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剑桥美国小说新论·14
(英文影印版)

New Essays on

*The Sound
and the Fury*

《喧哗与骚动》新论

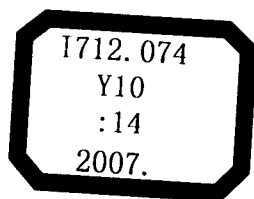
Noel Polk 编



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举报电话: 010-62752024

电子邮箱: fd@pup.pku.edu.cn

导 读

北京大学英语系教授 陶洁

近年来,美国文学在我国很受欢迎。大专院校英语系纷纷开设美国文学选读和专题课,学生从中学到的大部分内容是美国小说。不仅如此,在本科毕业论文、硕士论文或博士论文方面,学生所选题材也大多为关于某部美国小说或某个美国小说家。然而,我们的学生往往热衷理论而对作品或作家缺乏深入细致的了解和分析。他们往往先大谈理论规则,然后罗列一些例证,不能很好地把理论和文本融会贯通,恰如其分地结合在一起。在这种情况下,我们需要一些好的参考资料来帮助学生更好地认识和理解他们在阅读或研究的作品和作家。《剑桥美国小说新论》正是这样一套优秀的参考书。

这套丛书的负责人是曾经主编过《哥伦比亚美国文学史》的艾默里·埃利奥特教授,并且由英国剑桥大学出版社在上世纪80年代中期开始陆续出书,至今仍在发行并出版新书,目前已有五十多种,不仅出平装本还有精装本。一套书发行二十多年还有生命力,估计还会继续发行,主要因为它确实从学生的需要出发,深受他们和教师的喜爱。

《剑桥美国小说新论》的编排方式比较统一。根据主编制定的原则,每本书针对一部美国文学历史上有名望的大作家的一本经典小说,论述者都是研究这位作家的知名学者。开篇是一位权威专家的论述,主要论及作品的创作过程、出版历史、当年的评价以及小说发表以来不同时期的主要评论和阅读倾向。随后是四到五篇论述,从不同角度用不同的批评方法对作品进行分析和阐



释。这些文章并非信手拈来,而是专门为这套丛书撰写的,运用的理论都比较新,其中不乏颇有新意的真知灼见。书的最后是为学生进一步学习和研究而提供的参考书目。由此可见,编书的学者们为了帮助学生确实煞费苦心,努力做到尽善尽美。

这五十多种书有早期美国文学家库珀的《最后的莫希干人》,也有当代试验小说大师品钦的《拍卖第49号》和厄普代克那曾被《时代》杂志评为1923年以来100部最佳小说之一的《兔子,跑吧!》;有我们比较熟悉的麦尔维尔的《白鲸》,也有我们还不了解的他的《漂亮水手》;有中国学生很喜欢的海明威的长篇小说《永别了,武器》,令人想不到的是还有一本论述他所有的短篇小说的集子。有些大作家如亨利·詹姆斯、威廉·福克纳等都有两三本作品入选,但它们都分别有专门的集子。丛书当然涉及已有定论的大作家,包括黑人和白人作家(可惜还没有华裔作家的作品),但也包括20世纪70年代妇女运动中发掘出来的如凯特·肖邦的《觉醒》和佐拉·尼尔·赫斯顿的《他们眼望上苍》,甚至还有我国读者很熟悉的斯托夫人的《汤姆叔叔的小屋》。当年这部小说曾经风靡美国,在全世界都有一定的影响,后来被贬为“政治宣传”作品,从此在美国文学史上销声匿迹。70年代后随着要求扩大文学经典中女性和少数族裔作家的呼声日益高涨,人们才开始重新评价这部作品,分析它对日后妇女作家的影响、对黑人形象的塑造,甚至它在美国文学的哥特式传统中的地位等等。

这样的例子还有很多,例如威廉·迪恩·豪威尔斯和他的《赛拉斯·拉帕姆的发迹》。以前人们只肯定他在发展现实主义文学和理论方面的贡献,对他的作品除了《赛拉斯·拉帕姆的发迹》评价都不太高。但在这本新论文集子里编者对已有定论进行挑战,强调豪威尔斯的小说、他的现实主义跟当时的社会经济文化现状有很大的关系。他的小说既有其文学形式,又是一种社会力量。另外一位19世纪新英格兰作家萨拉·奥尼·裘威特过去一向被看成是乡土作家,现在学者们用女性主义观点强调她的《尖枞树之乡》对美国文学的贡献,分析当年的种族、民族主义和文学市场

对她写作的影响。用封底宣传语言来说,这本集子对美国文学研究、女性主义批评理论和美国研究等方面都会引起很大的兴趣。

还有一本书似乎在我们国家很少有人提起过——亨利·罗思的《就说是睡着了》。此书在20世纪30年代曾经风靡一时,此后长期销声匿迹,60年代又再度受到推崇。现在这部小说则是上面提到的《时代》杂志100部优秀小说中的一部,被认为是上个世纪头50年里最为出色的美国犹太小说、最优秀的现代主义小说之一。评论家认为集子里的文章采用心理分析、社会历史主义等批评方法探讨了有关移民、族裔和文化归属等多方面的问题。

这套集子里还出现了令人信服的新论点。很长时间内海明威一直被认为是讨厌女人的大男子主义者。但在关于他的短篇小说的论述里,作者通过分析《在密执安北部》,令人信服地证明海明威其实对妇女充满同情。不仅如此,这一论断还瓦解了海明威在《太阳照样升起》中充分暴露他的厌女症的定论。

然而,作者们并不侈谈理论或玩弄理论名词,所有的论断都是既以一定的理论为基础,又对文本进行深入的分析;既把理论阐述得深入浅出,又把作品分析得丝丝入扣,让人不由得不可不信服。他们能够做到这一点完全是因为他们了解学生的水平和需要。

我认为《剑桥美国小说新论》是一套很好的参考书。北京大学出版社购买版权,出版这套书是个有益于外国文学研究教学的决定。

Series Editor's Preface

In literary criticism the last twenty-five years have been particularly fruitful. Since the rise of the New Criticism in the 1950s, which focused attention of critics and readers upon the text itself – apart from history, biography, and society – there has emerged a wide variety of critical methods which have brought to literary works a rich diversity of perspectives: social, historical, political, psychological, economic, ideological, and philosophical. While attention to the text itself, as taught by the New Critics, remains at the core of contemporary interpretation, the widely shared assumption that works of art generate many different kinds of interpretations has opened up possibilities for new readings and new meanings.

Before this critical revolution, many works of American literature had come to be taken for granted by earlier generations of readers as having an established set of recognized interpretations. There was a sense among many students that the canon was established and that the larger thematic and interpretative issues had been decided. The task of the new reader was to examine the ways in which elements such as structure, style, and imagery contributed to each novel's acknowledged purpose. But recent criticism has brought these old assumptions into question and has thereby generated a wide variety of original, and often quite surprising, interpretations of the classics, as well as of rediscovered works such as Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, which has only recently entered the canon of works that scholars and critics study and that teachers assign their students.

The aim of The American Novel Series is to provide students of American literature and culture with introductory critical guides

to American novels and other important texts now widely read and studied. Usually devoted to a single work, each volume begins with an introduction by the volume editor, a distinguished authority on the text. The introduction presents details of the work's composition, publication history, and contemporary reception, as well as a survey of the major critical trends and readings from first publication to the present. This overview is followed by four or five original essays, specifically commissioned from senior scholars of established reputation and from outstanding younger critics. Each essay presents a distinct point of view, and together they constitute a forum of interpretative methods and of the best contemporary ideas on each text.

It is our hope that these volumes will convey the vitality of current critical work in American literature, generate new insights and excitement for students of American literature, and inspire new respect for and new perspectives upon these major literary texts.

Emory Elliott
University of California, Riverside

Contents

Series Editor's Preface
page vii

1
Introduction
NOEL POLK
page 1

2
Faulkner's Text Which Is Not One
DAWN TROUARD
page 23

3
"Now I Can Write":
Faulkner's Novel of Invention
DONALD M. KARTIGANER
page 71

4
Quentin Compson:
Tyrrenian Vase or Crucible of Race?
RICHARD GODDEN
page 99



5

Trying Not to Say:
A Primer on the Language of
The Sound and the Fury

NOEL POLK

page 139

Notes on Contributors

page 177

Selected Bibliography

page 179

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桥
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Introduction

NOEL POLK

THE *SOUND AND THE FURY* is the quintessential American high modernist text. For over sixty years now, but especially since its sudden “discovery” by readers and critics in the late forties and early fifties, it has attracted the attention of most major critics and nearly every major critical movement. It has been a sort of litmus paper on which critical approaches have tested themselves, from Marxism to New Criticism, to Structuralism and Poststructuralism, Deconstruction, Psychoanalytics, Linguistics, Feminism, and New Historicism, all of which seem to find it among the *sine qua nons* of its particular approach. Because it is so rich, so astonishingly full of the mainstreams of twentieth-century culture, it stands in a reciprocal relationship to us: it opens itself up to economic, historical, philosophical, religious, cultural, and social analyses, and in its reflecting turn enables us to see how profoundly all these streams are related to each other, and to us. Each of these approaches has enriched our understanding of the novel (though not all readings have done so), and it has generously given us back ourselves. Even so, if the amount of current critical activity involving *The Sound and the Fury* is any indication, it remains a Matterhorn of seemingly inexhaustible splendor, with unscaled faces we haven’t even discovered yet.

Faulkner’s fourth completed novel, *The Sound and the Fury* comes in his career at the end of more than a decade of feverish reading and writing. In the late teens and early twenties he wrote reams of derivative poetry that reflected his absorption of the language and concerns of the European Romantics, of the *fin de siècle* poets, of the essential thinkers during the period of his intellectual gestation: Freud, Einstein, Bergson, Frazer; the literary modernists:



Pound, Anderson, Dos Passos, and especially Joyce and Eliot. Thanks partly to the mentorship of Oxford, Mississippi, lawyer Phil Stone, partly to his friendship with writers like Stark Young and Sherwood Anderson, partly to his travels, and partly to the University of Mississippi Library, Faulkner had access to a wide range of the literature of the past and to the most avant-garde of current writing, all of which he devoured.

His own accounts of the origins of *The Sound and the Fury* are eyeball-deep in metaphors economic, romantic, modernist, and paternal:

When I began it I had no plan at all. I wasn't even writing a book. I was thinking of books, publication, only in the reverse, in saying to myself, I won't have to worry about publishers liking or not liking this at all. Four years before I had written *Soldiers' Pay*. It didn't take long to write and it got published quickly and made me about five hundred dollars. I said, Writing novels is easy. You don't make much doing it, but it is easy. I wrote *Mosquitoes*. It wasn't quite so easy to write and it didn't get published quite as quickly and it made me about four hundred dollars. I said, Apparently there is more to writing novels, being a novelist, than I thought. I wrote *Sartoris*. It took much longer, and the publisher refused it at once. But I continued to shop it about for three years with a stubborn and fading hope, perhaps to justify the time which I had spent writing it. This hope died slowly, though it didn't hurt at all. One day I seemed to shut a door between me and all publishers' addresses and book lists. I said to myself, Now I can write. Now I can make myself a vase like that which the old Roman kept at his bedside and wore the rim slowly away with kissing it. So I, who had never had a sister and was fated to lose my daughter in infancy, set out to make myself a beautiful and tragic little girl.¹

He wrote this in 1933, as part of an introduction to a proposed new edition of the novel which never got beyond the planning stages. The introduction, extant in several versions, was not published until 1972, but throughout his career, especially in the 1950s when as a Nobel Laureate he was lionized and interviewed everywhere he went, he continued to mine the vein he had opened there, and spun variations on this basic story, creating a sort of myth about the novel's writing and conception. His oft-cited interview with Jean Stein in the *Paris Review* in the mid-1950s is

his most elaborate and well-known version of the novel's composition:

It began with a mental picture. I didn't realize at the time it was symbolical. The picture was of the muddy seat of a little girl's drawers in a pear tree where she could see through a window where her grandmother's funeral was taking place and report what was happening to her brothers on the ground below. By the time I explained who they were and what they were doing and how her pants got muddy, I realized it would be impossible to get all of it into a short story and that it would have to be a book. And then I realized the symbolism of the soiled pants, and that image was replaced by the one of the fatherless and motherless girl climbing down the rainpipe to escape from the only home she had, where she had never been offered love or affection or understanding. I had already begun to tell it through the eyes of the idiot child since I felt that it would be more effective as told by someone capable only of knowing what happened, but not why. I saw that I had not told the story that time. I tried to tell it again, the same story through the eyes of another brother. That was still not it. I told it for the third time through the eyes of the third brother. That was still not it. I tried to gather the pieces together and fill in the gaps by making myself the spokesman. It was still not complete, not until 15 years after the book was published when I wrote as an appendix to another book the final effort to get the story told and off my mind, so that I myself could have some peace from it. It's the book I feel tenderest towards. I couldn't leave it alone, and I never could tell it right, though I tried hard and would like to try again, though I'd probably fail again.²

In other accounts, Faulkner claimed that it began in a short story about the Compson children, a story

without plot, of some children being sent away from the house during the grandmother's funeral. They were too young to be told what was going on and they saw things only incidentally to the childish games they were playing.³

Most commentators have taken Faulkner a bit more literally in these comments than is wise – or necessary. If *The Sound and the Fury* is the quintessential American high modernist novel, it is probably sensible to take Faulkner's claim to have "shut the door

between [himself] and all publishers' addresses" as the quintessential modernist metaphor, in its implicit assertion of High Art's right and need to exist for itself alone, its rejection of any relationship between art and economic motive, its claim not to have to submit itself to any market, much less one geared to the debased tastes of a bourgeois public. All his comments about the conception and writing of the novel come at least four or five years after its publication, and so probably ought to be taken less as fact than as his retrospective rumination about a profoundly important experience, a warm and loving distillation of that experience into metaphors that would allow him somehow to retain and evoke at will the passion that writing *The Sound and the Fury* gave him. That passion was something he truly seemed to cherish for the remainder of his life. Nor, he claimed, doubtless also metaphorically, did the ecstasy he felt in writing the Benjy section ever return in any of his other books. He never again felt "that eager and joyous faith and anticipation of surprise which the yet unmarred sheets beneath my hand held inviolate and unfailing."⁴ Of course it may well be that he conceived and wrote the novel exactly as he later described; in any case, legions of critics have found his description of the muddy seat of Caddy's drawers a very evocative, and provocative, entrance into the novel's various structures and meanings, and much fruitful discussion has recently emerged from considerations of Caddy as the novel's absent center, its absent presence. But whether he was speaking metaphorically or not, clearly writing *The Sound and the Fury* was an immensely powerful experience for him, an experience by which he seemed to have defined himself as a writer, and he must have taken enormous satisfaction in its accomplishment, no matter what he later said about its being his "most splendid failure."⁵ It should not surprise us to see how easily the master mythmaker mythologized the creation of his favorite book.

Whether the image of Caddy's drawers was in fact the cohering center of the novel's conception, we do not know. What we do know about the novel's antecedents might suggest something a bit more prosaic. Though he completed the typing of *The Sound and the Fury* in October of 1928, there is some evidence that fictional materials which he would eventually weave into it had been

on his mind for several years at least. It is certainly not necessary to believe that he actually had in mind the *Sound and the Fury* that we know as he worked through these materials, or even that he saw them as related to one another. But as Faulkner's letters home from New Haven in the spring and early summer of 1918 demonstrate, even then he was, willy-nilly, storing up materials which he would eventually incorporate into *The Sound and the Fury*.⁶ As nearly every historian of this text has pointed out, a crude preliminary version of Benjy Compson appears in one of the sketches, "The Kingdom of God," that Faulkner published in the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* in early 1925. Carvel Collins claims to have been told by one of his sources that Faulkner read or told him a story about the Compson children in Paris in 1925.⁷ This is possible, though by no means provable. Some fictions we do know he worked on in Paris — *Elmer* (1925; published 1983) certainly, and probably *Sanctuary* (1931) — and a pseudomedieval allegory entitled *Mayday* (1926; published 1977) has significant and specific affinities of theme, character, and mise-en-scène with *The Sound and the Fury*, as does *Flags in the Dust*, completed in 1927 and published two years later in a truncated version as *Sartoris* (1929). Moreover, similar affinities of theme and character might argue that *Flags*, *Sanctuary*, and *The Sound and the Fury* emerge from a single matrix in Faulkner's imagination. Certainly *Flags* and *Sanctuary*, especially in its original version,⁸ are closely related, so closely that bits of the materials deleted from *Flags* to make *Sartoris* turn up in the original version of *Sanctuary*, salvaged as it were from what he doubtless assumed would be lost. *Sanctuary* was mainly written in the spring of 1929, while Cape and Smith were copyediting *The Sound and the Fury*. At some point during that spring Faulkner put *Sanctuary* aside long enough to revise extensively and retype forty-one pages of the Quentin section of *The Sound and the Fury*, so that in important ways *Sanctuary* and *The Sound and the Fury* are practically simultaneous, and I have suggested elsewhere that Horace Benbow, the Prufrockian hero of *Sanctuary* and *Flags*, is a forty-three-year-old Quentin Compson, what Quentin would have become had he lived that long.⁹ Furthermore, if we can reasonably suspect that the letter Faulkner wrote to his mother from Paris in 1925 describing something he

had just written about the Luxembourg Gardens and rain and death¹⁰ is a version of *Sanctuary*'s final vision of Temple Drake in the Luxembourg Gardens, it may be worth speculating that the origins of that matrix lie in the materials of *Sanctuary*. Clearly he conceived of *Sanctuary* as a highly experimental novel. The holograph manuscript of that novel – with its thousands of revisions, its continual shift of passage after passage, page after page – and the revised galleys – characterized by the same restless shifting of large blocks of material – demonstrate how very difficult *Sanctuary* was to get on paper in a form that satisfied him. The extant materials thus make it possible to speculate that Faulkner worked on it sporadically through the late twenties, couldn't get the Horace Benbow–Temple Drake material to coalesce, then defaulted into *Flags*, a much more traditional novel. After *Flags*, something magical, perhaps even the discovery of Caddy's muddy drawers in a tree, moved him into *The Sound and the Fury*. The experience of writing *The Sound and the Fury* then released him to complete work on the Benbow–Temple Drake book, which in its "original version" was a book exclusively about Horace Benbow. In its revised, post-*Sound and Fury* avatar, Horace shares the spotlight with Temple.

Central to these early fictions is not a little girl with muddy drawers, but rather an effete, idealistic young man trying to find his way through a modernist tangle of postwar despair, historical disfranchisement and disillusionment, and Freudian-psychosexual problemata; all except the idiot in "The Kingdom of God" are recognizable avatars of Quentin Compson. Even so, it's not difficult to imagine that the discovery of Caddy's muddy drawers in that tree provided Faulkner a riveting imaginative center for all that masculine suffering to cohere around, a powerful narrative locus which gave him what he needed to organize the materials of his imagination.

The main thrust of the writing of *The Sound and the Fury* came in 1928. Faulkner finished typing it in October of that year in New York, apparently while Wasson edited *Flags in the Dust*. As Wasson – and legend – would have it, Faulkner erupted into Wasson's room one morning, tossed the manuscript on his bed, and said "Read this one, Bud. . . . It's a real son of a bitch."¹¹ Faulkner sent the ribbon typescript directly to his friend Harrison Smith, an editor

at Harcourt, Brace, which was to publish *Sartoris*, the edited version of *Flags*. Harcourt rejected the new novel on February 15, 1929.¹² In the meantime, Smith left Harcourt to go into partnership with the British publisher Jonathan Cape, who wanted an American subsidiary. Smith took Faulkner's new typescript with him and the new firm of Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith executed a contract for *The Sound and the Fury* on February 18, 1929, barely three days after Harcourt's rejection. Cape & Smith lost no time getting the novel into production, but the editing and the proofreading did not go smoothly. After entrusting the completed ribbon typescript to Smith, Faulkner apparently began tinkering with the carbon typescript text of Quentin's monologue, which he had retained (with few exceptions, the pages of the Quentin section are the only ones in the carbon typescript with holograph revision). Faulkner revised some passages of this section extensively, polished and pruned others, and experimented with several possibilities for punctuation, italicization, and phrasing.¹³ When he received the copyedited ribbon typescript, he retyped forty-one pages completely and substituted the new ribbon copies in the setting copy he returned to Smith. In the carbon copy he was keeping he carefully replaced the worked-over and revised carbon pages with the newly typed carbons; the old carbons are not known to exist.

Faulkner probably received galleys just as he was getting married and leaving for his honeymoon. The only available correspondence concerning the proofreading is undated, but the return address is Pascagoula, Mississippi.¹⁴ It is not clear from this correspondence whether he received at this or any other time any proof other than that for the Benjy section; his only comments are about the text of that part of the novel. Wasson, assigned to edit the new novel, changed a number of the details of the text. Faulkner took issue with him, however, over only one major problem in the proof of the Benjy section: Wasson changed all of Faulkner's italics to roman type, and proposed to indicate time shifts by line spaces in the text. Wasson's presumptuous editing of the first section prompted Faulkner's now well-known letter in which he patiently, but in no uncertain terms, told Wasson to put it back the way it was, or nearly so: "I know you mean well, but so do I."