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Contemporary British Literature:
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前 言

第二次世界大战结束后，世界进入新型的权力格局，英国逐渐失去了往日的帝国辉煌。前殖民地国家在二战后独立浪潮的影响下纷纷宣布脱离英国，建立独立政权，曾经的日不落帝国不复存在。1997年香港回归中国，标志着英国失去了最后一个殖民地。英国的衰落波及其文化领域。英国文学在战后发生了一些变化。它失去了乔伊斯、伍尔夫这样具有国际影响的作家，失去了它昔日的大气与光辉。在 20 世纪六七十年代，英国文坛和欧美文坛一样，后现代主义盛行，刮起反叛现实主义之风，耸人听闻地宣布，“文学已经枯竭”。英国评论界也说，“英国小说在二十世纪六七十年代已死”。

在 20 世纪 80 年代，英国文坛涌现出一大批创作力强而又才华横溢的年轻作家。其中，来自英联邦国家的作家以及移民作家的出现在复苏英国文学的潮流中起到了至关重要的作用。萨尔曼·拉什迪、哈尼夫·库雷西、V. S. 奈保尔、石黑一雄、卡里尔·菲利普斯、本·奥克里、钦努阿·阿契贝、蒂莫西·莫、扎迪·史密斯等都是当代英国多元文化小说最具代表性的作家，他们将族裔文学的概念首次引入英国文学史中。

目前国内读者对于英国文学的认知大多停留在维多利亚时期以及 20 世纪初的文豪，谈到狄更斯、勃朗特姐妹、哈代、乔伊斯、伍尔夫等作家的作品可谓如数家珍。然而，论及二战后的作家时，很多人可能会立即想到 2001 年以来四位荣膺诺贝尔文学奖的作家奈保尔、库切、品特及莱辛，但是对于二战后出生的作家就知之甚少了。针对于学界对当代英国作家的研究的重视不足的状况，笔者在南开大学攻读博士学位期间深受导师常耀信教授的教诲，以当代英国族裔作家为博

士论文的研究对象，旨在向学界及读者推介英国新生代作家。

本书脱胎于作者的博士论文，选取三位 20 世纪 50 年代出生的作家作为研究重点：石黑一雄（1954—），卡里尔·菲利普斯（1958—）与本·奥克里（1959—）。之所以选择这三位作家并不仅仅是因为他们都出生于二战后，更多地是因为他们拥有亚洲、非洲及拉丁美洲的文化背景，对于当代的多元文化身份及全球化现象的理解更为深刻。最根本的原因在于三位作家具有强烈的历史意识与社会责任感，大部分作品都围绕着历史问题而展开，在揭露历史暴行、抨击制度的残忍的同时也在探讨人性的纯良与美好。比较难得的是三位作家的历史叙事中都暗含了对当代多元文化身份的思考，他们以历史为基点，着眼于现在与未来。

本书通过对三位作家的主要作品的解读透视族裔作家在表现主题及写作手法等方面的主要特征，分析三位来自于不同文化背景的作家如何再现历史事件，如何从区别于西方主流文学的角度重构历史，如何将历史与叙事融合在一起，如何通过历史叙事折射当下的生活与现实。

全书的主体由五个章节组成。前三章的框架比较类似，每一章都是对单个作家的纵向研究。三个章节首先简明扼要地介绍了主要历史事件，然后阐述作品中对历史背景的描述，突出作家的历史意识。随后对每个作家的代表性作品逐一进行深入细致的文本分析，揭示历史事件对于个体的身体及心理影响。后两章则是对三位作家进行横向比较，从相同的话题切入总结三位来自于不同文化背景的作家表现历史与关注当下生活的异同。

第一章讨论日裔作家石黑一雄的历史意识。石黑一雄有四部作品围绕着二战历史展开，主要涉及了美国在长崎投射原子弹的事件、淞沪会战以及战后大英帝国的衰落。这些事件在作品中都通过主人公的回忆得以再现，石黑一雄将历史片段与主人公的个人经历非常巧妙地融合在一起，表明个体命运与时代背景的密不可分，描述战争给人们带来的难以言说的心理创伤。石黑一雄的主人公在记忆与现实中穿梭，

在回忆中反思自己以往的过失，重新审视自己的人生经历，所以石黑一雄的作品中往往充满了感伤、忧郁与失落的情绪。但是这些人物都能在自责与忏悔中重新界定自我，重新面对现实与未来。石黑一雄希望通过主人公的怀旧心理表达自我反省对个体生活的必要性与历史意识对社会发展的必要性。

第二章分析加勒比海移民作家卡里尔·菲利普斯的历史意识。菲利普斯完成于20世纪末的六部小说均是历史题材：奴隶贸易、二战中的屠犹事件与战后加勒比海人民的移民经历。菲利普斯的小说大多以碎片式的叙述表现奴隶贸易与大屠杀这些惨无人道的历史事件对黑人与犹太人的摧残，致使他们的生活支离破碎，使他们的心理承受着无尽的痛楚，也使得他们不得不远离故土，而长期处于流散、漂泊的状态中。在有关奴隶贸易的小说中，菲利普斯试图以全景式的描述揭示横跨大西洋的奴隶贸易对于黑人奴隶、白人奴隶贩卖者及种植园主的影响，抨击奴隶制度的残暴。他在对大屠杀事件的描写中将犹太人与黑人的创伤历史并置，认为这两个民族同为种族主义的最大受害者，所以他们在情感上对彼此的遭遇互为移情。在记录加勒比海人民的移民经历的小说中，菲利普斯探讨了二战后欧洲对外来移民的排斥、前殖民地与宗主国之间的关系以及独立后的加勒比海岛国与美国的关系等主题。菲利普斯希望通过他对历史事件的重现，能唤醒已经陷于历史失忆状态的人们对历史的尊重。唯有了解历史，人们才会认知现在，把握未来的方向。

第三章阐述长期旅居英国的尼日利亚作家本·奥克里的历史意识。长达几个世纪的奴隶贸易与英国对尼日利亚的殖民统治严重摧毁了尼日利亚的经济基础，使其人民饱受饥饿之苦。而尼日利亚本身是一个拥有多个民族、多种语言、多种宗教信仰的国家。其复杂的社会构成造成了地区之间、党派之间与部族之间的纷争不断，使得尼日利亚在独立后的几十年中都无法建立一个长期稳定的政府，党派与部落冲突在尼日利亚内战中发展到最激烈的程度。

奥克里的作品大多以魔幻现实主义的手法表现尼日利亚近代史

上的动荡与混乱的社会状态，如描写尼日利亚独立时期及内战时期的历史。在表现尼日利亚人民的贫穷而混乱的生活时，奥克里认为现实主义的手法显得苍白无力，所以他加入了魔幻元素，将鬼魅与幽灵带入了城市贫民窟的生活中。奥克里的魔幻现实主义手法在阿扎罗三部曲中得到最完美的展现。

第四章从小说中主要人物的身份的角度展开分析，发现三位作家在重构历史事件时将视角集中在了边缘群体的经历。本章主要以后殖民主义关于“他者”的理论为基础，分析三位作家对于西方主流文学有关“他者”叙述的颠覆与纠正。石黑一雄小说中体现了西方人对以日本与中国为代表的东方人的误解，西方人眼中的“东方野蛮人”形象完全是西方文化霸权意识的产物。小说中也集中描述了日本女性及英国女性为性别身份所困扰，在男权主义的压抑下无法获得自我实现的痛苦。菲利普斯作品中的黑人完全颠覆了西方主流文学中对黑人形象的类型化塑造。每个黑人主人公都具有鲜明的个性特点，亦都表现出隐忍、克制、内省、坚强、智慧与善良的人格魅力，而与之相对应的白人奴隶贩卖者与种植园主却大多是冲动、冷漠、无情的野蛮人物。菲利普斯笔下的女性人物形象众多，虽然她们各自的遭遇不同，但大多数女性人物在面对挫折与灾难时都展示出坚韧勇敢的一面，敢于挑战男权的压制，竭力追求自主的生活。奥克里的小说重点塑造了城市贫民与劳动妇女的形象。通过他们在尼日利亚独立前的经历揭示了统治阶级掩盖了工人阶级在尼日利亚民族解放的斗争中所做出的贡献的事实。奥克里对工人阶级的解析非常深刻，他在作品中不仅展现了工人阶级的疾苦，也指出了他们自身存在的弱点与局限性。奥克里对妇女解放的观点比较矛盾。他一方面同情女性、赞美女性的仁爱与勤劳善良；另一方面却又惧怕女权对男权的挑战。这种矛盾心理主要体现于他在阿扎罗三部曲中对科托夫人的矛盾形象的刻画中。

第五章结合作家个人的经历，阐释他们对当代多元文化生活及全球化现象的看法以及他们如何在历史叙事中表现当下的全球化现象。石黑一雄、菲利普斯自小跟随父母移民到英国，奥克里在童年时代曾

在英国生活，成年后长期旅居英国。三位作家都具有多种文化背景，都在不同程度上体会到英国的种族歧视。在与英国文化融合的过程中，他们始终没有抛弃自己的民族文化与身份，而且都认为在当今全球化的影响下，国际间的人员流动已成为趋势，置身于多元文化背景下的人们需要重新定义自己的文化身份，打破狭隘的文化地域的概念，建立起一种异质的流动的文化身份。当自己“无家可归”时，便是处处为家。这种新型的多元文化身份在三个作家的作品中通过三种人物形象得以体现：石黑一雄的“孤儿”形象，菲利普斯的“渡河人”形象，以及奥克里的“阿比库”（“灵童”）形象。三种形象都是在历史叙事中塑造出来的，刻上了历史的痕迹，但是他们的形象又都具有了当下的时代标签。他们都是跨界者，可以作为 21 世纪全球化语境中跨文化的代言人。

总之，三位作家在其作品中充分展示了他们强烈的历史意识，但是他们又都不局限于历史事件的简单重现。他们从边缘群体的角度审视历史事件对他们的影响，让那些被西方主流意识所压制和曲解的人们发出自己的声音，为读者还原历史的原貌。同时他们也在历史叙事中映射着当下与未来的生活，提醒新世纪的人们以古为鉴、以史为镜才能知晓兴替，才能更好地筹划未来。

书中观点乃笔者的一家之言，文学作品的魅力就在于它是一种开放式的语言符号体系，在给予读者阅读的乐趣、情操的培养及心智的启迪之外，亦能令读者全凭个人的兴趣与感知对作品进行个性化解读，于此才会有文学批评的百家争鸣。希望笔者的拙劣之见能对部分读者有所裨益。笔者亦会对类似选题加以深入研究，尽可能对当代英国族裔文学进行更为全面的展现。

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2014年10月

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Abstract

The end of the Second World War saw the restructuring of world power, with Britain having lost her superpower status and its imperial glory. Under the influence of the post-war movements of independence, former British colonies demanded independence and became sovereign states. As a result, the international territory of the British Empire shrank dramatically and Britain ceased to be the empire on which the sun never set. In 1997, Britain lost its last colony when Hongkong returned to China.

The decline of Britain's influence in world affairs has greatly affected her cultural and literary milieu. Post-war British literature went through some changes. With the pioneering writers like Joyce and Woolf no longer on the scene, British literature lost its international outlook. One other major feature of the change was seen in the pronouncement of some critics and writers in the 1960s and the 1970s regarding "the death of the novel" (Childs 1). Such a claim corresponded with the widespread view on the post-war literary scene across the Atlantic. When postmodernism gradually replaced realism as the predominating style, many people felt the loss of real literature. Of course, there was some form of rethinking and adjustment that took time, and soon the field of British fiction dazzled the reading public with its new outlook.

British literature entered a new phase in the 1980s, with many talented and promising young writers publishing a large number of first-class novels. Among these new-rising writers, the writers from the commonwealth countries and immigrant writers have played a pivotal role in reinvigorating British literature. Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, V.S.

Naipaul, Kazuo Ishiguro, Caryl Phillips, Ben Okri, Chinua Achebe, Timothy Mo, and Zadie Smith are the representatives of the multicultural writers, and they introduced a new concept of ethnic literature into the history of British literature. This book focuses on the study of three multicultural writers who were born in the 1950s: Kazuo Ishiguro (1954-), Caryl Phillips (1958-) and Ben Okri (1959-) and makes a comparative analysis of their representative works to reveal the thematic and stylistic similarities and differences between them. The book selects the historical novels of the three writers as the research topic and aims to illustrate how they represent historical events in literature, how their representation differs from the mainstream representation, how they incorporate history into fictional narratives, and how their historical narratives reflect the contemporary life and reality and portend future life.

The body of the book consists of five chapters. The framework of the first three chapters is roughly the same: each chapter is dedicated to the study of one individual writer. It first introduces briefly some facts on historical events, then explains the fictional description of the historical backgrounds to illustrate each writer's historical consciousness, and makes a detailed textual analysis on each writer's representative works to reveal the physical and psychological impacts of those dark events on individuals. The last two chapters offer a comparative study of the three writers. With a common topic as the thread, each chapter compares how the three writers from different cultural backgrounds represent history and how they link history with the present and the future.

Chapter One discusses the historical consciousness of the Japanese-British writer Kazuo Ishiguro in four of his novels concerning the Second World War, mainly American atomic bombing in Nagasaki, Shanghai Battle and the post-war decline of the British Empire. These historical events come to the foreground through the protagonist's recollection. Ishiguro ingeniously incorporates the historical episodes into

the individual experiences to show the interrelatedness between personal life and its social context and depict the nondescript psychological trauma of the war in each character. Ishigurian protagonists are caught in their mental shuffling between the past and the present. They examine their past misdeeds in their recollections and reevaluate their life experiences. Therefore, the sense of grief, melancholy and loss permeates his fiction. Fortunately, these protagonists are able to redefine their self after introspection and confession and confront the reality and the future life with courage and hope. Through the protagonists' nostalgic reminiscences, Ishiguro attempts to reveal the need for self-examination for individual life and the need for historical awareness for social development.

Chapter Two analyzes the historical consciousness of the Caribbean-British writer Caryl Phillips in his six novels, written before 2000, all centering on some historical events: the slave trade, the Holocaust and the post-war Caribbean immigration. Most of Phillips's fiction employs fragmented narratives to reflect the great damage that the inhumane slave trade and the Holocaust have done to the blacks and the Jews, disrupting their lives, imposing unbearable pains on their minds, uprooting them from their native soils and placing them in exile. In his novels on the slave trade, Phillips tries to present a panoramic view of the transatlantic trade and expose its impact on the black slaves, the white slave traders and plantation owners and vehemently attacks the cruelty of slavery. In his writings about the Holocaust, Phillips juxtaposes the traumatic black history and Jewish history to illustrate that the two peoples feel empathic with each other on account of their similar victimization by European racism. The two novels concerning Caribbean immigration explore the European xenophobia in the face of immigrants, the relationships between the former colonies and their "mother" country, between the independent island states and the United States of America. Phillips hopes that his historical novels can help people combat historical

amnesia and awaken people's respect for history. Only with the knowledge of history in mind can people understand the present and know where we are going in the future.

Chapter Three explains the historical consciousness of Nigerian expatriate writer in Britain, Ben Okri, whose fiction mainly reveals the chaos and confusion in the contemporary history of Nigeria: the pre-independence days of Nigeria and the Nigerian Civil War. Centuries' slave trade and British colonial rule have severely damaged Nigerian economy and made her people suffer the pains of poverty. Besides, the complex social composite structure of Nigeria as a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious nation leads to the constant regional, tribal and political strife, and in consequence, Nigeria has failed to establish a stable powerful government in the decades following her independence. The political and tribal conflicts culminated in the Nigerian Civil War.

Most of Okri's novels can be termed as works of magical realism. Okri feels that realism alone is no longer enough for him to describe such an impoverished and chaotic life as facing Nigeria. So he adds magical elements in his writings, bringing ghosts and spirits into the portrayal of urban Nigerian ghetto life. Magical realism is most evidently and perfectly employed in his Azaro trilogy.

Chapter Four explores the three writers' unanimous concern about the marginalized people's experiences in their representation of history. This chapter applies the postcolonial theory on the "Other" in the analysis of the three writers' subversion and revision of the Western mainstream writing about the "Other." Ishiguro touches upon the issue of Western misunderstanding of the Oriental people such as the Japanese and the Chinese and challenges the notion of the so-called "Oriental savagery," which originated from the Western concept of cultural hegemony. He also depicts the frustration of the Japanese and the British women about their

gender identity and their agonies over their futile efforts at self-fulfillment because of the male oppression.

The image of the black people in Phillips's fiction completely undermines the stereotypical black image in Western mainstream literature. Each black character shows his or her distinctive personality, and as a people they all possess the beautiful qualities as forbearance, restraint, introspection, perseverance, wisdom and kindness. By contrast, the white slave traders and plantation owners are mostly impulsive, indifferent, merciless and violent. Another group of impressive character Phillips creates is the female characters. Though they have encountered different misfortunes in their lives, most of the female characters confront their hardships and disasters with courage, challenge patriarchal institutions, and strive to pursue a self-reliant life.

Okri focuses on the characterization of the urban ghetto people and working women. By describing their experiences in the pre-independence days, Okri brings to light the contribution of the working class to Nigerian independence, which has been ignored by the ruling class. In his fiction, Okri not only expresses his sympathy for the anguish and agonies of the working class people but also points out their weaknesses and limitations. Okri's attitude toward female liberation is ambivalent. On the one hand, he is compassionate about women's suppressed life, and praises women's benevolence, perseverance and kindness. On the other hand, he is worried about the female challenge to the male authority. His conflicting mind on women can be seen in his contradictory characterization of Madame Koto in the Azaro trilogy.

Chapter Five offers some biographical information on the three writers' multicultural experiences and examines how they view the contemporary trend of globalization and the accompanying multicultural life and how they reflect it in their historical narratives. Ishiguro and Phillips immigrated to Britain in their childhood, and Okri spent his

childhood in Britain and then resettled down there after he came of age. The three writers all have experienced different cultures and have suffered to different extents racial discrimination in Britain. In the process of integrating themselves into British culture, they never give up their own native culture and their original cultural identity. They all think that when the phenomenon of globalization has made international migration an inevitable fact, those people with multicultural backgrounds should redefine their cultural identity. They should forsake the notion of the clear-cut cultural territory and build a heterogeneous and fluid cultural identity. When one is “homeless,” one can make everywhere a home. This kind of new cultural identity is represented in the three images in their fictions: Ishiguro’s image of the “orphan,” Phillips’s image of the “river-crosser” and Okri’s “abiku” (the “spirit child”). The three images bear some historical traces in them since they are created out of historical narratives, but the fluid nature of their identity speaks for contemporary life. They are all border-crossers, and can serve as the spokespersons of the cross-cultural life in the twenty-first century.

In conclusion, Ishiguro, Phillips and Okri are all writers with a strong historical awareness. They do not, nonetheless, confine their writings to the mechanical representation of historical events. They reexamine history from the perspective of the marginalized people and illustrate how they are affected by history and give voice to the people who have been subjugated, silenced and misrepresented by the Western mainstream culture. Thus they display to the reader a new picture and a new version of history. At the same time, they orient their historical narratives toward the present and the future life, and remind people that history should serve as a mirror and a guide for a better future.