题下任何结论，陷入了迷惘和绝望的境地。这种历险之后毫无所获的悲剧结局说明了什么？要回答这些问题就要考察经典成长小说和美国成长小说之间的联系和差异。但对这些问题的解答并不是本研究的终点，它将进一步引发对其它问题的思考：成长小说演变的社会和历史语境是什么？美国成长小说揭示了怎样的文化内涵？

本书将深入思考这些问题，并力图提出可能的解答。为了达到这一目的，作者将探讨成长小说的起源和演变过程，并根

据这一文学样式的模式和特点对上述三部小说进行评论。小说中的每一个人物都是一个个案；文学在一定程度上来说是对促使它生成的社会和文化的反映。基于这种认识，在研究中，我们将运用文化和心理批评等理论以期丰富我们对美国成长小说和美国社会的理解，加深对它们的认识。本书力图做到文学批评和文化考察相结合，依据成长小说这一奇特小说样式的特点，就三部小说的主题、结构和人物等基本构件进行探讨，并对它们之间的差异进行辨析。在对三部小说具体分析的基础上，挖掘隐藏在它们底层的文化意蕴。艺术和文化分析是本书的主要路径，但在具体研究中，对其它批评方法和思维方式，如辩证思维、哲学考量和心理分析等，都是敞开的，而不是闭合的，它们会根据需要在研究的相应部分有所体现。

迄今为止，有关美国成长小说的研究多半集中在欧洲对其产生的影响以及欧洲经典成长小说同美国成长小说之间的相似性的研究上。作者在书中试图开辟新的一隅之地，指出二者之间在成长主体及其成长过程等方面观念上的深刻差异，阐述这一小说样式典型的美国特征。

同研究目的相一致，本书在内容上主要有两大部分，在结构上细分为六章。第一章主要考察成长小说的缘起和特征，并对经典成长小说和美国成长小说进行对比研究，在对比中凸显出美国成长小说的品质。这一考察为下文对美国成长小说的具体评析提供了理论准备。以此为据，作者在第二至第四章自然地研究的视点转移到三部具有代表性的美国成长小说上。这三部作品大致勾勒出了美国成长小说的发展过程，代表了主人公成长的三种类型，或成长主体在走向成人世界历程中的三个阶段。马克·吐温的小说属于优雅传统，集中表现了成长主体备受折磨的道德和良心。福克纳和塞林格的小说代表着新传统

——直率、反偶像崇拜，前者再现了一个原初的、甚至有些怪异的人物，后者刻画了一个绝望和迷惘的少年。理论以实践为基础，在经过细致的文本分析之后，第五章的任务就是把这三部看起来分散、独立而实际上有着内在联系的作品视为一个整体，对三个阶段作综合分析。其目的在于描述创作主体眼中主人公的成长过程以及再现作家们是如何随着时间的推移改造和重构传统成长小说模式的。在这种改造的表层下必然隐藏着某种内在的东西，因此，作者将进一步揭示成长小说演变的动力。文学同社会和文化之间的关系在成长小说中表现得尤为明显，据此，本书的第六章旨在挖掘美国成长小说的文化蕴涵，以期增加研究的深度。作者对书的结构进行了精心的布局，第一章和第五、六两章遥相呼应、互为补充：前者是理论准备，后者是对理论运用的总结性考察。中间三章自成一体，是对文本渐进式的讨论，它既为其前后的理论探讨提供了必要的依据，又在二者之间起着桥梁和纽带的作用。依惯例，研究的最后部分是结论。该部分总结了前几章的考察和讨论并概括地评述了20世纪后半叶美国成长小说的发展情况，在此基础上，展望了此类小说的未来走向。

研究显示成长小说主要涉及成长、教化或教育等概念，描述一个主要人物，通常是少年或青年的成长过程。其成长的路径有两条：主人公要么沿着从错误走向真理的直线型方向发展，最终实现自我，融入社会；要么循着环状路线前进，最后回到探索的起点，或干脆迷失在不可知的状态中。文化追寻的目标或社会环境决定了小说是强调适应还是反叛，与此相对应的是两种结果：主人公要么与社会达成妥协，融入社会，要么脱离社会，开始新的探索征程或陷入迷惘、混乱之中。

通过对小说的主题、主人公和情节等方面的对比研究，作