

北京外国语大学比较文学研究丛书

中国学者眼中的英国文学

English Literature in the Eyes of a Chinese Scholar

何其莘 著

He Qixin



大象出版社

Z561.06

14

中国学者眼中的英国文学

English Literature in the Eyes
of a Chinese Scholar

何其莘

江苏工业学院图书馆
藏书章



大象出版社

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

中国学者眼中的英国文学 = English Literature in the Eyes of a Chinese Scholar/何其莘著. —郑州: 大象出版社, 2005. 4

ISBN 7-5347-3671-4

I. 中... II. 何... III. 文学研究—英国—英文
IV. I561.06

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2004)第 142768 号

责任编辑 沈 顿

封面设计 秦吉宁

出版发行 大象出版社 (郑州市经七路 25 号 邮政编码 450002)

网 址 www.daxiang.cn

制 版 郑州艾乐出版技术服务有限公司

印 刷 河南第一新华印刷厂

版 次 2005 年 4 月第 1 版 2005 年 4 月第 1 次印刷

开 本 890 × 1240 1/32

印 张 9

字 数 277 千字

印 数 1—1 200 册

定 价 12.60 元

若发现印、装质量问题,影响阅读,请与承印厂联系调换。

印厂地址 郑州市经五路 12 号

邮政编码 450002

电话 (0371)65957860-351



作者简介

何其莘，教授、博士生导师。毕业于西安外国语学院，1986 年在美国获英美文学博士学位，主攻方向为英国文艺复兴时期文学、英国戏剧和莎士比亚。1986 年底回国任教，现任北京外国语大学副校长、教育部高校外语专业教学指导委员会副主任兼英语组组长、全国英国文学学会会长、中国作协会员。主要研究成果有：《英国文艺复兴时期文学史》（与王佐良合著）、《英国戏剧史》等，主编教材《新概念英语》（新版）（与亚历山大合作）、*Listen to This*、《英国文学选集》、《英国戏剧选读》等。

内容提要

书中收入了作者在近 20 年中用英文撰写的有关英国文学的十几篇论文。可以分为两大类：一是对中、英两国文学的对比研究；二是从中国学者的视角，来审视和赏析英国文学中的经典作品。这两类论文都属于比较文学的范畴。

与国外出版的同类研究相比，作者参考了国外学者的研究成果，但不是照搬国外的资料，跟在国外研究者的后面人云亦云，而是从中国文化的主体性出发，用中国学人的思想和观点来分析、评价英国文学作品，推出了一些颇具独立创见和中国特色的研究成果。这也是中国学者对世界文坛做出的一份贡献。

Preface

My first contact with English literature was through Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* when I was attending senior high school in Beijing back in the early 1960s. My English instructor, an elderly man who had graduated from a missionary school in Shanghai, announced to the entire class, on the first day of the new academic year, that regular attendance would not be required in his class as long as we came to take the final exams. With his kind permission, I was able to sit somewhere on the school campus and read all by myself, during the four hours a week for English, Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* and some other simplified readers, in the last two years of my high school days.

At college, my attention was confined to the training of language skills simply because foreign literature was almost a forbidden area even for English majors in the early half of the 1970s. And the only literary works we could lay our hands on, as I remember now, were some thick volumes by Victorian authors kept in the college library.

It was not until the fall of 1981, when I began my master's program at the University of Akron, USA, that I finally became a serious student of English literature. Dr. Nicholas Ranson, a Shakespearean scholar who later became my master's thesis advisor, led me into the door of English literature, especially English dramatic literature. In 1984, I read my first paper at the annual International Conference on Patristic, Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies, held at Villanova University, USA and two years later, Barbara

Mowat, editor-in-chief for *Shakespeare Quarterly*, wrote some introductory comments for my essay which appeared as the leading article in the summer issue of the journal in 1986. These two essays marked the beginning of my writing in English on English literature.

The sixteen essays included in this volume are selected from my writings in English in the last twenty years. Some might sound a bit amateurish, but at least they indicate the growing awareness and appreciation of English literary works from someone who gradually fell in love with the study of English literature and finally decided to choose it as a life career.

Almost all the essays in this volume fall into the category of comparative studies. Some are comparisons of Shakespeare studies in China and that in the west; others are individual readings of English literary works from the perspective of a Chinese scholar who has been immersed in Chinese culture. As the chairman of China's Association of English Literature, I have repeatedly emphasized the importance of reading English literature from a Chinese perspective, instead of always following closely the footsteps of western scholars. To me, the reading and re-reading of Shakespeare's plays, for instance, in the last four hundred years, by people from various cultures in the world, have contributed enormously to the ever growing popularity of the bard. Therefore, a careful reading of English literature from a Chinese perspective is probably the best contribution that we, Chinese scholars and students, can make to the world literary community.

He Qixin

Contents

● Preface	(1)
● China's Shakespeare	(1)
● China (<i>Oxford Companion to Shakespeare</i>)	(21)
● The Translation and Reception of Shakespeare's Plays in China	(25)
● A Political and Ideological Approach to Shakespeare	(42)
● Translating Shakespeare into Chinese	(120)
● Comments on the Papers Presented at the Seminar "Shakespeare and China"	(137)
● Teaching English Literature to Chinese English Majors	(150)
● The MTV Generation and Hollywood's Post-Modern Adaptation of <i>Romeo + Juliet</i>	(160)
● A Revenge Tragedy or a Moral Sermon?	(173)
● 20th Century <i>Hamlet</i> Criticism	(182)
● Villain or Tragic Hero? —The Ambiguous Characterization of Bosola	(199)
● <i>The Faerie Queene</i> as a Document of the English Reformation	(211)
● Modern British Drama and a Multipolar World	(220)
● <i>Lear</i> and <i>King Lear</i>	(235)
● Pinter's Ambiguity in <i>The Caretaker</i>	(255)
● "One of Us"—Marlow in <i>Lord Jim</i>	(269)

China's Shakespeare^①

China is a new member in the world of Shakespearean scholarship. It was not until the turn of the twentieth century that Shakespeare became known beyond a small circle in China. In the years between 1903 and 1986, Shakespeare study in China underwent several stages in its development, representing in miniature all the features of literary criticism in China and, in a broader sense, many phases of modern Chinese history.

China is an ancient country with a rich historical and cultural heritage.

^① This essay was published in the summer issue of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 1986. Barbara A. Mowat, editor-in-chief of the journal wrote in her "From the Editor," "Among the other essays included in this issue is one that is topical in a different sense. Qi-Xin He's 'China's Shakespeare' includes in its discussion of Shakespeare scholarship in China the note that, according to *People's Daily* (30 November 1985), 'the first China Shakespeare Festival will be held in Shanghai during April 1986.' That note can now be brought up to date. According to Su Shanna, in *China Daily* (11 April 1986), the Festival received the 'enthusiastic response from the general public' that Qi-Xin He predicted. 'Some might call it madness for Chinese actors to take on the great English bard's Elizabethan works,' writes Su Shanna. 'And no doubt Shakespeare himself would have thought the idea of China's Coal Miners' Drama Troupe playing his *Midsummer Night's Dream* pure fantasy. But there they are...proving that all the world's a stage.' The Festival was more elaborate than *People's Daily* had announced in November. It took place in both Shanghai and Beijing, with performances of twenty-four plays, some of them translations, some adaptations, and at least one in English."

Through the first half of the 20th century, as a result of more than two thousand years of its feudal society and its traditional “closed-door policy,”^① China and its people felt a natural resistance to the introduction of foreign culture. Invasions by foreign powers after the Opium War of 1840 only intensified this spirit of nationalism. Consequently, Chinese Shakespearean study from 1903 to 1949 consisted of individual efforts, mainly in the form of translation, and remained within academic circles.

The years since 1949 have seen a series of changes in Chinese political and economic structures. Mirroring the times, Chinese Shakespearean study since 1949 has reflected, first, the Soviet influence on Chinese literary criticism in the 1950s, then the scornful rejection of foreign literature and art during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, and now the emergence of a new literature in China in the past six to seven years and the search by Chinese intellectuals for more contact with the outside world and a better appreciation of foreign cultures.

While China has been a socialist country with Marxism as the dominating ideology since 1949, it does not belong to the Soviet bloc. Long before the present Chinese leaders claimed to have built Chinese-style socialism—in fact, immediately after China broke away from the Russians in the late 1950s—China began to develop her own theory and practice of socialism. The ideas and instructions of Mao Zedong—known in China as “Mao Zedong Thought”—were the political and cultural guidelines for the Chinese before Mao’s death in 1976 and continue to have a strong influence on all aspects of Chinese life. In literary criticism, the principles Mao established in his works have played a far more important role in directing the Chinese critics than have the writings of Marx or Lenin. Chinese Shakespearean criticism

① “Closed-door policy” (in contrast to the “open-door principle” advanced by the United States in the second half of the 19th century to share the commercial and industrial benefits of China with Western countries) is a term referring to the principles and practices of the feudal states in pre-Opium War China that isolated the country from the rest of the World.

since 1949 has reflected Mao's Marxist viewpoint on literature and art as well as the special interests and particular emphases of Chinese literary critics.

All three factors—China as an ancient country, as a changing society, and as an isolated socialist country with her own particular form of Marxist ideology—have contributed a great deal to the political and historical events in modern Chinese history. The evolution of Shakespearean scholarship in China embodies and reflects all three aspects.

I. Introducing Shakespeare by Translation(1903—1949)

Not until after the Opium War in 1840 were the Chinese forced to recognize the fact that China (literally translated, "Middle Kingdom") was not the center of the world, and were compelled to take notice of the West. With reluctance, they directed their attention first to the military strength and advanced technology of the West, then to its political and social systems, and finally to its culture. Chinese translation of foreign literature started with the publication of a number of abridged translations of foreign short stories in 1898 by Liang Qichao (Liang Ch'i-ch'ao),^① a leading representative of China's new bourgeois reformists.

In 1903, the works of Shakespeare first became known in China through the translation of Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales From Shakespeare*. A collection of ten stories from Lamb^② was rendered by an unknown translator into classical Chinese, the literary language in China for over three thousand years. The translation was entitled *Hai wai qi tan* [*Strange Tales From Over-*

① Liang Qichao(1873—1929), a Chinese bourgeois reform leader, launched a movement for constitutional and educational reform from 1895, which was backed by Emperor Kuang Hsu but was aborted by the Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi.

② The ten stories are: *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Taming of the shrew*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *All's Well That Ends, Well*, *Cymbeline*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Hamlet*.

seas] and the ten stories were arranged as ten chapters of a novel, following the format of traditional Chinese fiction, with each chapter headed by an eight character poetic line giving the gist of the chapter's contents. ①The anonymous translator writes in his preface to the collection:

This book was written by Shakespeare (1564—1616), who was a celebrated actor and a great poet. His plays and stories became fashionable in England for a time and have been rendered into French, German, Russian, Italian and read by people all over the world. Nowadays Shakespeare is recognized and praised by the Chinese academic circle. ... I hope my translation of Shakespeare will add great splendor to Chinese fiction. ②

In 1904, the complete Lamb's *Tales From Shakespeare* was rendered by Lin Shu and Wei Yi (Wei I). Lin Shu, ③probably the most prolific Chinese writer in the earlier part of the 20th century, rewrote in Chinese the tales from Shakespeare's plays after being told about their contents. Since numerous allusions to classical mythology could be found in Shakespeare's plays, Lin Shu treated the tales as legend, providing for each tale a two-character mythical title, typical of the legendary stories common in the Tang (618—907 A.D.) and Song (960—1279 A.D.) dynasties. In the decade after 1910, Lin Shu retold in Chinese the plots of four of Shakespeare's history plays

① For instance, chap. 1 (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*) bears the heading PU-LU-SA-TAN-SE-BEI-LIANG-PENG ("Proteus sells out his close friend for lust"), chap. 6 (*All's Well That Ends Well*) JI-SHANG-JI-QING-QI-TOU-JIE-ZHI ("Playing tricks, the devoted wife steals the ring"), and chap. 10 (*Hamlet*) BAO-DA-CHOU-HEN-LI-DE-SHA-SHU ("Hamlet kills his uncle in revenge").

② *Hai wai qi tan* [*Strange Tale From Overseas*] (Shanghai: Ta-Wen Press, 1903), p. 1.

③ Lin Shu, the most popular English-Chinese translator of the early 20th century, rewrote in classical Chinese prose a large number of novels by 19th-century writers including Dickens, Scott, Hugo, and Balzac.

and one of his tragedies.^① Although Lin Shu's reproduction of Shakespeare's plays can not be considered proper translations, his books were frequently quoted by other Chinese writers of his time and his versions of Shakespeare's plays were used as the basis of the promptbooks for early Chinese staging.

The early rendering of tales from Shakespeare was done in classical Chinese prose style. With the gradual introduction of Western science and art, Chinese intellectuals at the beginning of the 20th century felt a pressing need to replace classical Chinese with the vernacular for general communication and even for intellectual discourse and literature. The New Cultural Movement initiated by Hu Shi (Hu Shih) in 1917, gave birth to the modern Chinese language.^② With the increasing popularity of this newly accepted literary form, Shakespeare's plays were translated into modern Chinese and were introduced, for the first time, in their original dramatic form to the Chinese audience. In 1922, Tian Han (T'ien Han), late chairman of the Chinese Dramatists' Association during the 1950s and early 1960s and a noted playwright, tried his hand at translating *Hamlet*, the first attempt to put a full-length Shakespeare play into Chinese. A tentative list of nine more plays to be rendered was printed at the back of Tian's *Hamlet*,^③ but only one of them, *Romeo and Juliet*, was translated by him; it appeared in print in 1924.

During the next ten years, between 1923 and 1932, twelve translators published their versions of eight more plays and by 1949, thirty-one plays had been put into Chinese. Some of the plays appeared in as many as five

① The five plays are *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Henry VI*, published in *Xiao shuo yue bao* [*Fiction Monthly*], 7 (1916), Nos. 1, 2-4, 5-7, and 12 (1925), Nos. 9-10.

② The New Cultural Movement was a literary revolution for the adoption of modern Chinese. Hu Shi started the movement with his article "Some Suggestions for the Reform of Chinese Literature," in the journal *New Youth* in January 1917.

③ Tian Han, trans., *Hamlet* (Shanghai: Zhonghua Publishing Co., 1922), p. 173.

different translations. There are two interesting facts to be noted about the translation of Shakespearean drama before 1949: first, the six plays which had not been touched by Chinese translators were all history plays; and, second, the most frequently rendered plays were the tragedies—*Hamlet* (1922, 1924, 1930, 1946, 1947), *Romeo and Juliet* (1924, 1928, 1944, 1946, 1947), *Julius Caesar* (1925, 1931, 1935, 1944, 1947), and *Macbeth* (1930 [twice], 1936, 1946, 1947). Only one comedy, *The Merchant of Venice*, had also been translated five times before 1949 (1924, 1930, 1936, 1942, 1947).

Although the number of Shakespeare's plays translated during the first forty-six years was quite impressive, each edition was rigidly limited and was circulated mainly among scholars, students, and other educated citizens. The high rate of illiteracy among the Chinese before 1949 meant that the translations reached only a very small proportion of the four hundred million Chinese people.

The same pre-1949 period was also marked by some daring but rather unsuccessful attempts at staging Shakespeare's plays. The first performance of a full-length Shakespearean drama was *The Merchant of Venice* in Shanghai in 1930. Seven years later, an amateur troupe brought *Romeo and Juliet* to the Shanghai stage. A few more efforts were made to present Shakespeare's plays to Chinese audiences before 1949, but none seemed able to preserve the essence of the original plays. As one review in the *New York Times* put it, the performance of *Hamlet*, at the Guo Tai Theatre in Chungking in December 1942, might be sincere and painstaking, but was "not yet ready for Broadway."^①

Among the more than twenty pioneer Chinese translators of Shakespeare, one deserves special credit. Zhu Shenghao (Chu Shenghao), a clerk working for a book company in Shanghai, started his career as a Shakespeare translator in 1935 at the age of twenty-four. Zhu claimed, in the

^① Brooks Atkinson, "Hamlet, at the Kuo Tai Theatre in Chungking, Is Not Yet Quite Ready for Broadway," *New York Times*, 18 December 1942, p. 1, 38.

introduction to his never-completed works of Shakespeare, that Shakespeare enjoyed everlasting admiration all over the world chiefly because the characters in his plays were people of all ages, the poor and the rich, the English and the other nationalities, and because the focus of his drama was the universal issue of humanity. ^① Zhu's first translation of a Shakespearean play, *The Tempest*, was completed in 1936 and he was planning to finish translating all of Shakespeare's plays within two years. However, this ambitious plan was crippled by the Japanese invasion of Shanghai in 1937. Fleeing from the bombarded city in the middle of the night, Zhu lost all his personal belongings and more than a hundred books on Shakespeare that he had painstakingly collected in the previous two years. All he had with him was a copy of the *Oxford Shakespeare* and a few of his manuscripts. After wandering about the country for several years, Zhu finally settled down in 1942 in his hometown, Jiaxing, not far from Shanghai, determined to carry out his original plan. Although poverty-stricken and haunted by illness, Zhu shut himself up in a small room and plunged into the translation. Before his death in December 1944, at the age of thirty-three, Zhu finished thirty-one and a half of Shakespeare's plays, twenty-seven of which were printed in 1947. Upon the approach of death, Zhu deeply regretted his unaccomplished work, saying that if he had known death would come so soon, he would have gone all out and tried at all costs to fulfill his life-long ambition. Young as he was at his death, Zhu was the one who had translated the greatest number of Shakespeare's plays before 1949 and his translation was the basis for the publication of *The Complete Works* in 1978 in Beijing.

Despite the active endeavors of individual translators, the publication of

^① The source of the information concerning the life and work of Zhu Shenghao is two essays: Zhu's "Introduction" to his translation of Shakespeare and "About the Translator," by his wife, Qing Ru. Both essays are printed as the appendix to an essay on translation by Liang Shiqui (Liang Shihch'iu) in *William Shakespeare: A Miscellany in Celebration of the 400th Anniversary of the Poet's Birth*, ed. Liang Shiqui (Taiwan: National Institute for Compilation and Translation, 1965), pp. 580-592.

Shakespeare's plays in Chinese did not evoke much interest among the public in China before 1949. Various reasons could be assigned for this lack of interest, but all seem to be related to the one fact that, during the hundred years after the Opium War, China, an ancient and proud country invaded by numerous foreign powers, was struggling to maintain her own civilization. The bitter memories of the Opium War and of a series of lost battles since 1840 were still fresh in the minds of the Chinese people, and Westerners were indiscriminately considered to be aggressors. It was generally believed that Westerners—"foreign devils"—destroyed the peace of the "Middle Kingdom" and damaged the rich historical and cultural heritage of the Chinese nation. Strongly influenced by this intensified spirit of nationalism and called upon always to boycott foreign goods as a means of resisting foreign invasions, the majority of the population in China was not enthusiastic about the introduction of Western culture; some regarded it as a cultural invasion, accompanying armed aggression. Thus, anti-foreign feeling, constant warfare and momentous social changes in the first half of this century diverted the attention of the Chinese people from even an introductory study of Shakespearean drama.

II. Shakespeare Studies (1949—1986)

The year 1949 marked the victory of the Communist Party over the Kuomintang, the beginning of a more settled life and the dawning of Shakespearean studies in China. In 1954, Beijing's Authors' Press published in twelve volumes a collection of thirty-one Shakespeare plays translated by Zhu Shenghao. Zhu's translation enjoyed a much larger audience this time than it had on the first publication of twenty-seven of the plays in 1947—the 1954 edition was reprinted once in 1958 and again in 1962. During the 1950s, Cao Weifeng, who is said to have started rendering Shakespeare's plays in 1931, published his translation of twelve plays. The People's Literature Publishing House printed the Chinese versions of nine plays by

other translators, ^① one of which was Bian Zhilin's *Hamlet*. In 1956, *Romeo and Juliet* was performed by graduates of a Chinese actors' training school in Beijing in the modern Chinese dramatic form ^②—a form which resembles western-style drama and which was initiated by a group of Chinese students studying in Japan in 1907. The same play was staged again two years later and was followed by productions of *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night*. At the same time, the film versions of *Hamlet* ("The Story of the Prince's Revenge," in Chinese), *Twelfth Night* and *Othello*, with either Chinese dubbing or captions, drew millions of moviegoers all over the country. What is more important, Chinese critics began to express their understanding and appreciation of Shakespearean drama through critical essays in journals. Shakespearean studies had begun promisingly.

Yet everything in China is subject to political change. Chinese criticism of Shakespeare in the last thirty-seven years mirrors various political movements; the emphasis, the tone, and even the expression of the criticism change according to the way the political wind blows.

In the years immediately following 1949, Soviet Russia was regarded as the "Elder Brother," the great friend, and China's most important ally. Russian literature, especially the Russian proletarian literature immediately before and after the Russian October Revolution of 1917, was translated into Chinese in large quantities. The Russian theory and practice of education was indiscriminately imitated in Chinese schools. Similarly, literary criticism in China was imported almost whole from Russia. To serve as models for Chinese Shakespeare critics, a select number of essays on Shakespeare by

^① Fang Ping, trans., *Much Ado About Nothing* (1953, 1957, 1958, 1961), *The Merchant of Venice* (1954, 1957, 1961), and *Henry V* (1955, 1958); Lu Ying, trans., *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1954); Zhang Caizhen, trans., *All's Well That Ends Well* (1955); Bian Zhilin, trans., *Hamlet* (1956, 1957, 1958); Wu Xinhua, trans., *Henry IV* (1957); Fang Zhong, trans., *Richard III* (1959); and Cao Yu, trans., *Romeo and Juliet* (1949, 1953, 1954, 1956, 1957, 1960).

^② A brief review of this performance appears in *The Illustrated London News*, 13 October 1956, p. 615.