

新经典  
ENGLISH MAJOR

高等学校英语专业系列教材

# 英国文学经典选读 (第二版)

刁克利 编著

*Classical Readings of English Literature*

(下)

外语教学与研究出版社  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

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# 前 言

文学作品既是一种语言精华的体现，也是一个民族文化、精神与情感的反映。

英国文学学习至少有四个目的：一是阅读最优美的英语；二是系统地学习英国文学知识，提高作品欣赏能力，启迪并发展文学批评能力；三是开阔视野，了解与文学相关的英语文化和思想潮流的产生和发展；四是丰富情感体验，提高人文素养和思想水平。

根据多年课堂教学经验，一本理想的英国文学教材应当包括：学习要点提示、系统的背景介绍、经典的作品遴选、详尽的注释、文学评论要点综述、富有启发性的思考题、灵活多样的课堂活动以及作家名言选录等。而正是这些构成了本教材的基本内容。

全书分上、下两册，由7个部分组成，共40单元，结构如下表所示：

上册	第1部分 1~4单元	中世纪文学，英语文学的形成时期
	第2部分 5~7单元	16世纪文学，即文艺复兴时期文学
	第3部分 8~11单元	17世纪文学
	第4部分 12~20单元	以启蒙运动为背景的18世纪文学
下册	第5部分 21~27单元	以诗歌为主要形式的浪漫主义文学
	第6部分 28~34单元	维多利亚时期的文学
	第7部分 35~40单元	20世纪文学

在对英国文学内容进行了全面梳理和系统讲解的基础上，本书对教材形式进行了较大的创新。大致框架如下：

每一部分首先介绍了学习要点和背景知识，然后是分单元讲解的作家作品。学习要点由关键词组成，放在各部分前面，明确教学目标，提示学习重点，在正文中出现时都以黑体标记。这也有利于在学习中加深印象，以及对相关参考书目的选择。背景知识主要介绍与作家作品相关的文学思潮，及其生成的社会、历史、文化背景，以及不同文学体裁的转换原因和新特点，还有对代表性作家作品的概述。

每单元（1~3单元除外）以作家为标题，主要内容是作家介绍与作品选读，以及注释、评论要点、问题思考、课堂活动和作家名言等。

- 作家介绍 (life and writing): 包括作家在文学史中的地位和总体评价, 作家的生活经历、文学思想和创作风格的形成, 以及作家的优秀作品与影响。

- 作品选读 (selected works): 遴选文学史中有定论的一流作家的代表作, 讲解部分主要包括作品的内容概述、结构分析、语言欣赏、艺术特色和主题思想等。

- 注释 (notes): 涵盖语言点、专用词汇和文学术语解释, 以及精彩句子点评、文学现象延伸讲解和重要段落的意思总结等。

- 评论要点 (critical points): 概括经典作品的魅力所在, 综述作品批评的历史沿革和不同的阐释角度, 引导文学欣赏与批评的新方法, 有助于文学论文写作和深入研究。对于热爱文学、想进一步探索研究的同学, 这一部分会有很大的帮助。

- 问题思考 (questions): 既促进思考, 又是重点内容提示, 强调对文学作品意义的思考和体验。

- 课堂活动 (class activities): 有写作训练、角色扮演、作品朗诵、分组讨论、主题报告和演讲等, 鼓励同学交流和师生互动, 以多种形式促进文学学习。此部分内容教师可根据实际情况采用。

- 作家名言 (quotations): 选录作家在不同作品中的精彩句子, 有助于理解作家的文学思想。

本教材的特点可以概括为以下几个方面, 这同时也是学习英国文学需要注意的地方:

一是注重文学规律, 清楚作家作品产生的社会背景、文化背景, 及其在文学思潮中的发生和流变; 阅读文学作品的同时学习文学批评和文学思潮的更迭。

二是注重作品解读, 提高文学欣赏和批评水平。对作品从内容结构、情节安排、表意层面、音韵格律、写作特色和技法等方面进行详尽地分析, 对作品的意义表述从情、理、思三个方面进行透彻地剖析。

三是以作家年代先后为线索编排内容, 注重作家思想的来源、文学风格的形成, 及其对文学史的贡献和影响。

四是强调教学互动。问题思考、课堂活动和作家名言等的设计旨在启示新的教学方法和学习、体验文学的新思路, 以达到更好的教学效果。奇文共欣赏, 疑义相与析; 相互交流和切磋会使学习过程生动有趣。

教材主要服务于教学实践。全书(上下册)的内容和形式均符合

两个学期的课程安排和每周一次课的教学需要。每次课可以是 2 到 4 个学时。授课对象为英语专业本科高年级学生。在实际教学中, 根据学生兴趣和实际需要, 对部分作家作品可以有所取舍, 各单元内容的讲解也可以有所侧重。

文学教材的目的不仅只是教授知识, 也要培养学生对文学的终生热爱。维护这种热爱的途径就是知道文学有趣、有益, 同时懂得如何登堂入室。所以, 本书的理念是在全面理解和执行教学大纲的前提下, 提倡对文学的多层次学习和理解。

在此, 特别感谢美国伊利诺伊大学厄巴纳-香槟分校英语系彼得·加勒特教授 (Peter Garrett), 我和他详细讨论过本书的选材和主要内容。从他的文学课堂中, 我获益良多。感谢查尔斯·兰斯福德先生 (Charles Lansford), 他逐句审读了本书的课堂活动和问题思考部分。感谢中国人民大学外国语学院英语系的学生, 他们的学习热情激励着我不断完善本书的构想。

第二版是在 2008 版的基础上修订而成, 主要是规范了全书体例, 使形式更加统一, 并完善了批评要点, 使重点更加突出。在此基础上, 删减并压缩了部分篇幅, 增强了本书作为教材的实用性。

衷心欢迎读者提出宝贵意见。

刁克利  
2011 年 3 月 23 日

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# Part V

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## The Age of Romanticism (1798-1832)

### Key Words

Romantic poetry	familiar essay
the novel of purpose	oxymoron
terza rima	epizeuxis
Byronic hero	ode



**The Romantic period** in Britain denoted the period between 1798, marked with the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and 1832, when Sir Walter Scott died and other major writers were no longer productive.

Romanticism gets its name from romance, the literary form in which desires and dreams prevail over everyday realities. The movement may be regarded as the triumph of the values of imaginative spontaneity, visionary originality, wonder, and emotional self-expression over the classical standards of balance, order, restraint, proportion, and objectivity. It marks a profound transformation in artistic style, in cultural attitudes, and in the relations between artist and society in literature and other arts in the first half of the 19th century.

England experienced the critical change from a primarily agricultural society to a modern industrial nation, in which the balance of economic power shifted to large-scale employers, and with which appeared an immensely enlarging working class. This change occurred in the context of the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the American Revolution.

## 1 French Revolution

The early period of the French Revolution evoked enthusiastic support from English liberals and radicals alike. Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791-1792) justified the French Revolution, and advocated for England a democratic Republic to be established by revolution. William Godwin's *Inquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) foretold an inevitable but peaceful evolution of society to a final stage in which all properties would be equally distributed and all governments would wither away. Both works, together with Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), had an important influence upon William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and other Romanticists.

In the early period of the French Revolution, all the leading English writers were in sympathy with it, and Robert Burns, William Blake, Wordsworth, Samuel Coleridge, Robert Southey were among its fervent adherents. The younger writers William Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Percy Shelley and Gorge Gordon Byron felt its example comprised humanity's best hope. Under the influence of the American and French revolutions, the idea of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" inspired English writers, and the desire for personal freedom and individual rights encouraged a more daring and imaginative approach to both life and literature.

## 2 The Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution had begun in the mid-18th century with improvements in machines for processing textiles, and was given immense impetus when James Watt perfected the steam engine in 1785. In the succeeding decades, steam replaced wind and water as the primary source of power in manufacturing, and began the ever-accelerating progress in economic and social conditions. This process introduced more efficient methods of agriculture and animal breeding required to supply a growing population; and it created a new landless class who either migrated to the industrial towns or remained as farm labourers, subsisting on starvation wages.

Meanwhile, the population was increasingly polarised into two classes: the land and factory owner and the wageworker, the rich and the poor. In London the leisure class enjoyed lavish display and moral laxity; in the provinces, the gentry in their country houses carried on their familial and social concerns almost untouched by great national and international events, as reflected in the novels of Jane Austen.

## 3 Literature Achievements

### 1) Romantic poetry

Most romanticists were poets because poetry was the best medium to express their feelings and passions. The Romantic period is, therefore, an age of poetry. As a whole, it is usually taken to represent a second renaissance of literature in Britain, especially in lyric and narrative poetry.

The characteristic features of Romantic poetry are as follows:

First, the poetic creation of Romanticism starts as a rebellion against the Neoclassicism. The Romantic poets explore new theories and innovate new techniques in poetry creation. Wordsworth, in the "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*", calls for simple themes drawn from humble life expressed in the language of ordinary people. He advocates a quite different standard for the material, content, theme, and language of poetry.

Second, the Romantic poets believe in the moral good of poetry. Their interpretation of poetry is that poetry is a healing energy, and it could purify both individual souls and society. Wordsworth defines the poet as "a man speaking to men"; Shelley believes that poetry can play a very important part in the spiritual life of society. "The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting on the cause."



(Shelley: "A Defence of Poetry")

Third, subjectivity and spontaneity are especially emphasised in Romantic poetry. The Romantic poets establish a new relationship between poetry and poet. They claim the quality of poetry is the quality of the poet. Wordsworth's definition of poetry is "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", which originates in "emotion recollected in tranquility". Shelley believes that "poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds." Both express that poetry is the direct product of the poet.

Fourth, Romantic poets believe that imagination is the vital faculty that creates new wholes out of disparate elements, as Coleridge argues. Shelley defines the poetry to be "the expression of the Imagination"; and poetry is connate with the origin of man." William Blake says, "where intelligence was fallible, limited, the Imagination was our hope of contact with eternal forces, with the whole spiritual world."

Fifth, a new connotation is given to the concept of nature. Nature is not only the major source of poetic imagery, but also provides the dominant subject matter. Wordsworth conceives of nature as "the nurse,/The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul/Of all my moral being." Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey reject the excessively rational, as well as excessively materialistic world, and choose to live by the lakeside as to escape from the "madding crowd".

Sixth, Romantic poets also make bold experiments in poetic language, versification and design, and construct a variety of forms on original principles of organisation and style. Examples can be found in Blake's visionary prophetic poems, in Coleridge's mystic ballad, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", in Wordsworth's spiritual autobiography, *The Prelude*, and in Shelley's symbolic drama, *Prometheus Unbound*. In order to achieve the effect of the individual vision, the medieval or renaissance world is particularly favoured as the setting.

William Blake and Robert Burns are the two notable forerunners of Romantic poetry. Later the works of William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, George Gordon Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats represent the highest achievements in Romantic poetry. Robert Southey<sup>1</sup> and

---

1 Robert Southey (1774-1843): English poet of the Romantic school, one of the so-called "Lake Poets", and Poet Laureate. Although his fame tends to be eclipsed by that of his contemporaries and friends William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Southey's verse enjoys enduring popularity. Moreover, he was a prolific letter writer, literary scholar, historian and biographer.

Leigh Hunt<sup>1</sup> are also influential figures of the Romanticism.

The Romantic poets are not only innovators of poetic creation but also thinkers of poetic theory. They make unique contributions to the development of literary theory, most notably in the writing of Coleridge and Hazlitt, and in major essays by Wordsworth and Shelley. “Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*” by Wordsworth, “A Defence of Poetry” by Shelley, *Biographia Literaria* by Coleridge, are three brilliant representatives.



Robert Southey, from a painting by John Opie, engraved by W. H. Egleton



Leigh Hunt, a portrait drawn by J. Hayter, engraved by H. Meyer

## 2) Familiar essays

The periodical essay in England began with Defoe in 1704, and was developed by Addison and Steele in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. Addison divided *The Spectator* writings into series essays and occasional papers.

In the 19th century, periodicals increased in number and modern magazines came into being. In 1802, the *Edinburgh Review* started the modern type of periodical publication. In 1820 appeared *The London Magazine*, liberal in politics and contemporary in literary interests. It allowed considerable latitude to its writers, and set its literary standards high.

These new periodicals, by elevating the essay in literary dignity and quality, and making an author able to earn a living as a freelance essayist, served a great promotion for the tradition of English essays.

The familiar essay (“informal” or “personal essay”), as a commentary on everyday subject written in a relaxed and intimate manner, flourished in a

---

<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt (1784-1859): English essayist, poet and writer.



fashion paralleling the course of Romantic poetry. Like the poets, the essayists are personal and subjective; their essays are often candidly autobiographical, reminiscent, self-analytic; the material is reflected in the temperament of the essayist. The subject matter of the essays, like that of poetry, exhibits an extension of range and sympathy for what is beyond the earlier limits of the leisure class and its fashionable concerns. The most important English essayists of this period are William Hazlitt<sup>1</sup>, Leigh Hunt, Thomas De Quincey<sup>2</sup> and Charles Lamb.



William Hazlitt,  
self-portrait, ca. 1802



Thomas De Quincey

### 3) Fiction of the Romantic period

Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott are two major novelists of the Romantic period.

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) was a prolific Scottish historical novelist and poet, enjoying popularity throughout Europe during his time. He is now known as “the father of the historical novel”, and many of his works remain classics, including *Ivanhoe*, *Rob Roy* and *Waverley*. “The Lady of the Lake” was among his best known poems.

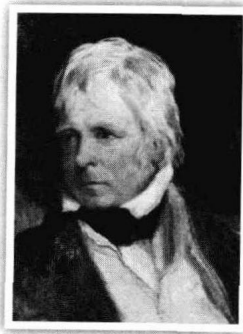
In this period, two other types of fiction were successively popular. One was the “Gothic novel”, prominent in the late 18th century, exerted distinct influence upon the Romantic poetry.

The second fictional mode popular at the turn of the century was **the novel of purpose**, written to propagate the new social and political theories current

1 William Hazlitt (1778-1830) was remembered for his humanistic essays and literary criticism, often esteemed the greatest English literary critic after Samuel Johnson.

2 Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859): English author and intellectual, best known for his book *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*.

in the period of the French Revolution. This kind of novel combines didactic intention with elements of Gothic terror. William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*<sup>1</sup> (1794) is a good example. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*<sup>2</sup> (1818) transforms a story about a fabricated monster into a powerful representation of the moral distortion imposed on an individual who is rejected by society as he diverges from the norm.



Sir Walter Scott, by Sir Edwin Henry Landseer, 1824



Mary Shelley

- 1 William Godwin (1756-1836): English journalist, political philosopher and novelist. Godwin is most famous for two books: *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, an attack on political institutions, and *Things as They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (often abbreviated to *Caleb Williams*), which attacks aristocratic privilege, but also is virtually the first mystery novel. *Caleb Williams* (1794) is a three-volume novel, written as a call to end the abuse of power by what Godwin saw as a tyrannical government.
- 2 Mary Shelley (1797-1851): the daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, wife of the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. She was also a novelist, authoring *Frankenstein*. It is a novel infused with some elements of the Gothic novel and the Romantic movement. It was also a warning against the "over-reaching" of modern man and the Industrial Revolution, alluded to the novel's subtitle, *The Modern Prometheus*. The story has had an influence across literature and popular culture.





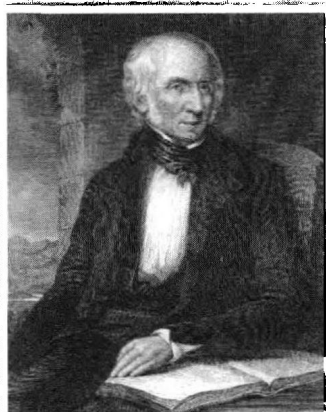
# Unit 21

## William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

*William Wordsworth is a leading English Romantic poet, and England's Poet Laureate from 1843 to 1850.*

### Life and Writing

Wordsworth was born and grew up on the northern fringe of the English Lake District. His father was an attorney, but died when he was 13; his mother died five years earlier. Wordsworth was sent to school by his guardian uncles. He attended St. John's College, Cambridge, but disliked the academic courses. In 1790 he went on a walking tour of France, the Alps, and Italy, and returned to France late in 1791; during his stay of one year in France he was fired by a passionate belief in the French Revolution and republican ideals, and also fell in love with the daughter of a surgeon, Annette Vallon, who bore him a daughter later. After his return to England, he published in 1793 two poems in heroic couplets.



*William Wordsworth, reproduced from Margaret Gillies' 1839 original*

In 1795 his friend left him a legacy of 900 pounds, intending to enable him to pursue his vocation as a poet. Wordsworth settled with his sister Dorothy in Somersetshire. They lived a frugal life, and Dorothy made him turn his eyes to "the face of nature" and take an interest in the peasants living in their neighbourhood. She also induced him to transform his observation of the landscape into the revelation of the beauty of nature in poetry. In 1797 he made friends with Coleridge. The intense friendship shaped their lives for the next 14 years and proved one of the most creative partnerships in English