



英美文学经典赏析

Selected Readings in British and American Literature

◎主 编 张 辉 李桂荣



OCSFEM 东方剑桥英语专业系列教材



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“2010年浙江省本科院校第二批省级实验教学示范中心建设项目”阶段性成果



前言

根据《英语专业教学大纲(2000年3月修订)》，21世纪的外语人才应该具备以下五个方面的特征：扎实的语言基本功，宽广的知识面，一定的专业知识，较强的能力和较好的素质。新《大纲》明确提出，应培养学生获取知识的能力、运用知识的能力、分析问题的能力、独立提出见解的能力和创新能力，学生能力的培养应贯穿于教学的全过程。基于这样的社会环境和人文背景，英语专业应致力培养具有扎实的基础、广博的人文知识和创新精神的英语人才。因此，《英美文学经典赏析》在参考国内外英美文学读本的基础上，精选了英美文学中的经典作品片段，力求丰富学生的知识，拓宽学生的视野，培养新世纪大学生的实践能力和创新精神。

《英美文学经典赏析》的编写没有采用传统文学教材以文学史为主线的框架，而是按照不同的文学体裁分为三大部分：诗歌部分(Poetry)、小说部分(Fiction)、戏剧部分(Drama)。每部分分为两个篇章：理论篇(Glossary)和赏析篇(Appreciation)。理论篇介绍了相关的文学术语，便于学生查阅解惑。赏析篇选编了英美文学中各个时代具有代表性的名家名品选段。

本教材赏析篇的每个单元一般包括作家简介、作品简介、作品片段、作品注释、思考题和阅读书目推荐。

本教材注重对学生理解能力、分析能力和鉴赏能力的培养，因此，每个单元在设有思考题之外还附有练习题，旨在让学生课后阅读原著并进一步做深度赏析。

为了便于读者了解作品情节和人物关系，小说篇和戏剧篇中每个作品选段之前附有 人物关系图，简要介绍了作品中的人物关系，为读者更好地理解原著提供了一个清晰的脉络。

由于本教材引用较多国外原文，引用段落的格式、标点及表达方式等都遵照原文。因此会出现格式不统一的现象，特在此说明。

本教材可作为高等院校英语专业和非英语专业的本科生和研究生的相关必修课或选修课教材，同时也可用作涉外工作人员、英语教师和英语爱好者的阅读材料。



《英美文学经典赏析》是“2010年浙江省本科院校第二批省级实验教学示范中心建设项目”阶段性成果。

本教材由浙江万里学院外语学院英语系张辉和李桂荣老师合作编写。在编著本书的过程中，得到了外语学院和实验教学中心领导的大力支持和帮助，在此深表谢忱。由于编者水平所限，疏漏之处实属难免，恳请学界同仁及读者不吝指正。

编 者

2014年4月

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Part I Poetry





Glossary of Poetic Terms

Terms Concerning Poetry

(1) Rhythm

Rhythm is the pattern of sounds perceived as the recurrence of stressed and unstressed sounds of poetry. In most English poetry, an underlying rhythm (commonly a sequence of four or five beats) is manifested in a metrical pattern—a sequence of measured beats and “offbeats” arranged in verse lines and governing the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables. Depending on how sounds are arranged, the rhythm of a poem may be fast or slow, choppy or smooth. Rhythm may reinforce the meanings of a poem.

(2) Meter

Meter is the pattern of measured sound-units recurring regularly in a poem. Metrical patterns are determined by the type and number of feet in a line of verse. Poetry may be composed according to one of four principal metrical systems: in quantitative meter, in syllabic meter, in accentual meter, and in accentual-syllabic meter.

(3) Rhyme

Rhyme refers to the repetition of identical or similar concluding syllables in different words, often at the ends of lines. Rhyme mainly refers to sounds rather than spelling. End rhyme is the most common form of rhyme in poetry, which means the rhyme comes at the end of the lines.

(4) Rhyme Scheme

Rhyme scheme is the pattern of end rhymes arranged in a poem or stanza. Rhyme schemes are described with small letters: the first rhyme sound is designated *a*, the second becomes *b*, the third becomes *c*, and the like. Thus the rhyme scheme of a limerick may be given the notation *aabba*. Rhyme schemes may follow a fixed pattern as in the sonnet and

several other forms, or they may be arranged freely according to the poet's requirements. The simplest rhyme schemes are those of rhyming couplets (*aabbcc*, etc.) and of the common quatrain forms (*abab*, *abcb*, *abba*), while those of ottava rima, rhyme royal, the Spenserian stanza, and the French fixed forms are far more intricate.

(5) Stanza

Stanza refers to a group of verse lines forming a section of a poem and sharing the same structure in terms of lines, meter, and usually rhyme scheme. In printed poems, stanzas are usually set off by space.



Classification of English Poetry

(1) Epic

Epic refers to a long narrative poem told in a formal, elevated style, focusing on a serious subject and celebrating the great deeds of one or more legendary heroes. The hero, who was usually protected by or even descended from gods, performed super human deeds or events to a nation or culture. Virgil's *Aeneid* (30 B.C.–20 B.C.) and Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) are called secondary or literary epics while Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (8th century B.C.) are the earlier “primary” or traditional epics. The Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf* (8th century) is a primary epic.

(2) Ballad

Ballad is traditionally a folk song or poem orally transmitted from generation to generation, telling a story usually derived from a tragic incident in local history or legend. The story is told simply, impersonally, and often with vivid dialogue. A ballad normally contains ballad stanzas. A ballad stanza is a four-line stanza, with alternating four-stress and three-stress lines, the second and fourth lines rhyming. However, some ballads are in couplet form, and some others have six-line stanzas.

(3) Couplet

A couplet refers to two consecutive lines that rhyme and have the same meter. A heroic couplet refers to a rhymed pair of iambic pentameter lines. Heroic couplet dominated English poetry in the 18th century, notably in the closed couplets of Alexander Pope.

(4) Sonnet

Sonnet refers to a lyric poem composed in 14 lines with iambic pentameter. There are two kinds of sonnet. The Italian sonnet (also called the Petrarchan sonnet) comprises an 8-line “octave” of two quatrains, rhymed *abbaabba*, followed by a 6-line “sestet” usually

rhymed *cdecde* or *cdcdcd*. The English sonnet (also called the Shakespearean sonnet) comprises three quatrains and a final couplet, rhyming *abab cdcd efef gg*.

(5) Blank Verse

Blank verse refers to unrhymed lines of iambic pentameter, as in these final lines of Tennyson's "Ulysses" (1842): One equal temper of heroic hearts / Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will / To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. Blank verse is a very flexible English verse form close to natural speech and therefore is the most common pattern found in English poetry. For instance, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Stevens have all written in blank verse.

(6) Elegy

Elegy refers to a formal mournful lyric poem lamenting the death of someone, commemorating a dead person, or reflecting seriously on a solemn subject. For instance, Tennyson's "In Memoriam" (1849) is an elegy for Arthur Hallam. But in a broader sense, an elegy may be a poem of melancholy reflecting upon life's transience and its sorrows, as in Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1751).

(7) Ode

Ode refers to a lyric poem of some length expressing noble feelings, often addressed to a person or celebrating an event. Ode is a single, unified strain of exalted lyric verse, directed to a single purpose, and dealing with one theme. The term connotes certain qualities of both manner and form. In manner, ode is an elaborate lyric, expressed in language dignified, sincere, and imaginative and intellectual in tone. In form, ode is more complicated than most of the lyric types. One representative work of this type of poem is Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" (1819).

(8) Dramatic Monologue

Dramatic Monologue refers to a type of lyric poem in which a character rather than the poet speaks to a silent audience. Such poems reveal not the poet's own thoughts but the mind of the impersonated character, whose personality is revealed unwittingly. This distinguishes a dramatic monologue from a lyric, while the implied presence of an auditor distinguishes it from a soliloquy. Major examples of this form in English are Tennyson's "Ulysses" (1842), Browning's "My Last Duchess" (1842), and T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1917).

(9) Free Verse

Free verse is a kind of poetry that has an irregular rhythm and line length and that

attempts to avoid any predetermined verse structure. It is poetry without a fixed metrical pattern, having a loosely organized rhythm. It uses the cadences of natural speech. Although free verse was first notably used in Italian opera and in the King James translation of the Bible, it was Walt Whitman who pioneered the form and made it acceptable in American poetry.





Chapter Two

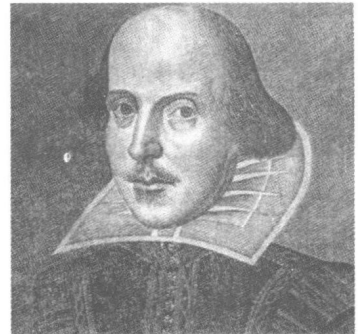
Poetry Appreciation



William Shakespeare (1564–1616): “Sonnet 18”

About the Author

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) was probably born in April, 1564. He was born into a merchant’s family at Stratford-on-Avon. Not much is known about Shakespeare’s early life except that he attended the Stratford Grammar School. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathaway who was then 26 years old. He left Stratford for London in 1586 or 1587. However, little was known about his life from 1585 to 1592. In London Shakespeare first worked as an actor and later playwright whose achievements were envied by Robert Green who resentfully declared him to be “an upstart crow”.



Shakespeare’s literary reputation mainly lies in his plays, especially in his four great tragedies: *Hamlet* (1601), *Othello* (1604), *King Lear* (1605), *Macbeth* (1605). Apart from 37 plays, Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets and two long poems, *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594). He was skilled in various poetic forms like the sonnet, the blank verse and the rhymed couplet. His sonnets were mainly divided into two groups. The first 126 poems were dedicated to a “W. H. ” and the rest poems were addressed to “a dark lady”. The following sonnet is one of the most beautiful and widely-read sonnets.

Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day^[1]?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease^[2] hath all too short a date^[3];

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven^[4] shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair^[5] sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed^[6];
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st^[7].
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

[Source: *The Norton Anthology of Poetry (fifth edition)* (2004)]

Notes

- [1] a summer's day: A summer's day in England is usually warm and pleasant. Here it may refer to the nice personality of a person.
[2] lease: a contract granting use or occupation of property during a specified time for a specified payment.
[3] date: duration of time.
[4] the eye of heaven: the sun.
[5] fair from fair: beauty from beautiful things.
[6] untrimmed: deprived of beauty.
[7] When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st: You become eternal with time for you live in this poem.

Questions for Discussion

- (1) What qualities of a summer's day does the poet compare his love to?
(2) What are the rhetorical devices employed in the poem?
(3) What is the significance of the couplet used at the end of the poem?
(4) What is the theme of the poem and what images Shakespeare employs to highlight the theme?

Exercise

Compare Shakespeare's sonnets with Petrarch's sonnets and find out the differences and similarities in the style.