



INTERPRETATIVE SUMMARIES
OF
TWENTIETH-CENTURY
AMERICAN CLASSIC NOVELS

英汉对照

纪

国长篇小说名著故事集

周静琮 编著

James Rembert 编审(英语)

东方出版中心

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Introduction

James Rembert

The value of a series of plot summaries of major twentieth-century American and British novels is twofold. First, a reader will be able to prepare himself or herself to enter the world which the author has created in his novel. In that world he lives an imagined life almost as real as the life he lives daily, and sometimes more real. A novel can bring a reader sustained joy that his own world only rarely brings him, and the same is true of sadness, which somehow pleases us in fiction. Readers of novels, one might say, live more fully than those who read no novels.

These plot summaries, if read before one begins a novel, reflect the way many of us hear stories in our daily lives. We sometimes hear an account in brief, then another version, then an expansion, then another point of view, and so forth. Similarly, when reading *The Unvanquished*, for example, we receive comments on the character of Colonel John Sartoris from different points of view, and we begin to understand his character the way we understand the personalities of some of our relatives or ancestors as perceptions of various family members told to us over the years.

In the same way we come to understand novels. First we might read a plot summary as introduction. Then we read the novel and analyze the motivations behind the characters' actions. Finally we discuss the novel with teachers, colleagues or friends and perhaps read critical or scholarly essays or books dealing with the novel. Perceptions pile upon perceptions, and the novel lives for us as characters and events in our own lives live for us in memory.

A second major value of a series of plot summaries lies in the power of a retold story to help a reader relive these novels in memory, enjoying again various moving experiences, recalling the delights of the original readings. Sometimes reading a plot summary will inspire a reader to reread a novel.

Zhou Jingqiong has a good grasp of what is important among the myriad details of a novel, what needs to be retold in order to convey the essence of the novel to her readers. Her handling of the English language, even difficult idiomatic expressions, is practically impeccable. Her accounts of twenty novels here should do much to inspire her readers to look into the original novels.

December, 1997

South Carolina, USA

序

从 80 年代中期念英美文学硕士之时起,我就对 20 世纪的长篇小说情有独钟。但是,面对琳琅满目、流派迭出的 20 世纪英美长篇经典,无论是自娱还是为了教授文学课,我在选择阅读书目时常有无从下手或顾此失彼的遗憾。因此,我一边读小说,一边查阅一些评论,也经常请教中外专家。此外,在 90 年代留学英国、访问美国期间,除了选修有关课程之外,我还留意、甚至收集了一些大学(其中包括英国的 Warwick 和美国的 Stanford 和 Yale 等名牌大学)英语系的课程设计和学生阅读书目。由此发现,我在《20 世纪美国长篇小说名著故事集》和《20 世纪英国长篇小说名著故事集》中介绍的 20 本小说大多数都有很高的重复率,因为它们在出版几十年、甚至上百年之后,仍被大众和评论界所垂青,已经成为名副其实的现实主义经典。

出版本书的目的是希望给外国文学同好提供一些选择。一个人出门远游,若囊中备有目的地的导游手册,想必能更有效地把有限的时间和精力花费在心仪的景点上。本书适合任何对英美两国的社会文化感兴趣的读者。也许,一些读者具有一定的英语基础,受客观环境限制无缘接触长篇原著(或中文译本)却又渴望对它们有所了解;也许,另一些读者

精通英语,却不知道从哪里走进阅读现当代经典的大门;也许,还有一些读者虽然饱读英美文学名著,却无暇一一重拾记忆中阅读它们时所带来的愉悦,……我希望上述读者能从本书中得到某种类似导游手册所能提供的帮助。

所谓导游手册式的帮助,就是希望阅读本书最终能使读者走向原著(或其中译本)。

约瑟夫·康拉德说过,他写作的目的是“To make you hear, to make you feel-it is, before all, to make you see. That - and no more, and it is everything.”读懂一部长篇小说,一般从两个层面着手:一个是“what”,即情节和主题;另一个是“how”,即作家的风格和作品的结构。假若读者读完本书中一部长篇的故事简介便裹足不前,那他/她充其量只知道“what”的一半,对于“how”则根本无从体验。假若一部经典长篇可以比拟成一个有血有肉有思想、生龙活虎的人的话,其故事简介则顶多不过是一个人的骨架罢了。一个人的骨架能体现那个人的全貌吗?同样,故事简介很难使读者充分享受阅读原著的那份愉悦之感。而后者正是康拉德,也是许多严肃作家已经达到的写作目标,读者岂能错过。

况且,有时候,故事简介可以不怎么触及一部小说的卓越。英国评论家 A. L. Morton 在评论《印度之旅》时就曾经说过:这部小说的地理背景、人物、甚至故事情节都很平庸,但是, E. M. Forster 硬是用平庸的材料造就了当代英国小说最优秀的一部作品。为什么?作家靠他对生活的态度、对现实的准确把握

和对小说技巧炉火纯青的运用,博得了评论界和广大读者的青睐,该书因此跨越时空的限制,在世界小说史上占有不菲的一席之地。

朱自清说,阅读经典不是为了知识,而是为了文化。现在有人担心,在市场经济的冲击下和各种实用主义的诱惑下,经典正日益丧失其内在的支撑力和动力。其实,市场经济的发展成熟并不意味着文学经典的地位必定江河日下。我们不妨看看文学经典在美国这个市场经济发达的国家的地位。最近几年,美国正经历着一场轰轰烈烈的“文化战争”(the culture wars),其争议的本质大概可以归纳为一句话:美国应该成为一个“大熔炉”(a melting pot),即把日益膨胀的移民人口改造成纯粹的美国人呢,还是应该成为一个“色拉钵”(a salad bowl),即任由肤色、民族根源迥异的美国公民,在宪法的保护下,在美国土地上保存各自的民族特性、文化风格和生活习俗而共同生息,相安无事。不管这场“战争”的结果如何,美国人对文学经典的态度却已经明朗:经典仍然在美国文化中享有不争的地位,与往昔不同的是,他们在原有的经典书目(大多出自死去的白人男作家之手)中加上了出自有色人种作家及女作家之手的名著。这是我们英美文学爱好者的福音,我们从此能在更广阔的层面上了解对象国的社会和文化。

在本书即将出版之际,我首先要感谢 James Rembert 博士。1995 年,James Rembert 博士作为访华富氏学者来到广州外语学院(现更名为广东外语外贸大学)执教,他当时就同意当本书的英语编审。从

1996年到1997年,他不但编审了所有的英语书稿,有时甚至连标点符号也重新修改,而且几次给我寄来最新参考资料,供我写作有关作者简介时参考。Rembert博士是文学教授,拥有两个博士学位。他为我提供的一切帮助均基于他对文学的热爱,他甚至拒绝考虑接受那份属于他的微薄的稿酬。

我对广东外语外贸大学的学术委员会深怀感激之情。1996年,经他们批准,我得到了一笔科研基金。对一个资历浅薄如我的作者,这笔基金含义深远。感谢顾绶昌教授(我的硕士导师)、黎导教授、方健壮副教授(英文学院院长)和李海丽副教授(英文学院副院长),多谢他们不断给予的帮助和鼓励。

感谢我父亲周文来先生,他审阅了本书中文部分的第一稿。

谨以本书献给我的英语启蒙老师纪力伟先生。

周静琼

1998年5月

广州,天河

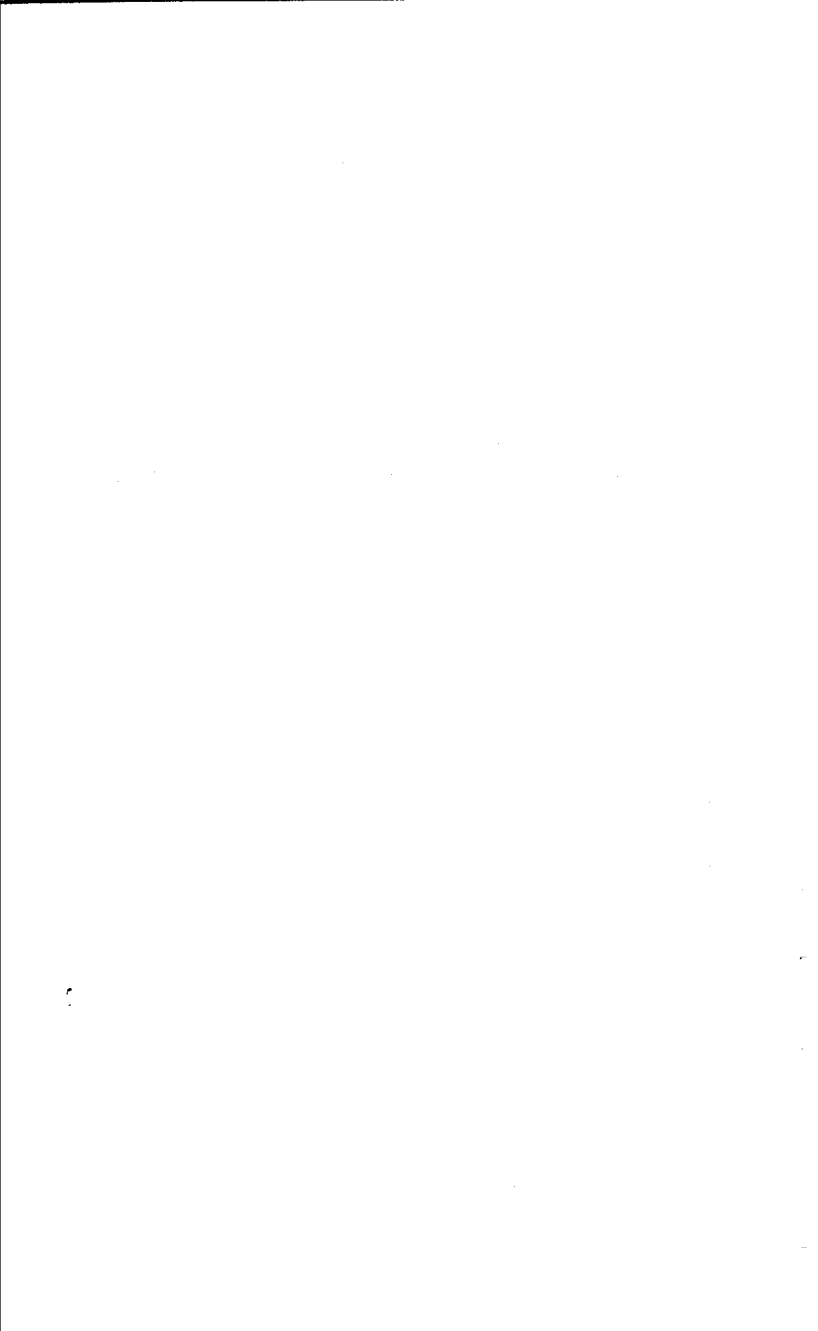
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The Stories and Their Writers



Babbitt (1922)

by Sinclair Lewis

It is an April morning of 1920.

George F. Babbitt, a businessman in his mid-forties, awakens to the sounds of morning bustle in his home in the exclusive Floral Heights section of Zenith, a city located somewhere in the American Midwest. Zenith "a city built—it seemed—for giants", is typically expanding with new factories and office buildings, modern homes and fine roads as well as the usual slums.

Arising at 7:20 am, Babbitt performs his regular morning ritual of washing and dressing. His wife, Myra Babbitt, a matronly woman, also gets up and begins her household duties. Babbitt then complains about the wet towels in his shining modern bathroom before discussing with his wife the too often repeated topic of which suit he should wear for work. When shaving, he is extremely annoyed to find that he cannot have a nice dry towel since the children have used them all and left them wet and sopping. In a fit of anger, Babbitt flings all the towels into the bathtub. He feels like exploding when his wife enters at that moment and comments that he really need not wash out all the towels. Before going downstairs for

breakfast, Babbitt gazes out of the window of his bedroom at the glittering office towers of Zenith that rise high above the rest of the city three miles off, and his faith in the religion of his business is refreshed.

Babbitt's house and its furnishings are like the middle class master himself: glossy, comfortable and moderately expensive. The house is packed with all the latest mass-produced conveniences and appliances, similar to nearly all the other houses in Floral Heights. It has such an impersonal touch that it does not look like a home. At breakfast the family sit together. The three children are Verona, aged 22, newly back from Bryn Mawr; Ted, 17, a high school student; and Tinka (Katherine), ten, the spoiled baby of the Babbitt family. As they eat, they argue over various minor issues, such as the car, school, jobs and clothes. Babbitt is suffering from his usual morning irritability. He then finds refuge in reading aloud from morning newspaper, *The Advocate Times* and *The Bible*, which provide him with most of his beliefs. The impersonal nature of the family conversation renders it impossible for them to communicate with each other. Confused and angry, Babbitt leaves for his office, wondering whether he should give up the whole business since the family does not seem to be worth his while.

Babbitt wears a three-piece suit with a Boosters' Club button pinned to his lapel, the very picture of conformity. On the way to work, Babbitt greets his neigh-

bours Sam Doppelbrau, a "Bohemian" Babbitt always disapproves of, and Howard Littlefield, a Yale Ph.D.; who works for the Zenith Street Traction Company, and Babbitt always takes pride in being his neighbour. They talk of the weather and exchange identical opinions on politics, business and world affairs. A partner in the Babbitt-Thompson (his father-in-law) Realty, Babbitt is restless this morning and does not obtain the usual satisfaction from his work. While settling down to the day's business, he begins to daydream of a fairy girl who is always his ideal in his illusion and represents an escape from the oppressive realities of the day. A highly respectable family man and having not done anything dangerous to risk his reputation, Babbitt cannot help feeling the awakening of his old romantic impulses with the coming of the spring.

After finishing countless dull details of the morning's task, Babbitt again determines to stop smoking (a decision he makes every month) and contrives a new and more funny plan to achieve this aim. But, of course, he keeps right on smoking. Finally, he telephones Paul Riesling, his college roommate, and arranges to have lunch together. Although Babbitt is regarded as a successful real-estate broker, honest, dependable and diligent, like many guys in his field, he is ignorant of the most elementary and important matters such as the nature of adequate education, police and fire services.

After again breaking his resolution not to smoke, Babbitt makes for the Zenith Athletic Club for lunch with Paul. Although Babbitt, wearing rimless glasses and smoking fat cigars, views himself as one of the builders of the city, the club whose membership he owns is not very exclusive with three thousand members. Before Paul arrives, Babbitt conducts a conversation with other club members on a variety of topics which reveals their ignorance and general illiteracy. A short time later, when he sits alone with Paul, a great success in his business, Paul confesses to be experiencing difficulties in getting along with his wife, Zilla. Despite his resolution to diet, Babbitt orders a heavy, fattening lunch. While he is not fat, he looks extremely well-fed. The two good friends finally come up with a decision to spend their summer vacation fishing in Maine and, to escape the boredom of their wives, they will set off several days earlier.

On his way back to the office Babbitt meets Henry T. Thompson, his father-in-law. He helps the old man buy a car with a discount on the price through a fellow member of the Boosters' Club who is sales manager of the Zeeco Auto Agency, reflecting complacently that his own generation of businessmen is much more polished and cultured. Back at his office, Babbitt finds it necessary to criticize Stanley Graff, his outside salesman who is asking for a payrise, for what Babbitt considers a breach of business ethics. Babbitt feels guilty when he sees that the oth-