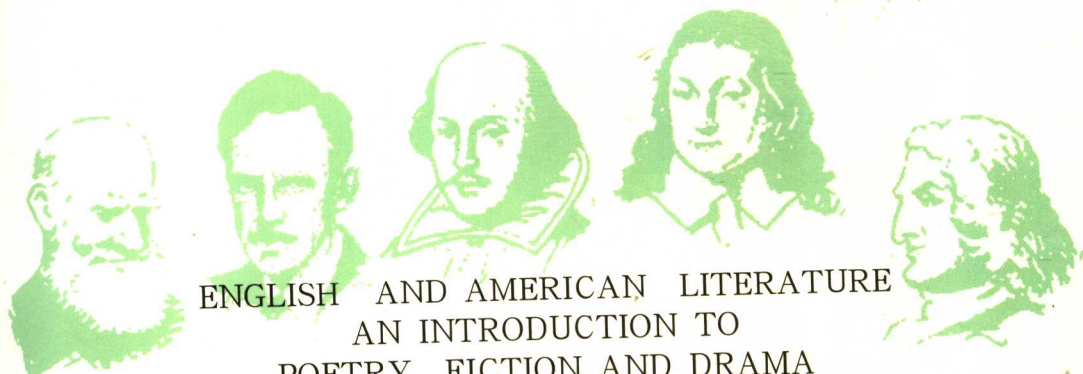


高等院校英语本科教材

英美文学

诗歌 · 小说 · 戏剧



ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE
AN INTRODUCTION TO
POETRY, FICTION AND DRAMA

主编 张小平

河南人民出版社

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前言

文学是一种社会生活方式。研究表明,在人类步入文明时代之前,文学就以号子、歌唱、神话等原始形式成为社会生活的一部分。没有文学润泽的人生是干渴的,没有文学滋养的社会是不可思议的。文学是一面镜子,它映照社会的方方面面,以其涉及面之广博,思想之深奥,知识之丰富,观察之细腻与多维,语言优美而形象,为人们提供了浏览、阅读、把玩、品味、赏析、研究等多层次的需求。因此,马克思称它是“百科全书”。阅读文学作品,人的心灵便多了一双想象的翅膀,人生五味,世间百态,万千感受,尽在其中。游弋在或庄重典雅、或诙谐幽默、或寓意丰厚、或辛辣尖刻、或俏皮夸张、或亦庄亦谐的文学作品中,感受文学作品的思想美、语言美、形象美、气韵美、意境美,既提高文学素养、陶冶情操,又增长知识,锻炼思维。研读英美文学不仅具有上述收获,更可以了解英美社会的风土人情,增强对英语语言文化的感悟。

中国第一大外语是英语,学习英语的人占学外语者的绝对多数。当前,我国高等院校英语专业和一些非英语专业都开设有相关的英美文学阅读和文学欣赏课程,可供选择的英美文学教材和读物种类繁多,有文学史,文学选读,或者二者合一的文学史及文学选读,它们各具特点,各有不同侧重点。但是,根据作者多年的教学经验来看,读史也好,选读作品也好,没有一定的与之相应的文学理论和文学批评知识,学生很难把握文学作品的实质,更难领略经典作品带给人们的真善美的启迪和熏陶。本书旨在引领读者用英美文学的基本理论和文学批评的基本方法,结合英美文学中的精华篇章,学会如何研读英语文学宝库中的经典文学作品。本书力图以规范的语言,浅显流畅的文句,向读者介绍英语文学之主要形式——诗歌、小说和戏剧的基本要素,在此基础上,遴选了英美文学史上近 50 位重要作家的多部经典作品来帮助读者加深对文学本质、文学流派和文学风格的了解和认识,力求在选材上具有新意。

诗歌是文学的最早形式,在中国有世界最早的诗歌集《诗经》和《萨格尔》、《江格尔》、《布洛陀》、《苗族古歌》等史诗;在两河流域有《吉尔伽美什》;印度有《摩诃

婆罗多》和《罗摩衍那》；在欧洲有《荷马史诗》；英国文学的源头也是公元8世纪的史诗《贝尔沃夫》。因此，本书编者有意识地把诗歌放在前边，作为第一部分。小说从它一出现就吸引了广大的读者群，并逐渐成为文学的主体，拥有最重量级的地位，也成为电影的主要脚本，因此，编者把它放在第二部分，并占有较多篇幅。戏剧作为不可忽视的文学艺术形式，也就作为本书的第三部分探讨的内容。这样安排著作的结构考虑到历史和逻辑的统一，也考虑到突出重要部分的内容，希望收到纲领分明、量体裁衣的效果。

本书写给英美文学爱好者和英语学习者，可作为高校英语专业和非英语专业学生的英美文学课程的教学用书和参考书，可供广大英语教师、英美文学爱好者以及具有一定英语水平的自学者采用的阅读材料，也为本、专科毕业生写作英语论文时提供格式、术语的参考。全书分三个部分，共十八章，融文学理论与文学名作的欣赏为一体，在文学理论讲解的同时，贯穿了文学作品的欣赏和研究。文学理论部分贯穿于文学作品的赏析中，并在每一章后面附有阅读时的理论“小贴士”。文学作品部分除了作家的生平、创作介绍、选文，还精心设计了相关的阅读思考题。另外，本书还附有文学论文写作时的引用格式和方法、文学术语词汇表、文学批评基本理论。如果作为教材，文学鉴赏理论部分由教师把握，作家介绍供学生参考；课堂上应以启发式和讨论式的教学方法为主，师生互动，注重培养学生的理性思辨能力和理解分析能力，让学生在获得理论指导的同时又能得到文本分析的实践，有效地提高学生的文学欣赏水平和英文写作的能力。

本书在编写过程中，曾得到了郑州航空工业管理学院、华北水利水电学院、河南科技大学及商丘师范学院有关领导与老师的大力支持，趁此书付梓之机，谨向他们表示由衷的感谢。

美国特拉华大学英语系主任、教授、Stephen Bernhardt 博士在百忙之中审阅了本书的初稿，并提出许多进一步修改的宝贵意见；Bernhardt 博士的助手 Dorothy Carroll 女士以及 Kay Hampson 教授一直关心和支持本书的撰写工作，提供了不少资料，并通读书稿。此书得以顺利出版，也凝聚了他们的劳作，编者在这里再次遥致真诚的谢意。

本书在编写过程中，参考了大量中外出版的文学批评理论、英美文学史和英美文学作品选读方面的书籍，注释和思考题部分也参照了一些有关的书籍，在参考文献部分均一一列出，在此向原作者深表感谢。

由于作者水平所限，书中讹误、缺点和疏漏之处在所难免，诚望专家与同行不吝赐教，以便再版时订正。

编 者

2006 年冬于郑州

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Part One Poetry

What is poetry? Pressed for an answer, Robert Frost made a classic reply: "Poetry is the kind of thing poets write." In all likelihood, Frost was not trying merely to evade the question but to chide his questioner into thinking for himself. A trouble with definitions is that they may stop thought. If Frost had said, "Poetry is a rhythmical composition of words expressing an attitude, designed to surprise and delight, and to arouse an emotional response," the questioner might have settled back in his chair, content to learn the truth about poetry. He would have learned nothing, or not so much as he might learn by continuing to wonder.

The nature of poetry eludes simple definitions. (In this respect it is rather like jazz. Asked after one of his concerts, "What is jazz?" Louis Armstrong replied, "Man, if you gotta ask, you'll never know.") Definitions will be of little help at first, if we are to know poetry and respond to it. We have to go to it—willing to see and hear. For this reason, you are asked in reading this book not to be in any hurry to decide what poetry is, but instead to study poems and to let them grow in your mind. At the end of our discussions of poetry, the problem of definition will be taken up again (for those who may wish to pursue it).

Confronted with a formal introduction to poetry, you may be wondering, "Who needs it?" and you may well be right. It's unlikely that you have avoided meeting poetry before; and perhaps you already have a friendship, or at least a fair acquaintance, with some of the great English-speaking poets of all time. What this book provides is—an introduction to the study of poetry. It tries to help you look at a poem closely, to offer you a wider and more accurate vocabulary with which to express what poems say to you. It will suggest ways to judge for yourself the poems you read. It may set forth some poems new to you.

A frequent objection is that poetry ought not to be studied at all. In this view, a poem is either a series of gorgeous noises to be funneled through one ear and out the other without being allowed to trouble the mind, or an experience so holy that to analyze it in a classroom is as cruel and mechanical as dissecting a hummingbird. To the first view, it might be countered that a good poem has something to say that is well worth listening to. To the second view, it might be argued that poems are much less perishable than hummingbirds, and luckily, we can study them in flight. The risk of a poem's dying from observation is not nearly so great as the risk of not really seeing it at all. It is doubtful that any excellent poem has ever vanished from human memory because people have read it too closely.

That poetry matters to the people who write it has been shown unmistakably by the ordeal of Soviet poet Irina Ratushinskaya, now living in the West. Sentenced to prison for three and a half years, she was given paper and pencil only twice a month to write letters to her husband and her parents and was not allowed to write anything else. Nevertheless, Ratushinskaya composed more than two hundred poems in her cell, engraving them with a burnt match in a bar of soap, then memorizing the lines. "I would read the poem and read it," she said, "until it was committed to memory—then with one washing of my hands, it would be gone."

Good poetry is something that readers can care about. In fact, an ancient persuasion of humankind is that the hearing of a poem, as well as the making of a poem, can be a religious act. Poetry, in speech and song, was part of classic Greek drama, which for playwright, actor, and spectator alike was a holy-day ceremony. The Greeks' belief that a poet writes a poem only by supernatural assistance is clear from the invocations to the Muse that begin the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and from the opinion of Socrates (in Plato's *Ion*) that a poet has no powers of invention until divinely inspired. Among the ancient Celts, poets were regarded as magicians and priests, and whoever insulted one of them might expect to receive a curse in rime potent enough to afflict him with boils and to curdle the milk of his cows. Such identifications between the poet and the magician are less common these days, although we know that poetry is involved in the primitive white-magic of children, who bring themselves good luck in a game with the charm "Roll, roll, Tootsie-roll! / Roll the marble in the hole!" and who warn against a hex while jumping along a sidewalk: "Step on a crack, / Break your mother's back." To read a poem, we have to be willing to offer it responses besides a logical understanding. Whether we attribute the effect of a poem to a divine spirit or to the reactions of our glands and cortexes, we have to take the reading of poetry seriously (not solemnly), if only

because—as some of the poems in this book may demonstrate—few other efforts can repay us so generously, both in wisdom and in joy.

If, as we hope you will do, you sometimes browse in the book for fun, you may be annoyed to see so many questions following the poems. Should you feel this way, try reading with a slip of paper to cover up the questions. You will then—if the Muse should inspire you—have paper in hand to write a poem.

1. Reading a Poem

How do you read a poem? The literal-minded might say, “Just let your eye light on it”; but there is more to poetry than meets the eye. What Shakespeare called “the mind’s eye” also plays a part. Many a reader who has no trouble understanding and enjoying prose finds poetry difficult. This is to be expected. At first glance, a poem usually will make some sense and give some pleasure, but it may not yield everything at once. Sometimes it only hints at meaning still to come if we will keep after it. Poetry is not to be galloped over like the daily news: a poem differs from most prose in that it is to be read slowly, carefully, and attentively. Not all poems are difficult, of course, and some can be understood and enjoyed on first seeing. But good poems yield more if read twice; and the best poems—after ten, twenty, or a hundred readings—still go on yielding.

Approaching a thing written in lines and surrounded with white space, we need not expect it to be a poem just because it is verse. (Any composition in lines of more or less regular rhythm, usually ending in rimes, is verse.) Here, for instance, is a specimen of verse that few will call poetry:

Thirty days hath September,
 April, June, and November;
 All the rest have thirty-one
 Excepting February alone,
 To which we twenty-eight assign
 Till leap year makes it twenty-nine.

To a higher degree than that classic memory-tickler, poetry appeals to the mind and

arouses feelings. Poetry may state facts, but, more important, it makes imaginative statements that we may value even if its facts are incorrect. Coleridge's error in placing a star within the horns of the crescent moon in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" does not stop the passage from being good poetry, though it is faulty astronomy. According to one poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, poetry is "to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning." There are other elements in a poem besides plain prose sense: sounds, images, rhythms, and figures of speech. These may strike us and please us even before we ask, "But what does it all mean?"

This is a truth not readily grasped by anyone who regards a poem as a kind of puzzle written in secret code with a message slyly concealed. The effect of a poem (one's whole mental and emotional response to it) consists in much more than simply a message. By its musical qualities, by its suggestions, it can work on the reader's unconscious. T. S. Eliot put it well when he said in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* that the prose sense of a poem is chiefly useful in keeping the reader's mind "diverted and quiet, while the poem does its work upon him." Eliot went on to liken the meaning of a poem to the bit of meat a burglar brings along to throw to the family dog. What is the work of a poem? It is to touch us, to stir us, to make us glad, and possibly even to tell us something.

How to set about reading a poem? Here are a few suggestions.

To begin with, read the poem once straight through, with no particular expectations; read open-mindedly. Let yourself experience whatever you find, without worrying just yet about the large general and important ideas the poem contains (if indeed it contains any). Don't dwell on a troublesome word or difficult passage—just push on. Some of the difficulties may seem smaller when you read the poem for a second time; at least, they will have become parts of a whole for you.

On the second reading, read for the exact sense of all the words; if there are words you don't understand, look them up in a dictionary. Dwell on any difficult parts as long as you need to.

If you read the poem silently to yourself, sound its words in your mind. (This is a technique that will get you nowhere in a speed-reading course, but it may help the poem to do its work on you.) Better still, read the poem aloud, or hear someone else read it. You may discover meanings you didn't perceive in it before. Even if you are no actor, to decide how to speak a poem can be an excellent method of getting to understand it. Some poems, like bells, seem heavy till heard. Listen while reading the following lines from Alexander Pope's *Dunciad*. Attacking the minor poet James Ralph, who had sung

the praises of a mistress named Cynthia, Pope makes the goddess of Dullness exclaim:

“Silence, ye wolves! while Ralph to Cynthia howls,
And makes night hideous—answer him, ye owls!”

When *ye owls* slide together and become *yowls*, poor Ralph's serenade is turned into the nightly outcry of a cat.

Try to paraphrase the poem as a whole, or perhaps just the more difficult lines. In paraphrasing, we put into our own words what we understand the poem to say, restating ideas that seem essential, coming out and stating what the poem may only suggest. This may sound like a heartless thing to do to a poem, but good poems can stand it. In fact, to compare a poem to its paraphrase is a good way to see the distance between poetry and prose. In making a paraphrase, we generally work through a poem or a passage line by line. The statement that results may take as many words as the original, if not more. A paraphrase, then, is ampler than a summary, a brief condensation of gist, main idea, or story. Here is a poem worth considering line by line. The poet writes of an island in a lake in the west of Ireland, in a region where he spent many summers as a boy.

William Butler Yeats

William Butler Yeats (1865 ~ 1939), poet and playwright, an Irishman of English ancestry, was born in Dublin, the son of painter John Butler Yeats. For a time he studied art by himself and was irregularly schooled in Dublin and in London. Early in life Yeats sought to transform Irish folklore and legend into mellifluous poems. He overcame shyness to take an active part in cataclysmic events. He became involved in the movement for an Irish nation (partly drawn into it by his unrequited love for Maud Gonne, a crusading nationalist) and in founding the Irish Literary Theatre (1898) and the Irish National Theatre, which in 1904 moved to the renowned Abbey Theatre in Dublin. Dublin audiences were difficult: in 1899 they jeered Yeats' first play, *The Countess Cathleen*, for portraying a woman who, defying the church, sells her soul to the devil to buy bread for starving peasants. Eventually Yeats retired from the fray, to write plays given in drawing rooms, like *Purgatory*. After the establishment of the Irish Free State, Yeats served as a senator (1922 ~ 1928). His lifelong interest in the occult culminated in his writing of *A Vision* (1937), a view of history as governed by the phases of the moon; Yeats believed the book inspired by spirit masters who dictated