



ROMANCE AS STRATEGY

A Study of Winnifred Eaton's Fiction

作为策略的罗曼司

温妮弗蕾德·伊顿小说研究

潘志明 (Pan Zhiming) 著

外语教学与研究出版社

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Abstract

The present book reassesses the literary creations of Winnifred Eaton, the first Chinese North American novelist, by placing her in the American tradition of romance and in American cultural, social and academic discourses around the turn of the twentieth century. Basically, the dissertation argues that Eaton reconfigures the other-directed tradition of romance to challenge, contest and contend with biologically informed American discourses on culture, society and women. Therefore, the dissertation inquires into four aspects of Eaton's literary creations, namely, her reconfiguration of the genre of romance, her challenge to physical anthropology, her contestation against evolutionist sociology and her contentions with essentialist subjugation of women.

Eaton's reconfiguration of the American tradition of romance addresses its inherent otherness. Romance as a literary genre swerves from reality and foregoes the relation between male characters and reality, thus displacing them into a geographical and/or historical space (the faraway and the long ago) and/or transposing them into encounters with racial or sexual others inhabiting that space. Rather than crippling the male protagonists and alienating them from reality, the geographical displacement affirms their own values and paradoxically restores them to the world they are alienated from or at least shortens the distance between them and that world. In this regard, the existence of the other, whether geographical, historical, racial or sexual, represents a structurally indispensable element against which romance defines its protagonists. It is particularly the case with

traditions of American romance. In the tradition of American high romance, writers such as Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne and Melville used these four types of others in quests of the Americanness of their protagonists. In the tradition of American popular romance, particularly in Japanese travel narratives, American protagonists often validate their masculinity at the cost of the (de)sexualized racial others. Eaton labels her literary works as romance, yet her unique Eurasian identity enables her to appropriate the genre for her own design; she reconfigures the relational paradigm of romance by excising its other-directedness and thereby, transforming it into a bidirectional mode of narrative that allows her to conduct experiments on biologically informed American academic discourses against the cultural, social and sexual others.

Eaton's literary experiments first of all challenge anthropology in general and ethnography in particular. Even more than romance, anthropology as a discipline patterns itself in relation to the existence of the historical, cultural and the racial others that serve as subjects of study for archeology, physical anthropology and ethnography. What's more, in the second half of the nineteenth century, anthropology gained momentous dynamo from Darwinian evolution, which helped to frame anthropological subjects as the other. Because of direct contacts with American Indians, blacks and Asians within the domestic arena, the American school of anthropology displayed great interest in the biological implications of Darwinian evolution. Works of anthropology, particularly ethnographic works, also aroused immense public enthusiasm, a salient example of which is Japonisme, a fervor for things Japanese that gave rise to numerous publications related to Japan, including

Japanese travel narratives. Eaton's Japanese romances belong to that special line of narratives, but her works also differ vastly from them. In contrast to these essentially ethnographical writings, her romances are designed to rebuke ethnographical endeavors that prefigure the Japanese as the cultural other. Instead of condescendingly gazing upon the Japanese and their culture from an Orientalist perspective, Eaton locates Westerners/Americans on the cross section of cultural encounters in the Japanese space, involving them in situations that deprive them of their privileges to indulge in Orientalist fantasies and turn them into objects to be tamed, ridiculed or chastised. Among Eaton's Japanese romances, those with all-Japanese cast address racial issues by positing characters within the Japanese cultural system and by delivering them from hereditary mires and thereby, neutralize outsider biases and disrupt American misrepresentations of the Japanese; those featuring Japanese and American characters in courtship or marriage invariably focus on cultural inquiries that interrogate and invalidate biologically based American prejudices against the Japanese. As a whole, by emptying its erotic/sexual content underneath love stories or temporary marriages, Eaton converts the genre of romance into a space that dislocates racism, banishes cultural superiority and outlaws (s)exchange in the name of cultural exchange.

Secondly, Eaton's literary experiments tackle evolutionist racial practices represented by such academic discourses as sociology and eugenics. If anthropology directs its attention to the racial other inhabiting the historical or geographical other space, sociology takes as its object of study the racial other within the

national border. Specifically, the turn-of-the-century American sociology dealt with issues related to blacks, American Indians and Asians in American societies. Like anthropology, American sociology of the day approached the domestic racial others either by adopting the Darwinian theory of evolution or by interpreting social practices in the Spencerian social Darwinism which pressed evolutionary theory into social services, thus reducing sociology into biology. Likewise, the eugenics movement, which swept the American society in the early decades of the twentieth century, applied Darwinian evolutionary theory to human improvement, advocating rigid regulations of undesired aliens for race betterment of the white race. Eugenics thus buttressed American racial discourses and practices such as race suicide, sterilization, the "Yellow Peril" and above all, exclusionary laws. In her romances, Eaton persistently contested these discourses and practices by setting up situations that either represent Americans involved in racist activities or expose the illogicality of racist scientism. This is true towards the mid of her literary career when she came out with direct contestations against racist scientism in her romances that expanded to American societies; such romances as *Sunny-San*, *Cattle* and *His Royal Nibs* unmistakably take issues against racist scientism represented by professors, politicians and other individuals involved in or obsessed with biological enterprises, either in theory or in practice. Through these romances, Eaton both articulates her criticism of American societies in unequivocal terms and sets forth to envision a world where different peoples exist side by side in peace.

The third aspect of Eaton's literary experiments engages

American discourses that regarded women as the sexual other. As a man-made world of fantasy inhabited by heroes, romance is primarily authored by male writers and populated by male protagonists. Implicit in this genre, particularly in the traditional popular romance, is the generic category of women as the sexual other. It entails the definition and construction of manhood and masculinity against and upon women as the inferior race of human beings to be conquered, possessed or disencumbered. In addition, American discourses on women in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century mainly perceived women as biological mechanisms set aside for reproductive function, an essentialist perspective that defaced women as the inferior race constitutionally unfit for sound reasoning and thereby, retired them from social arena and sequestered them into their proper home sphere as wives and mothers. From the feminist perspective, Eaton uproots the sexist undertone of romance and molds it into a narrative form that features women as heroines. Her romances present a conglomeration of women characters and her heroines as a rule are endued with strong wills, resourceful personalities and an acute sense of independence. These heroines defy cultural and social strictures imposed upon them, resort to tricksterism in their struggles against adverse forces and above all, spurn endeavors to label them as biologically inferior beings. On the one hand, Eaton's adumbrations of these heroines repudiate biologically informed prejudices against women, empowering them with the spirit of new womanhood without victimizing them in disadvantageous positions of New Woman heroines in works by American women

writers around the turn of the century. On the other hand, Eaton acknowledges biological differences between men and women. She attributes to her heroines a sense of true womanhood without trapping them in the femininity of True Woman heroines in works by American women writers in the nineteenth century. In this sense, Eaton locates her heroines between the True Woman and the New Woman and envisions the possibility of women in harmonious relationship with their male counterparts.

Eaton's literary creation mirrors her self assertion as a Eurasian woman writer, which began with her self invention of a Japanese identity as Onoto Watanna in her Japanese romances, continued in her self creation of an anonymous yet strong willed female writer hiding behind Nora Ascough in her semi(auto)biographies and finally ended in claiming herself as Winifred (Eaton) (Reeve) with her Alberta romances.

Key Words: Winnifred Eaton, Chinese American literature, romance, biology, anthropology, the racial other, the sexual other

中文摘要

本书把第一位华裔北美长篇小说家温妮弗蕾德·伊顿置于美国罗曼司传统和19世纪末、20世纪初的美国文化、社会及学术话语的语境之中，重新审视其文学作品，旨在说明伊顿的罗曼司作品对罗曼司传统所隐含的异己特性进行调拨，质疑、驳斥或抗争美国以生物学特征为基础的文化、社会和性别话语。因此，本书涵盖了伊顿文学创作的四个方面，也即对罗曼司文类的调拨、对体质人类学的质疑、对进化论社会学的驳斥以及对本质论女性从属地位的反抗。

伊顿对美国罗曼司传统的调拨所针对的是该文类内在的异己特性。作为一种文类，罗曼司偏离现实，放弃男性人物与现实之间的关系，从而把他们移置到一个遥远的地理空间、久远的历史空间或者幻想的地理或历史空间之中，与种族异己或性别异己为伴。然而，空间的转换无损于男性主人公的自我意识，也不会间离他们与现实之间的关系。相反，这往往肯定他们的自身价值，使他们重归原来的现实世界，或者至少拉近他们与那个世界之间的距离。就此而言，地域异己、历史异己、种族异己或者性别异己构成了罗曼司结构之中不可或缺的元素；换言之，罗曼司的男性主人公正是借助于这些异己元素来重新认识和定义自我的。这一点在美国罗曼司传统之中显得尤为明显。在美国高雅罗曼司传统之中，库珀、坡、霍桑、麦尔维尔等作家笔下的人物依赖以上四种异己构建他们的美国性。类似地，在美国通俗罗曼司传统之中，特别是美国旅日叙事作品之中，白人主人公往往通过赋予种族异己女性的特征来突出自己男性的伟岸。伊顿把她的文学作品定义为罗曼司，对罗曼司人物关系进行重新布局，去除其异己特性，从而把这一文类改造成具有双向视角的叙事范式，对美国以生物学特征为基础的学术话语进行批判，抗争美国社会对文化、社会以及性别异己的歧视与偏见。

伊顿的文学实验的第一个方面是对人类学的质疑，具体地说

则是对作为人类学一部分的民俗学的质疑。作为一门学科，人类学比罗曼司更加依赖于它与历史、文化以及种族异己之间的结构关系，因为这些异己正是其分支（考古学、体质人类学以及民俗学）的研究对象。再者，19世纪下半叶达尔文进化论给了人类学巨大的动力，对人类学把其研究对象纳入异己的框架起到了推波助澜的作用。由于它与美洲印第安人、黑人以及亚洲人的直接接触，人类学美国学派对达尔文进化论的生物学含义表现出了极大的兴趣。同时，人类学著作，尤其是民俗学著作，也激发了美国大众对人类学的热情，一个突出的例子就是19世纪末、20世纪初西方对日本文化和艺术的狂热，其中就包括美国旅日叙事作品。伊顿的文学作品既与这类作品一脉相承，又与它们大相径庭。与这些本质上属于民俗学写作的作品不同，伊顿的作品旨在批驳民俗学先入为主地把日本人当作种族异己和文化异己的行为。伊顿不同于民俗学家，她不是居高临下地以东方主义的视角审视日本人及其文化，而是把西方人/美国人置于日本这一地域空间的文化冲突交汇点上，创造一个他们没有特权、无法享受东方主义幻想的语境，把他们变成驯服、嘲笑或惩罚的对象。在伊顿的日本罗曼司作品中，那些仅描写日本人的作品把人物置于日本文化系统之内，从而把他们从民俗学的遗传或继承关系的泥淖之中解放出来，并借此消除民俗学白人中心主义偏见，推翻美国人心目中对日本人的误解。那些涉及日本人和美国人的作品虽然在表面上讲述的是爱情故事和婚姻关系，实质上批判的是以生物学特征为基础的美国民俗学研究对日本人及其文化的偏见和歧视。总而言之，通过清空罗曼司爱情故事或临时婚姻主题之下所隐含的性内涵，伊顿把种族歧视和白人文化优越性从罗曼司的叙事空间中流放出去，把罗曼司从西方男性的幻想叙事空间转变为文化交流的叙事空间。

伊顿文学实验的第二个方面与社会学和优生学等学术话语所代表的进化论种族实践相关。如果说人类学关注异域中的异己的话，

那么社会学的研究目标就是国家疆域之内的种族异己。具体地说，19世纪末、20世纪初的美国社会学研究的是美国社会内部的黑人、印第安人以及亚裔移民。与人类学一样，该时期的美国社会学，特别是其芝加哥学派，在研究种族异己时要么采用达尔文的进化理论，要么从社会达尔文主义的视角看待社会，这本质上是把社会学研究建立在生物学的基础上。类似地，20世纪初美国社会的优生学运动把进化论用于改善人类社会，倡导优化白人种族，约束不受欢迎的民族，成为美国种族话语（种族自杀、绝育、“黄祸”以及排外法案）的理论基础。伊顿在她的罗曼司作品中通过再现美国人的种族实践，揭露种族主义科学至上主义的矛盾，反对这些话语和实践。从其文学创作的中期开始，伊顿的注意力逐渐从日本的地域空间转移到美洲社会中来，展现渗透到美洲社会各个领域的以进化论生物学为基础的科学至上主义。《桑妮小姐》、《牲口》、《少爷》等罗曼司作品对教授、政客以及其他潜心于生物实验的人物所代表的科学至上主义提出了挑战。借助于这些作品，伊顿毫不含糊地表达了她对美洲社会的批评，同时也构想了一个各民族和谐相处的世界。

伊顿文学实验的第三个方面所抗争的是美洲社会中把女性当作性别异己的话语和实践。罗曼司本来就是一个由男性作家所创造的关于男性主人公的世界，因此它在文类范畴上把女性当作了男性的性别异己，这在通俗罗曼司传统中尤为明显。这意味着男人以征服、占有或摆脱女性这一性别弱势群体来定义男性的刚毅与伟岸。再者，19世纪下半叶和20世纪初的美国女性话语中的本质论观点认为，女性生理上不适于思维，女性不过是生儿育女的生物体，并借此把她们从社会领域中排除出去，让她们安心于在家庭这个“她们自己的天地”里相夫教子。从女权主义的角度来看，伊顿从根本上消除了罗曼司这一文类的性别歧视色彩，把它改造成以女性为主人公的叙事范式。伊顿的罗曼司作品描写了各式各样的女性人物，而

她的女性主人公通常都具有坚强的意志、敏于世事的个性和独立的自我意识，她们反抗文化和社会强加在女性身上的清规戒律，“不择手段地”与敌对势力作斗争，拒绝一切把她们当作低人一等的生物体的行为。伊顿在刻画女性主人公时，一方面批驳以生物学特征为基础的性别歧视，赋予她们新女性的精神，同时又不让她们落入美国新女性小说人物的不利境遇；另一方面，伊顿又承认女性与男性的生理差异，赋予其女性主人公美国真女性小说人物的意识，却又不为真女性人物的柔弱所累。如此，伊顿就把她的女性主人公置于真女性和新女性之间，构想了男女和谐相处的可能性。

伊顿的文学创作反映了其作为一个欧亚裔女性作家的自强之路。在开始创作日本罗曼司作品之时，她自创了一个日本身份——夫野渡名。其后，在她的自传作品中，她又杜撰了一个躲在诺拉·艾斯科夫身后的无名却又具有强烈女性意识的作家。最后，在创作阿尔伯达罗曼司时，她的自强之路以回归自我、成为威妮弗蕾德·伊顿而结束。

关键词：温妮弗蕾德·伊顿、华裔美国文学、罗曼司、进化论、人类学、种族异己、性别异己

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