

<<文学印象主义与薇拉·凯瑟的美学追求>>

图书基本信息

书名：<<文学印象主义与薇拉·凯瑟的美学追求>>

13位ISBN编号：9787564902797

10位ISBN编号：7564902795

出版时间：2010-1

出版时间：河南大学出版社

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页数：268

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前言

经过三年的艰苦努力，孙晓青的博士论文写成了，得到了专家学者的好评。又经过一年的修改和充实，在河南大学外语学院的支持下，一部体现她学术追求的专著即将问世，这是她多年心血的结晶。

作为这一结晶的见证人，我为这部专著的作者表示衷心的祝贺。

“文学印象主义与薇拉·凯瑟的美学追求”是一个有相当难度的选题。

难就难在要找到两者的契合点。

而且文学印象主义没有统一明确的概念定义。

该书首先追溯了印象主义绘画的特点，指出作为一个从法国绘画流派逐渐发展起来的影响到整个欧洲文艺思潮的艺术流派，印象主义画家们的创作有着极其鲜明的艺术特征：他们以光和色作为认识世界的中心，再现个人瞬间视觉印象，强调绘画的审美功能，而后印象主义重视个体主观感受，追求主观世界的表现，这些特征给文学创作带来了深刻的启示和深远的影响。

作者又归纳了文学印象主义的起源和历史发展过程，并在此基础上总结归纳文学印象主义的概念及特点，指出文学印象主义概念含糊的原因之一是没有抓住印象派绘画和文学印象主义的内核：他们的作品是画家、作家用其主体的目光去审视世界，作品是其主体生命、情感和审美的承载，是主体意识萌生的表征。

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内容概要

本书在第一章简介里首先综述凯瑟小说在国内外学界的接受和反应，追溯了文学印象主义的起源和历史发展过程，并在此基础上总结归纳文学印象主义的概念及特点，指出文学印象主义概念含糊的原因之一是没有抓住印象派绘画和文学印象主义的内核：他们的作品是画家、作家用其主体的目光去审视世界，作品是其主体生命、情感和审美的承载，是主体意识萌生的表征。

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The reader's difficulty in coming to terms with *The Professor's House* largely results from Cather's use of juxtaposition. The novel may very well be Cather's most perplexing book. Cather evidently takes pains to achieve internal consistency by inserting "Tom Outland's Story" in it. Why does the author go out of her way to complicate a narrative which can be essentially simple in its temporal range?

It would be possible to tell the stories in linear form, but the meaning resulting from the co-presence of events would be lost. "The disorder, after all, is deliberate and has specific effects"; "Some kind of moral discovery should be the object of every tale," (Conrad 1897: 60) writes Conrad. By "moral discovery" Conrad does not mean merely the illustration of a preconceived moral truth. It is in the creation of the work of art that the discovery is made. "The good and honest artist does not illustrate, he creates; and that very act of artistic creation, that moulding into significant form of some thing or part of life, is in itself a discovery about the nature of life, and ultimately its value will lie in the value of that discovery." (Carabine 1992: 559) A study of Cather's narrative technique in *The Professor's House* will show that she reveals something of her attitudes to the story told, something of her total vision of the world, her sense of individual destiny. Her narrative method is functionally related to her imagination and her vision of her world. According to Joseph Kestner, the modern authorial technique of using narrative frames "not only emphasizes the spatial pictorial quality of the plot...but also functions in another atemporal manner, as a delay....Such enclosures serve the presentation of 'simultaneous actions'" (Kestner 1978: 72). Whereas Tom Outland's narrative occurs logically and chronologically before St. Peter's memory, this simultaneous occurrence, which halts the outer linear narrative of St. Peter's life, also illustrates what Joseph Frank has called the "spatialization of form in a novel". In the spatialized novel, Frank says, "For the duration of the scene, at least, the time-flow of the narrative is halted; attention is fixed on the interplay of the relationships within the immobilized time area. These relationships are juxtaposed independently of the progress of the narrative, and the full significance of the scene is given only by the reflexive relations among the units of meaning." (Frank 1956: 16) Thus, for the duration of "Tom Outland's Story" attention focuses on Tom's relationship to Roddy and to the ancient cliff dwellers themselves. However, when the narrative window on the past closes and the focus returns to St. Peter in his study, both St. Peter and the reader will reflect on the significance of the scene and on its relationship to St. Peter's life. Cather's comparison of the novel to Dutch genre paintings suggests her use of spatial structure. "Tom Outland's Story" functions within the novel like a painting within a painting. This spatial structural analogy of fiction and painting has implications not only for the overall structure of the novel but also for individual scenes. "Planting his easel or his camera at one of the points of the space evoked, the novelist will discover all the problems of framing, of composition, and of perspective encountered by the painter." (Kestner 1978: 72) Like a painter, then, Cather creates a verbal picture of the Cliff City: "that cluster of buildings, in its arch, with the dizzy drop into empty air from its doorways and the wall of cliff above, was as clear in [my] mind as a picture. By closing [my] eyes could see it against the dark, like a magic-lantern slide." (PH, 204) Here is the spatial depth and the hint of color associated with painting. Juxtaposition- "setting one thing beside the other without connective" (Shattuck 1968: 332), isolates narrative formulas of connections between one situation and another. The isolated scenes or events constitute the minute blocks by which the "house" of fiction is constructed. And the whole meaning of the text lies in the linkage of these blocks. Therefore, not only the event but also its placement is crucial: "Each element is qualified by the position it occupies in the total picture." (Kestner 1978: 125) These are juxtaposed by the author to create a synthesis of meaning between them. The reader has to perceive them simultaneously in order to get the entire pattern of internal references, just as one visually juxtaposes the compositional elements of an impressionist painting. Only after the reader is in possession of all the elements and is active in re-constructing them can he get the meaning of the story. Therefore, [the Aristotelian dicta on beginning, middle, and end, on singleness of place and time and character, cannot apply to works that seek neither the balance of classic architecture nor the schematic psychology of classic theater. Like the portraitist who can begin his sketch with the

necktie and end with the pupil of the eye , or vice versa , artists have claimed a freedom to begin anywhere and end anywhere. (Shattuck 1968 : 347) Just like the impressionist painters , the writer can also “ begin anywhere and end anywhere ” , so everything in the novel can be regarded as middle ; every event is in the dynamic process of beginning and developing. Its life lies in its relationship with other events. Moreover , striving to reveal the entire universe in its potentiality at a moment of time , juxtaposition produces an explosive , exciting texture in which connectives are actively missed. It reproduces a compression and condensation of mental processes upon the reader with a certain density to the scenes or events. Inevitably it “ entails a set of characteristics often criticized in modern art—obscurity , illogicality , inept style , and abruptness ” (Spencer 1971 : 339) .As Roger Shattuck comments , “ The arts of juxtaposition offer difficult , disconcerting , fragmented works whose disjunctive sequence has neither beginning nor end. They happen without transition and scorn symmetry. ” (Shattuck 1968 : 333) For this reason , the reader of such a structured novel is surrounded with conflict and contrast and cannot expect to reach a point of rest or understanding in the conventional sense. He has to make a great effort to fit the isolated events , and has to keep his wits about him and grasp the moment in its total significance. He has to collaborate actively in order to pursue the developments and associations that have been barely suggested. He is always in the process of searching , matching and sorting out its internal order in order to build a new unity of experience among the fragments. In this sense , the reader becomes the architect of the “ house ” of the novel. So juxtaposition opens up interpretive possibilities for the reader and unfolds layers of textual self-referentiality. Facing the juxtaposed structure , the reader has to construct a synchronic reading in order to dig out the author's moral and philosophic judgment. The reader must work out for himself what connections are to be made among the seemingly disconnected parts.

媒体关注与评论

本书提出从文学印象主义对美国作家薇拉·凯瑟的作品进行阐释和解读的新课题。该书作者追溯了印象主义绘画与文学的共同内核，强调作家强烈的主体意识和审美情感捕捉瞬间感觉印象，然后将一系列流动的印象进行并置，通过新的艺术手法表达小说的深层意蕴。

——虞建华教授 上海外国语大学博士生导师 孙晓青博士运用细读的方式分析了凯瑟最有代表性的四部小说，揭示凯瑟对色彩、构图等印象主义绘画元素的运用以及在表现作品主体意识、文学描写、人物塑造等方面的作用，使读者得以从另一个角度去重新审视凯瑟的小说创作与文学成就，给人以耳目一新的感觉。

——李公昭教授 解放军外国语学院博士生导师 该书从文学印象主义的主体意识视角来系统地分析和评述凯瑟的四部作品，有较大的创新意义和学术价值。

从该书对文学印象主义和叙事学等有关理论的运用上来看，作者阅读了大量相关书籍和资料，有较好的理论素养，较强的学术功底和梳理文献的能力。

——何树教授 南京国际关系学院博士生导师 该书恰如其分地运用文学印象主义理论来分析凯瑟的小说理论及创作，对理论的阐述比较深入，对作品的分析客观，资料翔实，论述有力，语言流畅，基本功扎实。

该书在理论的运用和对作品的分析方面颇有新意和学术参考价值。

——郭继德教授 山东大学外国语学院博士生导师

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