

★ THE ★
AMERICAN
★ NOVEL ★

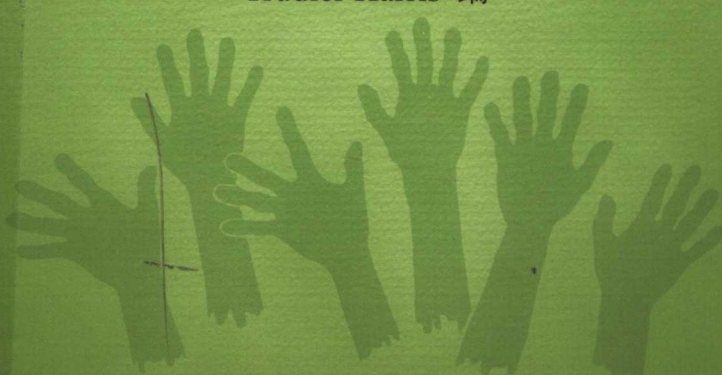
剑桥美国小说新论·3
(英文影印版)

New Essays on

*Go Tell it on
the Mountain*

《向苍天呼吁》新论

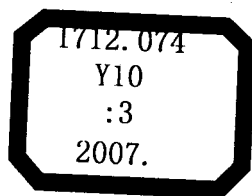
Trudier Harris 编



北京大学出版社
PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESS

★ THE ★
AMERICAN
★ NOVEL ★

剑桥美国小说新论 · 3



New Essays on

*Go Tell it on
the Mountain*

《向苍天呼吁》新论

Trudier Harris 编

 **CAMBRIDGE**
UNIVERSITY PRESS



北京大学出版社
PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESS

著作权合同登记 图字: 01-2006-7205 号

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

《向苍天呼吁》新论 = *New Essays on Go Tell It on the Mountain* / 哈里斯(Harris, T.)编. —北京: 北京大学出版社, 2007.1

(剑桥美国小说新论·3)

ISBN 978-7-301-11385-1

I. 向… II. 哈… III. 长篇小说-文学研究-美国-现代-英文
IV. I712.074

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2006)第152256号

Originally published by Cambridge University Press in 1996

This reprint edition is published with the permission of the Syndicate of the Press of the University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England.

THIS EDITION IS LICENSED FOR DISTRIBUTION AND SALE IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ONLY, EXCLUDING HONG KONG, TAIWAN AND MACAO AND MAY NOT BE DISTRIBUTED AND SOLD ELSEWHERE.

书 名: *New Essays on Go Tell It on the Mountain*

《向苍天呼吁》新论

著作责任者: Trudier Harris 编

组稿编辑: 张冰

责任编辑: 刘强

标准书号: ISBN 978-7-301-11385-1/I·0856

出版发行: 北京大学出版社

地 址: 北京市海淀区成府路205号 100871

网 址: <http://www.pup.cn>

电 话: 邮购部 62752015 发行部 62750672

编辑部 62767347 出版部 62754962

电子邮箱: zbing@pup.pku.edu.cn

印刷者: 三河市新世纪印务有限公司

经 销 者: 新华书店

650毫米×980毫米 16开本 10.75印张 176千字

2007年1月第1版 2007年1月第1次印刷

定 价: 20.00元

未经许可, 不得以任何方式复制或抄袭本书之部分或全部内容。

版权所有, 侵权必究 举报电话: 010-62752024

电子邮箱: fd@pup.pku.edu.cn

导 读

北京大学英语系教授 陶洁

近年来,美国文学在我国很受欢迎。大专院校英语系纷纷开设美国文学选读和专题课,学生从中学到的大部分内容是美国小说。不仅如此,在本科毕业论文、硕士论文或博士论文方面,学生所选题材也大多为关于某部美国小说或某个美国小说家。然而,我们的学生往往热衷理论而对作品或作家缺乏深入细致的了解和分析。他们往往先大谈理论规则,然后罗列一些例证,不能很好地把理论和文本融会贯通,恰如其分地结合在一起。在这种情况下,我们需要一些好的参考资料来帮助学生更好地认识和理解他们在阅读或研究的作品和作家。《剑桥美国小说新论》正是这样一套优秀的参考书。

这套丛书的负责人是曾经主编过《哥伦比亚美国文学史》的艾默里·埃利奥特教授,并且由英国剑桥大学出版社在上世纪80年代中期开始陆续出书,至今仍在发行并出版新书,目前已有五十多种,不仅出平装本还有精装本。一套书发行二十多年还有生命力,估计还会继续发行,主要因为它确实从学生的需要出发,深受他们和教师的喜爱。

《剑桥美国小说新论》的编排方式比较统一。根据主编制定的原则,每本书针对一部美国文学历史上有名望的大作家的一本经典小说,论述者都是研究这位作家的知名学者。开篇是一位权威专家的论述,主要论及作品的创作过程、出版历史、当年的评价以及小说发表以来不同时期的主要评论和阅读倾向。随后是四到五篇论述,从不同角度用不同的批评方法对作品进行分析和阐



释。这些文章并非信手拈来,而是专门为这套丛书撰写的,运用的理论都比较新,其中不乏颇有新意的真知灼见。书的最后是为学生进一步学习和研究而提供的参考书目。由此可见,编书的学者们为了帮助学生确实煞费苦心,努力做到尽善尽美。

这五十多种书有早期美国文学家库珀的《最后的莫希干人》,也有当代试验小说大师品钦的《拍卖第49号》和厄普代克那曾被《时代》杂志评为1923年以来100部最佳小说之一的《兔子,跑吧!》;有我们比较熟悉的麦尔维尔的《白鲸》,也有我们还不了解的他的《漂亮水手》;有中国学生很喜欢的海明威的长篇小说《永别了,武器》,令人想不到的是还有一本论述他所有的短篇小说的集子。有些大作家如亨利·詹姆斯、威廉·福克纳等都有两三本作品入选,但它们都分别有专门的集子。丛书当然涉及已有定论的大作家,包括黑人和白人作家(可惜还没有华裔作家的作品),但也包括20世纪70年代妇女运动中发掘出来的如凯特·肖邦的《觉醒》和佐拉·尼尔·赫斯顿的《他们眼望上苍》,甚至还有我国读者很熟悉的斯托夫人的《汤姆叔叔的小屋》。当年这部小说曾经风靡美国,在全世界都有一定的影响,后来被贬为“政治宣传”作品,从此在美国文学史上销声匿迹。70年代后随着要求扩大文学经典中女性和少数族裔作家的呼声日益高涨,人们才开始重新评价这部作品,分析它对日后妇女作家的影响、对黑人形象的塑造,甚至它在美国文学的哥特式传统中的地位等等。

这样的例子还有很多,例如威廉·迪恩·豪威尔斯和他的《赛拉斯·拉帕姆的发迹》。以前人们只肯定他在发展现实主义文学和理论方面的贡献,对他的作品除了《赛拉斯·拉帕姆的发迹》评价都不太高。但在这本新论文集子里编者对已有定论进行挑战,强调豪威尔斯的小说、他的现实主义跟当时的社会经济文化现状有很大的关系。他的小说既有其文学形式,又是一种社会力量。另外一位19世纪新英格兰作家萨拉·奥尼·裘威特过去一向被看成是乡土作家,现在学者们用女性主义观点强调她的《尖枫树之乡》对美国文学的贡献,分析当年的种族、民族主义和文学市场

对她写作的影响。用封底宣传语言来说,这本集子对美国文学研究、女性主义批评理论和美国研究等方面都会引起很大的兴趣。

还有一本书似乎在我们国家很少有人提起过——亨利·罗思的《就说是睡着了》。此书在20世纪30年代曾经风靡一时,此后长期销声匿迹,60年代又再度受到推崇。现在这部小说则是上面提到的《时代》杂志100部优秀小说中的一部,被认为是上个世纪头50年里最为出色的美国犹太小说、最优秀的现代主义小说之一。评论家认为集子里的文章采用心理分析、社会历史主义等批评方法探讨了有关移民、族裔和文化归属等多方面的问题。

这套集子里还出现了令人信服的新论点。很长时间内海明威一直被认为是讨厌女人的大男子主义者。但在关于他的短篇小说的论述里,作者通过分析《在密执安北部》,令人信服地证明海明威其实对妇女充满同情。不仅如此,这一论断还瓦解了海明威在《太阳照样升起》中充分暴露他的厌女症的定论。

然而,作者们并不侈谈理论或玩弄理论名词,所有的论断都是既以一定的理论为基础,又对文本进行深入的分析;既把理论阐述得深入浅出,又把作品分析得丝丝入扣,让人不由得不服。他们能够做到这一点完全是因为他们了解学生的水平和需要。

我认为《剑桥美国小说新论》是一套很好的参考书。北京大学出版社购买版权,出版这套书是个有益于外国文学研究教学的决定。

Series Editor's Preface

In literary criticism the last twenty-five years have been particularly fruitful. Since the rise of the New Criticism in the 1950s, which focused attention of critics and readers upon the text itself – apart from history, biography, and society – there has emerged a wide variety of critical methods which have brought to literary works a rich diversity of perspectives: social, historical, political, psychological, economic, ideological, and philosophical. While attention to the text itself, as taught by the New Critics, remains at the core of contemporary interpretation, the widely shared assumption that works of art generate many different kinds of interpretations has opened up possibilities for new readings and new meanings.

Before this critical revolution, many works of American literature had come to be taken for granted by earlier generations of readers as having an established set of recognized interpretations. There was a sense among many students that the canon was established and that the larger thematic and interpretative issues had been decided. The task of the new reader was to examine the ways in which elements such as structure, style, and imagery contributed to each novel's acknowledged purpose. But recent criticism has brought these old assumptions into question and has thereby generated a wide variety of original, and often quite surprising, interpretations of the classics, as well as of rediscovered works such as Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, which has only recently entered the canon of works that scholars and critics study and that teachers assign their students.

The aim of The American Novel Series is to provide students of American literature and culture with introductory critical

guides to American novels and other important texts now widely read and studied. Usually devoted to a single work, each volume begins with an introduction by the volume editor, a distinguished authority on the text. The introduction presents details of the work's composition, publication history, and contemporary reception, as well as a survey of the major critical trends and readings from first publication to the present. This overview is followed by four or five original essays, specifically commissioned from senior scholars of established reputation and from outstanding younger critics. Each essay presents a distinct point of view, and together they constitute a forum of interpretative methods and of the best contemporary ideas on each text.

It is our hope that these volumes will convey the vitality of current critical work in American literature, generate new insights and excitement for students of American literature, and inspire new respect for and new perspectives upon these major literary texts.

Emory Elliott

University of California, Riverside

Contents

Series Editor's Preface
page vii

1

Introduction

TRUDIER HARRIS
page 1

2

A Glimpse of the Hidden God: Dialectical
Visions in Baldwin's *Go Tell It on
the Mountain*

MICHAEL F. LYNCH
page 29

3

The South in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*:
Baldwin's Personal Confrontation

HORACE PORTER
page 59

4

Wrestling with "The Love That Dare
Not Speak Its Name": John, Elisha, and
the "Master"

BRYAN R. WASHINGTON
page 77



5

Ambivalent Narratives, Fragmented Selves:
Performative Identities and the Mutability
of Roles in James Baldwin's *Go Tell It
on the Mountain*

VIVIAN M. MAY

page 97

6

Baldwin, *Communitas*, and the Black
Masculinist Tradition

KEITH CLARK

page 127

Notes on Contributors

page 157

Selected Bibliography

page 159

剑
桥
美
国
小
说
新
论

Introduction

TRUDIER HARRIS

Background and Composition

GO *Tell It on the Mountain*, James Baldwin's first novel, was published in 1953. It had a long and extensive history of composition, extending across two continents and at least three countries. Baldwin had conceived the idea for the novel in the early 1940s, when he was about seventeen. He would write and rewrite it over the next ten years. An autobiographical composition, the novel takes its subject matter from the troubled relationship between Baldwin and his stepfather, David Baldwin. Little Jimmy was almost three years old in 1927 when his mother, Emma Burdis Jones, married David Baldwin, who legitimized his existence by adopting him. But the legal embrace did not mirror an emotional embrace. A history of racism and religion informed David's interactions with his adopted stepson. The elder Baldwin had come to Harlem from Louisiana, where he had been a preacher. Having less status, but being no less devout in Harlem, he held his family to strict interpretations of biblical texts. Wives were to be obedient and children were to be helpful but invisible; neither was to challenge the authority of the father who, following biblical injunction, was head of his household.

David Baldwin frequently took out his frustrations on the young Jimmy. He considered his stepson ugly and remarked that James had the mark of the devil on him. James's successes at school, which earned him the approval and applause of his white teachers, only exacerbated David. When James was "nine or ten," he wrote a play that was directed by one of his white schoolteachers. Her interest in him inspired her to approach his



father about James attending a “real” play. Although theatergoing was forbidden in the Baldwin house, James watched his father capitulate to the white teacher and grant permission for him to accompany her to the theater. His father had questioned her motives before her arrival, and it was only his general fear of whites that prompted him to give very reluctant consent to the outing. In spite of this woman’s help when David Baldwin was laid off from work, he never trusted her and warned James that his “white friends in high places were not really” his friends and that he would see when he grew older “how white people would do anything to keep a Negro down. Some of them could be nice, he admitted, but none of them were to be trusted and most of them were not even nice. The best thing was to have as little to do with them as possible.”¹ This attitude echoes almost precisely the opinion of Gabriel Grimes in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. Baldwin recounts from the point of view of John, Gabriel’s stepson:

His father said that all white people were wicked, and that God was going to bring them low. He said that white people were never to be trusted, and that they told nothing but lies, and that not one of them had ever loved a nigger. He, John, was a nigger, and he would find out, as soon as he got a little older, how evil white people could be.²

David Baldwin could not accept a world in which whites were anything but mean and hateful to blacks. His inability to change his attitudes with his change of geography, combined with his treatment of James, led to an intense hatred that the stepson would nurture for the stepfather. Baldwin’s composition of *Go Tell It on the Mountain* was in many ways an extended rite of exorcism. He was trying in part to rid himself of the demons of hatred his stepfather had instilled in him. “I had to understand the forces, the experience, the life that shaped him,” Baldwin would later comment, “before I could grow up myself, before I could become a writer. . . . I became a writer by tearing that book up for ten years.”³

Baldwin recalls the strained relationship between him and his father in the title essay in *Notes of a Native Son* (1955). In that essay, Baldwin reviews his father’s life, his behavior toward his

wife and children, and the overwhelming bitterness that consumed him:

He could be chilling in the pulpit and indescribably cruel in his personal life and he was certainly the most bitter man I have ever met. . . . When he took one of his children on his knee to play, the child always became fretful and began to cry; when he tried to help one of us with our homework the absolutely unabating tension which emanated from him caused our minds and our tongues to become paralyzed, so that he, scarcely knowing why, flew into a rage and the child, not knowing why, was punished. If it ever entered his head to bring a surprise home for his children, it was, almost unfailingly, the wrong surprise and even the big watermelons he often brought home on his back in the summertime led to the most appalling scenes. I do not remember, in all those years, that one of his children was ever glad to see him come home.⁴

His father, Baldwin asserted, “had lived and died in an intolerable bitterness of spirit.”⁵ Baldwin wondered, on his father’s death in 1943, if that bitterness had not now become his own heritage. He had to find a way of reconciling bitter memories and hatred with the need to move forward into a healthy and hate-free future.

During his father’s lifetime, however, Baldwin was never able to overcome his negative feelings toward him. Angered perhaps that his father was perennially impregnating his mother, and providing yet another baby for whom the young Jimmy, being the eldest child, had to assume caretaking responsibilities, Baldwin’s hatred of his father intensified with the years. Baldwin escaped as soon as he was physically – if not financially – able. With his move first to New Jersey when he was seventeen and shortly thereafter to Greenwich Village, he separated himself from his father physically, but not psychologically. Troubled father/son relationships would prove to be a recurring theme in Baldwin’s works. He later attempted to provide a literary healing in *If Beale Street Could Talk* (1974), in which a father’s love for his son is so sincere that his inability to get the son out of jail leads him to commit suicide.

Equally central to the composition of *Go Tell It on the Mountain* is Baldwin’s religious experience. In “Down at the Cross: Letter

from a Region in My Mind,” the second of the two essays in *The Fire Next Time* (1963), Baldwin discusses the physical and spiritual threats he began to feel at the age of fourteen. His own awakening to sexual desire was matched by the attempts of persons in his neighborhood to use him sexually, thus forcing a heightened awareness of the potential to sin and to be damned eternally for it. An acute sense of vulnerability to the forces around him – girls who were taught to begin looking for husbands, adults who exploited children sexually, cops who beat up little black boys – brought young Jimmy to the realization that not only his body but his soul was endangered. As early as his tenth year Baldwin was beaten by policemen in Harlem. The summer when he was fourteen produced “a prolonged religious crisis” in him.⁶ Baldwin sought refuge in a church to which one of his young friends had taken him. The woman minister of that church, Bishop Rosa Artemis (Mother) Horn, asked Baldwin on his first trip there, “Whose little boy are you?” Baldwin recalls that the question made him feel so welcome, so wanted, that his heart immediately replied, “Why, yours.” In order to escape the ravages of the street, he thus turned to the religious “gimmick” as opposed to the criminal or sexual one. He recognized that

every Negro boy – in my situation during those years, at least – who reaches this point realizes, at once, profoundly, because he wants to live, that he stands in great peril and must find, with speed, a “thing,” a gimmick, to lift him out, to start him on his way. *And it does not matter what the gimmick is.* It was this last realization that terrified me and – since it revealed that the door opened on so many dangers – helped to hurl me into the church.⁷

His transformation/conversion is mirrored in the experience of the young John Grimes in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. Baldwin recalls:

[W]hen this woman had finished preaching, everything came roaring, screaming, crying out, and I fell to the ground before the altar. It was the strangest sensation I have ever had in my life – up to that time, or since. I had not known that it was going to happen, or that it could happen. One moment I was on my feet, singing and clapping and, at the same time, working out in my head the plot of a play I was working

on then; the next moment, with no transition, no sensation of falling, I was on my back, with the lights beating down into my face and all the vertical saints above me. I did not know what I was doing down so low, or how I had got there. And the anguish that filled me cannot be described. It moved in me like one of those floods that devastate counties, tearing everything down, tearing children from their parents and lovers from each other, and making everything an unrecognizable waste. All I really remember is the pain, the unspeakable pain; it was as though I were yelling up to Heaven and Heaven would not hear me. And if Heaven would not hear me, if love could not descend from heaven – to wash me, to make me clean – then utter disaster was my portion.⁸

Baldwin joined Mother Horn's church and became an ardent follower, so much so that his brother David was somewhat perturbed by the transformation in Jimmy. The older brother was no fun anymore; he did not want to go to movies or engage in any of the other activities common to young boys. The church may have gained a devotee, but David was being denied an engaged, interesting brother.

Baldwin remained in Mother Horn's church until he was seventeen. He served as a "Young Minister"; his youth made him "a much bigger drawing card" than his father, and he "pushed this advantage ruthlessly." At the same time, he "relished the attention and the relative immunity from punishment" that his "new status" gave him.⁹ The competition between Baldwin and his father is echoed in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, when young John Grimes tries to gain an advantage over his father Gabriel by joining the church. Although the novel does not portray John in a minister's role, that is clearly the status into which the saints are hoping he will grow.

Baldwin said he left the church when he realized that all the "sermons" and "tears" and "repentance" and "rejoicing" had "changed nothing." He also became disillusioned with the "gimmick," with the "illusion" and how it was effected. After all those years of avoiding the theater, he asserted, he had actually been in one the whole time. This idea of the black church as theater or performance, especially the more charismatic churches such as the Pentecostal one to which Baldwin belonged, engaged

Baldwin's creative imagination, not only in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, but in *The Amen Corner* (1968) as well. Hellfire and damnation, or the fear of hell instead of the promise of heaven, was the underlying premise for the church in which Baldwin's religious ideas were shaped. People were to live righteously, literally by biblical injunction, or suffer the disastrous consequences of not having done so. Baldwin finally escaped the physical structure of the church, but the imaginative and spiritual impact remained with him throughout his writing career. More immediately, these shaping forces informed *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. Baldwin originally entitled the novel *Crying Holy*, then *In My Father's House*; he alternated the titles off and on through 1951.

Baldwin began serious work on his first novelistic venture after he moved to Greenwich Village permanently in 1943 (he had lived there intermittently before). He worked as a waiter at the Calypso, a small restaurant on MacDougal Street owned by Connie Williams.¹⁰ With encouragement from Williams and others, Baldwin waited tables during the day and wrote at night.

A happy meeting with Richard Wright enabled Baldwin to make progress on *In My Father's House*. A young woman who heard Baldwin read a few pages of the novel in the Village introduced him to Wright. When Baldwin visited Wright in Brooklyn in 1945, Wright asked to see what Baldwin had accomplished thus far on the novel. An excited Baldwin forwarded sixty pages to Wright, who read it within days and decided to help the aspiring young writer. Wright contacted Edward Aswell and recommended Baldwin for a Eugene F. Saxon Foundation Fellowship. That Wright was willing to enlist the aid of his own editor in securing a fellowship for Baldwin reveals the extent of the promise he saw in Baldwin's work; it also portended the bitter disappointment Wright would feel later when he thought Baldwin had betrayed him in his appraisal of *Native Son* (1940).¹¹ The \$500 Saxon Fellowship, awarded in November of 1945, boosted Baldwin's ego and enabled him to meet such literary notables as Frank S. MacGregor, president of Harper's, but it did not bring the result he had expected. When the book was re-

jected for publication, Baldwin felt keenly that he had not lived up to Wright's expectations.

He put *In My Father's House* in a "duffel bag" and turned to another novelistic project entitled *Ignorant Armies*, based on a 1943 case involving a bisexual man who reportedly brutally killed his wife because of their sexual problems. Baldwin tried to move forward with *Ignorant Armies* just as he was confronting the suicide of his friend Eugene Worth, whom he had met in 1943 and who committed suicide in December of 1946 by jumping off the George Washington Bridge. The death was especially painful for Baldwin because he had been sexually attracted to Worth but had not expressed that desire. Baldwin's personal anguish continued as he lived for a while with the woman he planned to marry. But he broke the engagement and threw the intended wedding ring into the Hudson River near where Worth had jumped. These emotional pressures took their toll and *Ignorant Armies* floundered. (Baldwin later salvaged some of the material for inclusion in *Giovanni's Room* [1956] and *Another Country* [1962].)

Baldwin abandoned the budding novel in part because he felt the need to come to grips with his own sexual identity. His personal dilemma joined hands with his writing and social dilemmas. When he reflected on his inability to establish solidly his own sexual and racial identity, along with other problems – the increasing sexual and societal difficulties of being black in America, encounters with white policemen, prejudice, particularly in New Jersey where he had worked for a while, as well as in the Village – he bought a one-way ticket to Paris with the last of the money he had been awarded earlier in the year by the Rosenwald Foundation. On 11 November 1948, when he was twenty-four, he boarded a plane to Paris.

In Paris without resources, Baldwin worked on *Go Tell It on the Mountain* intermittently over the next four years. He developed pieces from it for publication but could not bring it speedily to conclusion. The story of John and Gabriel Grimes held such a grip on Baldwin's imagination that the novel did not suffice to exorcise it all. At intervals during the ten years of composition,