

Unit 13
Reading C

The Chinese Novel 《中国小说 —— 诺贝尔演讲（选段）》
—Nobel Lecture (an excerpt), December 12, 1938
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1 The Chinese say “The young should not read Shui Hu and the old should not read San Kuo.” This is because the young might be charmed into being robbers and the old might be led into deeds too vigorous for their years. For if Shui Hu Chuan is the great social document of Chinese life, San Kuo is the document of wars and statesmanship, and in its turn Hung Lou Meng is the document of family life and human love.

中国人说“少不读《水浒》，老不读《三国》”。这是因为年轻人可能会被吸引去当强盗，而老年人可能会被引得做出超出其年龄承受力的过激行为。因为如果说《水浒传》是中国生活的伟大社会文献，那么《三国演义》就是战争与治国之术的文献，而《红楼梦》则依次是家庭生活 and 人类爱情的文献。

2 The history of the San Kuo or Three Kingdoms shows the same architectural structure and the same doubtful authorship as Shui Hu. The story begins with three friends swearing eternal brotherhood in the Han Dynasty and ends ninety-seven years later in the succeeding period of the Six Dynasties. It is a novel rewritten in its final form by a man named Lo Kuan Chung, thought to be a pupil of Shih Nai'an, and one who perhaps even shared with Shih Nai'an in the writing, too, of Shui Hu Chuan. But this is a Chinese Bacon-and-Shakespeare controversy which has no end.

《三国演义》的历史与《水浒传》有着相同的架构和同样存疑的作者身份。故事始于汉朝时三个朋友结拜为永恒的兄弟，九十七年后在接下来的六朝时期结束。这部小说由一个名叫罗贯中（Lo Kuan Chung）的人重写为最终版本，罗贯中被认为是施耐庵（Shih Nai'an）的弟子，甚至可能与施耐庵共同创作了《水浒传》。但这是一场中国版的培根与莎士比亚之争，没有尽头。

3 Lo Kuan Chung was born in the late Yuan Dynasty and lived on into the Ming. He wrote many dramas, but he is more famous for his novels, of which San Kuo is easily the best. The version of this novel now most commonly used in China is the one revised in the time of K'ang Hsi by Mao Chenkan, who revised as well as criticised the book. He changed, added and omitted material, as for example when he added the story of Suan Furen, the wife of one of the chief characters. He altered even the style. If Shui Hu Chuan has importance today as a novel of the people in their struggle for liberty, San Kuo has importance because it gives in such detail the science and art of war as the Chinese conceive it, so differently, too, from our own. The guerillas, who are today China's most effective fighting units against Japan, are peasants who know San Kuo by heart, if not from their own reading, at least from hours spent in the idleness of winter days or long summer evenings when they sat listening to the storytellers describe how the warriors of the Three Kingdoms fought their battles. It is these ancient tactics of war which the guerillas trust today. What a warrior must be and how he must attack and retreat, how retreat when the enemy advances, how advance when the enemy retreats — all this had its source in this novel, so well known to

every common man and boy of China.

罗贯中生于元末，一直活到明朝。他写了很多戏剧，但更以他的小说而闻名，其中《三国演义》无疑是最出色的。如今在中国最常用的《三国演义》版本是康熙年间毛宗岗修订的版本，毛宗岗对这本书进行了修订和点评。他对内容进行了修改、增添和删减，比如他添加了一位主要人物的妻子孙夫人的故事。他甚至改变了文风。如果说《水浒传》在当今作为一部人民争取自由的小说具有重要意义，那么《三国演义》的重要性在于它详细地展现了中国人所理解的战争的科学与艺术，而且与我们自己的理解大不相同。如今，游击队是中国抗击日本最有效的战斗单位，他们是农民，即使不是自己读过《三国演义》，至少也在冬日的闲暇时光或漫长的夏日夜晚，坐着听书人讲述三国英雄如何打仗的时候，把这本书牢记于心。正是这些古老的战争策略，如今被游击队所信赖。一个战士应该是什么样的，应该如何进攻和撤退，敌人进攻时如何撤退，敌人撤退时如何进攻——这一切都源于这部为每个中国普通百姓和男孩所熟知的小说。

4 *Hung Lou Meng*, or *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, the latest and most modern of these three greatest of Chinese novels, was written originally as an autobiographical novel by Ts'ao Hsüeh Ching, an official highly in favor during the Manchu regime and indeed considered by the Manchus as one of themselves. There were then eight military groups among the Manchus, and Ts'ao Hsüeh Ching belonged to them all. He never finished his novel, and the last forty chapters were added by another man, probably named Kao O. The thesis that Ts'ao Hsüeh Ching was telling the story of his own life has been in modern times elaborated by Hu Shih, and in earlier times by Yuan Mei. Be this as it may, the original title of the book was *Shih T'ou Chi*, and it came out of Peking about 1765 of the Western era, and in five or six years, an incredibly short time in China, it was famous everywhere. Printing was still expensive when it appeared, and the book became known by the method that is called in China, "You-lend-me-a-book-and-I-lend-you-a-book".

《红楼梦》是这三部中国最伟大的小说中最晚出现且最具现代性的一部，最初是曹雪芹以自传体小说的形式创作的。曹雪芹是清朝时期一位颇受宠信的官员，事实上满族人也把他视为自己人。当时满族有八旗，曹雪芹属于所有八旗。他没有完成这部小说，最后四十回是由另一个人添加的，这个人可能叫高鹗。曹雪芹在讲述自己生平故事的这一观点在现代由胡适加以阐述，在更早的时候由袁枚提出。不管怎样，这本书最初的书名是《石头记》，大约在公元 1765 年出自北京，在五六年内——在中国这是令人难以置信的短时间——它就闻名遐迩。在它出现的时候印刷仍然很昂贵，这本书是通过在中国被称为“你借我一本书，我借你一本书”的方式为人所知的。

5 The story is simple in its theme but complex in implication, in character study and in its portrayal of human emotions. It is almost a pathological study, this story of a great house, once wealthy and high in imperial favor, so that indeed one of its members was an imperial concubine. But the great days are over when the book begins. The family is already declining. Its wealth is being dissipated and the last and only son, Chia Pao Yü, is being corrupted by the decadent influences within his own home, although the fact that he was a youth of exceptional quality at birth is established by the symbolism of a piece of jade found in his mouth. The preface begins, "Heaven was once broken and when it was mended, a bit was left unused, and this became the famous jade of Chia Pao Yü," Thus does the interest in the supernatural persist in the Chinese people; it persists even today as a part of Chinese life.

6 This novel seized hold of the people primarily because it portrayed the problems of their own family system, the absolute power of women in the home, the too great power of the matriarchy, the grandmother, them other, and even the bondmaids, so often young and beautiful and fatally dependent, who became too frequently the playthings of the sons of the house and ruined them and were ruined by them. Women reigned supreme in the Chinese house, and because they were wholly confined in its walls and often illiterate, they ruled to the hurt of all. They kept men children, and protected them from hardship and effort when they should not have been so protected. Such a one was Chia Pao Yü, and we follow him to his tragic end in Hung Lou Meng.

这个故事的主题简单，但寓意、人物研究和对人类情感的刻画却很复杂。这几乎是一项病理学研究，讲述了一个曾经富有且深受皇室恩宠的大家族的故事，这个家族中甚至有一位成员是皇妃。但在故事开始时，辉煌的日子已经过去。这个家族正在衰落。财富正在消散，最后也是唯一的儿子贾宝玉正被家庭内部的腐朽影响所腐蚀，尽管他出生时品质非凡这一事实通过他口中发现的一块玉的象征意义得以确立。序言开篇写道：“原来女娲氏炼石补天之时，于大荒山无稽崖炼成高经十二丈，方经二十四丈顽石三万六千五百零一块。娲皇氏只用了三万六千五百块，只单单剩了一块未用，便弃在此山青埂峰下。谁知此石自经煅炼之后，灵性已通，因见众石俱得补天，独自己无材不堪入选，遂自怨自叹，日夜悲号惭愧。”因此，中国人对超自然事物的兴趣一直持续着；即使在今天，它仍然是中国人生活的一部分。

7 I can not tell you to what lengths of allegory scholars went to explain away this novel when they found that again even the emperor was reading it and that its influence was so great everywhere among the people. I do not doubt that they were probably reading it themselves in secret. A great many popular jokes in China have to do with scholars reading novels privately and publicly pretending never to have heard of them. At any rate, scholars wrote treatises to prove that Hung Lou Meng was not a novel but a political allegory depicting the decline of China under the foreign rule of the Manchus, the word Red in the title signifying Manchu, and Ling Tai Yü, the young girl who dies, although she was the one destined to marry Pao Yü, signifying China, and Pao Ts'ai, her successful rival, who secures the Jade in her place, standing for the foreigner, and so forth. The very name Chia signified, they said, falseness. But this was a farfetched explanation of what was written as a novel and stands as a novel and as such a powerful delineation, in the characteristic Chinese mixture of realism and romance, of a proud and powerful family in decline. Crowded with men and women of the several generations accustomed to living under one roof in China, it stands alone as an intimate description of that life.

我无法告诉你，当学者们发现甚至皇帝也在阅读这部小说，且它在民众中影响如此之大时，他们为了阐释这部小说而进行了多么牵强的寓意解读。我毫不怀疑他们自己很可能也在私下里阅读这部小说。在中国，有很多流行的笑话都与学者们私下阅读小说却在公开场合假装从未听说过它们有关。无论如何，学者们撰写论文试图证明《红楼梦》不是一部小说，而是一部政治寓言，描绘了在满族外族统治下中国的衰落。标题中的“红”字代表满族，而林黛玉这个本应嫁给宝玉却死去的年轻女孩代表中国，她的成功对手薛宝钗取代她得到宝玉，象征着外国人等等。他们说，“贾”这个姓氏代表虚假。但这是对一部作为小说而创作、以小说形式存在且作为一部有力作品的牵强解释。它以中国特有的现实主义与浪漫主义的混合风格，有力地描绘了一个骄傲而强大的家族的衰落。这部小说中挤满了几代习惯于在中国同一屋檐下生活的男男女女，它作为对那种生活的亲密描述而独树一帜。

8 But I can mention only a small fraction of the hundreds of novels which delight the common people of China. And if those people knew of what I was speaking to you today, they would after all say “tell of the great three, and let us stand or fall by Shui Hu Chuan and San Kuo and Hung Lou Meng.” In these three novels are the lives which the Chinese people lead and have long led, here are the songs they sing and the things at which they laugh and the things which they love to do. Into these novels they have put the generations of their being and to refresh that being they return to these novels again and again, and out of them they have made new songs and plays and other novels.

但我只能提及让中国普通百姓喜爱的数百部小说中的一小部分。如果那些百姓知道我今天跟你讲的这些内容，他们终究会说“讲讲那三大名著吧，我们就以《水浒传》《三国演义》和《红楼梦》论成败”。在这三部小说里有中国人民过着的以及长期以来一直过着的生活，这里有他们唱的歌、他们觉得好笑的事情以及他们喜欢做的事情。他们把世代的生命融入这些小说中，为了重振那种生命，他们一次又一次地回到这些小说，并且从这些小说中创作出新的歌曲、戏剧和其他小说。