



“十二五”江苏省高等学校重点教材

英语文学 阅读与欣赏

主编 石云龙 姜礼福

(修订本)

*Reading and Appreciation of
English Literature*

北京大学出版社



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序 言

文学之为大,因其包罗万象,海纳百川;之为重,因其刻画入微,从而见微知萌。它潜入生活的每片枝叶,润物无声。你或会在田间看到威廉姆斯笔下农民的活力,或会于案头惊寻莱辛的笔记,或在相处时发掘品特式的冷漠。倘错过美好的片段,倘难辨你我真颜,倘不知路向何方,文学以其万变的想像为你异彩呈现。跟随英语文学的足迹,我们有机会去领略异国文化,在每一位作家营造的世界里畅游,汲养。

诚然,文学阅读是将文学学以致用,触类旁通的基础。这本南京航空航天大学英语系教授们的辛劳之作,就以其丰富鲜活的文学气息带我们走入现当代英美文学之洋,藉此夯实英语文学基础。此书自2007年开始编写,历经实践调整,终于今问世。

避开众多英美文学书籍偏于经典的特点,此书与时俱进,所选材料皆为20世纪以来的作家之作品,作为经典的延续,透着浓郁青春色彩。这种青春感更来自多样的选段来源,从英美作家福克纳、休斯、莱辛,到爱尔兰作家班维尔、加拿大作家阿特伍德,另有诗歌、戏剧、小说、散文等各种文类相佐。所录篇目只是一隅,然据对此隅构建之研究,或可知英美文学之天下。此书即于选段之后另辟一节,包括意象派诗歌、后殖民主义文学等相关流派,及追寻小说、具形诗等文学样式,一应具陈,由浅入深。阅读之余应伴有思考,这也是将文学内化的必经之路。观毕此书,印象颇深为其作家简介、作品赏析和相关讨论及资料,从简洁概括的语言入手,提供了必要的信息和独到的赏析策略。曲径通幽,沿路而去,相信自可体悟文学真谛。

编者用心的设计和艰苦的编纂工作,实非易事。新颖的编排角度,反复的修订,细致的脚注、资料索引,皆为抽丝剥茧,排沙捡金所得。相信他们的心迹将随着书页的展开,沁润读者的心扉。

是为序。

李建波

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William Carlos Williams

(1883—1963)



About the author

William Carlos Williams, American poet, novelist, playwright and essayist, was born in Rutherford, New Jersey on September 17, 1883. His father William George Williams was of English and Danish blood, and his mother Raquel Helene (Elena) Hoheb, of French-Spanish blood born in Puerto Rico. He was a medical student at the University of Pennsylvania, where he befriended Ezra Pound and Hilda Doolittle. After he had earned his M. D. in 1906 and finished in 1910 his study of advanced pediatrics in Leipzig, Germany following his internship in New York, he came back to his hometown Rutherford, where he began work as a general practitioner. Rutherford became his lifelong home and in the end he became head pediatrician of the General Hospital in the nearby city of Paterson. On March 4, 1963, William Carlos Williams died of cerebral thrombosis in Rutherford, New Jersey.

In 1913, Ezra Pound arranged for the London publication of Williams's second published collection of poems, *The Tempers*, but it wasn't until 1914 that he was introduced to the public as an Imagist when he published some of his works in the literary magazine *The Glebe*. After that, his publication kept coming in the forms of poems, novels, and essays, including *Kora in Hell: Improvisations* (1920), *Spring and All* (1923), *The Great American Novel*

(1923), *In the American Grain* (1925), *Collected Poems: 1921—1931* (1934), *The Complete Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams: 1906—1938* (1938), *In the Money* (1940), *The Wedge* (1944), and so on. In 1946, he published *Paterson (Book One)*, which was the first of this five-volume “personal epic”, with the latter parts published in 1948, 1949, 1951, and 1958. Robert Lowell sees it as “Whitman’s America, grown pathetic and tragic... No poet has written of it with such a combination of brilliance, sympathy, and experience, with such alertness and energy”. Other important works by William Carlos Williams include *The Autobiography* (1951), *The Farmers’ Daughters* (1961), *Pictures from Brueghel and Other Poems* (1962), and *The Embodiment of Knowledge* (posthumous).

Although overshadowed by Ezra Pound with his Imagist Movement and T. S. Eliot with his European traditions and styles, William Carlos Williams received increasing attention and popularity among critics and the younger poets during and after his lifetime. In 1926 he was given the Dial Award, in 1948 the Loines Award of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, in 1950 the National Book Award for Poetry, in 1954 the Levinson Prize for Poetry and in 1955 the Oscar Blumenthal Award. In 1963, he was posthumously awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry for *Pictures from Brueghel* and the Gold Medal for Poetry of the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

William Carlos Williams is upheld as one of the great forces in 20th century American verse because of his experiment with new techniques of meter and lineation in a search of truly American speech and rhythm—which results in an “apparently relaxed colloquialism”, his subject matters centered on everyday life and his influence on the younger poets, including Allen Ginsberg and the Beats.

Brief appreciation of the poems

“The Red Wheelbarrow” is often considered as the masterwork of William Carlos Williams, which exemplifies the Imagist-influenced philosophy of “no ideas but in things”. The poem is said to portray the scene outside the window of a very sick young girl Dr. Williams was attending in Passaic, New Jersey.

With bare and plain form, Williams moves away from what he saw as the “European” wordiness of other poets, to create a typical “American” image with his poem.

The subject matter of “The Red Wheelbarrow” is what makes it the most distinctive and important. With the juxtaposed images of red and white, he lifts a wheelbarrow to an artistic level, exemplifying the importance of the ordinary and proving his idea that a poem “must be real, not ‘realism’, but reality itself”.

The poem has a distinct pattern, with alternating lines of two and one stressed syllables. The poem seems to attempt to reach a specific combination of stresses, but purposely misses each time.

“The Dance” consists of twelve lines of rhythmic verse written in response to a painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525–1569). The painting, *The Kermess*, or *Peasant Dance*, depicts sturdy, well-fed peasants on holiday-dancing, drinking, making music, and abandoning themselves to the spirit of carnival. Williams’s poem captures the hearty vitality that the painting evokes, through concrete visual and auditory images and through the strong, measured rhythm.

The Red Wheelbarrow

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens.



The Dance

In Breughel's^① great picture, *The Kermess*, the dancers go round, they go round and around, the squeal^② and the blare and the tweedle of bagpipes, a bugle^③ and fiddles tipping their bellies, (round as the thick-sided glasses whose wash they impound) their hips and their bellies off balance to turn them. Kicking and rolling about the Fair Grounds^④, swinging their butts, those shanks must be sound to bear up under such rollicking measures, prance as they dance in Breughel's great picture, *The Kermess*.



Related knowledge

Imagism is a movement in early 20th century Anglo-American poetry that favors precision of imagery, and clear, sharp language. The Imagists reject the sentiment and artifice typical of much Romantic and Victorian poetry. This is in contrast to their contemporaries, the Georgian poets, who are by and large content to work within that tradition. Group publication of work under the Imagist name in magazines and in four anthologies appearing between 1914 and 1917 feature writing by many of the most significant figures in Modernist poetry in English, as well as a number of other Modernist figures who are to be prominent in fields other than poetry.

① Pieter Bruegel (about 1525 - 69), usually known as Pieter Bruegel the Elder to distinguish him from his elder son, and generally considered the greatest Flemish painter of the 16th century.

② a long, high-pitched sound

③ a simple brass musical instrument that looks like a small trumpet

④ open land where fairs or exhibitions are held

Imagism calls for a return to what are seen as more classical values, such as directness of presentation, economy of language, and a willingness to experiment with non-traditional verse forms. The focus on the “thing” as “thing” mirrors contemporary developments in avant-garde art, especially Cubism. Although Imagism isolates objects through the use of what Ezra Pound calls “luminous details”, Pound’s ideogrammic method of juxtaposing concrete instances to express an abstraction, is similar to the way in which Cubism synthesizes a single image from multiple perspectives.

Based in London, the Imagists are drawn from Britain, Ireland and the United States. Though unusual for the time, the Imagists feature a number of women writers among their major figures. Historically, Imagism is significant because it is the first organized Modernist English-language literary movement or group. Apart from the representative figures such as Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell, Imagism includes well-known poets such as Richard Aldington, H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), F. S. Flint, D. H. Lawrence, Ford Madox Ford, and William Carlos Williams.

Topics for classroom discussion

1. Does the poem “The Red Wheelbarrow” have a theme? What is it if yes? And why if no?
2. Does the poem “The Red Wheelbarrow” have a subject, grammatically speaking? What is the poet’s intention in this arrangement?
3. Why does the poet separate the word “wheelbarrow”? What is the effect of the separation?
4. Analyze the specific features of Williams’s use of language in this poem.
5. Discuss the effect the form of this poem has on the reader. How does the form contribute to a reader’s understanding of the poem?
6. What is the main idea presented in the poem “The Dance”?
7. How do you understand Williams’ principle of “no ideas but in things” according to the two poems above?
8. Why does the poet in the poem “The Dance” dwell on some features of the painting and ignore other aspects of the picture?

Topics for further discussion

1. Compare the two poems of Williams that derive from paintings by Brueghel: "The Dance" and "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus". Find these paintings and study them. What relationship does Williams achieve between the visual and the verbal experience? Is it necessary to see the paintings to "see" the poems?
2. Is the poem simply an objective verbal description of the picture, or does the poet make conclusions about what the painting means? Could you reconstruct the painting from the poem without actually seeing it?
3. Do you agree with the meaning the poet "reads" in the painting, or do you think the writer misreads it or warps the scene depicted to personal ends?
4. Go to visit a gallery and find a painting that impresses most. Write a poem to illustrate it and try to tell the differences between the two forms of art.

Further reading

Landscape with the Fall of Icarus

According to Brueghel
when Icarus fell
it was spring

a farmer was ploughing
his field
the whole pageantry

of the year was
awake tingling
near

the edge of the sea
concerned
with itself



sweating in the sun
that melted
the wings' wax

unsignificantly
off the coast
there was

a splash quite unnoticed
this was
Icarus drowning

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Katherine Anne Porter

(1890—1980)



About the author

Katherine Anne Porter was born Callie Russell Porter in Indian Creek, Texas in 1890. She lost her mother at the age of two and was raised by her father and paternal grandmother, which made her strong and self-reliant at an early age. Catharine Ann Skaggs Porter, her grandmother, was a stern disciplinarian, and her strong character provided a model for grandmothers in Porter's stories. In 1904—1905, Porter attended the Thomas School in San Antonio. At the age of sixteen she married the first of her four husbands, John Koontz. This marriage lasted nine years. In 1917, after a struggle with tuberculosis, Porter took a job as a columnist for a magazine. Two years later she moved to Greenwich Village, and began to work seriously as a fiction writer. Obtaining success as a journalist, she moved to New York in 1919. Between the years 1918 and 1921 Porter became involved in revolutionary politics in Mexico, which appeared as the scene of several of her stories. She worked in Mexico as a journalist, publicist for a film company, and ghostwriter for the book, *My Chinese Marriage* (1921). After her travel in the late 1920s Europe, she returned to the United States, lived in many cities and finally settled in Saratoga Springs, New York in 1944. She moved to Washington D. C. in 1959 to finish *Ship of Fools*. On September 18, 1980,

Katherine Anne Porter died in Silver Spring, Maryland at the age of 90.

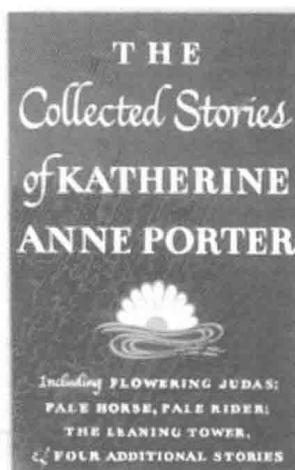
Porter has always been known as a master writer of short stories, prose and novels. In 1930, Porter published her first book, *Flowering Judas*, a collection of short stories. It was not until almost ten years later that her second book of short novels, *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, came out. She followed this in 1944 with *The Leaning Tower and Other Stories*. *Ship of Fools* (1962), Porter's first and only novel that took her almost twenty years to finish, deals with the lives of a group of various and international travelers and attacks the weakness of a society that could allow for the Second World War. In 1965, she won a Pulitzer Prize for her *Collected Stories*. Her other major works include: *Noon Wine* (1937); *Holiday* (1962); *A Christmas Story* (1967); *Collected Essays and Occasional Writings* (1970); *The Never-Ending Wrong* (1977), etc.

A perfectionist that tries to control every word of her writing, Porter is a major voice in twentieth century American literature for her flawless prose, her concern with the themes of justice, betrayal, and the unforgiving nature of the human race, and her great clarity in a style that achieves objectivity without sacrificing sensitivity. Many of her stories are set in the South and the Southwest of the US and Mexico.

Brief appreciation of the short story "Holiday"

"Holiday" originally appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* in December 1960 but received more attention when it was included in *The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter* in 1965. She won an O. Henry prize for the story in 1962.

In the introduction to *The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter*, the writer gives her account of the writing process of the story: "the story haunted me for years and I made three separate versions, with a certain spot in all three where the thing went off track. So I put it away... and I forgot it. It rose from one of my boxes of papers, after a



quarter of a century, and... I saw at once that the first [version] was the right one."

"Holiday" tells the tale of a young woman who travels to a Texas farm, on the recommendation of a former schoolmate about her own age, to live with a conventional German-American family for a month and to escape her unnamed "little problems" in life. The extended family members are hard-working but clearly care for one another. The narrator takes great interest in Otilie, the disabled, ugly and mute servant girl who cooks and serves meals for the twenty members of the household. Later, the narrator is startled to find out that Otilie is actually a member of this big family. Many important things happen one after another in the month—a wedding, a birth, a natural disaster, and finally the death of Mother Muller. The family continues to ignore Otilie and her suffering; in the end, only the narrator reaches out to aid Otilie in her grief.

The main character's fascination and identification with the family's deformed and crippled servant girl allows Porter to explore the themes of alienation, isolation, and the complete sacrifice of an individual for the good of the greater community. Like much of Porter's work, the story is drawn from her own experiences, and the main character (whose name the reader never learns) is believed to be Porter herself, describing her own alienation as a woman artist in a patriarchal society.

Known as a writer of great clarity, Porter achieved a style of objectivity without sacrificing sensitivity. Like other stories, "Holiday" is self-motivated, without the author's omnipresence.

Holiday

At that time I was too young for some of the troubles I was having, and I had not yet learned what to do with them. It no longer can matter what kind of troubles they were, or what finally became of them. It seemed to me then there was nothing to do but run away from them, though all my tradition, background, and training had taught me unanswerably that no one except a coward ever runs away from anything. What nonsense! They should have taught me the difference

between courage and foolhardiness^①, instead of leaving me to find it out for myself. I learned finally that if I still had the sense I was born with, I would take off like a deer at the first warning of certain dangers. But this story I am about to tell you happened before this great truth impressed itself upon me—that we do not run from the troubles and dangers that are truly ours, and it is better to learn what they are earlier than later, and if we don't run from the others, we are fools.

I confided to my friend Louise, a former schoolmate about my own age, not my troubles but my little problem: I wanted to go somewhere for a spring holiday, by myself, to the country, and it should be very simple and nice and, of course, not expensive, and she was not to tell anyone where I had gone; but if she liked, I would send her word now and then, if anything interesting was happening. She said she loved getting letters but hated answering them; and she knew the very place for me, and she would not tell anybody anything. Louise had then—she has it still—something near to genius for making improbable persons, places, and situations sound attractive. She told amusing stories that did not turn grim on you until a little while later, when by chance you saw and heard for yourself. So with this story. Everything was just as Louise had said, if you like, and everything was, at the same time, quite different.

"I know the very place," said Louise, "a family of real old-fashioned German peasants, in the deep blackland Texas farm country, a household in real patriarchal style—the kind of thing you'd hate to live with but is very nice to visit. Old father, God Almighty himself, with whiskers and all; Old mother, matriarch in men's shoes; endless daughters and sons and sons-in-law and fat babies falling about the place; and fat puppies—my favourite was a darling little black thing named Kuno—cows, calves, and sheep and lambs and goats and turkeys and guineas roaming up and down the shallow green hills, ducks and geese on the ponds. I was there in the summer when the peaches and watermelons were in..."

"This is the end of March," I said, doubtfully.

"Spring comes early there," said Louise. "I'll write to the Mullers about you, you just get ready to go."

"Just where is this paradise?"

"Not far from the Louisiana line," said Louise. "I'll ask them to give you my attic—oh, that was a sweet place! It's a big room, with the roof sloping to the

① taking stupid and unnecessary risks