

HISTORY AND ANTHOLOGY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

第二册

英国文学史及选读



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内容简介

本书是作者根据英国文学历史的顺序结合作品选读所编写的一套适合我国高等院校英语专业使用的教材。由于课时有限,历史部分只作了简明扼要的概述,作品选读部分,尽可能遴选了文学史上的重要作家和重要作品。

这部史、选结合的教材,分为两册出版,第一册是古代至 18 世纪英国文学,第二册是 19 世纪至 20 世纪英国文学。教材内容丰富,观点正确,选文具有代表性,可作高校外文系英语专业英国文学史和文学作品选读课程的课本或参考书,也是广大中学英语教师及具有一定程度的英语自学者和英美文学爱好者进修的理想读物。

前 言

我国高等院校英语专业在高年级课程中,开设有《英美文学史》和《英美文学作品选读》两门课程。讲授《文学史》以伴随《文学作品选读》为宜,否则容易形成脱节现象,或者形成教学中的重复。再者,文学史是根据历史的顺序以系统讲授为主,由于课时的限制,往往重头轻尾,完不成全面教学的任务。《文学作品选读》只能选一部分重要作家和重要作品进行讲授,略古详今。这样,史和选读分作两门课程讲授,往往不能相辅而行。从时间上说,也有不经济课时的情况。所以这两门课程,最好结合起来:史的部分在书中简单扼要地概述;作品选读部分,尽可能遴选文学史上的重要作家和重要作品进行讲授。教师根据班级的具体情况,可多选讲,也可少选,灵活掌握,因材施教。

本书编写的体例,除史的部分有简略扼要的叙述以外,作家作品部分有:(1)作者生平与创作介绍;(2)作品内容提要(如选文为作品节录时);(3)选文;(4)注释。在教学中每周以四学时计,共两个学期(有的院校是四个学期),课堂以讲授作品为主,史的部分由教师掌握,学生阅读参考。史、选结合,进行教学,可事半功倍,收到良好的教学效果。这是本书编写的目的。

本书编选分为两卷:第一卷是古代至18世纪英国文学,第二卷是19世纪至20世纪英国文学。

本书可供高校外语系英语专业英美文学史和文学作品选读课程作教学用书或参考书,也可供广大中学英语教师及具有一定程度的英语自学者和英美文学爱好者作为进修读物。

本书曾由国家教委高校外语教材编审委员会召开审稿会进行审稿。参加审稿会的有主审人张健教授(山东大学);审稿人有孟

广龄教授(北京师范大学)、常耀信教授(南开大学)和李乃坤副教授(山东大学)。会议期间,审稿人对本书提出了许多宝贵的意见,编者根据这些意见,作了必要的修改。在此,对参加审稿的同志表示衷心的感谢。

本书在编选过程中,曾参考了国内外出版的许多文学史和作品选读方面的书籍,注释部分也参照了有关各书的注释,在此不一一列举。由于编者水平有限,书中错误缺点和考虑不周之处在所难免,恳切希望读者和专家们批评指正。

编 者

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PART VI

The Romantic Period (1798-1832)

Romanticism in England

Romanticism as a literary movement came into being in England early in the latter half of the 18th century. It first made its appearance in England as a renewed interest in medieval literature. The movement was ushered by Thomas Percy, James Macpherson and Thomas Chatterton. William Blake and Robert Burns represented the spirit of what is usually called Pre-Romanticism.

With the publication of William Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* in collaboration with S. T. Coleridge, romanticism began to bloom and found a firm place in the history of English literature. In fact, the first half of the nineteenth century recorded the triumph of Romanticism.

As is known to all, literature develops with the development of the society and, as a superior ideology, gets strong influence of other social ideologies, especially of politics which is the most decisive; literature reflects the mental attitudes of a time and a nation. The class struggles also motivate the development of literature. But the most important and decisive factor in the development of literature is economics. These are true of the literature of all countries. The English Romanticism is no exception. It was greatly influenced by the In-

dustrial Revolution and the French Revolution.

After the Industrial Revolution, Britain became the “workshop of the world” and the English bourgeoisie fattened on world trade, plunder and colonization. No country was strong enough to compete with England. The Industrial Revolution pushed the bourgeoisie to the dominant position in the country. It became the ruling class. The aristocratic class retained some prestige and influence in social life and was still prominent in Parliament and bureaucracy, but now it had to submit to the rising, powerful bourgeoisie. As the victim of the “Enclosure Movement”, the peasants became landless and had to find new ways of living. The rapid capitalist development ruined the peasants who had to wander for work. They became hired workers in the countryside and cities. Thus, a new class, proletariat, had sprung into existence. All the working people lived in dreadful poverty. They were mercilessly exploited and in some places sixteen hours’ labour would hardly pay for the daily bread. In many large cities hungry men and women formed groups against the exploiters. The bourgeoisie got richer and richer while the labourers became poorer and poorer until they could not support themselves. It was under this unbearable economic condition that the workers’ struggle broke out, finding expression in the spontaneous movement (1811-1812) of the Luddites, or “frame-breakers”, who broke their master’s weaving machines to show their hatred of the capitalists and capitalist exploitation.

July 14, 1789 saw a great event in Europe. That was the French Revolution. The heavily-exploited Parisian people rose and stormed the Bastille, the symbol of feudalism. The revolution destroyed the feudal economic base. Its influence swept all over Europe. It is almost impossible for those who had no knowledge of the

world history of this period to imagine the extraordinary effect of the French Revolution on the life and thought of England in both cultural and political terms.

The Revolution proclaimed the natural rights of man and the abolition of class distinctions. This, of course, was welcomed by the labouring people in Britain where the labouring people and the progressive intellectuals hailed the French Revolution and its principle. Clubs and societies such as the London Corresponding Society and other radical organizations multiplied in Britain, all asserting the doctrine of "liberty, equality and fraternity", the watchwords of the Revolution. The Revolution had such a strong influence on Britain that many writers such as William Blake, Robert Burns, George Gordon Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Charles Lamb and even William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge to mention a few, got their inspirations from it and wrote beautiful poems or prose. Wordsworth was at first very much excited by the Revolution and had been to France twice. Even after he had lost faith and hope and gained a comfortable income, Wordsworth, when writing about the Revolution, would still say:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,

But to be young was very heaven.

The French Revolution inspired the working (labouring) people and the progressive intellectuals of Britain, but it scared the bourgeoisie, especially its upper stratum, who allowed and had their own revolution but could not bear the idea of another nation having its own revolution. The British government regarded the French Republic as a most dangerous enemy which threatened its very existence. Under the banner of patriotism and fighting "Jacobinism",

the British government supported and joined the “Holy Alliance”.^① By doing this, the British government attempted to turn men’s thoughts from their own to their neighbour’s affairs and so prevent a threatened revolution at home. The reactionary measures of the British Government resulted in the notorious “Peterloo Massacre” in 1819 at St. Peter’s Fields, Manchester, when hundreds of workers were killed and wounded by the troops during a mass rally demanding political reform for which the working people had been fighting for many years.

The political writings of the time also reflected the aone otrugle. Edmund Burke spoke against the French Revolution and sang elegies for the downfall of the royalty in France. He wrote a pamphlet entitled as *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1780), which soon became an anti-revolutionary manifesto for all reactionaries in Europe. In his picture of the sufferings of French royalty and nobility, as Thomas Paine said, “He pitied the plumage and forgot the dying bird.” In answer to this, Thomas Paine (1737-1809), the radical pamphleteer who had always been fighting for freedom, wrote *The Rights of Man* (1791-1792) a pamphlet, in which he advocated that politics was the business of the whole mass of common people and not only of a governing oligarchy. People would not like a government that failed to secure people “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”. Such a government people had the right to overthrow, if necessary, by revolution. This pamphlet of Thomas Paine, coming so soon after the destruction of the Bastille, added fuel to the flames kindled in Britain by the French Revolution. *The Rights of Man* was banned and Thomas Paine was founded guilty of

^① Holy Alliance: an alliance formed in 1815 by the rulers of Russia, Austria and Prussia to suppress the democratic revolutionary movement in Europe.

treason. The government wanted to arrest him. Fortunately, the accused was not taken prisoner. He did not attend the trial for he had been warned by the poet, William Blake, of the likelihood of immediate arrest and, instead of returning to his lodgings where the police waited with a warrant, had escaped to France.

The English people became more and more dissatisfied with the reality of their country. Fighting for "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" also became their national spirit and they never stopped demanding reform for many years to come.

Some reforms had been made in England since 1815. The destruction of the African slave trade; the mitigation of horribly unjust laws, which included poor debtors and petty criminals in the same class; the prevention of child labour; the freedom of the press; the extension of manhood suffrage; the abolition of restrictions against Catholics in parliament; the establishment of hundreds of popular schools, under the leadership of Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster, these are but a few of the reforms which mark the progress of civilization in a single half century. The Reform Bill of 1832 shifted the center of political power to the middle class.

It was amid these social conflicts mentioned above that Romanticism arose as a main literary trend, which prevailed in England during the period of 1798-1832, beginning with the publication of Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), ending with Walter Scott's death (1832).

The eighteenth century was distinctively an age of prose. The Age of Wordsworth—like the Age of Shakespeare—was decidedly an age of poetry. Its great men of genius were mostly eminent in the poetical field, distinction was more easily achieved in poetry than in prose, the general taste was decidedly set in the poetic direction.

This fact has helped to mark it as the second great age in English literary history; for poetry is the highest form of literary expression, and poetry seems to have been most in harmony with the noblest powers of the English genius. As in the Elizabethan Age, the young enthusiasts turned as naturally to poetry as a happy man to singing. The glory of the age is in the poetry of Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Moore, and Southey. Of its prose works, those of Scott alone have attained a very wide reading, though the essays of Charles Lamb and the novels of Jane Austen have slowly won for their authors a secure place in the history of English literature. Coleridge and Southey (who with Wordsworth form the trio of so-called Lake Poets) wrote far more prose than poetry; Southey's prose is much better than his verse. There was also a noteworthy development of the novel which was already beginning to establish itself as the favorite literary form of the nineteenth century. The drama was the only great literary form that was not adequately represented. Many of the great poets, as well as other writers, tried their hands at dramatic work; but there is probably not a single great drama in the stricter sense of the term. The best that we can say is that there was some really noble poetry written in nominally dramatic form. During the nineteenth century, the drama seems to have been practically superseded by the novel as a medium for the portrayal of its complex forms of life and character. It remains to be said that the literature of the age was exceedingly rich and varied. There were many excellent writers, and there was a vast body of excellent works. The great literary impulse of the age is the impulse of Individualism in a wonderful variety of forms.

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

William Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth, Cumberland, in 1770. He came from a North of England family, sound and healthy in its moral tone, and vigorous physically. Losing his parents early in life, he was left to the care of uncles who discharged their trust in a praiseworthy manner.

He went to school in his ninth year at Hawkshead, a village on the banks of Esthwaite Water. These school days were happy ones. He boarded in the village with a kindly old dame, whom he has fondly described in his *Prelude*, and, out of school hours, he was free from the supervision of tutors. He writes: "I was left at liberty then, and in the vacation, to read whatever books I liked." He was free also to go about as he pleased, and he roamed early and late over the mountains.

The healthy out-of-door life hardened the fibers of his sturdy frame and kept him vigorous, and the constant sight of nature in the wondrous beauty of the Lake District awoke love and reverence in him. He enjoyed the sports of hunting, skating, and rowing. Little by little, the glories of Nature grew upon him, until his soul seemed flooded with unutterable delight when in her presence. This profound passion was fostered by his life in these early years, and grew steadily with his youth. At seventeen, he went to Cambridge and,

for a time, was dazzled by the intercourse with town-bred men, but the infatuation was of short duration, and his four years at college were the least congenial of his life.

His travels on the Continent in his last vacation and after his graduation brought him in contact with the French Revolution, and he came under its spell, as did most of the enthusiastic young men of the time. His hopes were stirred and his imagination fired with dreams of an ideal republic, which he fancied would arise from the Revolution. He says:—

“I gradually withdrew
Into a noisier world, and thus ere long
Became a patriot; and my heart was all
Given to people, and my love was their.”

(*The Prelude*, Book IX)

He was prepared to throw himself personally into the struggle, when his relatives recalled him to England to face the ugly specter of poverty. The rude shock came too suddenly upon his ardent aspirations, and, following closely upon it, came the failure of the revolutionists, the period of anarchy and imperialism in France. He sank into a dejection as deep as his hopes had been high, and, as he slowly recovered from his disappointment, he became more and more conservative in his politics, and less in sympathy with any violent reactions. For this he was censured by Byron, Shelley, and other strong adherents of liberty, but such moderation was more natural to Wordsworth than the excitement of his early years. To the end of his days, he never failed to utter for genuine liberty a hopeful, though calm and tempered note.

He returned from France in 1792. In 1795 a bequest of £ 900 relieved the financial strain which had caused him anxiety, and se-