



加拿大 短篇小说选读

Anthology of Canadian
Short Fiction

南开大学加拿大研究中心
谷启楠 朱柏桐 夏乙琥 编著

南开大学出版社

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〔津〕新登字011号

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谷启楠 朱柏桐 夏乙琬 编著

南开大学出版社出版

(天津八里台南开大学校内)

邮编 300071 电话 3358542

新华书店天津发行所发行

河北省邮电印刷厂印刷

1994年5月第1版 1994年5月第1次印刷

开本: 850×1168 1/32 印张: 17 插页: 2

字数: 470千 印数: 1—5 000

ISBN 7-310-00669-0

H·63 定价: 13.50元

前 言

加拿大是个幅员辽阔、美丽富饶、科学技术高度发达的国家，在国际事务中，特别是在环太平洋地区的经济发展中，起着日益重要的作用。作为多民族的移民国家，加拿大自 1971 年起奉行多元文化主义政策，对各民族文化兼收并蓄，因而促进了文学艺术创作，使其成为世界文学艺术的重要组成部分。二十一世纪将是亚洲和环太平洋地区的经济文化迅速发展的时代，因此阅读加拿大的文学作品并研究加拿大的文化，对我们来说是十分必要的。《加拿大短篇小说选读》正是为适应这种需要而编写的。

本书按照国家教委颁发的《高等学校英语专业高年级英语教学大纲》的精神，旨在帮助学生增强阅读理解和文化理解能力并提高文学鉴赏水平。书中选入 27 位加拿大作家的 29 篇短篇小说，包括三位法语作家的英译作品，其中大多数是名家名篇，也有少数后起之秀的新作。这些小说生动地反映了加拿大各族人民在不同历史时期的生活感受和精神追求，具有浓郁的地方色彩和鲜明的多元文化特色。

在“精选详释”的原则指导下，编者注意选择具有代表性的作品。“作者介绍”部分着重勾勒出作者的创作概貌；“作品介绍”部分突出了对作品的分析和评价；“注释”部分除解释语言难点外还补充了必要的背景知识。编者在撰写过程中既参考国外评论界的最新观点，又溶入自己多年的研究成果。本书可作为大学英语专业本科高年级学生或研究生的文学教材，也可供具有同等水平的英语爱好者自学之用。

应编者邀请，加拿大当代重要的文学评论家、不列颠哥伦比亚大学英语系教授威廉·纽(William H. New)为本书撰写了序言，详尽评价加拿大短篇小说的历史和现状；加拿大里贾纳大学社会学系教授巴里·安德森(Barrie Anderson)为本书撰写了加拿大背景介绍。他们的文章将对读者的学习起到指导作用，在此特向两位教授表达诚挚的谢意。

本书系南开大学加拿大研究中心的研究项目之一，由南开大学外文系谷启楠副教授、天津外国语学院英语系朱柏桐教授和天津大学外语系夏乙琥教授合作编写。三位编者共同选材，分工撰写，互相审稿，最后由谷启楠统一修改定稿。中国加拿大研究会会长、四川外国语学院院长蓝仁哲教授审阅了全部稿件，提出了宝贵的修改意见，谨在此表示衷心的感谢。

本书是中加双方友好合作的结晶。国际加拿大研究会和加拿大驻华使馆为两位编者提供了赴加短期研究的机会，并为本书的出版提供了图书和资助。加拿大多位专家学者给编者提供了图书资料和学术上的指导。所有入选作品的版权拥有者给予编者大力支持并提供了方便。谨在此对上述人士表示衷心的感谢(详见Acknowledgements部分)。

编者十分感谢南开大学加拿大研究中心负责人陈炳富和韩经纶二位教授及南开大学出版社编辑白莉女士，他们的支持和帮助使本书得以顺利出版。

由于编者水平有限，书中难免有疏漏和错误之处，希望同行专家和广大读者不吝赐教。

编 者

1994年1月15日

Acknowledgements

Anthology of Canadian Short Fiction, a textbook compiled in the spirit of Sino-Canadian friendship and cooperation, is intended for university junior and senior students majoring in English and post-graduate students studying literature. It aims at enhancing their appreciation of Canadian literature and promoting their understanding of Canadian culture. During the course of its compilation, we have received a great deal of help and support from many people concerned. We would like to express our gratitude to all of them for their kindness and generosity.

Our greatest indebtedness goes to the Canadian government, which, through the International Council for Canadian Studies and the Embassy in Beijing, has not only granted two of the compilers Canadian Studies Faculty Enrichment Awards, enabling them to revisit Canada and do research there, but also provided books, reference materials, and a fund for the publication of this book.

We must express our profound gratitude to Professor William H. New of the University of British Columbia, who has given us invaluable advice and suggestions and has kindly written the enlightening introduction to our Anthology. His analysis will surely serve as a guideline for the readers. We are greatly indebted to Professor Barrie Anderson of the University of Regina, who has graciously written the informative Background to Canada for this Anthology. We appreciate their important contributions to the book.

We acknowledge the great effort made by Professor Lan Renzhe, Chairman of the Association for Canadian Studies in China and President of Sichuan Foreign Languages Institute, in reading through the manuscripts and making suggestions for improvement.

We express our gratitude to the numerous scholars and authors

who have either provided us with books and reference materials or given us valuable advice. Among them are : William J. Keith and Russel Brown (University of Toronto), Ken Mitchell and Robert Cosbey (University of Regina), Smaro Kamboureli, Misao Dean and Jamie Dopp (University of Victoria), Antoine Sirois (Universite de Sherbrooke), Carl Leggo (University of British Columbia), Linda Jones (International Council for Canadian Studies), Phoebe Larmore (on behalf of Margaret Atwood), Rudy Wiebe, Harold Horwood, J. J. Steinfeld, Paul Yee, Imogen Knister Givens, and Charles Ruas.

Our thanks go to Professors Chen Bingfu and Han Jinglun, Director and Executive of the Canadian Studies Centre at Nankai University, for their warm concern and support of this project. We would also like to thank Ms Bai Li, editor of Nankai University Press, for her careful editing of the book.

We convey our sincere thanks to all the copyright holders for granting us permissions to reprint the short stories in this Anthology. Some of them have even given us permissions to translate their works into Chinese for our further endeavor. We would like to acknowledge the assistance and cooperation given by the staff of McClelland & Stewart Inc., Macmillan Canada, MacGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited and Oxford University Press Canada.

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Introduction

Most histories of English-language short fiction observe that the "short story," as a separate, identifiable genre, came into existence in the early nineteenth century. When the American writer Edgar Allan Poe praised the artistry of a prose work that could be read at a single sitting. Most such histories also acknowledge that "a single sitting" is a remarkably indeterminate period of time, making Poe's "definition" of the new genre at the very least a little vague. In any event, how "new" was the genre? A tradition of tale-telling, in various languages, precedes Poe by many centuries. So the "short story" in English has to be thought of as an art form with many roots in prose and also in poetry. It's indebted to Greek *fables*. Biblical *parables*, and medieval *allegories* and also to the *legends* and *folktales* of many cultures, oral *anecdotes*, written *histories*, character *sketches*, and romantic and documentary *descriptions* of places and things.

In the hands of the great nineteenth-century American writers—Poe, Hawthorne, Melville—the short story became a form that emphasized mystery and the romance of psychological uncertainty. While American writers thus gave precedence to the *tale*, English writers of the time—from Dickens and George Eliot to Hardy and Kipling—tended more to write short narratives in the form of linear *histories*; the psychology of individual behaviour is by no means irrelevant to these stories, but the authors focus on the public world which shapes their characters' behaviour. In other countries, still other paradigms became common. The Brazilian writer Machado de Assis had in the nineteenth century already begun experimenting with fantasy and fable (though the age of Latin American "magic realism" had yet to begin), and by the end of the century such French and Russian writers as de Maupas-

sant and Chekhov were exploring the psychological and social transformations that even the briefest moments of revelation could effect. They specialized in a form of story that came to be known as the "slice of life." These differences in emphasis and organization are just one tiny sign of the complex relation between culture, history, and literary form.

In Canada, as in some other parts of the English-speaking world, writers were influenced by all these developments. Readers of Canadian short fiction will thus readily be able to find examples of many forms and modes, including psychological mystery (Scott), linear history (Leacock), parable (Callaghan), modified folktale (Brant), anecdote (Mitchell), satire (Haliburton), impressionistic sketch (Wilson), and postmodern metafiction. They will also be able to examine some of the several ways in which literary form (or "organization") overlaps with literary "subject." Many writers are preoccupied with individual understanding; many others are concerned with community values and practices and their significance for individual men and women. Some are committed to social reform; others question the way social institutions sometimes inhibit moral growth. In each case, such writers can also address the ways in which language itself is a medium for reconfirming or for querying social practice and literary tradition.

In some sense, the history of short fiction in Canada is a story of language change. The short story genre, which was developing even as the new country was developing, has become associated with "alternative" points of view. It was, for example, neither epic nor heroic in size or aspiration; it expressed a value system different from that which has come to be associated with the old empires—whether the empires of political expansionism or the empires of literary and critical fashion. While some early Canadian writers (Susanna Moodie, for one) did employ a conventional British English and follow the narrative models of the then fashionable romance writers, these models did not prove to be the most influential over the course of time. The short fiction tradition most dominant in Canada derived instead from the documentary *sketch* the attempt to record at first "objectively" (perhaps a false hope) and

then with open subjectivity the observed "realities" of ordinary people's ordinary lives.

The sketch itself has a long history, involving political report and the quick delineation of character *types*. In the early nineteenth century, it acquired some prominence in magazine journalism when a British law taxing "broadsheets" encouraged editors to lengthen their publications to the untaxed "quarto" or "octavo" format—four-page or eight-page gatherings. This move in turn required them to find "feuilletons" of "filler" items to fill out all the pages. "Sketches," often of the New World and of the "strange" characters to be met there, came to be a regular feature of these periodicals, and over the course of time they also acquired their own generic characteristics; they *looked* like documentary, but they *behaved* like subjective impressionism.

The practice of publishing short fictions in newspapers and magazines had thus been well established by the time Thomas McCulloch and T. C. Haliburton printed their early sketches in the Maritime papers of colonial Nova Scotia. McCulloch's Presbyterian satires probed the ethical and social hypocrisies that the author, a clergyman, saw around him in colonial Pictou County. The satires of Haliburton, a judge, were more directly political, calling for Nova Scotians (known as "Bluenosers") to improve their economic conditions by working harder and building a railroad to connect their ice-free seaports to New Brunswick and to the communities of the areas now known as Quebec and Ontario which were ice-bound in winter. Both writers wrote ironically. Haliburton's technique is particularly noteworthy, in that he invented an artificial "Yankee" dialect, attributed it to "Sam Slick" (an itinerant American trader), and used this lively character for several purposes: to provide a model of American energy and ingenuity, to criticize some aspects of American individualism, and to suggest to his own compatriots how they might learn from their political neighbours without necessarily being absorbed by them or having to emulate them in all things.

The sketch continued in use during the nineteenth century.

Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852) depicted New World characters and the trials of settling in the bush—and more importantly (for contemporary feminist readers, such as Margaret Atwood) she also revealed the deep personal trauma of being divided between her external circumstances and all the values and beliefs that she considered personal and that she connected with “home”: language, beauty, “civilization.”

With Duncan Campbell Scott and other writers of the 1890s, writers began to assemble their sketches and short story forms into unified booklength works—which some critics call “story cycles.” Scott’s revelatory *In the Village of Viger* (1896), Stephen Leacock’s humorous and possibly nostalgic *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912), Georgina Sime’s feminist *Sister Woman* (1919), and the several animal tale collections of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts and Ernest Thompson Seton all provide variant examples, and all use story-cycles to comment on social change. Even F.P. Grove’s *Over Prairie Trails* (1922) forms a kind of cycle; a set of encounters between the narrator and the land, it tells (when the sketches are read together) of the need for people to cope with their environment rather than either to fear it or to worship it, and to cope they need knowledge. Through this set of apparently documentary excursions Grove was, in other words, examining people’s subjective relation with the world. His sketches of the land—as a source of quasi-religious awe, of physical hardship, of aesthetic order, of economic power, and of scientific data—thus provide both empirical lessons and metaphorical commentaries on psychological stability. While Leacock wrote wittily, Scott and Moodie tried to achieve a kind of eloquence, often sacrificing vernacular cadences in the process. The style of Grove (who was born and educated in Germany) still shows some of the traces of his first language. But while the “story cycle” form would continue through these years (it is a recurrent form in Canadian writing, a form later used by Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro, Clark Blaise, Hugh Hood, Gabrielle Roy, Jack Hodgins, and many others), the next striking development in *language use* would not come until the late 1920s.

Raymond Knister’s 1928 anthology *Canadian Short Stories* was a

major turning-point. By highlighting the work of younger writers—in particular that of Morley Callaghan, who had published some of his earliest work in *This Quarter* and *The Exile*, journals associated with Ezra Pound and the European Modernists—Knister demonstrated how the force of the stories by the new generation of writers lay not in plot but in character, and in the way the terse handling of linguistic form revealed nuances of uncertainty. The *shape* of a Callaghan sentence is important to what it says (the same could be said of sentences by Hugh Hood, John Metcalf, Clark Blaise, Alice Munro). In “A Sick Call,” for instance, much depends on the contrasts between “and” (signifying equivalences of value) and “but” (signifying exceptions). Out of this structural distinction grow the moral choices that are revealed in the characters’ behaviour. Gone from these stories is any sense of exotic surroundings and elaborate plotted action; fantasy and whimsy are also rare. *Diction, cadence, word order, rhythm, pacing*: these are the terms of analysis that a Callaghan story invites a critic to use. Yet Callaghan’s stories involve readers at the same time in moral choices—and in recognizing that ethical commitment does not always free people from moral dilemmas, in “real life.” The “free indirect discourse” (the point of view that looks like “third person” but is handled so as to convey the inner thoughts, perhaps even the kinesthetic reactions, of the person being so described) permits the author to stand outside his or her subject but to use the subject’s own characteristic idiom. And through this idiom are presented the social tensions that derive from people’s limited perspectives. *Language*, these stories suggest, is a medium that shapes—and is shaped by—social attitudes. Language can by a force for change, therefore, or a way to reinscribe the *status quo*. Whatever the case, no language is politically neutral; no language, consequently, can be divorced from the social conditions in which it is used.

The so-called “real world”—the world of economic and religious conflict, or urban pressure and rural violence, of social distinctions and ethnic margins—came to preoccupy Canadian writers in the 1930s, as it did the writers of many other countries. In the stories of this time,

literary characters—with common sense, grace, goodwill, and family or community support—sometimes managed to transcend their circumstances; and sometimes the circumstances defeated them. Art, in other words, was finding in “real life” a quiet heroism and a pitiable failure which mirrored, in some respects, Canadian social experience during the middle decades of the twentieth century. The decade of the 1930s, with its agricultural failures, drought, and economic depression; the 1940s, with war in Europe and Asia; the 1950s, with prosperity masking various kinds of social discrimination; these were years of social upheaval, in which writers looked for signs of strength in the lives, the behaviour, and the moral principles of individual characters.

At the same time, because of the speed and magnitude of social change, tradition and traditional language were in question. But if language was to be questioned, how was it possible to write at all? Authors asked not just where meaning lay but also how to convey meaning. Sinclair Ross, Ethel Wilson, Ernest Buckler, Margaret Laurence, Henry Kreisel, Alistair Macleod, Shirley Faessler; repeatedly these writers looked to a central image to convey their apprehension of a time. They sought “objective correlatives” in the images of fog (uncertainty, obscurity), a lamp at noon (a kind of promise in a disordered world), a penny in the dust, an abandoned boat, a basket of apples. Specific images conveyed the particular realities of troubled individuals.

From the 1960s to the 1990s, so many new writers emerged that generalizations are inevitably flawed and misleading; variety and difference are the only constants. While some writers meticulously committed themselves to paradigms of style sanctified by British tradition (John Metcalf, for example), others (among them Rudy Wiebe, Leon Rooke, George Bowering, Andreas Schroeder, Audrey Thomas, Matt Cohen, Jacques Ferron, Madeline Ferron, David Adams Richards, Guy Vanderhaeghe, Robert Kroetsch, Dave Godfrey) embraced in various ways the open-form models of postmodernism, magic realism, non-linearity, discontinuous sequence, minimalism, and fantasy, whose sources are complex and manifold. All these stylists recognized the artifice of

language; they used it not as a mere end in itself (even the exaggerations, the verbal play, of a Hodgins, or a Carrier, or a Mitchell story serves ends beyond the words themselves) but broadly speaking as a political strategy. If words depict a world, argue these writers, whose words are they? and whose world is it? What are the systems of value that words serve, and whose interests are (reflexively) served by the perpetuation or rejection of these values?

Characteristically, "postmodern" stories resist the very features of language that earlier narratives depended on; a clearly-planned plot, for example, with a climax and a conclusion; clearly-defined characters whose actions are sufficiently motivated and who behave consistently; a realistic (or at least credible) setting, even if the premise of the action proved to be fantastic; and a logical continuity of development. Postmodern stories highlight inconsistency instead; plots are abandoned, if begun at all; actions seem irrational or chaotic or random; fantasy leads not into utopian possibility but into dystopian nightmare; endings prove to be ambiguous. Such stories primarily resist the notion of "wholeness," and often deliberately develop strategies to impede the easy reading of the text. Sometimes these stories interrupt "conventional" narrative form, for example, with "conventionally non-literary" texts such as photographs or excerpts from sales catalogues, or they abruptly adopt the discourse of popular culture, such as comic strips and song lyrics. Sometimes they even incorporate documentary sketches into narrative contexts. The intent is to force the reader's attention on the power of artifice, whether narrowly literary or more broadly social.

Resisting the notion of social wholeness urges readers to question the validity of "uniformity" in a pluralist society. Resisting the notion of universality asks readers to examine the relative ways in which literary forms can encode values; to question, for example, the relation between narrative "linearity" and a faith in historical "progress." Resisting the notion of literary wholeness invites readers, further, to ask about canonical values and the selectivity of "dominant" traditions; to what degree does a particular notion of aesthetic design serve a defined

(however widely accepted) ethical and social order? Focussing on fragmentation and discontinuity instead, postmodern stories probe the arbitrariness of language and value. Often they are metatextual—in that they foreground the writing of the language that's being used to write the story—and they invite readers not to watch the action of language from some supposed objective distance, but actively to take part in the composition, to realize how people (themselves included) readily attribute value and meaning to arbitrary codes and shapes of speech, always subjectively, and how they frequently misinterpret others' intentions in the process.

Interestingly, such designs do not always dissolve into chaos, despair, or meaninglessness; frequently they champion the power of alternative forms of expression to communicate the persistent values that have seemingly been lost from the surface of contemporary life—lost in anonymity, lost in familiarity and automatic convention, lost because of apathy and inertia. Or they articulate, indirectly, the values of ordinary people who live their lives on the edges of authority. Not all critics of society or custom are literary postmodernists, of course. Once again, however, social contexts can be seen to be having an impact on cultural production.

In the latter decades of the twentieth century—at a time when Canadian society, already mobile, is undergoing some remarkable changes in its ethnic makeup, in its legal constitution, and in its political and technical relations with the rest of the world—many writers who regard themselves marginalized by the dominant social and literary conventions of the day (or who choose to espouse the cause of “marginalized” peoples) have been embracing cultural politics openly.

Pre-eminent among the experiences that were seen to have led to marginalization were gender, region, race, and class. Many women resisted the androcentric biases of Canadian law and other institutions as well as literary practice, and wrote in favour of reform. (The question arose of whether there might be a “women's language,” separate from men's language in modality and organizational strategy, if not always in