

可持续发展教育项目

WAY TO WITTINESS

A Conversation
between
Author and Reader

苏鹏 著



企业管理出版社

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前 言

培养文学气质，提高人的修养，是我国文化传统的精髓，也是当前提高人文素质的要求，更是国家、社会可持续发展的核心要求。而外语文学作品的学习，也是我们学习外语、了解外国文化的重要途径与组成部分。正因为如此，自我国开始进行外语教学以来，文学作品在高等学校外语专业的课程中就占着非常重要的地位。虽然对教学大纲进行过多次的修订，文学课的地位从来没有真正受动摇。这充分说明了文学作品的学习在外语学习、文化理解、进而在提高人的素质方面不可替代的重要作用。

然而，现实情况是，从事文学教学的教师中，大部分人的教育经历不足以解决教学中新出现的问题与要求。大学里传统的英语文学教学方法受到质疑、甚至遭遇学生的抵触。与此同时，作为普通读者的学生发现，文学课既晦涩难懂又无实用价值。文学课成了学生“不得不上选修课”——有的学生将其戏称为“鸡肋”。

本书多年从事英语文学教学与学习的心得体会；目的在于，在对西方批评理论的分析与比较的基础上，通过具体作品的分析，使读者能增加对文学作品的敏感度，不再对文学作品像雾里看花般不知所云。但本书也并不仅仅是重复某一流派的观点，或是用一种理论标准去衡量文学作品是否达到要求。希望读者朋友在看过本书后，能尽量学习各家观点，借他山之石，借鉴前人成果，在此基础上，更接近作者，形成自己对文学作品更全面、更客观的分析与评论。本书分三大部分：对自古希腊以来的西方文学批评传统，尤其是 20 世纪以来一些具有影响的批评流派进行了分析与回顾；分别从传统和现代两个角度围绕马韦尔的诗歌《至羞涩情人》和莎士比亚的戏剧《哈姆雷特》进行了分析，让学生学

习如何分析文学作品；在第三部分，作者尝试将各种理论角度综合在一起，尤其是借鉴了一些语言学领域的研究成果，从不能角度对同一部作品进行深入分析，希望能对爱好文学的读者朋友有一定的裨益。

由于作者水平有限，虽然不懈地努力学习，但阅读、欣赏文学作品时加进了自己的许多感受，书中观点难免有偏颇、浮浅之处，请读者朋友与专家批评斧正。

苏 鹏

2006年11月于山西大同大学

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN AUTHOR AND READER

At the very beginning of this book, it is helpful to know something about the different attitudes towards a flower, in order to understand “common readers’” attitudes towards the study of literature.

When we are appreciating a pot flower, we usually appraise its shape, height, color, vitality, even we know nothing about plant and even have never looked at flowers. If we are familiar with plant, maybe we can talk a little about its genus, especially when it happens to be a kind of plant on the verge of extinction. We seldom think about where it comes from, who planted it, how and why it is planted, and so on. Only when the flower is very demanding to climate and weather, do we think about its origination and difficulties to raise it, in this case, we might introduce the owner (and/or planter) of the flower—to show his enthusiasm and energy in taking care of plants. As for the purpose of the planter, it is the last thing appearing in our mind. It would be thought ridiculous to ask who planted the flower before talking about the beauty of the flower itself. No one would value the beauty according to the owner or planter of the flower. Nevertheless, one is always willing, sometimes even eager to express his idea about a flower, no matter positive or negative.

On the contrary, when we read a piece of literature work, unfortunately, the first thing appearing in our mind might well be: what is it talking about? I don't understand it. It's too difficult; let me ask a critic (or teacher of literature). If we must give a comment on the work, we immediately think about the author (flower-planter), his life, his time, the time when he wrote, his reason or purpose to write, what in reality the art work is reflecting, etc. Most of the time, we judge the art work according to its reflection of the author's time and life. Besides, for us "common readers", the name of the author can influence our evaluation of an art work. For example, it is difficult to claim that a poem is not good if we know the writer is thought to be Shakespeare, even though the poem is really not good or, even worse, a forgery. This is because no one is willing to be found unable to see the "King's New Dress". The word "Shakespeare" makes people think the poem must be a good art work. People no longer have the confidence and attitudes he has when facing the flower.

"Mirror" theory can best explain this approach. From as early as ancient Greece, when Aristotle started literary criticism, critics have been treating art work as a "mirror" of the world in which people live. The best works are those that best reflect the reality which stands in front of this special mirror—literature. Since then, although there appeared many different schools of literary creation and critics in the long history, they unexceptionally followed the principles of "mirror" theory.

In the 20th century, there appeared many approaches to literature. In criticizing tradition, some of them go to extreme. New Crit-

icism, for example, draws the readers' attention to the text only. These approaches emphasize that literature work has its own beauty which is not influenced by any other factors. So while appreciating the text, one should not think about its writer, time, or any other background no matter how helpful the might be.

However, no matter what approaches they might be, all critics in the world agree that there are six levels of understanding a text.

1. The response demonstrates no evidence of critical reading skills, and the reader does not engage in a thoughtful analysis of the text. The response reflects an unquestioned acceptance or rejection of the author's craft or text's message(s) without comment or explanation.

2. The response demonstrates a superficial, confused, or unfounded analysis of the author's ideas and craft. The response indicates a lack of awareness of the author's purpose or stylistic decisions. There may even be an apparent lack of awareness of the author's voice (i. e., the reader may seem to have difficulty distinguishing author from narrator or character in the selection). Basing on a literary text, the reader does not use literary concepts or terms (e. g., character, plot, symbol, metaphor) to analyze the effectiveness of the selection; or the reader makes a judgment about the author's craft or message(s), but provides no textual support.

3. The response demonstrates an incomplete analysis of an author's ideas and craft; evaluations are simplistic or unsupported. The response shows limited identification and analysis of the author's purpose and begins to analyze how stylistic decisions (e. g., structure, point of view, word choice) contribute to achieving that

purpose; basing on a literary text, the reader gives unsupported or simplistic explanations of how literary elements or devices contribute to the effectiveness of the selection and uses limited evidence from the text to form opinions about the author's craft or messages.

4. The response demonstrates a complete analysis and evaluation of an author's ideas and craft. The response identifies the author's purpose and analyzes how the author's stylistic decisions (e. g. , structure, point of view, word choice) contribute to achieving that purpose. Basing on a literary text, the reader provides a basic analysis of how literary elements (e. g. , character, plot, setting, theme) and/or literary devices (e. g. , simile, metaphor, symbol) contribute to the effectiveness of the selection, using terminology as appropriate; and uses relevant evidence from the text to make and support reasoned judgments about the author's craft or message(s).

5. The response demonstrates a strong analysis and evaluation of an author's ideas and craft. The response identifies the author's purpose and presents an analysis and evaluation of how some of the author's stylistic decisions (e. g. , structure, point of view, word choice) affect the message and purpose. Basing on a literary text, the reader identifies and analyzes how selected literary elements (i. e. , character, plot, setting, theme) and/or devices (e. g. , simile, metaphor, symbol) contribute to the effectiveness of the selection; and uses specific and relevant evidence from the text to make and support reasoned judgments about the author's craft or message(s).

6. The response demonstrates a thorough and convincing anal-

ysis and evaluation of an author's ideas and craft. The response identifies the author's purpose and presents a thorough and insightful analysis and evaluation of how the author's stylistic decisions (e. g. , structure, point of view, word choice) affect the message and purpose. Basing on a literary text, the reader identifies and skillfully analyzes how literary elements (i. e. , character, plot, setting, theme) and/or devices (e. g. , simile, metaphor, symbol) contribute to the unity and effectiveness of the selection; and uses specific and relevant evidence from the text to make and support reasoned judgments about the author's craft or message(s).

CONTENTS

Way to Wittiness	1
Part One Theoretical Review	1
Chapter 1 A Review of Western Tradition of Criticism	1
1.1 Greek&Roman Criticism	1
1.2 Criticism in the 17th and 18th Centuries	5
1.3 Criticism in the 19th Century	7
1.4 Criticism in the 20th Century	10
Chapter 2 Some Prevailing Approaches	15
2.1 Traditional Approaches	15
2.2 New Criticism	17
2.3 The Linguistic Approaches	19
2.4 Structuralist Criticism	21
2.5 Stylistic Approach	21
2.6 The Rhetorical Approach	22
2.7 Feminist Criticism	23

7.3	Language, Imagery and Symbolism	128
Chapter 8	Illustration of Feminist Approach	131
8.1	An Feminist Reading of Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress"	131
8.2	Women's Love and Marriage Pattern and its Cause in Wuthering Heights	135
Chapter 9	Experiment on Modern Approach	147
9.1	A Formalistic Reading of "To His Coy Mistress"	147
9.2	Style of Hemingway's the Snows of Kilimanjaro	154
Appendix 1		163
	To His Coy Mistress	163
Appendix 2		165
	Hamlet	165
Bibliography		187

PART ONE

THEORETICAL REVIEW

CHAPTER 1 A REVIEW OF WESTERN TRADITION OF CRITICISM

1.1 Greek&Roman Criticism

Literary Criticism, discussion of literature, includes description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of literary works. Like literature, criticism is hard to define. Literary criticism deals with different dimensions of literature as a collection of texts through which authors evoke more or less fictitious worlds for the imagination of readers.

We can look at any work of literature by paying special attention to one of several aspects: its language and structure; its intended purpose; the information and worldview it conveys; or its effect on an audience. Most good critics steer clear of exclusive interest in a single element. In studying a text's formal characteristics, for example, critics usually recognize the variability of performances of dramatic works and the variability of readers' mental interpretations of texts. In studying an author's purpose, critics acknowledge that forces beyond a writer's conscious intentions can affect what the writer actually communicates. In studying what a literary work is about, critics often explore the complex relationship between truth

and fiction in various types of storytelling. In studying literature's impact on its audience, critics have been increasingly aware of how cultural expectations shape experience.

Because works of literature can be studied long after their first publication, awareness of historical and theoretical context contributes to our understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of them. Historical research relates a work to the life and times of its author. Attention to the nature, functions, and categories of literature provides a theoretical framework joining a past text to the experience of present readers. The tradition of literary criticism surveyed here combines observations by creative writers, philosophers, and, more recently, trained specialists in literary, historical, and cultural studies.

The Western tradition's earliest extended instance of literary criticism occurs in ancient Greece. In a comedy (*The Frogs*, 405 BC) by Athenian playwright Aristophanes, two dead masters of Greek tragedy (Aeschylus and Euripides) debate a fundamental dilemma of all subsequent criticism: Is the writer's first commitment to uphold and promote morality or to represent reality? Is the task of drama and other forms of literature primarily to improve or primarily to inform the audience?

Greek philosopher Plato found virtually all creative writers deficient on both counts in his dialogue *The Republic* (about 380 BC). Plato felt that stories about misbehaving gods and death-fearing heroes were apt to steer immature people toward frivolous and unpatriotic conduct. Besides, he argued, poetry tended to arouse the emotions rather than promote such virtues as temperance and en-

CHAPTER 1 A REVIEW OF WESTERN TRADITION OF CRITICISM 3

durance. But even at their moral best, Plato viewed writers—like painters and sculptors—as mere imitators of actual human beings, who are themselves very imperfect “copies” or imitations of the eternal idea of Human Being in the divine mind.

Greek philosopher Aristotle produced a strong philosophical defense against such criticism. His *Poetics* (about 330 BC) presents artistic representation (mimesis) not as mere copying but as creative re-presentation with universal significance. For example, the epic poet and the playwright evoke human beings in action without having to report actual events, because the poetic approach to human action is more philosophical in nature than a purely historical approach. Literature can show the most probable action of a person of a specific type, rather than what an actual person said or did on a particular occasion. Even the portrayal of great suffering and death may thus give pleasure to an audience—the pleasure of learning something essential about reality.

Aristotle suggested that tragedy cured us of the harmful effects of excessive pity, fear, and similar emotions by first inducing such emotions in us, and then pleasurably purging them in the controlled therapeutic setting of theatrical experience. The precise meaning of Aristotle's concept of catharsis has been debated for many centuries, but most critics of literature and of other arts, such as opera and cinema, find useful his isolation and analysis of six interacting aspects of performed drama: plot, character, thought or theme, diction, music, and spectacle.

Roman poet Horace offered practical advice in *The Art of Poetry* (about 20 BC). His most influential suggestion was to combine