



研究生

高等院校英语语言文学专业研究生系列教材（修订版）

总主编 戴炜栋

# 英美后现代主义小说选读

Selected Readings in Postmodern British and American Fiction

胡全生 编著

*Selected Readings  
in Postmodern British  
and American Fiction*



上海外语教育出版社

外教社 SHANGHAI FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION PRESS

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# 总 序

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育规模也在不断扩大。要使研究生教育持续健康地发展，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，上海外语教育出版社于 21 世纪之初邀请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“高等院校英语语言文学专业研究生系列教材”，迄今已陆续出版了二十余种。这套系列教材集各高校之所长，优势互补，形成合力，在教材建设方面，把我国英语语言文学专业的研究生培养工作推上了一个新的台阶，规范了我国英语语言文学专业的研究生课程，为高校培养基础扎实、知识面广、富有开拓精神、符合社会需要的高质量研究生提供了条件。

该系列教材的编写结合了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，力求体现理论与应用相结合，介绍与研究相结合，史与论相结合，原创与引进相结合，全面融会贯通。每一种教材都能够反映出该研究领域的新理论、新方法和新成果。系列教材推出后不仅被作为我国英语语言文学专业研究生的主干教材，也被作为中国语言文学专业的教师与学生的参考用书。

在多年的使用过程中，全国各高校的英语语言文学专业的专家学者和教师对该系列教材提出了许多建设性的建议。近几年，英语语言文学研究也有了新的发展。为了吸纳这些建设性建议及最新的学科研究成果，进一步完善教材，我们对该系列教材进行

了修订。此次修订的主要方面有：内容上查漏补缺，进一步提升教材质量；理论上与时俱进，反映最新的学科研究成果；体例上规范统一，提高学术的严谨性；资料上充实丰富，增加教学资源；版式上全新设计，增强教材的易教性。此外，我们还对该系列教材的选题进行了拓展和延伸，在邀请国内专家学者编写原创教材的同时，精选国外原版教材引进出版。修订后的“高等院校英语语言文学专业研究生系列教材”在选题上中西合璧，覆盖了英语语言文学专业各学科的主要课程，学科方向将更齐全，更能满足我国英语语言文学专业研究生教育在学科建设方面的需求。

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，在新世纪推出的这套系列教材，必将大大推动我国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

2009年5月

# 前言

《英美后现代主义小说选读》共选有 30 位英美作家的后现代主义小说，分布于“先行者”（20 世纪 50 年代后现代主义文学先驱的作品）、“篇篇怪”（20 世纪 60-70 年代实验性非常张狂的后现代主义小说）和“什么都行”（20 世纪 70 年代后借用通俗文学包括改写的后现代主义小说）三部分。篇首有一“导论”，旨在以现代主义文学为参照系，从理论上介绍后现代主义文学的方方面面，如其界定、发生、突出的艺术特征等。之所以要以现代主义文学为参照系，乃是因为后现代主义文学虽超越现代主义文学却又源于现代主义文学，甚至有理论家认为后现代主义就是现代主义的继续。因此，要讨论什么是后现代主义文学就必然要涉及什么是现代主义文学。可以说，不讨论现代主义文学就无法讨论后现代主义文学。希冀“导论”能帮助读者在理论上认识和把握英美后现代主义小说。

“导论”之后便是分成三个部分的选读。“先行者”部分选有“垮掉的一代”、“愤怒青年”和“黑色幽默”作家的小说，他们先前被称为现代作家，但现在渐然多被视为后现代作家，这当中最具代表性的是贝克特和纳博科夫。“篇篇怪”部分选有实验性更张狂的作品，以突显后现代主义小说的实验性，而“什么都行”部分则选有所谓的“兼收并蓄”的作品，这些作品或明或暗地借用通俗文类，或混用文类，因而带有相当的通俗性。希望这两部分可以完全反映后现代主义的“双重编码”，展示“界线”如何被“跨越”、“鸿沟”如何被“填平”。需要说明的是，将哪位作家归入哪一部分是有点武断的。比如，加迪斯（Gaddis）可以算是早期的美国后现代主义小说家，然而在本《选读》中他被放在第三部分，原因是他的《木匠的哥特式房屋》具有明显的后现代哥特式小说特征。将一个作家收录于第二部分，并非意味他或她在创作中不借用通俗文类或混用文类，而收录于第三部分也不意味他或她创作中的实验性不强。实际上，第二、三部分的选录，主要还是依据所选作品的

具体情况而定，所谓“具体情况具体分析”吧。视一个作家是现代主义的还是后现代主义的，还是应依据作家的某部具体作品而定。乔伊斯的《尤利西斯》是现代主义和后现代主义参半，而《芬尼根守灵》则是百分之百的后现代主义了。

《选读》末尾附有三篇文章，即巴思的《补充文学：后现代主义小说》、菲德勒的《跨越界线，填平鸿沟》以及艾柯的《〈玫瑰之名〉后记》，以便读者聆听这些小说家和理论家是如何叙说后现代主义小说的。

《选读》的编写体例如下：1) 作家生平与创作介绍；2) 理解所选作品须通晓的文学学术语解释（共72条）；3) 选文；4) 就选文提出的思考题；5) 围绕思考题就选文作的分析。本书的“分析”颇有特色：它并非就所提问题——分开作答，而是以一篇有机的短文在分析选文的同时回答所提问题。读者读着这种小文章，对如何分析文学作品会有所领会，渐渐中当能提高自己分析作品的能力。

《选读》可作为高校英语专业高年级学生和硕士研究生的英美后现代文学课程的教学用书或参考书，也可供具有相当英语基础的英美文学爱好者作为进修读物。

编写本书时，编者参考了国内外出版的相关书籍文章，对这些作者、编者在此表示深深的感谢。《选读》虽列有100余篇部“参考文献”，但难以穷尽。有的资料是来自网上的，由于涉及面较广，未能在此一一注明，特此说明，并向所有相关人士谨表谢忱。

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，敬请大家批评指正。

胡全生

2013年7月

于交大外语楼



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# Introduction

Dear readers,  
perhaps you have not realized it,  
but your lives so far have been spent  
in a period called “postmodern.” (Berardinelli)<sup>①</sup>

The above quotation from Alfonso Berardinelli suggests that although the word “postmodern” is “well-known” to us, “has been around for many years”, and “almost always occurs unexpectedly”,<sup>②</sup> it is slippery and elusive. We are certainly in the postmodern age, yet we hardly know the strange and inexplicable phenomenon described as postmodernism. What is postmodernism? Before we answer this question, it is primary and essential for us to have some idea about modernism, for “postmodernism” is believed to presuppose that there is (or was) something known as “modernism” from which, or against which, something can be “post”.

## I. Modernism

### 1. Towards a Definition

There are many definitions of modernism, but none is universally acknowledged. Like the term “literature”, the term “modernism” (or

① Alfonso Berardinelli, “From Postmodernism to Mutation: How the Twentieth Century Draws to a Close,” *Diogenes* 47.2 (1999): 93.

② Ibid.

“Modernism”) can only be explained, discussed and analyzed. Just look at the definition given by *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*: (Modernism is)

a general term applied retrospectively to the wide range of experimental and *avant-garde* trends in literature (and other arts) of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, including Symbolism, Futurism, Expressionism, Imagism, Vorticism, Dada, and Surrealism, along with the innovations of the unaffiliated writers. Modernist literature is characterized chiefly by a rejection of 19<sup>th</sup>-century traditions and of their consensus between author and reader: the conventions of realism, for instance, were abandoned by Franz Kafka and other novelists, and by expressionist drama, while several poets rejected traditional metres in favour of free verse. Modernist writers tended to see themselves as an *avant-garde* disengaged from bourgeois values, and disturbed their readers by adopting complex and difficult new forms and styles.<sup>①</sup>

Obviously, it is mainly an explanation, not a formal definition, of modernism. A formal definition requires two basic elements: the naming of the class to which the term being defined belongs, and the presentation of its unique characteristics. But in the “definition” offered by the *Dictionary*, we simply don’t see the “class” (— “trends in literature [and other arts]”?) but only some characteristics (— “characterized”) of modernism. Indeed, there does exist a danger of making modernism too inclusive.

This danger probably comes from the fact that modernism may refer to a period and a cultural movement at once. As a period, some critics say, modernism began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and lasted until the end of World War II. Some even suggest the exact date of birth of modernism, for example, 1857 when the French poet Baudelaire published his *Les Fleurs du mal* (*Flowers of Evil*), or 1859 when Darwin published his *Origin of Species*, or 1899 when Arthur Symon published *The Symbolist Movement in France*. From these critics we see that even the birth-date of modernism is not agreed upon.

But no critics would deny that modernism is a cultural movement. As such, it includes many isms of both literature and arts, as is mentioned in the entry in the *Dictionary*.

However, since definition in the age of postmodernism tends to be arbitrary and since our concern here is only with literature, let us make modernism a name for a period that stretched from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the Second World War, in which an artistic passion for something

① Chris Baldick, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2000), 140.

new in the field of literature was pushed up, cared, cherished and esteemed.

## 2. Cultural Backgrounds of Modernism

Nothing is born out of vacuum, nor was modernism. Modernism in literature is the result of many forces acting upon literature. As Alan Friedman points out in his pioneering analysis of modern fiction, *The Turn of Novel*, published in 1966, “The roots of the change in the novel lie tangled deep in the modern experience. Causes in fields other than literature there doubtless were — a confluence of psychological, philosophical, scientific, social, economic, and political causes, analogues, and explanations”.<sup>①</sup>

### 1) New Science and Technology

Before the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the universe was thought to be a closed, finite, measurable, cause-and-effect one. But this view was challenged; the universe was regarded open, relativistic, changing, and strange. This shift in scientific thinking about the universe arose from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century when science “was growing increasingly relativistic, looking into uncertainty and chaos, assuming that reality was not objectively given but subjectively apprehended through consciousness”<sup>②</sup> and when scientists began to have “a running controversy as to whether the basic material of the universe behaved like waves or particles; a controversy for which there was no direct observation.” They began to say “that science does not ‘explain’ the workings of the universe, it merely describes what happens in given conditions”.<sup>③</sup> Of these scientists Einstein and Heisenberg are two representatives.

In his Theories of Relativity, Einstein suggested that no law or observation can be universally reliable, but depends, among other factors, on the position of the individual observers. As if to reinforce Einstein’s idea, Heisenberg announced his Uncertainty Principle in 1923. With all the rigor and logic of mathematics, the Principle stresses the incapacity of science to establish anything about the physical universe with absolute rigor, logic or certainty. Their conclusions not only interested scientists but also novelists and poets. As “the new science exploded the world, it exploded with it the novel as well”.<sup>④</sup> The recognition of epistemological limitation in knowing the

① See Randall Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction* (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), v.

② Malcolm Bradbury, *The Modern American Novel* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 31.

③ Michael Bell, “The Metaphysics of Modernism,” in Michael Levenson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism* (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2000), 11.

④ James M. Mellard, *The Exploded Form: The Modernist Novel in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980),

world brought home the recognition among scientists and novelists as well that science is a construction of the human mind before it is reflection of the world.

Together with new science came the new technology (or vice versa). "In 1893 Roentgen's X-rays had been discovered, in 1898 radium, 'that metaphysical bomb'; the automobile had become 'a nightmare at the hundred kilometers an hour'". People found themselves "living in the Gallery of Machines". These discoveries and inventions, together with the technology of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, signified that "[t]he old religious world, the world of the Virgin, was over; new powers dominated modern existence." They "affected all societies", driving "the modern world into entropy, the modern mind into chaos",<sup>①</sup> making the modern man easily think that the modern world was discontinuous with the past. Modernist writers were no exception and were under the impact of the new technology. The result of the affecting is that their works are heavily tainted with despair, alienation, loss of identity, and dehumanization of the world of materialism.

## 2) Philosophical Background

Not only Einstein's and Heisenberg's works but also Nietzsche's that left "nothing absolute in the universe" (D. H. Lawrence's words).<sup>②</sup>

Doubtlessly, Nietzsche was perhaps one of the best known and most celebrated thinkers of the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was unique in the way he stated his thought. A mad man he called himself or called by others, Nietzsche pronounced "God is dead" in *Parable of the Madman* at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By this statement Nietzsche does not mean "I do not believe in God." He just means that man must understand that life is not governed by rational principles. Life is full of cruelty, injustice, uncertainty and absurdity. There are no absolute standards of good and evil which can be demonstrated by human reason. There is only naked man living alone in the godless and absurd world. He stressed the idea that man ought to recognize the dark and mysterious world of instinct — the true life force.

Nietzsche's proclaim of the death of God could be traced to Kierkegaard, who declared "life is a dark saying." The first writer to call himself existential and generally regarded as the founder of modern existentialism, Kierkegaard reacted against the systematic absolute idealism of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel, who claimed to have worked out a total rational understanding of humanity and history. He utterly rejected the Hegelian system as an attempt to put man in the place of God,

① Malcolm Bradbury, *The Modern American Novel*, 20-21.

② See Randall Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction*, 71.



emphasized the primacy of the will and of free choice unconstrained by reason or cause, and stressed the ambiguity and absurdity of the human situation. He believed that one must choose one's own way without the aid of universal, objective standards. In him the traditional view that moral choice involves an objective judgment of right and wrong is utterly denied.

Like Kierkegaard, the 20<sup>th</sup>-century German existentialist Heidegger reacted against an attempt to put philosophy on a conclusive rationalistic basis. He argued that humanity finds itself in an incomprehensible, indifferent world. Human beings can never hope to understand why they are here; instead, each individual must choose a goal and follow it with passionate conviction, aware of the certainty of death and the ultimate meaninglessness of one's life.

The French existentialist Sartre shared the same view with Heidegger that modern life is meaningless or absurd. He declared that human beings require a rational basis for their lives but are unable to achieve one, and thus human life is a futile passion. The fundamental premise he made that "existence precedes essence" implies that we as human beings have no given essence or nature but must forge our own values and meanings in an inherently meaningless or absurd world of existence.

The impact exercised by existentialism is great not only in philosophy but also in modern literature. As a matter of fact, a number of existentialist philosophers used literary forms to convey their thought, and probably Sartre is a particular case. In novels (notably *Nausea*, 1938) and plays (e.g., *The Flies*, 1943) he presented his ideas about being and nothingness. The influence of existentialism is pervasive in modern literature. In the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian novelist Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the Underground*, in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Austrian Jewish writer Kafka's *The Trial* and *The Castle*, in the work of the French writer Albert Camus, in the plays of such British and American dramatists as Samuel Beckett and Arthur Miller, in the fiction of Iris Murdoch, John Fowles, Ralph Ellison, John Updike, Joseph Heller, and many others, we see alienated antiheroes raging against the optimistic assumptions of rationalist humanism, isolated men confronting vast, elusive, menacing bureaucracies, and the apparent absurdity and futility of life, the indifference of the universe, and the necessity of engagement in a just cause.

### 3) Psychological Background

Differently from the way Nietzsche glorified the irrational as a poet, Freud tried to recognize the irrational as a potential danger in a scientific way. His scientific method is psychoanalysis. As a doctor or psychoanalyst, Freud treated his patients in two ways. The first was free association: say whatever comes to mind. This is spontaneous and uninhibited, and sometimes the patient would indeed reveal something hidden. The second was the