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The Modern British Novel

1878-2001

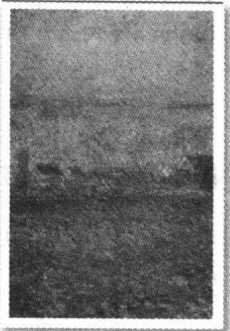
现代英国小说

Malcolm Bradbury

外语教学与研究出版社

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General Preface

Among the most important developments in contemporary global culture is the arrival of Western literary criticism and literary theory in China. FLTRP is to be congratulated for its imagination and foresight in making these crucial texts available to teachers and students of literature throughout China. There is arguably no greater force in producing understanding between peoples than the transmission of literary traditions—the great heritage of narrative, lyric, and prose forms that give cultures their distinctive character. Literary criticism and theory stand at the crossroads of these transmissions. It is the body of writing that reflects on what a literature has meant to a culture. It investigates the moral, political, and experiential dimensions of literary traditions, linking form to content, literature to history, the sensuous love of literature to analytic understanding.

The availability of these important texts will greatly help students and teachers to become acquainted with recent criticism and major critical theories and movements. I am convinced that the series will make an important contribution to the literary education of China, increasing literacy in new fields and international understanding at the same time. It is an extraordinarily timely venture, at a time when comparative literary study in a global context has become increasingly important for professionals, and beyond that, for a general readership that seeks a deeper understanding of literature.

W. J. T. Mitchell

Gaylord Donnelley Distinguished Service Professor
English and Art History
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Editor, Critical Inquiry

出版说明

近年来,许多大专院校为英语专业的学生开设了英美文学课程,市场上也出现了各种版本的原版英美文学经典著作,它们基本上满足了高校对课堂阅读教材的需要。但是,英美文学教学中仍然严重缺少原版文学史、文学理论、文学评论和文学工具书等重要参考书,以至于许多学生写论文时收集资料成为一大难题,专业教师和研究人员的业务水平的提高因此受到限制,在知识更新及学术研究上也难以与国际接轨,北京、上海等大城市以外的地方尤为如此。

据此,外研社组织了全国17所著名高校或研究院的44名英美文学领域的专家学者,经过仔细斟酌,决定引进一批与教学需要相适应,有学术价值,在国外最常用且被国际公认为优秀的文学评论、文学理论、文学史和文学工具书。这是一套开放型的系列图书,以原版加中文序言的形式分批出版。相信这套书的出版定可缓解国内大专院校中英美文学参考书匮乏的现象;同时,通过这种途径,可以有意识地引进国际知名学者的代表作,这无疑会推动和提高我国在英美文学领域的研究水平。

钱 青

北京外国语大学英语学院

1993年,《现代英国小说》初版。1994年出了一个新版本,但作者马尔科姆·布拉德伯里(1932—2000,英国著名文学史学者、文学评论家、小说家、杂文家)并没有对全书进行实质性修订,仅增加了一个当年所写的针对当年出版的小说的跋。具有实质意义的修订版一直等到2001年才问世,也就是我们读到的这个版本。在这个真正的新版本中,出版商在“现代英国小说”字样后添加了年份“1878—2001”,以示这是一部“跨世纪”之书,已“跨越”到了新世纪、新千年。事实上,此版《现代英国小说》不仅增加了100多页篇幅,而且在时间上也横跨3个世纪和2个千年:从19世纪的最后23年到21世纪的第1年。

当然,世纪、千年只是人为的时间概念,这里更应当注意的,是“现代”一词的内涵。一般认为,“现代”指的是20世纪,一个文化上经历了激烈变革的世纪。但布拉德伯里将所涉及作品的时间上限设在19世纪70年代。于是,乔治·艾略特和托马斯·哈代也成了现代小说家。可是一般研究者都知道,他们的写作手法主要是现实主义的,其故事场景也在并非十分现代的19世纪乡村小镇(尽管已被资本主义生产关系所深深渗入),而狄更斯、萨克雷虽然比艾略特和哈代早几十年,但他们所描写的却是地道的城市生活,那么可否将他们也视为“现代”,甚至不妨问:他们是否比艾略特和哈代更为“现代”?

严格意义上的“现代”,指的是现代主义运动的巅峰期,也就是激进、前卫、疯狂实验的20世纪20年代,乔伊斯、吴尔夫、劳伦斯等人为其领军人物。在这些“正统”现代派眼中,现实主义与物质主义是同义词;阿诺德·贝内特和H. G. 威尔斯一类“爱德华时代”小说家的写作手法不仅已可悲地过时了,甚至还沾染上了物质主义的铜臭。当然,广义一点的“现代”则指的是20世纪前半叶或第二次世界大战前那几十年,涵括了从晚期亨利·詹姆斯、约瑟夫·康拉德到奥尔德斯·赫胥黎、伊夫林·沃和乔治·奥威尔等一大批

小说家。但无论“现代”具有何种含义，也无法逃避这一问题：现代之后是什么？

是“后现代”，即一个价值多元的时代，或一个文化呈多元样态、价值沦为相对虚无、“宏大叙事”淡出的时代。这也是一个资本主义进入“晚期”（即所谓“晚期资本主义”）、高科技大行其道的时代。其实，仅就前一个特征来看，在西方世界，真理之开始具有多元的维度，“宏大叙事”之开始被解构，并非是20世纪下半叶所特有的现象。20世纪上半叶现代派的领军人物中，谁在其创作中没有汲汲于解构“宏大叙事”，以此昭示真理的多元性？若要进一步追根溯源，甚至可以到启蒙运动甚至文艺复兴时期去寻找先驱者。

暂且不论某些具有根本性的后现代特征其实在前现代即已出现，既然有“后现代”，也就不妨问这个问题：“后现代”之后是什么？是后-后现代。这就陷入无聊了。所以不难看出，布拉德伯里将书名定为《现代英国小说》是相当聪明的。因为很显然，现实主义作为一种基本写作手法或一种小说家体知世界、呈现世界的基本样式，并没有因为现代主义的兴起而自动消弭。无论是在乔伊斯、吴尔夫这些“正宗”的现代主义小说里，还是在当代英国小说家如艾丽丝·默多克、威廉·戈尔丁、约翰·福尔斯、马丁·艾米斯、朱利安·巴恩斯、伊恩·麦克尤恩、萨尔曼·拉什迪及V. S. 奈保尔等人的“后现代”小说里，都如实呈现了我们所熟知的生活这一面。

尽管布拉德伯里比一般论者聪明，但他也未能逃脱或不愿意问这一根本问题，即，从2001年算起，及至何时，“现代”方可告一段落？所谓“现代”，从根本上讲当指言说主体因其主体性的高扬，对其所处时代有着强烈的自我意识，将之视为“现今时代”，或“我们”这个时代，或一个与“我们”靠近而非离“我们”太遥远的前人或后人的时代。那么，哪些英国小说是“非现代”的呢？按照小说理论家伊恩·瓦特的说法，小说兴起于资产阶级确立起其经济、政治和社会地位的18世纪上半叶，距今还不到300年。在这短暂的300年中，既然“现代”几乎占了一半时间，那么相对于长久的未来，英国小说史上那并非“现代”的时间便实在太短促了，或者说，小说作为一个文类，其本身便是“现代”的。基于这一考虑，假如把书名定为《英国小说》，也许更为合理。

事实上，新版《现代英国小说》一如1993年初版时那样，并没有以“现

代”或“现代性”立意。布拉德伯里其人，以平实著称，作惊人之论既非其所求，亦非其所长（当然，其行文风格也不乏文人型学者的细腻、含蓄和幽默）。在其《伟大的传统》（1948）中，F. R. 利维斯所讨论的英国小说比《现代英国小说》要少得多，但利维斯有明显的思想倾向，即凸显、张扬英国小说的社会、道德关怀之传统。为什么利维斯大肆褒奖艾略特、詹姆斯、康拉德和劳伦斯，却把乔伊斯和吴尔夫晾在一边？那可能是因为，在他看来，乔伊斯和吴尔夫等“正宗”现代派激进的形式实验，与他心目中英国小说密切关注人的社会处境和道德处境这一“伟大的传统”是格格不入的，因而是不可取的，甚至是有害的。

布拉德伯里并非论战型学者，因而《现代英国小说》也没有明显的倾向可言。然而对于外国读者来说，这可能恰恰是其长处所在。这部大部头著作的非论战性，恰恰意味着综合性、折衷性和包容性。对艾略特、詹姆斯、康拉德、劳伦斯与乔伊斯、吴尔夫这些思想倾向和艺术倾向不同的小说家，布拉德伯里并没有厚此薄彼。事实上，他对其所涉及的每位小说家及其重要作品，都进行了繁简得当的中性的介绍。没有这种介绍，要对如此众多的英国小说进行总体把握，便非常困难。须知，仅在1995年，便有8000部英国小说问世（萨尔曼·拉什迪语，见本书507页）！这个数字无论对读者、作家还是对于评论界而言，都难免使人心生恐惧。在一个横跨3个世纪的时间段里，《现代英国小说》谈到了仅约350个小说家、约2700部小说，可见它是一个过滤器。没有它，要对124年间出版的无数小说有一个基本把握，便会无从着手。但《现代英国小说》也不像有些著者如兰德尔·史蒂文森（《三十年代以来的英国小说》[1986]、《20世纪英国小说指南》[1993]）那样过于粗略，那样浮光掠影、蜻蜓点水，或就是一部流水账，读之索然无味，也获取不了多少信息或教益。

那么，为什么一个人口仅6000来万的岛国每年会有如此巨量的小说问世？首先，英国是一个老牌资本主义国家，英国社会是一个十分富足、闲暇的社会。纵然已有现代体育、流行音乐、电影电视、互联网等新型娱乐方式（19世纪下半叶富裕社会形成之初并没有这些东西），小说阅读仍保留了一席之地，或者说在已分割为多个板块的娱乐市场上仍占有一定份额。而在一个高度富裕的社会中，该份额所蕴含的资源已足以支撑相当数量的小说写手。其次，由于种种历史和现时原因，英语国家享有经济、军事和文化等各方面的优势，

英语已成为一种全球性语言。这意味着什么？意味着英国小说市场拥有一个全球性市场。以20世纪80年代开始走红的马丁·艾米斯为例，其小说一问世，便不仅在伦敦书市上热销，也会在纽约、多伦多、孟买、悉尼、吉隆坡和香港的书市上走俏，甚至中国内地的出版社也会购买版权，翻译出版其小说。第三，作为老牌发达国家，英国拥有十分成熟的版权、版税制度和十分发达的图书营销手段。也就是说，故事写手的权益享有充分的制度保障，故事产品的销售渠道也十分畅通。这不仅保证了写手收益的最大化，反过来也促进了故事产量的增长。最后，在一个娱乐业高度发达的社会，小说创作向戏剧、电视、电影、广播等其他领域的渗透，已成寻常之事，也就是说，小说写手不仅享有来自传统阅读的资源支持，也享有其他强有力媒介的资源支持。仅就笔者掌握的有限情况而言，二战后有乔治·奥威尔、威廉·戈尔丁、约翰·福尔斯、保罗·斯科特、石黑一雄等人的小说被改编成戏剧、电影或电视剧广泛上演。

以上种种因素的结合，使现代英国小说的巨大产量成为可能；使一个并无文学天分可言的人，也能混迹文字市场；使一个三四流甚或不入流之“材”，也能卖文为生。如此看来，一年8000部小说的产量，并非没有缘由，也并非十分可怕。实际上，在这8000部作品中，很可能大部分是经不起时间的汰选或考验的。甚至不妨说，将几十年的小说产量累计起来，或若干个8000部中有1部能够像曹雪芹的《红楼梦》、托尔斯泰的《复活》、陀思妥耶夫斯基的《卡拉玛佐夫兄弟》、福楼拜的《包法利夫人》那样流芳后世，就得谢天谢地了。如果考虑到在这每年8000部小说中，有很大一个比例为通俗故事，或纯娱乐意义上的言情小说、侦探小说、惊险小说、鬼怪小说、科幻小说、魔幻小说或儿童魔幻小说（如风靡全球的“哈利·波特”系列），8000部这一数字就更不那么令人恐惧了。毕竟，布拉德伯里心目中的小说，不仅应当有娱乐的功能，还应当有价值担当和艺术形式探索这些同样重要、甚至更为重要的功能。如果一部小说未能承载、表达一个民族、一个文明、一个时代的主流价值观，未能表现出应有的社会、道德关怀，便不是严肃的。如果一部小说未能努力开掘小说这一综合性文类所蕴含的种种艺术潜力或可能性，便不是严肃的。考虑到这一层因素，不难想象，《现代英国小说》的关注范围不可能是一年8000部，而只可能是平均每年几十部。即便如此，这也仍然是一个很大的数量。

布拉德伯里是一个对现代英国小说进行综合性评论、研究的学者。在数量

巨大的故事作品面前，他大刀阔斧地使用了排除法，因而最后有幸被《现代英国小说》提及或简单讨论的小说数量，是相对较小的。然而对于一般中国读者，即便经过作者精心拣选后的小说数量相对较小，或已大大缩小了范围，也仍然是一个惊人的数字。在大多数情况下，《现代英国小说》可以被当作工具书使用。该书提供了详细的索引，查阅起来十分方便。如此这般，产量巨大的现代英国小说就一点不可怕了。

阮 炜

深圳大学文学院

现代英国小说

英美文学文库

导 读

In memory of
Angus Wilson, Angela Carter, William Golding and Iris Murdoch

Preface

This new edition of *The Modern British Novel* is about fiction in Britain from the end of the Victorian Age to the dawn of the twenty-first century and the birth of the third millennium: in other words, from one great age of the new to yet another. They called their time the Modern Age; we call ours the Postmodern Age. The two terms indicate there is an intricate connection. The book covers the novel in Britain over a century of radical innovation and novelty, political terror and shameless barbarism, rising human expectations and a serious loss of faith, deeply and rapidly changing images of selfhood, progress, psychology, science, the gene pool, the nature and future of our planet and the cosmos, enormous cultural change and a vast remixing of the national community. A century is a long time in the history of any literary or artistic genre; and this was a century of quite unprecedented change. It saw a sequence of major and deeply disastrous historical crises, when the existence of the planet itself was at risk, when the future could have gone in one of many different ways, toward freedom or servitude. The events and ideas of the century fractured an older sense of real, valuable, human and familiar. It upset the liberal belief in history, the human value of the person. It changed the logical evolution of British society – which as the twentieth century dawned was one of the most powerful societies in the world, empire spread wide, wealth vast, its innovations many, its place on the globe certain, its confidence despite rising tides of new politics of many kinds apparently secure.

Such were the changes that came in the next hundred years that not one of the terms in this book's title (with the possible exception of the definite article) can be considered safe. Today the word 'modern'

has several meanings, both weak and strong. Often used to refer to the twentieth century – widely touted as ‘the modern century’, and its culture of unprecedented innovation – it is also used to refer to part of it, the first half, the age of the ‘Modern movement’, experimental, radical, avant-garde. If that is the Modern era, it follows that what comes next is the ‘Postmodern’ era – a convoluted but now commonplace term used to denote both the more experimental arts of the second half of the century, and the natureless nature of its late capitalist, hi-tech, pluri-cultural culture. If the second half of the century is the Postmodern era, we might ask what comes next – Postpostmodernism? Or does a quite new epochal term for doings of the third millennium come into play? Certainly ‘modern’ has a weak (modern times) and a strong (Modernist avant-garde) meaning. One of the things that will interest us in this book is the complicated interplay that exists between the two.

‘British’ is far less safe a term. Used with splendid confidence as the century dawned and the map glowed pink, the Union Jack waved in many parts of the globe, the Union (mostly) flourished and most of the world’s shipping sailed by need into London docks, it is a term of multiplying ambiguities in an age when the United Kingdom itself devolves and dissolves, the idea of Europe has acquired a quite different meaning and when the classic nineteenth-century nation state yields to new forms of political pluri-culturalism. Writing has always been cosmopolitan, and in literature the term was always open to considerable argument – not least because many of the writers sailing under this flag of convenience (British fiction, English literature) were never British at all. Henry James was American, Conrad was Polish, George Moore, Sheridan Le Fanu, Oscar Wilde, James Joyce and Samuel Beckett were Irish, Robert Louis Stevenson and Arthur Conan Doyle were Scottish, Wyndham Lewis was simply born on a ship at sea. Now many of the writers we claim today under the rubric have names like Rushdie, de Bernières, Mo, Ishiguro, Okri, Kureishi and Zameenzad. Meanwhile many of the writers born in Britain chose – like D. H. Lawrence, Lawrence Durrell, Malcolm Lowry, Graham Greene, Anthony Burgess, Muriel Spark – to live, think and write elsewhere, and have often seen their land of origin

and its literary tradition entirely from the outside. Parts of the British Isles that were in the Union have ceased, over the course of the century, to be so, leaving us with a complex and confusing paradox in the matter of Irish writing. In any case, however far back we care to go, the 'English' or to use the presently preferred (for how long?) term 'British', tradition has always been in some basic way international; Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron and Shelley are international, their writings having always been linked with travel, pilgrimage, exile, emigration, cultural pluralism, placelessness. In our own interfused and global village age, the idea of interpreting any literature, even as eclectic as that in Britain, in terms of a single national canon or sequence has obvious difficulties. And yet it does remain sensible to assume there are certain shaping aspects to a culture, definite characteristics and emphases, a national tradition, a variety of probable and recurrent subject-matters, however much it all fragments and diverges. In terms of inclusion or absence of writers, I have been pragmatic, including writers when they seem essential to the idea of a development or a tradition (James, Conrad, Joyce, Beckett) but not doing so when they seem better seen in the light of another lineage, like Flann O'Brien, Chinua Achebe, Patrick White, Michael Ondaatje, Nadine Gordimer or Thomas Keneally.

Next the tricky word 'novel'. As the term says, it exists to describe an original thing – a loose baggy monster, a form of fictional prose narrative of a certain length that contains infinite variety, assimilates many different sub-genres, draws on many origins, quite often to subvert them. Multiple-storied, containing many characters and discourses, it reaches across from reportage, social history, memoir and documentary to fantasy and romance, from the serious exploration of its own characteristics as a species of art to the most popular levels of commercial indulgence and generic repetition. It is truthful, it is false; it is high, it is low. The modern novel as we understand it is generally reckoned to date from Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605), that sceptical or deconstructive form of the old romance; though prose narrative had existed before, it here seems to encounter all the splendid scepticism of the modern world and modern prose. The novel became a popular form across Europe; in eighteenth-century Britain it became

a key public expression of culture. In the age of Balzac, Hugo, Dickens, Thackeray, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Melville, it turned into the great social archive and moral record of the nineteenth century. In the work of the Brontës, Trollope, George Eliot and Mrs Gaskell, British fiction became a rolling opera, a rich source of social knowledge and entertainment, book of etiquette, moral tract, work of political criticism, voice of romantic sentiment, agent of reform. Then came the 'modern novel', which was in many respects an attempt to upturn the Victorian novel, challenging everything from its patriarchal morality, its high-minded principles and its sexual reticence to its representation of human nature and its claim to depict 'the real'. In the twentieth century the novel acquired a new experimentalism, a new psychological complexity and a new raunchiness. Today, as popular commercial product and a form of inquiring art, it is everywhere.

Yet throughout the course of the last century the borders and frontiers of fiction have been endlessly teased over and disputed. One very important part of the argument here is the entire question of what it is the novel is and does, how it survives and continues, and where it stands in times not just of cultural but technological change, when the book itself may be yielding to something else. The novel over the twentieth century served many functions, at many levels; it attracted to itself many great writers, and many kinds of writing. It would keep D. H. Lawrence endlessly poor and Jilly Cooper, Jeffrey Archer and Helen Fielding shamelessly rich. Its greatest books would generally sell in small quantities, or at least until they became classics; its smallest books would have the most massive sales. Novelists have constantly quarrelled over the very idea of the novel, and no form has been more analyzed and questioned. 'I have an idea that I will invent a new name for my books to supplant "novel";' wrote Virginia Woolf in her diary as she struggled with the great question. 'A new – by Virginia Woolf. But what? Elegy?' As usual, the new term is hard to come by; after all, what could be newer than 'novel' itself? Yet the frontier here can open out in so many ways: to lyricism, poetry, fantasy, to reportage, memoir, autobiography, to parody, elegy, dirge or faction. And, as we can challenge the idea of the novel as genre, so we can challenge the idea of the author, the voice of omniscience,

the notion of the stable text, the confident faith in representation, the idea of fixed print on a continuous page, the idea of a publisher, the notion of the reader, the requirement that the story appear as a book. Again, the only way forward is to take to pragmatism; works of a good long length that develop fictional powers are what I shall take the novel to be.

One reason why the idea of the novel was so disputed is because it has been crucial to modern culture, especially modern British culture – and over a time when that culture has been changing radically, as has the wider world. So, briefly, what this book will be is a general survey of the development of the novel in Britain over a sequence of literary generations, from the dawn of the ‘modern novel’ to the plural, ‘postmodern’ scene of the recent present. To me it is one of the great and flourishing periods of writing, a time when the novel changed wonderfully in spirit and purpose, challenged poetry and drama for the high places of literary dominance, and then was itself challenged and transformed by new technological media – film, television, Internet – with which it has found the need to interact. Over this period it threw off a good deal of its historical framework and its Victorian constraints, formal and moral. It became an exploratory and discovering genre, and one of the fields of its exploration was the question of what the novel itself was and could do. The radical difficulty this presented for many readers – as they encountered major and baffling ‘modern’ works like James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*, Malcolm Lowry’s *Under the Volcano* or Beckett’s *The Unnamable* – is a very important part of the story. Yet, as Stephen Spender argued in his book *The Struggle of the Modern* (1963), there are really two ‘modern’ traditions that need attention. One is the ‘Modern’, experimental and avant-garde; the other is the ‘Contemporary’, which is fiction and literary art at its familiar work of exploring the world as in general we see it, and the way we live now. Like many writers, I am fascinated by both traditions, and their constant interaction, for the popular is never far from the high, and the realistic and documentary from the grotesque or fantastic.

Until quite recently, this division was important in criticism. Once it became accepted that the ‘Modern’ was the radical art of the new