

杨跃华 著

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知识女性的愿景 ——玛格丽特·德 拉布爾 小说研究



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Gold
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序

熟悉战后英国文学的人都知道玛格丽特·德拉布尔 (Margaret Drabble)，她与声誉卓著的当代英国女作家莱辛 (Doris Lessing) 和卡特尔齐名 (Angela Carter)。尽管她们文风各异，但都是具有强烈社会意识的作家，都高度关注英国社会，特别是知识女性问题。1963 年以来，德拉布尔共创作了 16 部现实主义小说，出版了《阿诺德·贝内特传》和《安格斯·威尔逊传》两部人物传记，曾主编华兹华斯、哈代、伍尔夫等经典大师的文集，发表了大量文学评论，并主持了蜚声海内外的《牛津英国文学指南》的编撰工作。她曾获得布莱克纪念奖、罗斯纪念奖、爱·摩·福斯特奖等多项文学大奖。因其文学成就卓著，英国女王授予她 CBE 勋位之殊荣。

令人颇感遗憾的是，中国大陆学者对其知之甚微，研究匮乏。从 20 世纪 90 年代至今，在国内学术论期刊上公开发表的关于德拉布尔的介绍和文本研究文章以及硕士论文总共只有十多篇。而德拉布尔的创作从 20 世纪 60 年代开始一直持续到本世纪，2004 年她还出版了长篇小说 *The Red Queen*。时下，大多数学者研究的兴奋点集中在现代主义和后现代主义文学，关注和讨论德拉布尔有助于现实主义创作传统的继承和创新，有利于拓展当代英国文学研究之疆域。

杨跃华的专著是对德拉布尔作品进行深度研究之领先工作之一，值得关注。专著借助女权主义敏锐的批判力，择取德拉布尔早期作品中的《磨盘》、《瀑布》和《金色世界》作为研究对象，对三部小说的道德主题进行了周详的分析与认真的讨论。

选择这三部作品是合理的。第一，三部小说都是关于女性问题的小说，各女主人公均为知识女性和母亲；第二，每位女主人公都遭遇这样或那样的困境，都以各自不同的方式努力地追求自我价值的实现；第三，这三部小说具有连贯性，三位女主人公在不同人生阶段的经历构成一个完整的求索过程。第一和第二部小说分别探索了知识女性的两大希望：独立与母性并行，独立与性爱共存；第三部小说有了深化发展，其女主人公不再简单地追求独立和性爱，而是对人类所面临的更为普遍的问题进行思考并以具体行动探求解决问题的可行方案。因此，这三部小说完全可以视作一组三部曲。

在有关德拉布尔的评论家中几乎没有一位将《磨砺》、《瀑布》和《金色世界》三部小说作为一个有机体整体，即一组三部曲来看待并进行分析研究。杨跃华的专著这么做了，是一种突破，具有新意。专著的另一个亮点是理论阐释与文本细读紧密结合，整个分析在肖尔沃特、波伏瓦的女性主义批评理论以及马斯洛需要层次理论的关照下展开。《磨砺》中的罗丝蒙德·司黛西，是位女博士生，也是一位未婚母亲。她以牺牲爱情来保持自己的独立性，并苦苦探索独立与母性兼顾的可能性。经过母爱的洗礼，罗丝蒙德不仅满足了自己对母性的渴求，而且也保持了一个女人的尊严。但罗丝蒙德为获取独立而拒绝性爱的选择是对人的本性的压抑与扭曲。《瀑布》的女主人公简·格雷，是一位女诗人，一位已婚的母亲，不仅承认自己情感的外移，而且大胆地享受性爱。简在与情人乔治的爱情中同时满足了爱与被爱的需求以及对自尊的渴望。简的婚外情经历使她冲破了以往在身体和心理上的自我封闭，同时也让她意识到自我独立的可贵。《金色世界》中的女主人公弗朗西丝·温格特则是一位成功的母亲和著名的考古学家，她享有一个真正解放了的女性所拥有的独立和自由。她所面临的已不再是困扰罗

丝蒙德和简的有关如何在爱情与自由、牺牲与独立之间寻得一个平衡点的女性问题。弗朗西丝思考的问题更具普遍性，即每一个人应该如何应付疾病、对待生与死，以及应对过去与未来。弗朗西丝已从探求一个女人自我价值的实现升华到关注人类在生命过程中所必须面对与解决的问题。简言之，三部曲反映了当代英国知识女性在不同人生阶段对生命意义的思考与对生存价值的追求。

希望杨跃华的专著能对中国学者深入研究德拉布尔产生影响。

张定铨

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Introduction

Britain has witnessed women writings since the nineteenth century. Among them women novels have played an important role. Women novels, an inclusive term, refer to either the novels that are produced by women writers, or the subject matter of novels that deals with women. Yet, the two aspects are interrelated as many women writers more than often choose their subject matter based on women's experience, predicament and pursuit in their respective social context in the form of novel. During the postwar period a host of outstanding women novelists such as Iris Murdoch, Doris Lessing and Margaret Drabble emerged in the British literary circle. Their works have given a panoramic picture of the life of women in the twentieth century of Britain. As one of the first female novelists to take her themes from the growing feminist movement of the mid-twentieth century, Margaret Drabble is considered among the most accomplished British authors of the postwar period. Her novel, *The Millstone* (1965) was given the John Llewelyn Rhys Memorial Award; *Jerusalem the Golden* (1967) was awarded the James Tait Black Memorial Book Prize, and *The Needle's Eye* (1972) received the Book of the Year Award from the Yorkshire Post. Margaret Drabble was also presented with an E. M. Forster Award from the National Institute and American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1973.

Drabble, known as "Maggie" to her friends, was born in 1939, in the

industrial city of Sheffield, England. Her father, John Frederick Drabble, is a barrister, a country court judge, and a novelist. He and his wife were the first of their families to graduate from college, and they simply assumed that women should be educated and have jobs. Margaret Bloor Drabble has always believed that her daughter would “be something wonderful” and that she has not been “fully stretched” (Sadler 1986: 2). She helps to explain Drabble’s empathy with the plight of women. Although the family is Anglican, Drabble and her sisters were sent to a Quaker boarding school for girls, the Mount School in York, and she shows the impact of the Quaker doctrines of the presence of God in every individual (Hardin 1973: 286) and the equality of all men and women. Her serious approach to literature may stem from this early education.

Like her mother, Drabble attended a Quaker school, then, enrolled at Newnham College, Cambridge, to pursue studies in literature. At Cambridge, Drabble was influenced by F. R. Leavis, a professor and literary critic who was well known for his efforts to promote a “Great Books” curriculum that excluded such avant-garde authors as the novelist D. H. Lawrence. After graduating from college with honors in 1960, she joined the Royal Shakespeare Company for several reasons. She married Clive Walker Swift, also an actor with the company, in 1960. Drabble’s dream of an acting career ended when, pregnant with the first of three children, she was forced backstage. At this point she decided to turn her creative energies to writing. As a result of her education and impact of the family, Margaret Drabble is concerned with the soul, the less fortunate, the interplay of fate and chance, the nature of wisdom, redemption, and the importance of

being in touch with one's depths and of doing right rather than seeking enjoyment (Cooper-Clark 1980: 70). Though Margaret Drabble is not a strict religious person, yet she believes in loving one's neighbor, enduring unlovely people, and not being solipsistic or self-centered and so assesses her characters (Preussner 1979-80: 575).

Drabble began her writing career since 1962. Her first two novels, *A Summer-cage* and *The Garrick Year*, were published respectively in 1962 and in 1964. Then, additional award-winning novels followed, including *The Millstone* (1965), *Jerusalem the Golden* (1967) and *The Needle's Eye* (1972). Later came out *The Realms of Gold* (1975) and *The Ice Age* (1977). Over the next decade she published the following novels: *The Middle Ground* (1980), *The Radiant Way* (1987), *A Natural Curiosity* (1989) and *The Gates of Ivory* (1991), *The Witch of Exmoor* (1996), *The Peppered Moth* (2001), *The Seven Sisters* (2002), and *The Red Queen* (2004). In addition to her fiction, she published the collection of short stories *Hanssan's Tower* (1980), criticisms such as *Wordsworth* (1966), *Virginia Woolf* (1973), *For Queen and Country: Britain in the Victorian Age* (1978), biographies of *Arnold Bennett* and *August Wilson: Arnold Bennett, a Biography* (1974) and *August Wilson, a Biography* (1995), non-fiction *Safe as Houses* (1990), and a screenplay *Isadora* (1973). Margaret Drabble also edited *The Genius of Thomas Hardy* (1976) and has been well-known for being the editor of *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (the fifth edition, 1985), *The Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature* (1987) and the new edition of *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (2000).

Female Intellectuals' Visions—A Thematic Study of Margaret Drabble's Three Novels

As one of the most important and well-known British novelists writing today, Margaret Drabble has not only received serious attention in Britain since the appearance of her first novel, but also established an impressive reputation in America. Her works have brought her both popularity and critical acclaim. From her first novel Drabble has recorded the conflicting sensibilities of the "new", educated woman pursuing her selfhood and seeking her place in the modern world. Her heroines are self-aware, articulate, intelligent, career-minded; they are also wives and mothers caring for and redeemed by their children, while desirous of emotional, moral, and economic autonomy. As a realist writer, Drabble's fiction has been developing in scope and sophistication, as have her female protagonists. Her viewpoint has shifted from the psychological interiors of single female characters to omniscient panoramas of men and women struggling with the ambiguities of life in contemporary Britain. This dissertation, concentrating on a feminist study of Margaret Drabble's three novels *The Millstone*, *The Waterfall* and *The Realms of Gold*, has developed out of the writer's interest in female intellectuals represented in Drabble's early novels written in the 1960s and the 1970s, and in both feminist theories put forward by Simone de Beauvoir and Elaine Showalter and the personality theory developed by Abraham Harold Marslow.

In the first place, the choice of study on Margaret Drabble's works is worthwhile because Drabble's works bear strong reference to her time and her particular concern for female intellectuals. Most of her novels written in the 1960s and 1970s, in particular, are reflections of British women's situation, experience and their attempt and efforts to realize

their own selfhood and value. In the second place, a close reading of these novels on women issues of the 1960s and 1970s discloses that a trilogy has been indicated in the three novels: *The Millstone*, *The Waterfall* and *The Realms of Gold*, though they are not a trilogy intended explicitly by Margaret Drabble. Finally, what accounts for the consideration of the three novels as a trilogy lies in the following aspects: first, they are novels dealing with women issues and the protagonists are all female intellectuals and mothers; second, the major female characters are represented respectively for their own efforts in different manners towards an integrated self, though they have to struggle in their own predicament, which may adequately illuminate the difficulty that an integrated self of the intellectual woman can possibly be achieved in the contemporary time; third, the three novels form a coherent relationship that the heroines at different life stages are pursuing what they want to be. The first two novels explore two striking and significant fulfillments desired by intellectual women: balance between self-reliance and maternity, and self-reliance and eroticism, and the third novel, as a big leap forward, going beyond independence and fulfillment of sexuality, puts its heroine into contemplating and dealing with more philosophical and universal problems as an individual human being.

Drabble has achieved great respect as a writer and critic on both sides of the Atlantic. Her dedication to both the craft of fiction writing and sharing her love of literature—accomplished in addition to meeting the demands of her private life—has caused at least “one critic to dub her a role model for modern women” (*Contemporary Literary Criticism* Vol.129, 2000: 110). Her works have consistently been

praised for their “wry humor, their mannered style, and their uniquely literary approach to the culture of the twentieth century” (*Contemporary Literary Criticism* Vol. 129, 2000: 110). Critical responses to Margaret Drabble have been keeping up with her publications of novels all the way from the 1960s to the turn of the twenty-first century. A general literary review about her novels concerned in this section will cover mainly Drabble's novels in the 1960s and 1970s. More specific criticisms on each one of the trilogy *The Millstone*, *The Waterfall* and *The Realms of Gold* will be incorporated into the discussion of the concerned novel.

While the very early works such as *A Summer-Cage* and *The Garrick Year* were criticized for insubstantial characters and thin plots, Drabble's protagonists rang true with many readers who were, like the author, college-educated young mothers in their twenties trying to make sense of their place in society. *The Millstone*, with its focus on independence, single parenthood and sexual liberation, gained Drabble the title of “the novelist of maternity” from feminist critics. Valerie Grosvenor Myer highlights the contribution when she writes: “The area she [Margaret Drabble] has made her own is that of motherhood: pregnancy, birth, lactation and maternal care . [. . .] Motherhood is a central experience in the life of Margaret Drabble's characters and maternal love a means to salvation” (Myer 1974: 14). She also emphasizes the influence of Drabble's biography, especially Quakerism, on the novels and traces characters' doubts and scruples to Drabble's being crippled by her Puritanism in her book *Margaret Drabble: Puritanism and Permissiveness*. Ann Rayson in “Motherhood in the Novel of Margaret Drabble” declares: “Margaret

Drabble ushers in a new era for the women writer in which the relationship between a mother and her children is catalytic rather than destructive” (Rayson 1978: 43), while more mainstream reviewers admire the novel’s approach to modern culture as similar in style to that of the nineteenth-century writer Henry James. However, Drabble’s depiction of women, particularly in *The Waterfall*, aroused the ire of some feminists due to its underlying premise that a woman might be “saved” from a deteriorating psychological condition such as depression simply through obtaining the love of a man. In many of her early novels some critics note, “Drabble’s embrace of feminism has been somewhat ambivalent” (*Contemporary Literary Criticism* Vol.129, 2000: 110). In an eleven-page chapter devoted to Margaret Drabble in *A Companion to the British and Irish Novel 1945-2000*, Margaret Moan Rowe concentrates on the themes of maternity and conflicting mother-daughter relationship. Rowe notices, “Maternity takes a different turn in Drabble’s novels of 1970s. The Tableau of Madonna and infants give way to the mother and children with demands living in a larger social world” (Shaffer 2005: 422). Rowe further highlights mother-daughter relationship in Drabble’s novels in the 1980s, 1990s and afterwards. While the mother-daughter conflict is left unresolved, for example, in *The Radiant Way*, “formidable matriarchy stands out in Drabble’s recent novels—*The Witch of Exmoor* and *The Peppered Moth*” (Shaffer 2005: 424).

Lynn Veach Sadler makes a study of Drabble’s novels and essays from her first novel *A Summer Bird-Cage* to *The Middle Ground*. Sadler arranges Drabble’s novels in a chronological manner and classifies the major female characters mainly in *A Summer Bird-Cage*,