

上海市高等学校教育高地建设项目

上海市教育委员会重点课程“英美文学”资助项目(KZ0805)



The Basics of English Short Stories
and
Appreciation of Selected Readings

英语短篇小说 常识与名作研读

丛书主编 / 蔡龙权 叶华年

本册主编 / 霍红宇 叶倩

主 审 / 叶华年



上海交通大学出版社
SHANGHAI JIAO TONG UNIVERSITY PRESS

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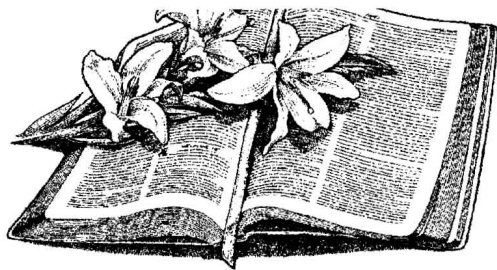
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内 容 提 要

本书是上海市高等学校教育高地建设项目,是为普通高校英语专业本科生编写的文学教材。本书共 20 章,分两大部分。第一部分为英语短篇小说结构要素分析,第二部分为当今西方通用的文学批评方法。每章除了基础理论的介绍,还有选文作者的介绍、相关评论、英文注释、思考问题及答案。本书可作为英语专业学生必修课和选修课教材之用,也可供英语爱好者提高文学修养之用。

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前言

本书是我国高校英语专业文学教材之一,可作英语专业学生必修课或选修课教材赏析,也可供业余英语爱好者阅读之用。短篇小说作为文学的重要组成部分,其内容直面人生,紧贴社会,其语言叙事写人,传情达意,富有活力。本书选编有代表性的当代英语短篇小说,旨在丰富和深化读者对英语世界的人生和社会的认识,增进文学修养和提高英语水平。

我国现有的高校英语专业文学教材多以年代或国别编写,在教学中又常以时代背景和内容主题为主。本书力求有所不同,从文学本体出发,在兼顾作品主题和内容分析评论的同时,着重讨论短篇小说的结构要素和文学批评的基本方法。这种编写方法遵循文学的自身规律,有一定的科学性和实用性,希望能与其他类型的教材共存并荣。

本书共 20 章,分两大部分。第一部分为英语短篇小说结构要素分析,第二部分为当今西方通用的文学批评方法,每部分各 10 章。每章各有中心,但彼此呼应相连,所选的 23 篇小说既体现所在章节的重点,又可联系其他章节进行讨论,从而使全书成为一有机整体。

每章内容包括:

基础理论:介绍某一结构要素或某一批评方法。

作者介绍:简要介绍作者生平、背景知识和选文概略。

相关评论:择要节选西方有关所选作品的评述。

作品选择:精选一至两篇与基础理论紧密相关的短篇小说。

英文注释:以英语专业高年级水平为基准,对所选作品中难解的单词、短语和句子予以英文注释,必要时辅以中文译文,目的在于扫除阅读障碍,以便专注于作品本身的分析讨论。

思考题:围绕作品的诸要素从多角度提问。读者也可根据个人阅读感受另提出问题进行探讨,以便更深刻、更全地领会欣赏作品。

附录内容为每章思考题的参考答案。文学作品的研读历来是见仁见智,百人百解。我们所选取的相关评论与我们对思考题所作的答案仅为一家之见,不求全面周到,只求提供垫脚石让学者思考有起点,教者发挥有余地。

本书是上海市高等学校教育高地建设项目、上海市教育委员会重点课程“英美文学”项目系列丛书之一,由蔡龙权和叶华年总体规划,叶华年主审,霍红宇编著 1~10 章及相关答案,叶倩编著 11~20 章及相关答案。在写作过程中,我们得到了上海师范大学外语学院的关心和支持,在此表示衷心的感谢;我们也参阅了众多书籍,皆一一列入了参考书目,以志谢意。

编者

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Part One

Basic Elements of English Short Stories

Chapter 1 Plot

Stories are based on life, but life as it is cannot be a story. For life to become a story, it needs to be clipped and shaped, and that is plotting. In “A & P” (present chapter) John Updike writes only about those events that suggest a basic conflict between conformity and independence, thus creating a plot by imposing order and unity on his material. **Plot** is not merely the sum total of events or their sequence. Rather it is the organizing principle that controls the order of events, the selecting, ordering, and arranging of incidents to bring out their importance, their relationship and their mutual dependence. To say that some girls in bathing suits walk into an A & P and that Sammy the clerk quits is to say only what happens. Actually the story has this pattern: The A & P excludes nonconformity. Sammy admires the nonconformity of Queenie and the other two girls who come into the A & P in bathing suits. The three girls are rebuffed by Lengel the manager. In protest Sammy decides to quit. To review a story's plot, therefore, is to say something about the connections between the events in the story. Because a well-plotted story presents such a focused and controlled segment of life, reading it offers us an insightful way of bringing order and meaning to our own life experiences.

The traditional plot follows with variations a basic design that may be visualized as a line, which gradually rises, reaches a high point, and then moves downward. Although this design may be varied, it usually manifests certain elements basic to most fictional plots: exposition, conflict, complication, crisis, climax and denouement.

Exposition refers to the opening portion of the story that sets the scene, introduces the main characters, tells what happened before the story opened, and provides any other background information that is needed for the reader to understand and care

情节并非事件及其发生顺序的简单叠加,而是一种组织原则,它通过筛选、布局和秩序的安排,来揭示一系列事件之间的关联,以凸显事件的重要性。

分析小说的情节,其实是分析小说中一系列事件之间的内在联系。一篇情节精彩的短篇小说展示的是一个集中的、精心设计的生活片段,可让读者对照自己更深刻地审视个人生活经历的意义和秩序。

传统短篇小说的情节多呈线性;情节逐步向前推进,渐趋高潮,达到转折点,然后回落。虚构的情节主要涉及以下几个基本要素:铺垫、冲突、复杂化或激化、危机、高潮、结局。

铺垫即为开场白,一个好的铺垫必定含有冲突的因子,如行动、思想、欲望和意志的冲突,这些冲突在叙述中先逐渐激化,最后得到解决。

about the events to follow.

A good exposition never fails to contain the seed or suggestion of a **conflict**, or a clash of actions, ideas, desires or wills that is intensified and then resolved during the narrative. Whether the story is about an attempt to get out of a punishment, about parents' frustrated efforts to discipline a recalcitrant child, or about the difficult decision on the choice of a career, at the heart of each lies a conflict. In fiction, as in real life, the conflict may be physical, mental, emotional or moral, and it may take three basic forms: man against man (some other person or group of persons), man against his environment (nature, society or fate), or man against himself (some element in his own nature).

When the characters are caught up in their situation and the conflict intensifies, the **rising action** begins, the **complication** occurs and the **crisis** develops until the conflict peaks at a moment of **climax**, the point of greatest intensity when the opposing forces interlock or reach a standstill and the outcome is to be decided.

The climax marks the turning point of the narrative. Afterwards the direction of the plot changes, the **falling action** begins and the **denouement** (resolution or conclusion) approaches. In the denouement the conflict between the opposing forces that have become entangled during the complication is settled, the loose narrative strands are tied up, and the story is brought to an end. A story may have a **happy ending**: the protagonist solves his problems, defeats the villain, wins the girl, and lives happily ever after. It may have an **unhappy ending** of frustration or defeat, causing the reader to brood over the results, to seek out the story's implication and to see deeper into life. A story may also have an indeterminate ending, or an **open ending**, one in which no definite conclusion is arrived at and no central conflict is resolved in favor of the protagonist or the antagonist.

Plot may vary in many ways, for example, lengthening or shortening any of the elements, introducing minor crises before the major one, planting exposition at various places in the narrative or even omitting it, and shifting the order of events. Events can indeed be presented in a variety of orders. A **chronological** arrangement begins with what happens first, then second, and

小说中的冲突如同人们现实生活中的冲突,其内容为人与人、人与自然或人与自我之间的冲突,其性质有肉体的、精神的、情感的区分,其形式为行为、思想、欲望或意志方面的较量。

高潮为冲突双方的力量由僵持转化为此消彼长,情节出现转折点。若主角得胜,则故事以喜剧收尾;若主角受挫,故事即以悲剧告终;若冲突双方各有胜负,矛盾未得最终解决,故事的结局便是开放性的。

故事情节的发展可采取多种形式:按时间顺序由头讲到尾的为顺叙;由结局逆向追溯到源头的为倒叙;在故事的中间开花,然后同时向故事的头、尾推进情节的是直入本题的叙述。

so on, until the last incident is related. Some stories begin at the end and then lead up to why and how events worked out as they did. Stories can also begin **in medias res** (Latin, “in the midst of things”), first presenting some exciting or significant moment, then filling what happened earlier while pushing forward toward the end. In some stories the writer moves back and forth between the past and the present frequently or rapidly to provide information that leads up to the final startling moment, as William Faulkner does in “A Rose for Emily” (Chapter 1).

让情节有所变化的叙述手段还有闪回、回想、伏笔、悬念、意外结局等等。

A frequent variation from the basic plot structure is the flashback, the presenting of scenes which took place prior to the time of narrative, or the **retrospect**, a scene relived in a character’s memory. Another familiar device for restructuring time is the **frame**, which presents a story from the past within a framework of the present-day events. **Foreshadowing** is a variation to induce the reader’s anticipation by hinting subtly at the events to come later in the story. **Suspense** is a device that makes the reader ask “What’s going to happen next?” or “How does this turn out?” and impels him to read on to find answers to these questions. Suspense is the greatest when the reader’s curiosity is combined with anxiety about the fate of some sympathetic character. Closely related with the element of suspense in a short story is the element of surprise. The **surprise** is proportional to the unexpectedness of what happens; it becomes pronounced when the story departs radically from our expectation. In the short story such radical departure is more often found in a surprise ending: one that reveals a sudden new turn or twist, as is often found in O. Henry’s short stories.

Reading a story for its plot should not be considered a mere matter of reading only to discover what occurs. Instead, reading with the plot in mind should involve an appreciation of the craftsmanship used to put the story together. E. M. Forster made a helpful distinction between story and plot. A story is “a narrative of events in their time-sequence. A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality.” A story arouses only curiosity; a plot demands intelligence and memory. Thus plotting is the process of converting story into plot, of

情节安排是在叙述时对故事

中所发生的事件进行组合和编排以突出它们间的因果关系与意义。阅读小说只急于知道发生了什么事是浅度阅读,而着眼于赏析情节安排的巧妙手法、挖掘故事的隐含意义则是更有收益的深度阅读。

changing a chronological arrangement of incidents into a causal and inevitable arrangement. We study the plot to appreciate how the reversal is suggested by the sequences of events and their complication; how the denouement fulfills the foreshadowing of the exposition; how the ending, whether happy or not, grows logically and inevitably out of the story's beginning and middle. By studying the architectural design of a plot, we come to appreciate the form, harmony, and beauty of the story's artistic construction.

John Updike (1932-2009)

Updike was born in Shillington, Pennsylvania, and spent his first years in a small town where his father was a high school science teacher. His mother, an inspiring writer, encouraged him to write and draw. So he launched himself as a cartoonist for the *Harvard Lampoon* during his college years and for a year after graduation studied drawing in England. Soon after this he joined the staff of *The New Yorker* and served the magazine in a number of capacities until 1957; he continued to contribute verse, reviews, and fiction to its pages later on. His fiction is often topical—people trapped in American fads and prejudices figure often in his most characteristic writing.

His first novel, *The Poorhouse Fair*, was well-received in 1958. With the support from the Guggenheim Fellowship, Updike undertook a more ambitious novel, *Rabbit, Run* (1960). It introduced one of Updike's most memorable characters, the small-town athlete, Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom. In 1968, Updike's novel *Couples* created a national sensation with its portrayal of the complicated relationships among a set of young married couples in the suburbs. It remained on the best-seller lists for over a year. In *Bech: A Book* (1970), Updike introduced a new protagonist, the imaginary novelist Henry Bech, who, like Rabbit Angstrom, was destined to reappear in *Bech is Back* (1983). Rabbit Angstrom reappeared in *Rabbit Redux* (1971), *Rabbit is Rich* (1981), which received numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and *Rabbit at Rest* (1990).

"A & P", set in an A & P supermarket in a town north of Boston, is about a young man's struggle with morality, authority, and for freedom. The girls who enter the A & P only in bathing suits provoke Sammy's wandering imagination, longing for freedom and desire for a change in his mundane daily activities. As the plot unfolds, Sammy transforms from a thoughtless and sexist boy to a young man who can make a decision, even though it might hurt him.

Related Comments

John Updike's most anthologized short story, "A & P", chronicles the protagonist's seemingly impulsive decision to quit his job at the local supermarket. On the basis of Sammy's forceful stand against his boss Mr. Lengel, who nearly kicks three girls out of the A & P for failing to comply with the "no shirt, no shoes, no service" rule, the established critical stance has placed Sammy in the position of "hero". Although classifying Sammy as a hero is understandable, since he views himself as one, critics have failed to adequately consider the fact that he is also **the narrator** through whose limited point of view the story is told. Thus, he reveals much about the impetus behind his resignation when he describes the events prompting his decision to quit.

In "John Updike's 'A & P': A Return Visit to Araby", Walter Wells correctly recognizes that Sammy is frustrated. But the source of Sammy's frustration eludes Wells; he attributes it to Sammy's "infatuation with a beautiful but inaccessible girl". The text suggests, however, that Sammy is not frustrated because he cannot woo Queenie but because of the length of time he has been working at the supermarket. Sammy wishes to quit, but his parents would regard it as "the sad part of the story". Therefore, he must remain an employee until he can justify his quitting. Though masking his actions as chivalry, Sammy uses the girls, for they act as catalysts that precipitate his well-considered decision to resign.

As the girls enter the store, Sammy solely views them as sex objects. He goes from noticing how little the girls are wearing, to what they are not wearing, to finally focusing on their bare skin. By privileging the girls' skin over their clothing, Sammy indicates that his main interest lies in their bodies and not in their right to wear bathing suits in the supermarket. By drawing a parallel between the store's commodities and the girls, Sammy suggests that they, like the commodities, are merely objects to be observed, handled, and used.

Once the disagreement between Lengel and the girls commences, he has begun to realize that the incident offers him the perfect opportunity to free himself from his dead-end job. Sammy should not be regarded as a hero, but rather as a young man who takes full advantage of an opportunity to free himself from the responsibility-filled life that he desperately wants to avoid.

(Excerpted/adapted from;

Corey Evan Thompson, *Explicator* (59:4) 2001, 215-16.

<<http://www.csus.edu/englishta/TA/.../FormalWriting/formalpaper3.doc>>)

A & P¹

In walks these three girls in nothing but bathing suits. I'm in the third check-out slot,² with my back to the door, so I don't see them until they're over by the bread. The one that caught my eye first was the one in the plaid green two-piece.³ She was a chunky kid, with a good tan⁴ and a sweet broad soft-looking can with those two crescents of white⁵ just under it, where the sun never seems to hit, at the top of the backs of her legs. I stood there with my hand on a box of HiHo crackers⁶ trying to remember if I rang it up or not. I ring it up again and the customer starts giving me hell.⁷ She's one of these cash-register-watchers,⁸ a witch about fifty with rouge on her cheekbones and no eyebrows, and I know it made her day to trip me up.⁹ She'd been watching cash registers forty years and probably never seen a mistake before.

By the time I got her feathers smoothed¹⁰ and her goodies¹¹ into a bag—she gives me a little snort¹² in passing, if she'd been born at the right time they would have burned her over in Salem¹³—by the time I get her on her way the girls had circled around the bread and were coming back, without a pushcart, back my way along the counters, in the aisle between the check-outs and the Special bins.¹⁴ They didn't even have shoes on. There was this chunky one, with the two-piece—it was bright green and the seams on the bra were still sharp and her belly was still pretty pale so I guessed she just got it (the suit)—there was this one, with one of those chubby berry-faces,¹⁵ the lips all bunched together under her nose, this one, and a tall one, with black hair that hadn't quite frizzed right, and one of these sunburns right across under the eyes, and a chin that was too long—you know, the kind of girl other girls think is very “striking” and “attractive” but never quite makes it, as they very well know, which is why they like her so much—and then the third one, that wasn't quite so tall. She was the queen. She kind of led them, the other two peeking around and making their shoulders round. She didn't look around, not this queen, she just walked straight on slowly, on these long white primadonna¹⁶ legs. She came down a little hard on her heels, as if she didn't walk in her bare feet that much, putting down her heels and then letting the weight move along to her toes as if she was testing the floor with every step, putting a little deliberate extra action into it. You never know for sure how girls' minds work (do you really think it's a mind in there or just a little buzz like a bee in a glass jar?) but you got the idea she had talked the other two into coming in here with her, and now she was showing them how to do it, walk slow and hold yourself straight.

She had on a kind of dirty-pink¹⁷—beige maybe, I don't know—bathing suit with a little nubble all over it and, what got me, the straps were down. They were off her shoulders looped loose around the cool tops of her arms, and I guess as a result the suit

had slipped a little on her, so all around the top of the cloth there was this shining rim. If it hadn't been there you wouldn't have known there could have been anything whiter than those shoulders. With the straps pushed off, there was nothing between the top of the suit and the top of her head except just *her*, this clean bare plane of the top of her chest down from the shoulder bones like a dented sheet of metal tilted in the light. I mean, it was more than pretty.

She had sort of oaky hair that the sun and salt had bleached, done up in a bun that was unravelling, and a kind of prim face. Walking into the A & P with your straps down, I suppose it's the only kind of face you can have. She held her head so high her neck, coming up out of those white shoulders, looked kind of stretched, but I didn't mind. The longer her neck was, the more of her there was.

She must have felt in the corner of her eye me and over my shoulder Stokesie in the second slot watching, but she didn't tip.¹⁸ Not this queen. She kept her eyes moving across the racks, and stopped, and turned so slow it made my stomach rub the inside of my apron, and buzzed¹⁹ to the other two, who kind of huddled against her for relief, and they all three of them went up the cat-and-dog-food-breakfast-cereal-macaroni-rice-raisins-seasonings-spreads-spaghetti-soft-drinks-crackers-and-cookies aisle. From the third slot I look straight up this aisle to the meat counter, and I watched them all the way. The fat one with the tan sort of fumbled with the cookies, but on second thought she put the packages back. The sheep²⁰ pushing their carts down the aisle—the girls were walking against the usual traffic (not that we have one-way signs or anything)—were pretty hilarious. You could see them, when Queenie's white shoulders dawned on them, kind of jerk, or hop, or hiccup, but their eyes snapped back to their own baskets and on they pushed. I bet you could set off dynamite in an A & P and the people would by and large keep reaching and checking oatmeal off their lists and muttering "Let me see, there was a third thing, began with A, asparagus,²¹ no, ah, yes, applesauce!" or whatever it is they do mutter. But there was no doubt, this jiggled them. A few house-slaves in pin curlers²² even looked around after pushing their carts past to make sure what they had seen was correct.

You know, it's one thing to have a girl in a bathing suit down on the beach, where what with the glare nobody can look at each other much anyway, and another thing in the cool of the A & P, under the fluorescent lights, against all those stacked packages, with her feet paddling along naked over our checkerboard green-and-cream rubber-tile floor.

"Oh Daddy," Stokesie said beside me. "I feel so faint."

"Darling," I said. "Hold me tight." Stokesie's married, with two babies chalked up on his fuselage already,²³ but as far as I can tell that's the only difference. He's twenty-two, and I was nineteen this April.