英国文学阅读与欣赏

第二版

王虹 编

English Literature
Reading and Appreciation

21 世纪英语语言文化丛书

English Literature: Reading and Appreciation

英国文学阅读与欣赏

（第二版）

王 虹 编

华南理工大学出版社

·广 州·

内 容 简 介

本书按英国文学史各个主要历史阶段划分,从中世纪到20世纪初,分为十个单元。各单元包括各时期历史和文学史简介、有代表性作家的生平简介、作品摘选及注释、练习及课堂活动等。书后附有主要作家、作品一览表和文学术语,方便读者查阅。本书适用于英语专业高年级学生或具有中高级英语阅读能力的自学者。

总　序

　　21 世纪正在以惊人的速度演变成这样一个新时代：国际政治多极化、经济环球化、社会信息化、文化多元化。毫无疑问，它将给我国外语教育，尤其是英文教育带来新的机遇和挑战。也就是说，新时代将迫使我们修正英语人才的培养目标和规格。我们认为，未来的英语人才不仅要具备扎实的听、说、读、写、译基本功和较广的知识面，而且还要具备适应知识经济时代的三种能力：强劲的获取并运用知识、处理信息与通信的能力，独立分析问题、提出见解的能力，热爱科学、极具个性、大胆创新的能力。简而言之，21 世纪的英语人才要有一流的综合素质和深厚的文化底蕴。于是，我们诚邀各路同仁，精心策划了这套《21 世纪英语语言文化丛书》。

　　中国教育部于 1999 年 4 月决定进一步演化高考制度改革，其改革方案不仅包括高考科目、高考形式、录取方式的改革，更重要的是"高考内容"的改革。这一改革更加注重对考生能力和素质的考察，因此高考命题把以知识立意转变为以能力立意。这无疑向我国高等院校的人才培养提出了更高的要求。而英语专业人才的培养教育则应在加强宏观战略研究的同时，把关照重心放在课程的优化设置、教材的精心选编、课堂的人文管理和能力的充分提高等方面，从而发展学生的跨文化交际能力和继续学习、不断发展的能力。作为"人类灵魂的工程师"，我们应在社会转型、价值速变的今天带领我们的莘莘学子，抵制利禄，放弃窘迫，在市井的嘈杂与喧嚣中呼唤文化素质，呼唤艺术品味，呼唤高尚人格。于是，我们认真选编出版了这套《21 世纪英语语言文化丛书》。

　　本丛书的策划、选编和出版得到了华南理工大学出版社的积极响应和中华传动网的热情支持，在此一并表示衷心的感谢！丛书中一定有许多不足之处，诚望同行专家和广大使用者赐教。

<div align="right">广东外语外贸大学英语语言文化学院　毛思慧博士</div>

Introduction

I see Everything I paint in This World, but Everybody does not see alike. To the Eyes of a Miser a Guinea is more beautiful than the Sun, & a bag worn with the use of Money has more beautiful proportions than a Vine filled with Grapes. The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the Eyes of others only a Green thing that stands in the way ⋯ As a man is, So he Sees. As the Eye is formed, such are its Powers.

William Blake (1799)

In reading great literature I become a thousand men and yet remain myself. Like the night sky in the Greek poem, I see with a myriad eye but it is still I who see.

C. S. Lewis (1961)

Aims

This book is intended for advanced learners of English as a foreign language who will use English in cultural/economic exchange with or in administrative work involving English speaking peoples. Since the level of the learners is advanced, this course is mainly fluency based as far as language is concerned. While improving learners' fluency in English is part of the aims, literary texts are used not just for this purpose; more importantly, they should be taught and appreciated in their true value as literature. Although the book is designed for the teaching of English literature to English majors, with classroom activities and assignments, the general readers and learners studying by their own can also use this book to study English literature and improve their reading skills.

The aims of the book can be briefly summarized as follows:

1. To consolidate and extend the learners' knowledge and fluency in English through interaction with literary texts;
2. To provide the learners with an outline of the history of British literature up to early 20th century;
3. To further develop the learners' ability to recognize and express emotional and moral attitudes on a higher level than about daily occurrences so as to facilitate their communication with educated native speakers;
4. To introduce the learners to imaginative use of English and to help them towards an appreciation of literary language and literature;
5. To prepare the learners for the study of literature in English at a higher level and to help them to develop interest in and, hopefully, the habit of reading extensively.

Methodology

In this book, activities are designed to make learning more learner-centred and it is hoped that teaching/learning will be conducted through interaction at three levels: between the students and the text, between/among fellow students, and between students and the teacher.

Comprehension, especially literary comprehension, is not just a matter of decoding the lexical and syntactic elements of sentences. It involves the text as well as the attitudes, knowledge and expectation of the reader. If we want the reader to comprehend and respond to a text, we need to provide certain conditions for reader/text interaction to take place. This is especially important considering some linguistic and cultural difficulties faced by the learner while reading literary texts in English. The pre-reading activities are designed to develop an appropriate mental set for reading, appreciating and interpreting the texts.

Interaction among students and between students and the teacher means the channel of communication between the teacher and students will cease to be exclusively one-way, and there will be a proportion of group work and pair work appropriate to the nature of activities and to the texts. The teacher's role is to facilitate, stimulate and support in activities where learners investigate, explore and interpret literary texts. Furthermore, as a more mature and experienced reader, the teacher is in a position to guide the students in the right direction of appreciation and interpretation. There are times, when the teacher will assume the role of the instructor, passing on background information or information on literary techniques.

There is no standard requirement as to how and how much of the activities should be covered in class. The teacher should feel free to change, adapt or introduce new activities as she/he sees fit. In other words, with the general aims of the course in mind, each individual teacher has plenty room for manoeuvre in adapting teaching to the needs of the students.

Features

Units   The book is divided into 10 units, each dealing with a particular period in the history of English literature. Units 8 and 10 are exceptions in that they are concerned with particular genres rather than with a particular period. Unit 8 is about the novel, while Unit 10 is about the short story.

Introduction   Background information is integrated into the book in the form of a brief introduction at the beginning of each unit.

Writer's biography   All the literary texts selected for this book are proceeded by biographical information about the writer concerned.

Texts with learning activities   These are meant to be used in the classroom. These

texts are often accompanied by notes.

Classroom activities   These are designed to assist teaching and learning. The teacher can decide how much of these activities to cover in class and she/he can also design new activities when necessary.

Pre-reading—They are designed to help motivate learners by getting them involved in the theme of the text before they read it. Some texts do not have pre-reading activities and you may think up your own tasks for these texts when you use them in the classroom.

Language and Style—These exercises deal with detailed questions concerning the techniques or language used by the writer and aim to show the learner how the text achieves its effects on the reader.

Understanding and interpretation—Under this heading fall a variety of exercises which serve to assist comprehension of not only what is stated but also what is suggested. They require learners to express their own interpretation of the texts.

Extension and Appreciation—While the other activities mainly aim at helping the learner to make sense of the texts, these assist those who are more interested in literary-critical study of the texts. The learners are invited to go beyond the comprehension of the texts to critical appreciation.

Writing and Discussion—These activities give the learners the chance to express their own opinion and improve not only their ability to use the language but also their literary competence.

Supplementary Readings   Texts collected under this heading are meant for out of class reading. The teacher can encourage learners to read more by organizing discussions about some of the texts or writers mentioned.

Appendices   The appendices include a list of important writers and their works, aiming to help learners to go beyond this book in their reading, and a list of literary terms.

Contents

Unit 1
Early and Medieval English Literature

Introduction

The early and medieval English literature can be divided into three major periods: the Anglo-Saxon period, the Anglo-Norman period and the period of preparation for Renaissance.

The Anglo-Saxon Period

The period begins with the migration of three Teutonic tribes, the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, to Britain. These tribes came from western Denmark and the northwest coast of Germany. By the end of the fifth century, they conquered and almost exterminated the Celtic tribes, the native inhabitants of the island, and began to form the English nation.

When they first came to Britain, the Anglo-Saxons were heathen. Later, a group of missionaries led by St. Augustine came to the island from Rome and started to Christianize its people. The first to be converted was the King of Kent, who had a Christian wife, and then within a century all England was Christianized. The Christianity of England is important because religion has a strong influence on literature, especially during the early periods.

The early history of England is not a peaceful one. Not long after the Anglo-Saxons settled down in Britain and established seven kingdoms of large territories, the Danes began to invade England. For more than a century, the Danish invasion was a constant threat. King Alfred the Great of Wessex led the people in the war against the invaders and succeeded in repulsing the Danes. Gradually, all the Kingdoms in England were united.

In early 11th century, the Danes again invaded England. This time they won the battle and ruled the land for a quarter of a century (1017—1042). Then in 1066, the Normans, led by William the Duke of Normandy, invaded and conquered England, thus making the end of the Anglo-Saxon period.

The literature of this period is rather primitive, so to speak. When they came to Britain, the Anglo-Saxons brought with them their own legend and tradition, so early Anglo-Saxon poetry often dealt with things which happened on the continent. The earliest form of their literature was oral. Stories were narrated orally or sung to a group of audience, and interesting stories were passed from mouth to mouth. Later, there emerged

a kind of professional narrators or singers of stories. Some of the stories were written down and these became precious materials for modern study and research. The best preserved and most important work of this kind is the long narrative poem, *Beowulf*. This poem is called the "national epic of the Anglo-Saxons".

A distinctive feature of Old English poetry is alliteration, the repetition of stressed initial sounds in a group of words closely connected to one and other, as in this line from *Beowulf*: "From a friendless foundling, feeble and wretched."

Beowulf was composed before the Anglo-Saxons became Christians. However, as it was handed down from generation to generation, the influence of Christian religion was unmistakable. In later Anglo-Saxon poetry, purely religious themes became quite popular. This reflects the influence of the Christian church in England's culture and literature. Here we may mention the story of one religious poet by the name of Caedmon. It is said that Caedmon was an elderly farmhand of Yorkshire. He had never learnt to make verses, and would flee for shame when his turn came to sing at entertainment. One day, however, he suddenly began to compose poems of a kind hitherto unknown in English: religious narrative verse on themes drawn from the Bible. Unfortunately, very few of his poems have come down to us.

It is a remarkable feature of the early English literature that many of the works were anonymous. It seems that men of literary talent at that time had no idea of public fame; they wrote because they wanted to, and that was enough for them. We know some of them only because they were recorded by others or because they were famous during their lifetime for their contribution in other fields than literature.

The first great book in prose in English is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which recorded the national history of England from AD 1 to 1154.

Anglo-Norman Period

In 1066, the Normans, under the leadership of William the Duke of Normandy, won the battle of Hastings and conquered England. After the conquest, native English became the speech of the lower classes, while French was the official language of the state and was used by the nobility. Still another language, Latin, was used in Churches and other religious institutions. So three languages existed at the same time in England, each with a special function. The native language had strong vitality; it borrowed from French and Latin, and greatly enriched itself. Gradually English replaced French in many functions. By the end of this period, English was officially introduced at school and at courts of law.

The literature of this period was strongly influenced by French culture. The most important form of literary composition of this period is the metrical romance, namely romance written in metrical verses. By then, metre and rhyme had been adopted from French poetry. Metrical romances dealt with love or knightly adventures and very often with both. The most popular theme employed was the legend of King Arthur and the round

table knights. Among all the Middle English metrical romances, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is generally considered to be the best.

Preparation of Renaissance

Three centuries after the Norman Conquest, the Normans had been assimilated by the Anglo-Saxons, and they had long lost their control on the continent. In 1337, the monarchy of England waged a war against France. The war lasted for about a century and accordingly was called the Hundred Years' War. Two years after the war with France, in 1455, the English lords and barons began their internal strife, which was later called the Wars of the Roses (Red Rose represents the noble family of Lancaster and White Rose represents the noble family of York). The living conditions of the people deteriorated as the wars continued, and as a result, popular insurrections were growing in force. In 1381, came the great peasants' rising which brought the armed people to London. Though the rising was suppressed, social unrest continued. When the war was over at last, England was ready for a new phase in its history.

The social condition finds its expression in literature. There were a number of works of social protest. The most prominent was a long narrative poem written by William Langland, *Piers Plowman*. The poem is a dream vision, the full title being *The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman*. The poet appealed directly to the people, exposed the vice of the Church and set on record the struggles and virtues of the common people. This made the poem immediately popular.

The poetry of this period produced one of England's greatest poets — Geoffrey Chaucer, with his masterpiece *The Canterbury Tales*. A group of poets came under the influence of Chaucer. They owed their satirical and narrative skill to their acknowledged master, but none of them achieved the success enjoyed by Chaucer.

A notable literary achievement of this period is a collection of the legends of King Arthur, translated from French by Sir Thomas Malory, *Morte d'Arthur*. It was among the earliest printed books in English (by Caxton in 1485). The finest part is the last four books, comprising the unlawful love of Guinevere, the Queen and Lancelot, King Arthur's trusted knight, and the destruction of the fellowship of the Round Table. The book is written in prose with a fine rhythm.

Another prose work which deserves mentioning is the translation of the Bible, reputedly by John Wyclif. Wyclif was an active figure in the social and religious reform of his time, and his fame rests more on this account than on his contribution to literature. At the end of Wyclif's life, there appeared the earliest translation of the entire Bible from Latin to English. The translated version is called *Wyclif Bible*, because it was attributed to him. Recent research tends to believe that Wyclif did not undertake the translation, but it undoubtedly reflects his influence.

Besides the poetry and prose discussed above, there was a kind of folk literature,

especially popular in the 15th century, and this was the ballad. A ballad is a story told in song. It is composed collectively by the people and constantly revised in the process of being handed down from mouth to mouth.

Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1340 — c. 1400)

Certainly the most important and the greatest writer of the period is Geoffrey Chaucer, the father of English poetry. Chaucer was born in or about 1340. His father was a rich wine merchant. At the age of 17, he was employed in the service of a nobleman, who later became the Duke of Clarence. When Edward Ⅲ's army invaded France, Chaucer was in the army and taken prisoner. Shortly afterwards he was ransomed. Later he entered the service of King Edward Ⅲ.

In his literary career, Chaucer was first influenced by French literary models. He translated a French love allegory, *The Romance of the Rose* and successfully introduced into English some forms from French poetry. When he was sent on a diplomatic mission to Genoa and Florence, he began to feel the influence of the great literary geniuses of early Renaissance Italy, and for the next fifteen years or so he wrote under Italian influence. To this period belong *The House of Fame, The Parliament of Fouls, Troilus and Criseyde*, and *The Legend of Good Women*. In about 1386, Chaucer conceived the idea of *The Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer's contribution to the English poetry and his fame after his death mainly rest on this monumental work, because in his maturity he was free from any dominant foreign influence and became a truly English poet. *The Canterbury Tales* was not completed when the poet died in 1400. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, the first poet to be buried in the "Poet's Corner".

Chaucer is rightly termed the "Father of English Poetry". His experiences, combined with his literary genius, enable him to stand above his contemporaries, and occupy the foremost position among the poets of Medieval English literature. In his poetry, foreign influence is assimilated into English tradition and the heroic couplet employed so successfully by him in *The Canterbury Tales* has become an important form of English poetry. He is the earliest of the great modern poets and his works have the promise of the English Renaissance in them.

The Canterbury Tales

Geoffrey Chaucer's great skill was as a teller of tales. He drew on the moral, religious and philosophical beliefs of the day and yet created poetry from the spoken language. His writing was full of comedy blended with tragedy as well as wonderfully realistic descriptions of characters and nature.

The Canterbury Tales, *begun in about 1386, consists of stories told by some of the*

thirty pilgrims who set off from the Tabard Inn in Southwark, London, to visit the shrine of St. Thomas a Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury murdered in his own cathedral in 1170. The aim was to tell four stories each: two on the way, two on the way back. The teller of the best story would be given a free dinner by the cheerful host of the Tabard. In fact, the collection is incomplete and only twenty-four stories are told. These stories, in their extent and variety, offer a remarkable anthology of medieval literature.

The Prologue introduces the readers to the situation and gives portraits of the pilgrims. These portraits are lively and sometimes satirical, with a generous sympathy for the springs of vitality in each individual character, whether righteous or sinful. In the following extracts we are going to read the portraits of three pilgrims. The Canterbury Tales was written in Middle English and our extracts are taken from a modern version of the poem. In **Supplementary Readings (1),** *you will find an original version of the first section of the Prologue.*

The pilgrims meet at the inn

Extract 1

Pre-reading

You are going to read Chaucer's description of a prioress, a nun who is the head of a religious order or a religious house (e. g. an abbey). Before reading Chaucer's description, we could try to create a picture of a nun from our knowledge or imagination.

1. Imagine the facial expression of a nun, what words would you use to describe it?

2. A nun, especially a prioress, is usually remarkable for the following characteristics
    (tick the words/expressions of your choice):
    a. solemnity, charm, kindness
    b. serious/ pleasant/ easy-going/ sombre manners
    c. full of sense / sensibility

3. If she carries a motto, which do you think is more likely to be her choice?
    a. All that glisters is not gold.
    b. Glory belongs to the King.
    c. God helps those who help themselves.
    d. Love conquers all.

Now read Chaucer's description and be ready to compare and tell the differences between your idea and Chaucer's description.

> ALSO there was a nun, a PRIORESS[1] ,
> And she went smiling, innocent and coy;
> The greatest oath she swore was by Saint Loy;
> And she was known as Madame Eglentine.
> Full well sang the services divine,
> Intoning through her nose right prettily,
> And fair she spoke her French and fluently
> After the school of Stratford-at-the-Bow;
> (The French that Paris spoke she didn't know).
> Well-taught she was at table; she would let
> No food fall from her lips; she never wet
> Her fingers deeply in the sauce; with care
> She raised each morsel; well would she beware
> Lest any drop upon her breast should fall;
> In manners she delighted above all.
> Always she wiped her upper lip so clean
> That never a fleck of grease was to be seen
> Within her cup when she had drunk. When she
> Reached for her food, she did it daintily.
> Pleasant she was, and loved a jest[2] as well,
> And in demeanor[3] she was amiable.

Ever to use the ways of court she tried,
And sought to keep her manner dignified,
That all folk should be reverent of her.
But, speaking of her heart and character,
Such pity had she, and such charity
That if she saw a trapp'd mouse she would cry —
If it had died, or even if it bled;
And she had little dogs to which she fed
Fine roasted meat, or milk, or dainty bread;
How would she weep if one of them were dead,
Or any one should strike it viciously:
She was all heart and sensibility!
Her face was fair in pleated[4] wimple[5] draped,
Her eyes were gray as glass, her nose well-shaped,
Her mouth full small and thereto soft and red,
But of a truth she had a fair forehead,
A span in breadth or I should be surprised,
For certainly she was not undersized.
Handsome her cloak, as I was well aware;
And wrought of coral round her arm she bare
A bracelet all of beads and green gauds[6] strung,
And down from this a golden pendant hung —
A brooch on which was written a crown'd A
Followed by *Amor Vincit Omnia*[7].

Notes

(1) *prioress*: a nun serving as head of a religious order or house
(2) *jest*: jokes
(3) *demeanor*: behaviour towards others
(4) *pleated*: with folds
(5) *wimple*: head covering worn by nuns
(6) *gauds*: showy ornaments
(7) *Amor Vincit Omnia*: Latin for "Love conquers all"

Discussion

Compare Chaucer's description with your prediction in **Pre-reading**. Is there any difference? How do you think of Chaucer's description?

Language and Style

1. Select a detail which contains humour or irony. What makes it comic or ironic?

2. What do you notice about the rhyme at the end of the lines?

Extract 2

Read the extract and fill in the blanks with words from the list provided.

money	gaiety	gain	sell	pence	virtues
dollars	debt	trade	prayer	solemnity	

> NEXT, all in motley[1] garbed, a MERCHANT came,
> With a forked beard. High on his horse he sat,
> Upon his head a Flanders beaver[2] hat;
> His boots were buckled fair and modishly[3].
> He spoke his words with great _____,
> Having in mind his _____ in pounds and _____.
> He wished the sea, regardless of expense,
> Kept safe from Middleburg to Orewell.
> Cunningly could he buy French crowns, or _____,
> And great sagacity[4] in all ways showed;
> No man could tell of any _____ he owed,
> So circumspect he was in everything,
> His loans, his bargains, and his trafficking.
> In truth, a worthy man withal was he,
> And yet I know not what his name might be.

Notes

(1) *motley*: of various colours
(2) *beaver*: a kind of fur-coated animal that lives both on land and in water
(3) *modishly*: fashionably
(4) *sagacity*: practical wisdom

Extract 3

A word is missing in the first line of this extract. Read the extract carefully and try to supply an appropriate word for the blank.

> THERE was a _____ out of Oxford town,
> Indentured[1] long to logic and the gown.