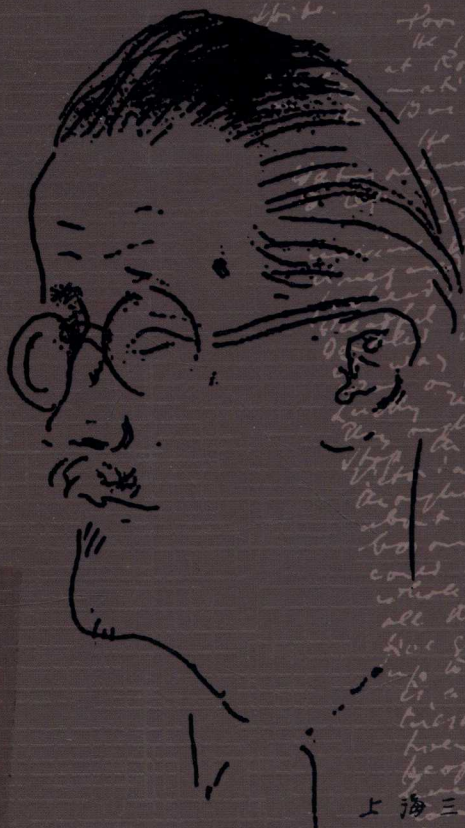


聚焦与变奏

陈 豪 著

《尤利西斯》的美学研究

Variation and Convergence:
An Aesthetic Study of Joyce's Ulysses



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前言

爱尔兰作家詹姆斯·乔伊斯(1882—1941)的巨著《尤利西斯》被公认为是20世纪英语文学史上一座难以逾越的高峰。自问世以来,小说以其广博的信息覆盖,丰富的主题内涵,多样的语言风格和新奇的文学技巧吸引着无数学者的研究与解读。在笔者看来,《尤利西斯》作为旷世杰作的一个重要原因在于其蕴涵的巨大美学价值。撇开思想主题不谈,仅针对其艺术表现力而言,小说完全可以被认为是乔伊斯美学思想的集大成之作,也是西方各种美学流派相互碰撞和对话的一次盛宴。由于作品在艺术手法上的高度杂糅性,学术界对其美学特征的界定出现了各种不同的声音。有些认为作品表面离经叛道,但本质上符合传统审美标准,他们的主要依据是小说的神话结构和自然主义的叙事风格都是对传统的继承和发扬。还有学者认定小说具有超前性的审美意识,也就是说《尤利西斯》超越了传统读者的审美趣味,突破了一般叙事作品的艺术界限,全面提升了小说作为一门艺术品种的境界。

本书旨在通过探讨这部作品的形式、语言和接受状况来揭示《尤利西斯》的美学特征和原则。本书认为:变奏与聚合是贯穿作品最为显著的美学特质,构成了作品丰富表现力及其独特审美体验的基石。换言之,《尤利西斯》的美学成就集中体现在文本从形式到内容既兼容并包又有机统一,既千变万化又有序平衡的特性上。

笔者认为,所谓的变奏指的是艺术作品在表现形式及内容上呈现出的一种灵动感。它为艺术注入活力,并赋予一部杰作理应具备的复杂

性。变奏这一美学特质可以用来归纳《尤利西斯》的文本以及读者阅读反应的浅层特征。而聚合则被定义为能使作品趋于完整统一的一种美学性征,它的主要功能是维护作品的内在秩序,并使各要素之间形成和谐平衡的关系。聚合原则已然成为了乔伊斯设计小说形式结构及其语言风格的主要原则。《尤利西斯》的美学成就缘于其文本能同时兼容这两种相异特质,它们在文本中互为牵制又相互配合的平衡关系使小说的艺术境界大幅升华,臻于巅峰。在变奏与聚合的作用下,小说不仅打破了混乱与秩序之间的界限,现代经验与古代神话之间的隔阂,诸多美学观念也因此互相融合,从而极大地丰富了读者的审美体验。依笔者愚见,美的创造是文本与读者,即审美客体与审美主体间互动的结果,因此本书的分析立足于文本内及文本外与美学有关的一切因素。

本书第一章通过小说的结构、叙事以及人物设置来考察《尤利西斯》的形式美学,主要论证了作为美学原则的变奏与聚合在小说形式建构中所起的作用。虽然《尤利西斯》内容上纷繁复杂,变换无穷,但形式本身所拥有的强大聚合力,能帮助文本建立秩序并整合文本零乱的内容。笔者发现《尤利西斯》变化不定的表层之下潜伏着一个能通过平衡与聚焦来组织文本的超稳定结构。另外,小说叙事结构的聚合作用也是显而易见的,它虽然糅合了各种叙事时间、声音、视角,却始终以人物刻画为焦点,而各种叙事手段也能做到相互协调,和谐运作。就人物设置而言,众多人物亦非随意布局,他们中的每一位都担负起一定的职能,是关系配置中的基本单位。出于人物塑造的考虑,乔伊斯让主要人物经历了一系列变形。但同时,人物关系网又被设计成一个三层式的聚合结构:即边缘人物、次要人物、核心人物,层层递进聚焦。

第二章旨在通过风格、修辞以及符号三方面来考察《尤利西斯》语言的美学特征。本章指出《尤利西斯》的语言特色依然紧扣变奏与聚焦这两个原则。一方面,变奏在乔伊斯的语言实验中屡见不鲜。它作用于小说语言的文体、修辞及表意,创造出令人炫目的艺术效果并伴有强烈美感。另一方面,尽管乔伊斯的语言变幻无穷,但基本服务于一个宗旨,即力求小说表现力的最大化,这一点恰恰体现了聚合的特质。通过语言风格的解构和重构,作者旨在表明:语言表现力的高低取决于它对内容

的适应度,文学的灵魂永远在于内容而非单纯风格技巧的展示。而通过考察小说所运用的各种修辞手段,我们亦不难发现,在《尤利西斯》中,修辞是展示人物内心的最为有效手段,它的运用实现了作者以文字形式记录感性经验以及个体在无意识状态下的种种体验。所以修辞拓宽了语言的外延,使其成为反映精神真相的工具。最后,借助语言表意的象征功能,乔伊斯创造性地在他的作品里重现了人类历史。小说语词能指和所指的分裂极大地丰富了文本的内涵,使百科全书般的海量信息得以生动展示,而诸多意义又都处于可控范围,并指向人类的永恒母题——历险。

第三章从文学的生产及消费角度出发,阐释了《尤利西斯》接受美学中的基本特征。本章分析了乔伊斯创作小说时的美学观念,并且分别考察了文本潜在和实际读者的阅读反应。笔者发现变奏与聚集贯通整个接受过程。变奏发轫于乔伊斯的美学观念中,他的美学体系具备高度的兼容性和灵活性,既不恪守传统也不偏执现代,而这一特点显然影响了他的创作。通过研究作者与文本,文本与读者间的互动关系,笔者认为《尤利西斯》的美学价值处于不断变化之中,不同的美学评判标准能使其释放出不一样的艺术光芒。值得注意的是,小说的文本拥有一个多元化的召唤结构,它包涵的美学特质能服务于多元化的读者群,并为他们所接受和欣赏。因此,文本中的隐含读者应是一位兼收并蓄型的人物,他能跨越传统与现代,辩证地处理各种美学观念之间的冲突,最终实现审美体验的最大化。此外,本章也探讨了作品在接受过程中所呈现的聚合特征。首先,在审美过程中,文本始终作为焦点发挥着聚合的作用。其次,文本的隐含读者不仅具备化解冲突的能力,而且还可以起到桥梁的连接作用,沟通作者与读者双方。当然在实际接受过程中,聚合也是无处不在的。一个显而易见的事实是尽管充满争议,《尤利西斯》巨大的艺术成就已为现代读者一致认可。

本书结论部分指出变奏与聚合的统一源于乔伊斯无尽的创造力以及对各种材料及技巧的平衡施用。创造力的宗旨就是求变,所以这是变奏的原动力,而平衡是实现聚合的基本前提,因为平衡有利于分歧的化解,求同存异,并最终使作品达到自由与秩序,动态美与静态美的和谐统

一。此外,文章在结论部分还归纳了《尤利西斯》中构成小说变奏与聚合内在动因的七组对立关系的平衡,它们分别是混乱与秩序的平衡,多样性与统一的平衡,真实与虚构的平衡,继承与创新的平衡,叙事与模仿的平衡,神话与现实的平衡以及分歧与共识的平衡。作者对这些对象关系的妥当处理无疑确保了《尤利西斯》至高无上的文学地位。

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Abstract

Ulysses is a novel of enormous aesthetic value. This dissertation attempts to examine the aesthetic qualities of the work and demonstrate the aesthetic principles behind the text by focusing on its form, language and reception. The central argument is that variation and convergence hold immense aesthetic value which makes for the peerless beauty of *Ulysses* and contributes to its artistic prominence. Variation is defined as a kind of changeability in the form or substance of artistic expression. It provides a work of art with dynamic energy and complexity that ensures its long-term artistic vitality. This dissertation argues that the quality of variation mainly characterizes the textual surface and the state of readers' responses. Convergence is defined as a tendency towards unity and wholeness. It brings order where chaos reigns, endows diversity with oneness of purpose, and maintains a balance between opposite forces. It is primarily adopted as an organizing principle of the formal and linguistic structure of the work. Joyce's aesthetic achievement in *Ulysses* is basically related to his integration of the two ostensibly contrasting qualities in the text which inspires a sensation of perfection and elevates the novel to a new level of artistic sophistication. Based on the two qualities, the novel successfully aligns order with disorder and parallels modern life with classic myth. It has a compatibility with different aesthetic tendencies and perceptions. As a

result, it can fascinate readers with diverse tastes and enriches their aesthetic experience to the fullest. The dissertation holds that the making of beauty in literature calls for the interaction between text (aesthetic object) and reader (aesthetic subject). So its focus falls on both textual and extra-textual factors which make for the aesthetic accomplishment of *Ulysses*.

The first chapter investigates the formal aesthetics of *Ulysses* by probing into its structure, narrative and character relationships. It substantiates that variation and convergence are the aesthetic principles underlying the formal construction of the work. Endowed with the power of convergence, form plays a crucial role in bringing order to the textual variations and giving coherence to the diverse elements of the novel. The main finding of this chapter is that the novel possesses a super stable structure which underlies the protean surface of the text. The textual structure assumes the role of organization through balancing and focusing. The narrative structure is found to harmonize varied narrative time, voices and points of view for the need of characterization. The characters are also not randomly deployed; every one of them has a specific function and constitutes the basic unit of a relation network. For the sake of characterization, Joyce subjects the major characters to a series of transformations. The network is a converging structure that directs the least important characters towards the relatively important ones which are finally centered on the major ones.

Focusing on the linguistic aesthetics of *Ulysses* in the second chapter, the author argues that variation and convergence, as two aesthetic properties, also hold sway in the linguistic configuration of *Ulysses*. Variation prevails in Joyce's linguistic experimentations which not only produce a vertiginous effect but also conjure up an intense sense of beauty. And yet they are governed and guided by the principle of maximizing the representational effectiveness of the novel. Through the deconstruction and reconstruction of style, Joyce demonstrates that the priority of content over

style is a prerequisite for developing the representational function of language. By virtue of the stylistic experimentation, Joyce substantiates that the soul of literature always lies in content rather than in the exhibition of stylistic techniques, and therefore the best style is the one which aligns itself with content. His experimentation with various rhetorical devices indicates that rhetoric is not only an effective means that reflects the beauty of language but also exposes the truth of the spiritual world. Although those devices differ in function, they all help the author to translate a lot of perceptual and sensory experiences into words. Some devices obscure the meaning of words and cause confusion in understanding, and such an effect is exactly what Joyce needs so as to represent the chaotic state of the unconscious. Joyce's experimentation with the symbolic use of language allows him to represent the evolution of human beings in an artistic way. The significations of the text are considerably enriched by the split between signifier and the designated signified, which creates room for him to cram an encyclopedic amount of information into the novel. Nevertheless the significations do not proliferate in an uncontrollable way; they are organized to represent adventure, the eternal motif of human life.

The third chapter uncovers the law that governs the reception aesthetics of *Ulysses* by tracing the whole process of literary production and consumption. It not only gives a critical review of the author's aesthetic conception by the time he wrote the novel but also examines the potential and actual readers' responses. The author finds that variation and convergence have run through the whole reception process. The initial variation comes into being in Joyce's compatible aesthetic system. His all-round perspective places him in a vantage position on which his aesthetic experience thrives with the interpenetration of traditional and modern values. This author finds that variation becomes more pronounced when the multi-faceted response-inviting structure calls forth sympathetic responses from different groups of readers. The fact that the novel is able to

coordinate itself with different aesthetic criteria gives rise to the situation that readers' responses to the novel vary with the change of times. As a result of those variations, readers of different generations take aesthetic pleasure typical of their own times. On the other hand, this chapter discusses how the power of convergence takes effect through the interplay among author, text and reader. The text remains a focal point during the aesthetic process. The implied reader arising from it is able to reconcile contradictory aesthetic doctrines, bringing the author and the reader together. His influence extends to the reception process in which, despite a lot of controversies, there has been a consensus among readers on the supreme artistic value of the work.

The book concludes that the unity of variation and convergence is due to Joyce's inexhaustible creativity and his balanced handling of writing techniques and materials. Creativity whose objective is to change is the motive power behind all the variations, and the state of balance is essential to the fulfillment of convergence. It helps the latter to reconcile divergence and resolve the chaotic situation. Combining kinesis with stasis and rational order with chaotic energy, it points to a tendency towards aesthetic satisfaction and perfection. In the conclusion part, the aesthetic value deriving from the two qualities is summarized into seven well-balanced dichotomies that underpin the aesthetic construction of *Ulysses*, including chaos and order, variety and unity, fact and fiction, inheritance and innovation, diegesis and mimesis, myth and daily life, and divergence and agreement. Notably, Joyce's appropriate handling of these dichotomies ensures the matchless state of *Ulysses* in the history of literature.

Key Words: Joyce; *Ulysses*; Aesthetic Study; Variation and Convergence

List of Abbreviations

G	The Gilbert Schemata.
L	The Linati Schemata.
PAYM	<i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.</i> Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1992.
WR	"The Wandering Rocks"
"Oxen"	"Oxen of the Sun"

Contents

前言	1
Acknowledgments	1
Abstract	1
List of Abbreviations	1
 Introduction	 1
I. The Aesthetic Achievement of <i>Ulysses</i>	1
II. A Review of Aesthetic Criticisms of <i>Ulysses</i>	5
III. The Main Argument and the Organization of the Book	10
 Chapter One Formal Aesthetics in <i>Ulysses</i>	 17
I. A Gestalt Paradigm: The Textual Structure	20
II. A Synthesized Patchwork: The Narrative Mode	42
III. Transformation and Confluence: The Character Configuration	59
 Chapter Two Linguistic Aesthetics in <i>Ulysses</i>	 70
I. The Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Style	71
II. The Sensuality and Obscurity of Rhetoric	95

III. The Fission and Fusion of Meaning	112
Chapter Three Reception Aesthetics in <i>Ulysses</i>	129
I. The Complementary Unity of Joyce's Aesthetic Conception	130
II. The Merging of Different Visions: The Implied Readers in <i>Ulysses</i>	139
III. Controversy and Consensus in the Aesthetic Reception of <i>Ulysses</i>	151
Conclusion	161
Bibliography	168
Appendix	175

Introduction

I. The Aesthetic Achievement of *Ulysses*

James Joyce (1882 – 1941) is unarguably one of the most influential and controversial writers in the modernist movement of the early 20th century. His writings have made a monumental contribution to the development of novelistic form and technique. He is not a prolific writer, but his four novels not only carry the literary heritage of the past but also explore the new modes of expression for the future. His literary achievements have exerted an important influence on many generations of writers in the western world as diverse as Beckett, Borges, Nabokov and Rushdie, etc. His earlier novels, *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* demonstrate his initial efforts to inherit the tradition of realism and naturalism, and *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's wake* which mark the rise of a literary giant are most notable for their experimental style and innovative design that permanently fascinate and distress both critics and readers. These novels are all aesthetically outstanding with distinctive qualities that tremendously enrich the artistic pleasure of fiction reading.

Widely acclaimed as the greatest English novel of the twentieth

century^[1], *Ulysses* has shocked and intrigued the reading public for generations since its debut in the *Little Review*. The greatness of the work lies in its encyclopedic reach, epic framework and unprecedented originality in both form and content. It not only stands as a landmark of modern fiction but also marks the termination of an old era in the development of English fiction in a way that, as T. S. Eliot observes, “destroyed the whole of the Nineteenth century” and “showed up the futility of all English styles.” (Woolf 1954:49)

Certainly, such a stupendous work poses a tremendous challenge for both readers and critics. A thorough interpretation or evaluation of it calls for multidisciplinary perspectives and endeavors which few individual critics manage to offer. But after all, *Ulysses* has remained and will always remain a novel with all the components essential to this genre. Though Eliot once disclaimed it as a novel, he did this just for the purpose of emphasizing the author’s creative application of mythic pattern: “if you call it an epic, it will not matter. If it is not a novel, that is simply because the novel is a form which will not serve.” (Eliot 2005, 167) For a novelist, no matter what drives him to write, his first priority is always to guarantee the aesthetic appeal of his work if he takes his job seriously and regards fiction as a sort of narrative art. Considering himself as an artist, Joyce is aesthetically conscious of the importance of artistry in literary writing. In this regard, the aesthetic approach ought to draw us nearer to the ultimate significance of *Ulysses* than other approaches of interpretation do. The central concern of this dissertation hereby rests on the aesthetics of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Its intended goal is to discover the aesthetic qualities of the work and demonstrate the aesthetic principles behind it by examining its form, language and reception.

[1] According to the list made by the Modern library and Waterstone’s, Joyce’s *Ulysses* ranks at the top.