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Preface books

# 莎士比亚喜剧导读



A Preface to  
*Shakespeare's  
Comedies*

[英] Michael Mangan 著



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## 总 序

1970年英国朗文出版集团 Pearson 教育出版社出版了《华兹华斯导读》，作者是华兹华斯研究专家约翰·珀金斯。该书首先提供华兹华斯的基本信息，介绍诗人的教育背景、哲学和宗教思想，特别强调了他与英国当时经济发展的关系，随后对华兹华斯各个时期代表作品进行深入细致的解读，分析其诗歌创作的成就及其特点，最后提供相关资料，如华兹华斯圈子内的人、阅读书目等信息。《华兹华斯导读》是一部学习和研究华兹华斯诗歌极为有用的参考书，深受学生、教师和研究工作者欢迎。时隔多年，Pearson 教育出版社又推出《华兹华斯导读》修订版，原作者对该书内容作了调整，并增加对自传体长诗《序曲》的论述。《华兹华斯导读》是 Pearson 教育出版社出版的“英国文学名家导读丛书”第一册，入选该丛书的其他名家有莎士比亚、弥尔顿、邓恩、斯威夫特、蒲柏、约翰逊、雪莱、济慈、奥斯丁、狄更斯、勃朗特姐妹、霍普金斯、王尔德、哈代、康拉德、H. G. 威尔斯、E. M. 福斯特、欧文、劳伦斯、庞德、T. S. 艾略特、乔伊斯、奥威尔、格林等，在时间上涵盖文艺复兴、新古典主义、浪漫主义、现实主义、现代主义及战后等不同历史阶段，在文体上包括小说、诗歌、戏剧等文学样式。

“英国文学名家导读丛书”作为一套“学术与研究丛书”，旨在向英国名家作品的读者提供“现代和权威的导引”，帮助他们克服在阅读时遇到的特有的困难，达到“智性理解和艺术欣赏”之目的。一如《华兹华斯导读》，该丛书各册的结构一般分为三个部分，第一部分是关于作家的生平经历，所处的历史时代背景，所受到的文学、文化、宗教、哲学思潮的影响。第二部分是评论研究，以文本分析为主，涉及作家的代表性作品、创作思想、艺术手法，同时展示各种研究视角。第三部分是参考信息，包括对作家有重要影响或与作家关系密切的人物的简介、较为完备的研究书目等内容。

“英国文学名家导读丛书”各册的作者均为学有所成的专家学者，他们学术研究功底深厚，对英语文学文化传统以及当代西方文学理论有深入了解，注意将作家及其作品置于历史和社会文化背景之下，对文本进行深度解读，论证充分，剖析精辟，有不少独到的见解，形成了鲜明特色。例如，《莎士比亚喜剧导读》从研究笑的社会功能入手，分析莎剧中的幽默和丑角，将伊丽莎白时代观众对喜剧的期待与二十世纪读者对莎士比亚喜剧的接受进行区别。《莎士比亚悲剧导读》研究莎士比亚四大悲剧，对莎士比亚的语言有精当的论述。《弥尔顿导读》精选诗人不同时期的诗篇进行细读，有效帮助现代读者理解弥尔顿作品中所包含的清教主义思想以及他的诗歌艺术。《奥斯丁导读》对奥斯丁与十八世纪文学的关系进行梳理，详尽分析了她的人物塑造和小说结构，并专门讨论《爱玛》中的两位男性人物。《王尔德导读》按照王尔德的创作轨迹评析他的诗歌、小说、社会喜剧和自传，试图解开他经久不衰的魅力之谜，对王尔德的性倾向问题也有专门论述。《哈代导读》展示了哈代在小说中描写悲剧情感和普遍人性时所表现出来的深度和力度，并有专门章节讨论他的短篇小说和诗歌创作成就。《康拉德导读》揭示了康拉德复杂的欧洲文化思想背景，关于《诺斯特罗摩》的解读成为全书的亮点。《劳伦斯导读》将劳伦斯的生平经历、时代背景与文学创作结合起来考察，对《儿子与情人》和《虹》的评析清晰明了，令人信服。《庞德导读》以较多的篇幅介绍庞德这位有争议的诗人的生活 and 文学、文化、政治背景，对其鸿篇巨制《诗章》内容的复杂性以及诗人在二十世纪诗歌中的地位进行较为客观中肯的评析论述。《艾略特导读》强调了历史文化传统在艾略特生活和文学创作中的重要性，对他的代表作品诗歌《荒原》、《四个四重奏》和诗剧《大教堂谋杀案》作了现代阐释。《乔伊斯导读》分析了乔伊斯作品中的爱尔兰文学意识和现代主义特征，对《一个青年艺术家的画像》、《尤利西斯》和《芬尼根的苏醒》文本的分析解读起到了解惑释疑的功能，是学习乔伊斯小说的良师益友。

“英国文学名家导读丛书”各册均由相关领域的专家学者一人独撰，这保证了书中内容结构的系统性和连贯性。该丛书注重学术严谨性，考证细致，阐释得当，同时，论述力求深入浅出，体现导读的特点，既有综合介绍，又有重点分析，可读性强。丛书的作者把作家的文本适当地穿引在评述之中，从而使得论证有理有据，没有脱离文本。书中采用各种研究视角，对一般读者具有启迪作用。作为教学与研究参考书，该丛书的资料不仅丰富全面，而且准确可靠。参考文献汇总了该领域的研究成果，很有针

对性,是查询相关材料的好助手。分类索引便于读者快捷地了解到所需信息在书中的位置。另外,书中附有珍贵的人物照片、历史地图、插图等,图文并茂成为该丛书的一个特点。

Pearson 教育出版社在上世纪七十年代推出“英国文学名家导读丛书”后,受到读者好评。为使该丛书及时反映学术研究最新进展,扩大其规模 and 影响,Pearson 教育出版社对已出版的导读进行修订再版,并继续出版新的导读。长期以来,我国高校英语文学教学与研究原版书刊匮乏,学生写论文时收集资料成为一大难题,教师和研究人员开展学术研究也受资料不足的制约,影响了研究工作的质量和水平。北京大学出版社决定引进 Pearson 教育出版社的“英国文学名家导读丛书”,将有助于改变这种状况。惠普尔说:“书籍是屹立在时间的汪洋上的灯塔。”对于在英国文学海洋中畅游的众多学子来说,该丛书如同灯塔一样,可以起到指引作用。

“英国文学名家导读丛书”在中国出版,将促进我们国家的英国文学教学和研究工作。

王守仁

南京大学外国语学院教授

2005 年 1 月



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## Prefatory note and acknowledgements

The text referred to throughout is William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, general editors Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986). I have used the modernized version of the Shakespeare texts, and have modernized non-Shakespearean quotations myself. References to Shakespeare plays are in the body of the text; all other references are contained in endnotes.

I would like to thank the following, all of whom have contributed to this book, whether they knew it at the time or not, by being generous with their own time and knowledge; by offering suggestions or criticisms; by lending or giving me manuscripts or copies of articles; by providing opportunities for trying out ideas: Mark Brickman, Roland Clare, Oliver Double, Frances Gray, Michael Hattaway, Elaine Hobby, Maurice Hussey, John Idris Jones, Ted Leinwand, Bryan Loughrey, Sandy Lyle, Avril and Arthur Meakins, Sherry, Marc Vyvyan-Jones, Mick Wallace. John Purkis was an ideal editor, and colleagues and library staff at the University of Sheffield and at Loughborough University of Technology provided a pleasant working environment. Particular thanks are due to the drama students who worked with me on the Loughborough Shakespeare Conference, and to the cast and crew of the open-air productions at St Dogmael's Abbey. Thanks above all to Zara and Rachael Mangan, for their loving and good-humoured support.

A Preface to

*Shakespeare's  
Comedies*



**For Zara**

莎士比亚喜剧导读·

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'A description of what the *Preface Books* were intended to be was included in the first volume and has appeared unchanged at the front of every succeeding title: "A series of scholarly and critical studies of major writers intended for those needing modern and authoritative guidance through the characteristic difficulties of their work to reach an intelligent understanding and enjoyment of it." This may seem modest enough but a moment's reflection will reveal what a considerable claim it actually is. It is much to the credit of Longman and to their (founding) editor Maurice Hussey and his authors that these words have come to seem no more than a plain statement of fact.'

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## Prologue: Shakespeare's England – an overview

This volume is a sequel to another in the same series, *A Preface to Shakespeare's Tragedies* (London: Longman, 1991). As such it suffers from a common dilemma of sequels: how much to repeat from the previous book?

I have tried to repeat as little as possible, but inevitably there is some overlap – largely concerning factual information. The reference section at the end of the book has been revised, brought up-to-date, and re-focused so as to concentrate on matters more directly concerned with the comedies; nonetheless some of the bibliographical information, and the information about theatres and contemporaries, appeared first in the earlier volume, as did one or two of the details about theatre audiences in Chapter 3. Apart from this, I have tended to avoid any direct repetition of material which I have already covered in the *Tragedies* book. This means, inevitably, that some potentially relevant material has been excluded from this volume. Chapters which dealt broadly with religious and philosophical developments, Elizabethan and Jacobean society, the development of the language, the printing of the plays, and playhouse practice have as much to do with comedy as they do with tragedy, and part of the brief of the *Preface* series has been to look at texts within their historical contexts. What now follows in the rest of this prologue, therefore, is a summary of many of the main ideas which are discussed at greater length in the early chapters of the *Tragedies* book. I include it because many of the arguments which were elaborated in that volume are implicit in this. In particular this book, like its predecessor, takes the view that Shakespeare wrote about a society quite different from our own, that we cannot always assume a continuity of meanings between his world and ours, and that apparent similarities often mask a gulf between the lived experience of these worlds. It also assumes that we cannot – and should not – ignore the cultural factors which condition our own responses to these texts. To read, see, stage or perform a Shakespeare play is thus to engage in a confrontation between past and present meanings, between the historical moment in which the text is produced and that in which it is received.

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*Elizabethan society, Elizabethan English*

That first historical moment, the moment of production, came at a time of social and philosophical turmoil. Between the time of the English Reformation in 1534 and the death of Elizabeth I in 1603, social and political patterns were changing rapidly, and the ways in which people made sense of their existence were changing accordingly. In the complex of religious and political developments which followed the Reformation, questions of religious dogma became intertwined with questions of national sovereignty and independence from European domination which have an uncanny air of familiarity about them today. England was rethinking its own national identity, having broken away from Rome, one of the traditional sources of authority. As a result, questions of the relationship between the individual subject and state authority were of prime importance in the sphere of political and social theory.

Correspondingly, in the field of scientific inquiry, a new way of thinking was developing. It was a way which owed much to the predominantly sceptical strain of Protestant thought, and it encouraged the scientist to start from his or her own observation of empirical data rather than from the axioms of traditional authority. It is what we now think of as 'the scientific method': truth is discovered by starting from observable facts, and progressing from them towards more general principles which try to account for these facts. It is a habit of thought which is now deeply ingrained in European thinking, so deeply that we may think of it as 'natural'. And yet, as late as 1620, the philosopher Francis Bacon was complaining that such an 'inductive' way of thinking had hardly even been tried, and that philosophers, scientists and others still clung to the converse habit: of starting with general assumptions about the universe, and then trying to trim all available facts to fit those assumptions. Bacon believed that the shift from that old way of thinking to the new would prove revolutionary – and he was right. The new philosophy would throw many things in doubt during the course of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries: the fields of theology and politics would be affected just as much as that of scientific enquiry.

Many of those changes would have seemed unimaginable when Queen Elizabeth I came to the throne in 1558. The task which faced her then, and which continued to face her for most of the second half of the sixteenth century, was that of ensuring the survival of an infant state which seemed ready to collapse at any moment into political and economic chaos. By the end of

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her reign she had, in many ways, succeeded in this task and had presided over England's development into a strong nation state, one of the Old World's foremost mercantile and military powers. Domestically there were still many social and political problems: inflation, homelessness, poverty and constitutional crises continued to ensure that the ship of state ploughed through choppy waters. Nonetheless, Elizabeth – partly by ruthless exploitation of her own image as a figurehead – had effectively done the job she set out to do. Although the 1590s saw a growing sense of staleness and desire for change, Elizabeth's reign had substantially changed England's sense of its own national identity, and in doing so had also changed the political map of Europe.

The changes which occurred on the national and international level had their effects on a more local scale. Tudor theories of society had always depended on a strong sense of rank, order and degree: most of the images which preachers, social and political pamphleteers, and lawmakers put forward to describe the workings of society were hierarchical, and much energy went into suggesting that this hierarchical picture of society – what some commentators have called the 'great chain of being' – was the natural order of things, divinely ordained, and part of the structure of Nature itself. Yet this hierarchical model was under stress. In the early years of the seventeenth century the new King James I began to push the model to its limits, speaking often and eloquently about the divine sanction of his monarchy. Yet the vehemence with which he had to argue with his ministers and Parliament to get them to accept this idea shows how far the notion of the 'divine right of kings' was from being universally or uncritically accepted. Similarly, the theoretical image of an unchanged and unchanging order based on essentially feudal notions of degree had to contend with a new geographical and social mobility which went hand in hand with an emerging capitalist economy. Shakespeare's own attitudes towards these changes are far from clear – or even consistent. Sometimes he seems in sympathy with an old, pre-capitalist sense of how society should be organized; at others he aligns himself with a new order which is sharply anti-feudal. He himself, certainly, was a beneficiary of the new trends in society. The London stage was an epitome of Elizabethan commercialism: it was an aggressive and competitive venture, and through this venture Shakespeare became socially upwardly mobile, rising in both wealth and social status.

The period's change went deep – as deep as the language itself. For centuries it had been assumed that Latin was the only possible language for the communication of serious matters. While an established tradition of popular literature was growing

*Prologue: Shakespeare's England – an overview*

up in English during the sixteenth century, it was not easy to dislodge the ancient languages, and especially Latin, from their positions as the languages of power. Access to the discourses of philosophy, theology, medicine and the law was limited to those who were sufficiently privileged to have been able to afford a classical education. Not surprisingly, there was a strong body of opinion amongst philosophers, lawyers and medical practitioners which insisted that English was not a proper language for these disciplines. Apart from the poverty and the immaturity of English, it was urged that Latin – which was still regarded as a living language – was a common European tongue which enabled scholars of different nations to converse with each other, that the study of classical languages would decay if English became too important, and (finally) that it was necessary to prevent the uncultivated from dabbling in matters of philosophy, law and medicine. The academic and professional classes of Elizabeth's reign understood very well the extent to which their knowledge of Latin and Greek confirmed them in their own positions of influence.

But now, as a counter-current to this, there was a new interest in the English language, an interest which sprang in part from England's changing rôle in international affairs. As England grew in importance as a mercantile power, so new linguistic opportunities and needs arose also; and as the nation came to view itself as a major player in European politics, and became increasingly concerned to establish its own autonomous identity, so the status of the English language as a respectable medium of intellectual thought gradually became accepted. This issue took on a particular urgency in the light of the intellectual changes which had followed the English Reformation earlier in the century. Since the Protestant tradition emphasized a personal relationship with God, unmediated by the hierarchical structures of priesthood, the new generation of English Protestants which emerged in the mid-sixteenth century found themselves with a growing need of literacy. Their new faith taught that salvation is to be found by reading and understanding the Bible. The existing Latin Bibles of the Catholic Church would no longer do: in order to liberate the text of God's word from the control of established authority, the first, and vital stage, was that the Bible itself be translated into the vernacular, into English. The second was that ordinary men and women should be able to read it. Hence the sudden rise in the literacy rate in mid- and late-sixteenth-century England: the village schools and grammar schools which sprang up around the country were one of the legacies of the Reformation. An intensified interest in the word went hand in hand with new forms of Christian belief.

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It was a result, too, of more practical developments. If any single invention marked the end of the medieval period in Europe and the beginning of the Renaissance, it was that of the printing press. William Caxton's introduction of this into England in 1476 (less than a century before Shakespeare's birth) marked the advent of an access to information which was newly secularized. It meant that the monopoly on knowledge was no longer held by a small number of learned clerks. Books no longer belonged solely in the cloister and abbey: they could now be found too in the houses of lay people. The manuscript book was superseded by the printed volume, which brought with it a democratic access to ideas and information which was formerly inconceivable.

Thus, during the sixteenth century, English culture became increasingly literary rather than oral in nature. By the time Shakespeare was born the change was well under way, although it was by no means fully completed. The printed word was widely available by 1600, but it was to take many more generations before the habits and assumptions of an oral culture died away completely. Moreover, not everyone was able to benefit from the new upsurge of interest in education which the sixteenth century saw; and while the literacy rate underwent a dramatic increase during the period before 1600, and the provision of educational facilities blossomed, these developments were uneven and access to them was limited. Not everyone could afford tuition fees, nor (in what was still a predominantly agricultural society) the loss of their children's labour, especially in the fields at crucial times of the year. On the whole, the main beneficiaries of the educational expansion were males from the middling and upper ranks of the social scale, and especially those who were entering the growing ranks of the merchant classes. London, the nation's capital, the richest city in the country and the centre for trade, industry and arts, had a substantially higher literacy rate than the rest of the kingdom; even so, recent scholarship estimates that not many more than a third of the adult males in Shakespeare's London could read or write. Nevertheless, this represents a substantial increase in the literacy rate over previous years, and the age of the printed book had well and truly begun.

The increase in literacy, and the rise of a reading public, brought with it changes to the language itself. As printed communication became more widespread, so the need developed for more widespread agreements about how the language should be used. Thus grammatical rules began to be formalized, prescribing the ways in which different elements of a sentence are related to each other. It is possible to discern in the sixteenth century the beginnings of the standardization of modern English grammar.