英国戏剧读本 （上）

The British Drama Reader (I)

傅 俊 编著

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总　　序

　　近年来,随着我国经济的飞速发展,社会对以研究生为主体的高层次人才的需求日益增长,我国英语语言文学专业的研究生教学规模也在不断扩大。各高校在研究生培养方面,形成了各自的特色,涌现出一批学科带头人,开设出自己的强项课程。但同时我们也认识到,要使研究生教育持续健康地发展,要培养学生创新思维能力和独立研究与应用能力,必须全面系统地加强基础理论与基本方法方面的训练。而要实现这一目标,就必须有一套符合我国国情的、系统正规的英语语言文学专业研究生主干教材。

　　基于这一认识,我们邀请了全国英语语言文学专业各研究领域中的知名专家学者,编写了这套《英语语言文学专业研究生系列教材》,旨在集各高校之所长,优势互补,形成合力,在教材建设方面,将我国英语语言文学专业的研究生培养工作推上一个新的台阶。我们希望通过这套教材的出版,来规范我国的英语语言文学专业的研究生课程,培养出更多基础扎实、知识面广、富有开拓精神、符合社会需要的高质量研究生。

　　在内容上,本套系列教材覆盖了英语语言文学专业各学科的主要课程。我们总的编写指导思想是:**结合我国英语语言文学专业研究生教学的实际情况与需要,强调科学性、系统性、先进性和实用性。力求做到理论与应用相结合,介绍与研究相结合,中与外相结合,史与论相结合,广泛搜集资料,全面融会贯通,使每一本教材都能够反映出该研究领域的新理论、新方法和新成果。**本套教材的这些特点,使其有别于单纯引进的国外同类原版教材,是国外教材所不可取代的,两者的作用是相辅相成的。也正是由于这些特点,本套教材不仅可以作为我国英语语言文学专业研究生的主干教材,也可作为中国语言文学专业的教师与学生的参考用书。

　　在编写体例上,我们参照了国家标准局的有关标准以及国际上的通行做法,

制定了统一的规范。每章后面,都列出了思考题和深入阅读书目,以便启发学生思考和进一步深入研究。

　　教材建设是学科建设的一项重要基本建设,对学科发展有着深远的影响。我们相信,正如国外剑桥和牛津大学出版社出版的语言学和应用语言学教材和丛书对推动国际语言学和应用语言学的发展起了巨大作用一样,在世纪之交推出的这套系列教材,也必将大大推动我国 21 世纪英语语言文学专业研究生教育事业的发展,促进我国英语语言文学研究水平的提高。

戴炜栋

2000 年 9 月

Preface

   As one of the important literary genres (like poetry and fiction), drama is also a comprehensive art form which combines textual literature, performance, music, dance and other artistic elements into an organic whole. British drama, in the total world drama, has a prominent position for producing some most brilliant master-dramatists: Christopher Marlowe, Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw and others, as well as William Shakespeare. Shakespeare's drama is not only one of the most precious treasuries but also one of the most influential legacies in world literature. Therefore, to do some study of British drama is very helpful to ensure better understanding of (British) literature in general.

   The British Drama Reader was originally planned to be only a one-volume textbook in about 600,000 words, covering 13 authors' 14 plays arranged in chronological order. After submitting the first draft, however, I was suggested to expand it into two volumes, each in about 500,000 words, covering altogether 17 authors' 18 plays, with the second volume specifically devoted to the 20th century, especially its latter half, for it was an age which witnessed some very remarkable experimental dramatic schools — the Theatre of the Absurd, Angry Young Men, to name just a few, — and many outstanding dramatic creations as well.

   The result of this expansion is the present anthology structured in two volumes: *The British Drama Reader: Book I* and *Book II*. *Book I* consists of 8 authors' 9 plays belonging to three historical periods: drama of Medieval Period, Renaissance drama and drama from Restoration to 19th Century; while

Book II consists of 9 authors' 9 plays belonging to two historical periods: drama before 1945 and drama after 1945. The whole anthology has a general introduction to studying drama, and each historical period is preceded by a survey of drama development of that particular age. As a study-unit, each selected play has four parts: 1) **background information** about the author and about the chosen play respectively; 2) **text** of the whole play, but more often of some chosen acts or scenes owing to the limitation of the book length; 3) **topics** for discussion and writing; and 4) **a booklist** for further reading, **and** sometimes 1 - 2 related **websites** accessible to the complete play and other related materials.

The basic criteria for the selection of this anthology are:

1. The chosen author has to have an important and representative position in his/her age;

2. The chosen play is generally acknowledged as one of this author's representative plays;

3. The selected parts from this play should be able to reveal this author's major distinctive characteristics in theme, characterization, language style and/or other aspects.

This anthology is designed primarily as one of the serialized textbooks for graduate students of English major in Chinese universities. It is also applicable — as a reference book — to university students majoring in (Chinese or foreign) literature as well as to amateur lovers of (foreign) literature in general and (British) drama in particular.

The compiler is fully aware of the inevitable arbitrariness and subjectivity in the selection and commentary of this anthology owing to her inadequate knowledge, experience and judgment. Therefore, criticism, commentary and suggestions for improving this anthology are heartily welcome.

Acknowledgements

The ideas about drama expressed in this textbook have been shaped by many playwrights, scholars and critics. Doubtlessly, I, as the compiler of this textbook, am not aware of all the influences upon me, but I know I am much indebted to many of them, for the introductions, the texts of the plays, and for some of the footnotes. I am indebted especially to the following sources:

The Way of the World: Text : http://www. bibliomania. com/0/6/frameset. html
Footnotes: ***William Congreve: The Way of the World.*** ed. by Kajal Sengupta, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1977;

The School for Scandal: Text: ***Richard Brinsley Sheridan: The School for Scandal.*** Dover Thrift Editions, New York: Dover Publication, Inc., 1995;

The Importance of Being Earnest: Text:
http://drama. eserver. org/plays/modern/importance_of_being earnest. html

If other scholars find they have contributed in some ways to this textbook, I hope that they will be charitable and will accept my sincere apologies for my unwitting omission and my earnest thanks to their contributions.
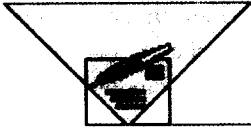
Introduction:
Studying Drama

What Is Drama?

Drama is an important literary genre in the history of English literature. A dramatic work, or play is written to be performed on a stage before an audience — a group of people gathering together in the same place and at the same time to share the experience of the theater. The primary ingredients of drama are characters, represented by players; action, described by gestures and movements; thought, implied by dialogue and action; spectacle, represented by scenery and costume; and, finally, audience, who respond to this complex mixture.

While studying it we should keep in mind that drama is of two manifestations: it is a literary work, an order of words on pages to be read; and it is a performance, an order of speeches and visual effects (or gestures) presented on a stage to be listened and watched.

As a literary work, drama has characteristics common to all literary genres. One of these characteristics is that drama of a certain historic period reveals the impact of the literary trend or movement of that period. Some dramatic works are based on dominant styles such as the highly artificial linguistic structures of Euphuism, others on dominant forms such as the comedy of manners of the Restoration period, and others on sets of esthetic principles such as Symbolism. Movements can be traced in every period easily as classicism

traced in Ben Jonson's **Volpone**, realism reflected in Shaw's **Pygmalion**, aestheticism in Wilde's **The Importance of Being Earnest** and existentialism revealed in Samuel Beckett's **Waiting for Godot**.

Another literary characteristic of drama is its structure. Traditionally a typical dramatic structure consists of five parts: (1) the exposition, the presentation and definition of the established situation from which the play takes rise; (2) the rising action, in which new factors complicate the original situation; (3) the climax or turning point, which reverses the emotional tone and direction of the action; (4) the falling action, in which the various complications begin to find their resolution; and (5) the conclusion, which establishes a new stable situation to end the play. In addition to the climax or central turning point, a play may include many other instances of sudden, dramatic reverses. The scene at Ophelia's grave in **Hamlet** can illustrate this point. When Hamlet enters, he is confident and happy, joking with the First Clown(or gravedigger) about mortality. Then he learns that the skull he is holding and joking about is the skull of Yorick, his late father's jester, and he passes into a mood of nostalgia and reflection. When his reflections reach the use of cosmetics, he falls into a jesting, cynical mood, which is interrupted by the appearance of the procession of the coffin. His emotion changes first to curiosity about the identity of the dead lady, then to sorrow when he learns that it is Ophelia. When Laertes jumps into the open grave, Hamlet reacts with violent, impulsive action and rhetoric. Much of the power and tension of the scene comes from this series of reverses of emotional tone.

Climax renders conflict dramatic and is a basic element of drama.

As a literary work, drama, like poetry, fiction and other literary genres, obtains its internal complexity through various literary devices used by the playwright. One of the devices is to build one or more subplots to enhance the theme conveyed by the main plot. Take **Hamlet** for example again. The subplots of Laertes and of Fortinbras enhance the revenge theme of the Hamlet main plot, and at the same time enrich the complexity of the play.

Another common device in literature to give complexity is allusion — a reference to something which recalls some other work or idea. **The Bible** and the Christian ideas are most frequently alluded in British drama. Both **the Bible** stories in the contents of the medieval mystery and morality plays and the forgiving and reconciliation theme in Shakespeare's later plays are good instances of biblical allusions.

To use a group of recurring images is another device to lend internal

complexity to drama. Throughout *Hamlet*, for example, images dealing with the body are used as a metaphor of the state as the body politics. Studying the play with this in mind will reveal dozens of such references. To give only one example, when the Ghost tells Hamlet that his death was falsely reported, his choice of words is significant: "So the whole ear of Denmark/Is by a forged process of my death/Rankly abused." This image becomes even more significant when he tells Hamlet the precise manner of his death. He was killed when his brother "in the porches of my ear did pour/The leprous distilment." The knowledge that the king is the "head" of the state and that Hamlet believes the wrong man is king may throw some light on his "madness." The understanding of the play can be greatly increased by watching for such image patterns.

Another device to add complexity to the play is the effort to reproduce actual speeches for various characters. The relatively uneducated characters speak substandard or dialectical English as Mak and Gill and the shepherds do in *The Second Shepherds' Play* or speak in prose as the gravediggers do in *Hamlet*. By contrast, the well-educated characters of high rank or upper classes speak in mannered standard English as Oscar Wilde's characters do in *The Importance of Being Earnest* or speak in blank verse as Shakespeare's princes and aristocrats do. Within a given play a writer may choose to give one or more characters individual speech patterns — for example, Hamlet's tendency to repeat the final phrase of a speech, and Polonius' habit of using parallel sentence structures.

The play on stage, however, is quite different from the play as literature, not only because of its transience but also because every performance is a unique expression of the collaborative energies which make up the totality of the performance. In part this is due to the thousands of discrete elements which make up a performance. An actor may forget a line or the technician responsible for the lights may miss the speech which should tell him to change the lighting. Either of these or one of a thousand other possible accidents will make the performance unique. Another factor which makes every performance unique is that no two audiences are quite the same. Some audiences respond with warmth and enthusiasm; others are cold and unresponsive. In short, no performance can exactly duplicate another.

Besides, the costume, light effect and blocking are among many other elements which make drama on stage different from drama in written text. When, for example, in Act I, Scene II of *Hamlet*, the Queen asks Hamlet to

"cast thy nighted color off," Hamlet should obviously be dressed in black. Hamlet dressed in black in this scene is an example of how a playwright can imagine or invent a striking stage effect: Hamlet enters at the beginning of the scene with the King, the Queen, and the courtiers, and throughout the scenes with the ambassadors to Norway and then with Laertes, he is on stage but silent and isolated from the other figures by his dress. The stage picture has an effect which can be imagined in reading the scene but which is even more striking in performance.

In the history of British drama, we find that sometimes the audience also exercises an influence on the content of a performance. Plays are the most public form of literature, and the playwright writes for the group rather than the individual. The subjects treated by a play must have some relevance to its society. Many popular comedies, for example, reflect the attitudes of the society toward marriage as showing in Congreve's *The Way of the World* and Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*. Plays may also reflect historical events as well as values and attitudes. Most of Shakespeare's great tragedies concern the succession to a throne or position of leadership. They were believed to have been written at the time when Elizabeth I was an aging queen without prospect of heir to succeed her throne. For two centuries England had been subjected to war and destruction brought on by crises of succession. Stories about succession might well fascinate Shakespeare as well as his audiences. Another way in which the audience affects the content of the play is that in the theater certain representations are taboo. The exact area of taboo will vary at different periods. The Greeks, for example, eschewed violence on stage. Violent actions and death must take place offstage and be reported by a messenger. In Shakespeare's time, however, the audience loved violence on stage as can be seen in the final scene of *Hamlet*. In our time the use of racial stereotypes is offensive to audiences. In modern productions of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* we see therefore a Shylock who deserves more sympathy than contempt — quite different from the one that Shakespeare's contemporaries saw.

The characteristics of the stage on which drama is performed and the conventions which govern it vary from age to age. Greek tragedies were performed in broad daylight without a curtain or other conventional means of changing the place and time. In consequence almost all the extant Greek tragedies occur in a single place and the action covers a supposed 24 hours. This explains the appearance of the classical rule of "Three Unities" for drama.

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Shakespeare's plays were also performed in broad daylight, but the acting area was more complex, including a recessed area at the back of the stage and a raised area above. Such areas were easily adapted to serve as the Queen's chamber in **Hamlet**, a cave in **The Tempest** or a balcony in **Romeo and Juliet**.

Another area of convention involves the actors. Both Shakespeare and Sheridan, on the other hand, worked with companies of players whose abilities and weaknesses they knew. The role of Polonius in **Hamlet** suggests that Shakespeare was writing for an actor who was particularly good at portraying sententious old men. Shakespeare's acting company was restricted because the female roles were assumed by pre-pubescent boys. Only occasionally, as with Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra, did Shakespeare write complex female parts for his boy actors. Sheridan's company did include women players — actresses, and as a rule his female parts are therefore more complex. By the time of Shaw and T. S. Eliot, theater had become international. Plays were no longer written for performance at a specific time by a specific group of actors. A play which had a success in London would be performed in Paris, Vienna, or New York. To accommodate this trend, acting companies were composed of specialists in certain "lines," such as leading man, leading lady, juveniles of both sexes, and character actors. In this, as in time and place, the stage convention of the period will exercise an influence on the writing of the play.