

隋刚 著

Sui Gang

英语诗歌和小说 写作指南

Poetry and Fiction Writing
in English : a Guidebook

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in English: a Guidebook

YINGYU SHIGE HE XIAOSHUO XIEZUO ZHINAN

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作者简介

1992年毕业于上海外国语学院，获英语语言文学博士学位。现任北京第二外国语学院英语系教授、硕士生导师和北京市高校优秀青年骨干教师，兼任北京市青联教育组委员。2000年获美国德鲁大学凯斯珀森研究生院博士后研究证书。2002年获英国学术院颁发的研究证书。现从事英美文学和英语创造性写作的教研工作。在国内外发表的作品包括：文学批评及文学教学论文、杂文、译文、英汉词典、教材、译著和专著（如：《英美诗歌意境漫游》、《美国文学旧作新读》、《康拉德短篇小说选》、《美国哲人智慧》和《诗意的发现与创造》）。数次获院级和市级的优秀教学成果奖和优秀科研成果奖。

中文序言

本书是国内出版的第一本英语创造性写作(即英语文学创作)综合指南,主要内容涉及英语诗歌和短篇小说写作。本书不仅体现了英语文学赏析和英语文学创作的结合,还体现了逻辑思维的培养和形象思维的培养的结合、英语教学和人文素质教育的结合。

本书具体表明了中国学生在英语创造性写作实践中读写并进的可操作性,从而引导学生逐步改进思维方式,提高对英语词语的敏感度;帮助学生克服浮躁情绪,养成精益求精的习惯,自觉纠正自己的语言错误,尽可能准确地表情达意,尽可能生动地咏物言志,尽可能充分地发挥主观能动性,持续不断地提高自己的人文素质。本书意欲催生中国学生的更多的英语写作的创造性成果,推动国内英语文学创作实践活动的进一步开展,以利于较全面地向英语世界展示中国英语教学和人文素质教育的特色,进行多层次、多方位的国际文化交流。

本书可用做高等院校英语语言文学专业高年级本科生和研究生的“英语创造性写作”课程的教材,也可用做“英美文学选读”课程的补充教材,还可用做有一定英语基础并有心试笔的文学青年的自学参考书。

本书的正文分为两个部分——第一部分:英语诗歌写作;第二部分:英语小说写作。每一个部分有10个单元。本书共有20个单元。每一个单元的基本内容包括:学习目的、英语文学名作原文、阅读理解思考题、学生习作、写作练习题和文学名词解释。本书正文后还附有补充读物和参考文献。对本书中收录的学生习作,笔者进行过忠实于原作内容的语言加工。

本书是笔者基于自己的英语创造性写作的教学实践编写而成的。笔者

认为:英语创造性写作具有重要的人文价值和显著的实践意义,应该并且能够成为英语语言文学专业高年级本科生和研究生教学的一个具体内容,应该并且能够成为高校可持续发展的人文素质教育的一个有机成分;英语创造性写作通常始于名作的阅读、理解和模仿,进而学以致用,自然而然地开阔视野,丰富想像,磨砺思想,陶冶性情,提炼语言,表现人生;英语创造性写作有利于“拿来”及“送去”的双向跨文化交流,有利于人生诗意的发现和创造,有利于精神财富的积累以及灵魂生活质量的提高。英语创造性写作教学旨在培养重视人生终极意义的人、把握人文精神实质的人、有思维创造力和语言表现力的人。

英语创造性写作教学是“英美文学史/选读”之类的传统课程教学的广度延伸,是一种人文素质教育。人文素质教育中的一个必不可少的内容就是创新意识和创新能力的培养。英语创造性写作教学恰恰可以培养这种创新意识和创新能力(即:艺术想像力、思维创造力和语言表现力)。笔者在英语创造性写作的教学实践中贯彻始终的教学理念是:以人文精神为主线,以终极关怀为指向,以文学名作为创作指南,以现实生活为创作素材,以激发学生联想为主要教学手段,以提高学生人文素质为主要教学目的,引导学生通过文学阅读、赏析和创作来汲取并吸收丰富的精神营养,消除因神圣价值缺席而产生的困惑,拒绝无诗意的生活,提升自己的人格,培养自己的创新意识和创新能力,做能够塑造自己健康的灵魂的合格的工程师。

在上述教学理念的支撑下,笔者①确立了人文精神的主导地位,营造了崇尚真善美、追求人文价值的课堂小氛围,与此同时,着力破除盛行于世的肤浅的极端物质主义和功利主义的现代迷信,揭露其贪婪、虚伪和粗鄙的本质;②树立了文学为素质教育服务的具体目标,凸显了英语文学精品的永恒价值和普遍意义,与此同时,打破了以种种非文学标准画地为牢的界限,帮助学生消解了原本对英语文学怀有的隔膜感;③建立了一个激励学生发挥创造力的新机制,使学生在试笔过程中获得愉悦感和自由感,保持思维的活力和创造的激情,设立了一个以读促写、以写促读、读写并进的新起点,丰富了英语语言文学专业高年级本科生和研究生教学的内容,努力拓宽高校人文素质教育

的道路,与此同时,突破了国内英美文学教学的某些旧模式,解构了“文学无用论”的思想观念。

笔者坚信:每一个有一定的英语语言文学基础的学生都有运用英语进行文学创作的潜能,但若没有教师的提醒、启发、引导和鼓励,若没有合适的人文氛围和创作契机,这种潜能就会永远处于“冬眠”状态,无法得以发挥。

英语创造性写作教学的重要功效之一是:帮助学生运用想像,进行联想,建立主体和客体之间的生动联系,依靠形象思维超越物质世界进入精神世界,超越已知世界进入未知世界,透过现象看本质,透过事实觅真理,通过心灵体认去知己知彼,通过文学创作去赋予生活以令人信服的人文意义。

英语创造性写作教学为学生提供了继承人文传统、开采思想资源、获得灵感、进行创造的机会。人文传统的继承属于精神财富的继承,有别于物质财富的继承。人文传统是全人类共有的精神财富。我们只要用心地研究,深刻地领会,严肃地思考,积极地创造,就有可能获得人文传统的继承权,并有可能成为使这一精神财富不断增值的出色的继承人。具体地说来,文学经典的作者和读者都是有国籍的,但文学经典所反映的人文精神是没有国界的,是具有普遍意义的思想资源。在英语创造性写作的第一个实际教学环节,笔者引导学生细心研读文学经典,挖掘人文精神内涵,分析其普遍意义和现实意义,启发学生精读多思,审视相通的文心,总结文体的异同,从内容和形式两方面进行力所能及的创造性继承,为以后的试笔环节打下基础。

英语创造性写作教学为学生指明了一条继承人文传统、弘扬人文精神、上下求索、果敢创新的途径,使学生变得敏感起来——能够发现平凡事物中所蕴涵的非凡诗意,使学生变得深刻起来——能够诠释具体意象中所蕴涵的普遍真理,使学生变得振奋起来——能够在文学创作的过程中显露出青年人应有的锐气和激情。

一般地说来,各种文学艺术创作均始于对名作的模仿。英语创造性写作教学的一个重要环节就是:引导学生灵活地模仿英语名作的措辞、句式、视角或语气等,探索用英语表达自己的思想感情的种种可能性。模仿练习应是创造性的模仿。它决不是机械刻板的——它能够帮助学生激活思维,选取某个

合适的切入点,着手下笔进行实际的语言操练,在试笔实践中不断地展现自己的创意。

英语创造性写作教学属于人文素质教育的范畴,像其他的人文学科的教学一样,处处显现出人文语言的隐喻性。英语创造性写作教学正是要帮助学生找到人文感觉,进而运用自己创造出的个性化的新比喻对这种人文感觉加以文学性的表述。比喻的种类很多,其中最常见的是明喻和隐喻,相对而言,便于掌握。笔者指导学生认真琢磨词语的引申义,从对字面意思的关注过渡到对比喻和意象的关注,灵活运用包括明喻和隐喻在内的多种修辞手段来塑造意象,争取推陈出新,准确地表述个人的人文情怀和蕴涵于生活中的人文意义。

中国学生的英语创造性写作实践及其成果清楚地表明:中国青年并非个个急功近利;英语学习并非等同于硬背死记;人文素质教育并非只是务虚;中外文化深层交流确有契机。

在全球化的文化氛围中,在人文素质教育的共时体系框架中,英语创造性写作的教学与研究有着广阔的发展空间和良好的发展前景。

隋 刚

2003年9月

于北京第二外国语学院英语系

An English Foreword

Sul Gang

Beijing Second Foreign Language University

September 2003

This guidebook is mainly based on experience. My academic experience as a Chinese professor of English includes the following——

(1) teaching English creative writing (poetry writing and fiction writing) to Chinese undergraduate and postgraduate students at Beijing Second Foreign Language University;

(2) giving lectures on the teaching and learning of English creative writing at Capital Normal University (Beijing), and at Shanghai Finance and Economics University;

(3) conducting research on the communicative function of English creative writing at the Graduate School, Drew University, USA, and at the School of English, Queen's University of Belfast, UK;

(4) writing and publishing *Surf the Sea of Poetry*, a textbook of poetry writing, through Foreign Languages Press (Beijing, 1998);

(5) revising my students' poems, and compiling and publishing *Poetry and Me——Poems Written in English by Chinese Students*

through International Cultures Publishing Company (Beijing, 2002).

To be used in an undergraduate or postgraduate English creative writing course, this guidebook contains two sections (20 units)—“Section One (10 units): Poetry Writing” and “Section Two (10 units): Fiction Writing”, which are followed by “Supplementary Readings” and “Selected Bibliography”. The basic contents that each unit includes are as follows—Learning Objectives, Reading for Writing (I): Model Works, Questions for Reading Comprehension, Reading for Writing (II): Students’ Writing Samples, Exercises of Creative Writing, and Literary Terms.

Creative writing creates. What might an English creative writing course help EFL (English as a foreign language) learners create? At its best, it might help them create an eye for beauty, a taste for verbal art, and a voice of self-expression for themselves; it might also help them create links between writers and readers, between feelings and meanings, between facts and truths; it might help them create channels of intercultural communication as well.

It is my conviction that an English business writing course, no matter how well it is taught, can never replace an English creative writing course even in a market-oriented society. The uniqueness and significance of a well-structured English creative writing course offered at a Chinese university just lies in the fact that it inspires the EFL learners to aim high, bring their creative potentialities into full play, and produce intellectual and spiritual wealth by using English as a foreign language. That is to say, it follows the general line of humanistic education, and urges the EFL learners to look at human universals and constants behind finance, marketing and the other aspects of everyday life in order to seek truths from facts; it represents

possibilities in the systematic integration of the EFL learners' reading practice with their writing practice, and contributes to the improvement of their thinking strategies and learning skills; it enhances the overall quality of the EFL learners' self-expression in English, and opens up broad prospects for intercultural communication.

Creative Writing and English Learning

As a global language, English is an intercultural and multifunctional medium. It is deplorable for EFL learners to be passive receivers of the knowledge of English, merely parroting its vocabulary and grammatical rules. It is desirable for them to be sensitive, imaginative and active learners who learn English wisely in the actual process of using it to create. One of the recommendable ways of learning English is to practice using it to create verbal art, to do creative writing, or in other words, to write poetry, fiction, literary nonfiction, etc.

I have been teaching English creative writing to Chinese undergraduate and postgraduate students. They are English majors and "sophisticated" EFL learners. The youngest of them is about 20 years old, and has learned English for nearly 10 years. I constantly remind them that they do have a great advantage of being bilingual, and of being potentially capable of English creative writing, though they themselves may not be aware of it. In fact, they possess in their minds the two linguistic systems of Chinese and English, which are coexistent, sometimes cooperative, and sometimes conflicting, with the words, sounds and patterns of the mother tongue indicating, balancing, modifying, supplementing and / or revitalizing its English

counterparts. Well guided, this kind of dynamic equilibrium may give rise to unique, meaningful literary creation.

By adopting an open-minded approach to the literary quintessence of the English-speaking countries, and by taking up English creative writing, my Chinese students hold the initiative of active learning, and are happy to find another working language to make use of, another rhythm to tone in with, another meaning system to refer to, and another Muse to turn to—for inspiration. In the process of writing-oriented reading, they pay much closer attention to the words on the page, their connotations and symbolic meanings; they learn about English artistic representations of the issues of personal worth, national identity, ultimate spiritual concerns, etc; they try consciously to discern some techniques and laws of English creative writing, and explore the relationships between illusion and reality, between clarity and ambiguity, between the orderliness of verbal art and the freedom of wordplay...

Many of my students are drawn to the phonetic, lexical and syntactical otherness of English, and they are enthusiastically engaged in localizing and vivifying the foreign language by using it to create typically Chinese settings, events and images. They have a great sense of achievement when they challenge themselves by putting aside their own monosyllabic Chinese language, and creating a rhythmic flow of speech in English. Both their willingness and their ability to communicate in written English are gradually developed in creative reading and writing practice, and their communicative skills of English listening and speaking are also improved by benefiting from teacher-led classroom discussions about literary classics in English as model works, and from critiques between and among peers about their own

writings.

EFL learners' creative writing practice is sure to encourage their practice of imaginative association. Using the global language of English creatively, my students heighten their awareness of interrelatedness of objects, events and people around the globe. They think and link in an imaginative way to embrace the beautiful, the virtuous and the truthful as an organic whole, and they write to sympathize, to empathize, and to love.

Creative Writing and Systematic Teaching

Ideally, for EFL learners, an English creative writing course is part of arts education through entertainment, and part of character education through enlightenment. It encourages EFL learners to be free from the drudgery of mechanical memorizing of English words, and furthermore invites them to use those foreign words playfully and meaningfully—so as to take aesthetic pleasure in giving personal artistic descriptions of life; it cultivates EFL learners' ability to think in imagery, inspires them to be visionary enough to see the moral and spiritual nature of reality, and trains them to be imaginative, creative and responsible individuals in order to fulfill some of the personality requirements of future jobs.

Taking my students' mentality and aptitude into consideration, I include the following objectives in my plan for teaching English creative writing, and endeavor to achieve them—(1) to help my students discuss the thematic and stylistic importance of the "I", and use the "I" as a center of consciousness, as a carrier of conviction, and / or as an embodiment of feeling; (2) to help my students experiment with different figures of speech to create lifelike images;

(3) to help my students gain a deeper appreciation of the natural cadence of English; (4) to help my students see how human universals and constants have been written about, how human nature can be defined metaphorically or metaphysically, and how the universal writer's mentality finds expression in creative writing; (5) to help my students examine how creative writing creates visions of human and cosmic unity (or disunity) by emphasizing (or de-emphasizing) the spiritual links between and among human individuals and natural objects; (6) to help my students make sense of different types of creative writing, and become acquainted with their cultural implications and linguistic characteristics.

I follow the general reading and writing directives as proposed in the textbook *Surf the Sea of Poetry* to suggest in class (1) that my students read poetry in English so imaginatively as to be able to relate it to their personal lives, (2) that they use the selected short classic poems as model poems for the purpose of imitation, (3) that they build up their confidence as beginners, and start to write candidly from the point of view of the "I", (4) that they write free-verse poems first, without consideration of regularity in rhyme, meter and length of lines, (5) that they learn to express ideas and feelings by using precise images, and (6) that they make sense of the contribution of meter and rhyme to the musical effect of poetry, and practice using regular metrical patterns and rhyme schemes in poetry writing, if possible.

Creative Writing and Self-expression

I consider model works to be some of the primary sources of inspiration for EFL learners, and I regard imitation as one of the

legitimate and indispensable activities in an English creative writing course. I strongly recommend my students to read model works at the outset, and let them know what the criteria of good writing are. What is more, instead of discouraging them from imitating model works, I encourage them to do writing exercises of imitation as one of the initial steps towards substantial self-expression—believing that all types of artistic creation begin with imitation.

By imitating model works in diction, sound or syntax, and by using parodies or allusions, my students think for themselves, and enjoy making their own artistic statements. Here are two examples of this kind: “Give me those six little chickens that are singing a sweet song,” (which is imitative of Walt Whitman’s alliterative line “Give me the splendid silent sun with his beams full-dazzling,”) and “Poetry is the demon with dimples,” (which is imitative of Emily Dickinson’s metaphorical line “‘Hope’ is the thing with feathers——”).

In persistent writing practice, my students have been increasingly aware that, in order to express themselves well, they first need to acquire adequate knowledge about themselves, and about the people and things they are related to; they need to rethink human relationships and natural surroundings; they need to be capable of sympathy and empathy; they need to use figures of speech to create fresh images; they need to weigh every word and pay attention to its musical effect; they need to represent individual thoughts and emotions in such a way that they become universally significant.

It is true that my students have made numerous grammatical and stylistic errors while writing, and the weaknesses as found in their writings involve unidiomatic or hackneyed expressions, awkward

rhymes and rhythms, sweeping generalizations, cheap sentimentalism, shallow didacticism, etc. Their writings are by no means flawless. It is also true that creative writing practice itself has provided them with an opportunity to learn (or take warning) from their own past demerits constantly and conscientiously so as to avoid future ones. The more poems and stories they write and revise, the better they understand grammar, style, feeling and meaning.

Towards Intercultural Communication

English creative writing and intercultural communication are two interactive processes. Creative writing is by nature communicative, and the global language of English used to generate creative writing outcomes allows intercultural communication to take place between certain individuals, on certain conditions, and in certain forms. For example, an American's poems written in English might inspire a Chinese reader; the inspired Chinese might be able to write his or her own poems in English, and get them published in this way or that so as to reach out to American readers and / or some other English-speaking readers.

As is indicated at the beginning of this foreword, I have compiled and published *Poetry and Me—Poems Written in English by Chinese Students* through International Cultures Publishing Company (Beijing, 2002). That collection of about 150 poems does draw the attention of my foreign colleagues—professors of English in the USA, the UK, Finland, etc.

There are many possibilities. It is possible that there will be more course offerings of English creative writing at Chinese universities; it is possible that Chinese EFL learners' creative writings in English will

have a wider audience at home in China; it is possible that some web-pages will be designed for direct intercultural communication conducted between Chinese EFL learners and native speakers of English, through online creative writing workshops, discussions, publications, readings and performances; it is possible that Chinese EFL learners, while creating their own verbal art in English, will broaden their poetic outlook to create a greater spiritual haven for kindred souls elsewhere in the world as well as for themselves.