



美国文学研究评论选

Selected Readings in American
Literary Criticism

(下册)

常耀信 主编

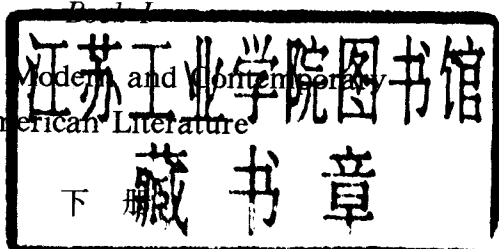
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SELECTED READINGS
IN AMERICAN LITERARY CRITICISM

Part I
Criticism on Modern and Contemporary
American Literature



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前 言

美国文学评论的发展大体经历了 3 个重要阶段。自 19 世纪 40 年代爱默生的《论诗人》始至 90 年代威廉·狄恩·豪威尔斯的《批评与散文》止的半个世纪,是美国独立文学和文化的炼铸成形时期,是美国作家和评论家为美国独立文学的发展而鸣锣与呐喊的时期。第二阶段从上世纪末始至本世纪 30 年代末止,是美国文学评论气氛活跃、争论热烈、具有决定意义的阶段。除了 T. S. 艾略特、埃德蒙·威尔逊、艾伦·塔特等“新批评”的声音之外,还有一个不同凡响的声音——凡·威克·布鲁克斯、H. L. 门肯以及伦道夫·伯恩等人对美国文学“业已成年”的断言。这是美国文学评论家以全新的目光看待本国文学独特的伟大之处的时代。如果说在这以前,人们习惯于以剖析欧洲和英国文学的思想和方法比照美国文学,因而结论总不外乎“不够伟大”、“不能同欧洲作家的鸿篇巨制相提并论”的话,那末,在这一阶段中,评论家已开始从美国的国情出发认识本国文学,认识到美国文学经过近 300 年的演变,已于 1901 年至 1920 年间达到“成年”。这一论断开创了美国文学评论的新纪元;它标志着美国文学评论界重新评估美国文学的开端。

第三阶段可以 40 年代初 F. O. 马西森的《美国的文艺复兴》和艾尔弗雷德·卡津的《在本国的土地上》两部文学评论巨著的发表为始。这是一个“重新发现”美国文学的阶段。美国文学评论界一扫过去追随欧洲文学评论的气氛,把精力集中到从本国的文化历史实际出发剖析美国文学上。如果二、三十年代的论断尚需佐证,40 年代后的文学评论则从空泛的议论跃进到从作品的具体实际出发寻觅出赏析美国文学的理论的阶段。美国文学评论界“重新发现”美国文学的激情在 50 至 60 年代升至其“沸腾点”,评论巨著迭相面世,每部新书都立论新颖,给人以一新耳目、发聩振聋的印象,真可谓群芳竞艳,让人目不暇接,读者对评论的兴趣有时竟超过对文学作品本身的兴致。倘然美国文学在本世纪前 20 年已趋成年,那么美国文学评论做为文学的一个有机组成部分,在 50 年代和

60年代也已成年,并以自己的独特风格和欧洲文学评论比肩齐名。这一时期评论重点在于美国早期文学,即19世纪美国文学的主要作家及作品。在60年代以后,美国文学评论又有了长足发展。在继续探索早期美国文学的内在模式的同时,对本世纪以来,即现代和当代的文学的评论数目剧增。新一代评论家又独辟蹊径,从不同的角度赏析现当代文学,进一步巩固了美国文学与文学评论在世界文坛上不可小觑的地位。

正如美国现代诗人华莱士·史蒂文斯的一首诗所说,看山鸟鸟的方式可有13种之多,四、五十年代以来美国文学评论界所提出的研究美国文学的理论也是各式各样的。事实上,美国文学评论的基本特点在于它的“多元化”,但是透过这些纷然杂陈的观点,人们可以看到评论家都在努力寻觅一种“合成”理论,以诠释几位作家或某一时期内作家的创作活动,使之具有令人信服的理性基础。他们从美国历史或文化发展的角度去赏析本国文学,每人提出的理论都有合理之处,各种理论的总和便使读者有可能在较可靠的基础上看到美国文学的全貌。因此,把这些理论的精粹编选出来以飨读者是非常必要的。

正是出于这种意图,我们编注了《美国文学研究评论选》作为大学本科高年级及一年级研究生的美国文学批评课教科书。由于侧重点不在于反映美国文学评论的历史颠末,因此它的内容主要不是前面所讲的第一阶段和第二阶段,而是第三阶段,即美国文学评论业已成熟的阶段内的各种评论观点。本书共分上、下两册。上册辑录了美国评论家(D. H. 劳伦斯除外)对早期美国文学的各种评论;下册收集了评论界关于现当代美国文学的各种颇富影响的评论。所选注的文章皆出自美国学术界公认的美国文学研究经典著作,是国外英美文学本科生与研究生的必读书,内容丰富,不拘泥于概念的纷争,不玄秘艰涩,科学性与知识性兼具,对美国文学名家和名著进行生动、透辟的分析,视角多变,说理简洁,文字非常流畅。编者相信,本书会成为我国学者和学生研究美国文化背景、文学流派、名作家及名作品的有益指南,将有助于提高我国一般文学爱好者对美国文学的理解和欣赏能力。如果它能以某种方式推动我国文学评论和文学创作的发展,编者将会感到极大的欣慰和鼓励。

《美国文学研究评论选》(上、下册)共选入 20 位著名评论家的专著或专论。每篇选文均由作者介绍、作品介绍、文章节选、注释、讨论题及参考书 5 部分组成,以利于教学。同时,考虑到社会上一般读者的需要,简介和注释都以中文写成。所选各篇的排列虽同其内容有些关系,例如在上册中,罗伯特·斯皮勒的《美国文学本末》位于书首,是因为选文为欣赏美国文学提供了必要的历史和文化背景,而佩里·米勒的《进入荒野的使命》位居第二,是由于选文精辟地论述了美国文化和文学的主要因素——美国清教主义传统的始末,等等;但是一般说来各篇可自成一体,读者可择己所需者先读。本书作为美国文学教科书,学生可在阅读所论及的文学著作以前、以后或当中选择最佳时机阅读。

本书由南开大学外文系英美文学研究室负责规划和选材。常耀信任主编。参加编写的有王蕴茹、李前程、吴伏生、常耀信。此外,李刚、刘思远、吴克亮、孙学军、王南等参加了资料收集工作。

本书编注结束之后,便被列入国家教委英语教材编审委员会 1988 年编审计划;厦门大学外语系杨仁敬教授和四川大学外文系朱通伯教授受托对全部书稿进行认真审阅,并提出了宝贵的修改和增删建议,这对我们修订书稿、保证全书质量具有重要意义。我们值此机会向他们表示衷心的感谢。

因编选者水平有限,书中不妥之处一定不少,企盼专家与读者匡谬指正。

编者

1992 年 1 月

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DANIEL HOFFMAN

〔作者介绍〕

丹尼尔·霍夫曼(Daniel Hoffman, 1923~), 美国诗人、文学评论家。他出生在纽约, 就读于哥伦比亚大学, 获博士学位。曾在斯沃思莫尔大学和哥伦比亚大学任教, 做过印第安纳大学文学院研究员, 曾任法国第戎一大学客座教授。1972 年任美国诗人协会主席, 1973 年任美国国会图书馆诗歌顾问。自 1966 年起为宾夕法尼亚大学英语教授、“驻校诗人”。他曾于 1964 年获哥伦比亚大学魁奇奖章和费城文学协会文学奖。

霍夫曼迄今已出版 6 本诗集, 其中包括《三十条鲸鱼》(*An Armada of Thirty Whales*)、《一个小故事》(*A Little Geste*)、《令人满意的城市》(*The City of Satisfactions*) 及《我到厄尔巴岛前天下无敌》(*Able Was I Ere I Saw Elba*) 等。做为诗人, 霍夫曼技巧精湛, 文笔典雅, 其作品常有出人意外的效果。

霍夫曼是出色的文学评论家, 他的文学评论和他的诗歌一样, 表现出对神话及其影响的浓厚兴趣和独到见解。他的主要文学评论著作有: 《保尔·班扬》(*Paul Bunyan*)、《最后一名边疆神人》(*The Last of the Frontier Demigods*)、《斯蒂芬·克兰的诗》(*The Poetry of Stephen Crane*)、《野蛮的知识: 叶芝、格雷夫斯及米尔诗歌里的神话》(*Barbarous Knowledge: Myth in the Poetry of Yeats, Graves, and Muir*)、《美国小说的形式与寓言》(*Form and Fable in American Fiction*) 以及《坡》(*Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe*)。70 年代末, 霍夫曼主编了《美国当代文学》(*Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing*)。他还编选

了斯蒂芬·克兰和罗伯特·弗罗斯特的诗歌选集。

Form and Fable in American Fiction

〔作品介绍〕

《美国小说的形式与寓言》是研究民间传说与神话对早期美国文学的影响的一部经典性文学批评著作，1965年在纽约出版。它探讨的范围既包括曾深刻影响过早期美国小说家——欧文、霍桑、麦尔维尔、马克·吐温——的题材，也涉及到这些作家独特的写作风格。

全书共由4部分及一篇“后记”组成。第1部分“寓言与现实”属概论，它阐述了作者关于神话与寓言对美国小说家的影响的观点。霍夫曼认为，早期美国小说的素材和灵感的源泉为民间传说、神话、礼仪及巫术等，因此领悟民间传说与神话在小说中的体现会加深对作品的欣赏和理解。虽然民间口头传说几乎尽人皆知，但是在事实上，对作家的创作发挥影响的传说题材都是屈指可数的。这可以从欧文、霍桑、麦尔维尔及马克·吐温的作品里看出来。早期美国小说属于“传奇”(romance)类，其特点是回避“现实”，表现出作者不愿正视社会现实问题、在创作过程中多借助于狂想、感情及闹剧形式的倾向。

霍夫曼对几位早期小说家的10部短篇及长篇作品进行了深刻分析。这些作品包括欧文的《睡谷传奇》(“The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”)，霍桑的短篇小说《村里的大伯》(“The Village Uncle”)、《我的族人莫里诺少校》(“My Kinsman, Major Molineux”)、《五月柱》(“The Maypole of Merry Mount”)、《好小伙子布朗》(“Young Goodman Brown”)、《红字》(The Scarlet Letter)、《七个尖角阁的房子》(The House of the Seven Gables)、《福谷传奇》(“The Blithedale Romance”)，麦尔维尔的《白鲸》(Moby-Dick)及《骗子》(The Confidence Man)和马克·吐温的《哈克贝利·芬历险记》(The Adventures

of *Huckleberry Finn*)。霍夫曼推究事理,力求钩深致远,不仅寻究这些作品从民间传说与神话中吸取题材的情况,而且考查它们的文学形式和所取题材的内在关系。他把“民间传说”——地区性传奇故事、巫术与奇闻轶事、北方乡巴佬和骗子、民间故事——同欧洲的“神话”(诸如神的死而复生等)相提并论,把地区性或历史性的事实同古代的典型同样看待,把民众文化同西方文学传统并重,不分厚薄,这就把美国小说置于神话的框架里,而赋予它以新的丰富的内涵。霍夫曼认为,美国小说因凭借寓言、哥特文体、民间传说和神话等的力量而独具一种魅力。

这里选注的是该书第1章第3节

Form and Fable in American Fiction

The American Hero: His Masquerade

“Something further may follow of this Masquerade.”

——Melville, *The Confidence-Man*

ONE

“What then is the American, this new man?” asked Crèvecoeur in 1782, posing at the birth of the Republic the question of national identity which our writers have never since ceased trying to answer. Even from the earliest settlement the conviction loomed large that human nature itself was changed by being transplanted to new circumstances. The Puritans had felt as a divine visitation the call to leave the Old World for the New and found under God’s will a new Zion¹ in the wilderness. By the middle of the eighteenth century the thoughts of emigration and the untamed land continued to sway men’s minds. We have noted in the paradisaical symbolism of the frontier that the wilderness becomes the fecund Garden of tall-tale fame Melville would envisage the West as inhabited by “the White Steed of the Prairies. . . . A most imperial and archangeli-

cal apparition of that unfallen western world, which to the eyes of the old trappers and hunters revived the glories of those primeval times when Adam walked majestic as a god, bluff-browed and fearless." Characteristically, Melville mythicized into more heroic dimensions a conviction of popular culture. The Enlightenment version of the "bluff-browed and fearless" American settler was indeed unfallen and Adamic, but not quite as majestic or godlike as Melville proposes. This we can see in Crèvecoeur's answer to his own question, "What then is the American, this new man?"

He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. . . . The American is a new man, who acts on new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas, and form new opinions. From involuntary idleness, servile dependence, penury, and useless labour, he has passed to toils of a very different nature, rewarded by ample subsistence. —This is an American.

The character of this new man soon clearly revealed itself. At first there was the miraculous rebirth of the British serf as a freeholder in the New World; the career of one such serf, Andrew the Hebridean, was appended to the third of Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer*. But one need not be born a serf on the isle of Barra² to be reborn in the American colonies. That rebirth and metamorphosis are the bywords of American life is among the lessons in Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*. That work and Crèvecoeur's are the earliest and most influential examples of the new American character in literature. As yet the lineaments of that character are "colonial," the products rather of general political and social institutions than of the special culture of a particular region. Such localization was the next step in the development of popular concepts of character. Along the northeastern seaboard a well-defined type, the Yankee, developed early in folklore and, by the 1830's, appears in popular culture to have displaced the undifferentiated American of the Franklin and Crèvecoeur variety. A parallel development along the frontier brought the character of the Backwoodsman into folktales, al-

manacs, popular fiction, theatricals, and, in the person of Davy Crockett,³ into national political prominence. Metamorphosis, adaptability, and indomitable self-mastery are the qualities these three types of the hero share. Whether actual men or fictitious characters, these heroes insist upon the constancy of the self behind their changing masks. Yet, as the more reflective minds of Hawthorne, Melville, and Twain used these popular stereotypes in their fiction, the question of identity could not so casually be laid to rest. Crèvecoeur's question, what is the American, becomes for their characters, Who am I? Which of my masks is Me?

Andrew the Hebridean, however, felt no such ambiguity about *his* identity.

All I wish to delineate [Crèvecoeur writes] is, the progressive steps of a poor man, advancing from indigence to ease; from oppression to freedom; from obscurity and contumely to some degree of consequence—not by virtue of any freaks of fort me, but by the gradual operation of sobriety, honesty, and emigration.

To succeed, Andrew must cast off his ancient heritage as though it were a chrysalis. Only then can the real man within come forth in all his human power, sustained by the laws, for "we are the most perfect society now existing in the world." Arriving in Philadelphia, Andrew is befriended by the benevolent American Farmer who assures him that "Your future success will depend entirely upon your own conduct, if you are a sober man. . . laborious, and honest, there is no fear that you will do well." No less than twelve times do these adjectives, the apices of bourgeois virtue, come together in Crèvecoeur's discourse on Andrew. It is true that the Hebridean does not know how to handle a hoe or an axe, and that his wife must be apprenticed in a friendly kitchen to learn the rudiments of pioneer housekeeping. These skills being soon acquired, Crèvecoeur and a friend stake Andrew to a hundred acres of land. The ever benevolent farmer invites the neighborhood to a frolic, amid the convivial folk festival of house-raising a new American is born.

When the work was finished the company made the woods resound with the noise of their three cheers, and the honest wishes they formed for Andrew's pros-

perity. . . . Thus from the first day he had landed, Andrew marched towards this important event; this memorable day made the sun shine on that land on which he was to sow wheat and other grain. . . . Soon after, further settlements were made on that road, and Andrew, instead of being the last man towards the wilderness, found himself in a few years in the middle of a numerous society. He helped others as generously as others had helped him. . . . he was made overseer of the road, and served on two petty juries, performing as a citizen all the duties required of him.

The combination of his own sobriety, industry, and honesty with "our customs, which indeed are those of nature" and our laws, which derive "from the original genius and strong desire of the people," leads ineluctably toward the triumphant transformation of Andrew. By Crèvecoeur's time, deistic optimism⁴ had for many colonists quite replaced the earlier Puritan emphasis on original sin. Man, in accordance with the new philosophy of the age, is inherently good, and America, being free from the inherited evils and injustices of Europe, offers him the unprecedented opportunity to be reborn to a brighter destiny. Although neither Crèvecoeur nor his age held credence in such superstitions as witchcraft or wonders, surely this transformation of a peasant into a free American is as miraculous an instance of shape-shifting as anything reported at Salem.⁵ The power of transformation, of self-transformation, is no longer seen as malevolent. It partakes of the same beneficent energy that populates the forests and the farmyards with prodigious plenitude of game and fecundity of crops. Already the American character is defined as the exercise of metamorphic power.

Crèvecoeur's ingenuous account of Andrew is the prototype of the Horatio Alger story.⁶ It is the new fairy tale of the new man on the new continent. He begins life in Europe, in the stage of subjection to which history has condemned him. But by emigrating to the New World,

He begins to feel the effects of a sort of resurrection; hitherto he had not lived but simply vegetated; he now feels himself a man, because he is treated as such.

His symbolic gesture is to discover his own humanity in a land where all

men hold the highest and equal rank of citizens.

In time the American hero developed a more sophisticated character. The next representative hero adapted himself to almost all of the human possibilities of thought and action in his time. Benjamin Franklin begins his dizzying progress in much the same vein that Crèvecoeur had begun Andrew's adventures:

Having emerged from the poverty and obscurity in which I was born and bred, to a state of affluence and some degree of reputation in the world, and having gone so far through life with a considerable share of felicity, the conducting means I made use of, which with the blessing of God so well succeeded, my posterity may like to know, as they may find some of them suitable to their own situations, and therefore fit to be imitated.⁷

It is worth recalling that Franklin formed the plan of his life upon his reading of Cotton Mather's *Essays To Do Good*. Although the didacticism of his purpose perpetuates the Puritan emphasis on studying the example of a holy life, his goal is not holiness. It is success. The simple bourgeois formula of honesty, sobriety, and industry which brought about Andrew's resurrection is elaborated in Franklin's famous table of virtues, as well as in a hundred examples drawn from his own life. One cannot gainsay D. H. Lawrence's mockery of Benjamin for his denial that "The soul of man is a dark vast forest, with wild life in it. Think of Benjamin fencing it off! . . . He made himself a list of virtues, which he trotted inside like a gray nag in a paddock."⁸ This charge, or at least its spirit, was anticipated by Melville. As one who dived deep into the recesses of the self, he could not help but find Franklin's character a shallow show of outward versatility lacking inner conviction. Thoreau was more in tune with the popular culture of the time when he wrote, "Franklin—there may 'be a line for him in the future classical dictionary, recording what that demigod did, and referring him to some new genealogy. "Son of ———— and ————. He aided the Americans to gain their independence, instructed mankind in economy, and drew down lightning from the clouds."⁹ It was his role as rebel rather than as conciliator, and his hard-headed virtues and practical approach to the mastery of life which made

the hero of the *Autobiography* seem a prototypical figure among his countrymen. Quite consistent with these qualities was his rationalistic derision of the superstitions of Puritan times in his bagatelle, "A Witch Trial at Mount Holly. "

In the midst of so much that is admirable in Franklin's career, what seems to have most appealed to the popular mind were the ingredients of a stock figure, half wily savant, half homely philosopher. The emergent Yankee trickster was already limned in Ben's burning his light later than his rival's, pushing a wheelbarrow down Main Street to promote his own reputation for industry, rising in the world by the heft of his own cunning till at last he dines with kings. Allied with this emphasis on the too-clever side of Ben is the popular confusion of Franklin himself with Poor Richard, his fictitious gaffer who paved *The Way to Wealth*¹⁰ with proverbs. "Love your neighbor, yet don't pull down your hedge"; "Write with the learned, pronounce with the vulgar"; "Fish and visitors stink after three days"; "If you would be wealthy, think of saying as well as getting." These apothegms of bourgeois caution could, like his tricky maneuvers to get ahead, be regarded as somewhat incompatible with the other Franklin of popular tradition—the wise statesman, the original scientist, the patriarchal patriot. Mark Twain, in a sketch at Franklin's expense, complained that "His maxims were full of animosity toward boys. Nowadays a boy cannot follow out a single natural instinct without tumbling over some of those everlasting aphorisms and hearing from Franklin on the spot." Franklin, pretending industriousness, might say "Procrastination is the thief of time," but Mark Twain knows better; "In order to get a chance to fly his kite on Sunday he used to hang a key on the string and let on to be fishing for lightning. "

He was always proud of telling how he entered Philadelphia for the first time, with nothing in the world but two shillings in his pocket and four rolls of bread under his arm. But really, when you come to examine it critically, it was nothing. Anybody could have done it.¹¹

In a trenchant satirical sketch of Franklin, Melville presents the sententious, calculating sage at Passy,¹² in whom "The diplomatist and

the shepherd are blended; a union not without warrant; the apostolic serpent and dove. "This portrait, in *Israel Potter*,¹³ is perhaps as shrewd an assessment of Franklin's virtues and as striking an indictment of his faults as the narrator of the *Autobiography* has ever received. Melville ranks him with Jacob¹⁴ in the Bible, and Hobbes,¹⁵ as "labyrinth-minded, but plain-spoken Broad-brims. . . keen observers of the main chance; prudent courtiers; practical Magians in linsey-woolsey." The dualism of his personality, the contrast between his humble beginnings and the worldly, sophisticated, and cunning old soothsayer Israel Potter meets in Paris, makes Franklin suspect;

Having carefully weighed the world, Franklin could act any part in it. By nature turned to knowledge, his mind was often grave, but never serious. At times he had seriousness—extreme seriousness—for others, but never for himself. . . . This philosophical levity of tranquility, so to speak, is shown in his easy variety of pursuits. Printer, postmaster, almanac maker, essayist, chemist, orator, tinker, statesman, humorist, philosopher, parlour man, political-economist, professor of housewifery, ambassador, projector, maxim-monger, herb-doctor, wit; Jack of all trades, master of each and mastered by none—the type and genius of his land. Franklin was everything but a poet.

In his protean and hydra-headed versatility the metamorphic Franklin seemed a moral chameleon. Who and what is he, ultimately, underneath all these rebirths and resurrections? Franklin's own character exhibited in its most highly developed form that versatility which frontier conditions and a limited population made necessary in a new country. De Tocqueville had noticed the premium placed in America on the Jack-of-all-trades, at the expense of the master-craftsman who was useless beyond his one specialty. If this prized versatility did not long outlast the division of labor brought about by post-bellum industrialization, it was characteristic of American life in the early nineteenth century. This was true on every level of society, from the farmer-mechanic-peddler to the likes of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, both of whom were quondam philosophers, scientists, architects, statesmen, politicians, and farmers. That the plebeian Franklin should have been the most suc-