

高等学校教材

英美 现代文论选



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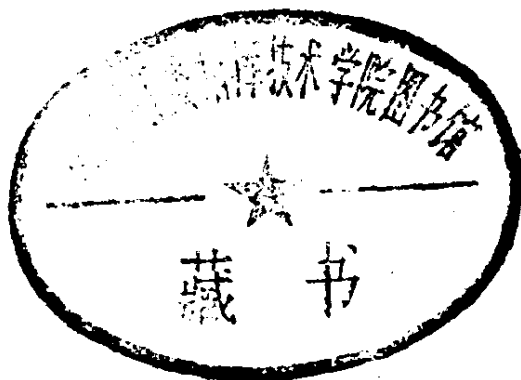
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英美现代文论选

Modern British and American Literary
Criticism: An Anthology

朱通伯 编选

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前 言

八十年代以来,随着我国对外学术交流的开展,国内学术界对
外国文论日益重视,高校英语专业的许多师生也希望多了解一些
现代英美文论的发展情况,但目前尚缺乏适当的原文教材。《英美
现代文论选》可说是在这方面的一个初步尝试,或许能起到抛砖引
玉的作用。

英美现代文论,流派繁多,内容丰富而庞杂,文字难懂,要编
写一本文论选具有相当的难度。这本教材编选了富有重要代表
性的英美现代文论名篇二十篇(全文或节选),包括了从麦休·阿
诺德到斯坦利·菲什和特里·伊格尔顿等现代英美著名批评家、
评论家共十七人。选文大体按作者的生平年代次序排列,每个选
文单元均由“简要评介”、“选文”、“脚注”和“重要参考书目”四个部
分组成。在书后附有两个附录,补充了有关欧美现代批评史、批评
流派的一些重要资料和西方现代批评术语索引,以便有兴趣的学
生和其他读者作进一步的学习与研究。

1987年12月,根据全国高校英语专业教材编审组的计划,在成
都召开了《英美现代文论选》审稿会。会议由南开大学常耀信教授
主持,厦门大学杨仁敬教授担任主审。出席审稿会的有北京大学陶
洁教授、南京师大许汝祉教授、四川外语学院蓝仁哲教授、四川大
学林必果老师和四川师大张顺赴副教授。我作为教材的编者也
参加了审稿会。与会同志对本书初稿提出了许多宝贵而中肯的意
见,谨在此致以深切的谢意。此外,在本书进行修改和定稿付印
过程中,承蒙出版社编辑同志悉心帮助与指导,并得到四川大学
外文系有关打字员和办公室的同志的大力支持,亦在此表示衷心

的感谢。由于编者能力有限，书中一定存在不少缺点和漏误，尚祈专家和广大读者不吝指正。

编 者

1989年6月于四川大学

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Matthew Arnold

1822—1888

麦休·阿诺德(Matthew Arnold)是英国维多利亚时代杰出的批评家和诗人,在西方现代文学批评史上占有非常重要的地位。他少年时受过极为良好的家庭教育,毕业于牛津大学,曾任教育部督学和牛津大学诗歌教授,先后到法国、德国、荷兰考察教育,并两次赴美国访问、讲学。阿诺德一生著述甚丰,大致说来,他的写作生涯可分为三个时期:初期以诗歌创作为主,如《杜佛海滨》(*Dover Beach*)、《菲罗美拉》(*Philomela*)、《哲塞斯》(*Thyrsis*)、《勒格比教堂》(*Rugby Chapel*)等优美抒情诗就是他这一时期发表的名篇。中期以文学批评论著为主,重要的作品有《评荷马史诗的翻译》(*On Translating Homer*, 1861)、《凯尔特文学研究》(*On the Study of Celtic Literature*, 1867)和收集在《评论一集》(*Essays in Criticism, First Series*, 1865)与《评论二集》(*Essays in Criticism, Second Series*, 1885)里的一些论文。晚期著作主要是一些关于文化、生活、宗教哲理问题的评论,其中重要的有《文化与无政府》(*Culture and Anarchy*, 1869)、《文学与教条》(*Literature and Dogma*, 1873)等。

阿诺德的《当代批评的功能》一文于1864年初次发表,后收入《评论一集》。在这篇著名的批评论文中,阿诺德旁征博引,就当时英国文论的现状、文学创作与文学批评之间的关系、文学批评的目的、标准及其社会文化功能等重要问题,进行了深入的阐述,提出了所谓“人生批评”的主张。阿诺德受实证论和泰纳社会学观点的影响较深,在他看来,批评的主要任务是保证精神、知识的自

由运用，从而广泛接触“最美好”的思想，了解人生的“真谛”，作出对人生的批评。阿诺德的所谓“人生批评”的主张，对后来的批评家如艾略特、瑞恰兹等人都产生过十分深刻的影响。

The Function of Criticism at the Present Time

Many objections have been made to a proposition which, in some remarks of mine on translating Homer, I ventured to put forth; a proposition about criticism and its importance at the present day. I said: "Of the literature of France and Germany, as of the intellect of Europe in general, the main effort, for now many years, has been a critical effort; the endeavor, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is." I added, that owing to the operation in English literature of certain causes, "almost the last thing for which one would come to English literature is just that very thing which now Europe most desires—criticism"; and that the power and value of English literature was thereby impaired. More than one rejoinder declared that the importance I here assigned to criticism was excessive, and asserted the inherent superiority of the creative effort of the human spirit over its critical effort. And the other day, having been led by a Mr. Shairp's excellent notice of Wordsworth¹

1. 指苏格兰批评家John C. Shairp (1819—1885)发表在《北不列颠评论》(1864年八月号)上的论文 *Wordsworth: The Man and The Poet*. 阿诺德曾对此作过如下评述: "I cannot help thinking that a practice,

to turn again to his biography, I found, in the words of this great man, whom I, for one, must always listen to with the profoundest respect, a sentence passed on the critic's business, which seems to justify every possible disparagement of it. Wordsworth says in one of his letters: "The writers in these publications [the reviews], while they prosecute their inglorious employment, cannot be supposed to be in a state of mind very favorable for being effected by the finer influences of a thing so pure as genuine poetry."² And a trustworthy reporter of his conversation quotes a more elaborate judgment to the same effect:

Wordsworth holds the critical power very low, infinitely lower than the inventive; and he said today that if the quantity of time consumed in writing critiques on the works of others were given to original composition, of whatever kind it might be, it would be much better employed; it would make a man find out sooner his own level, and it would do infinitely less mischief. A false or malicious criticism may

common in England during the last century, and still followed in France, of printing a notice of this kind—a notice by a competent critic—to serve as an introduction to an eminent author's works, might be revived among us with advantage. To introduce all succeeding editions of Wordsworth, Mr. Shairp's notice might, it seems to me, excellently serve; it is written from the point of view of an admirer, nay, of a disciple, and that is right; but then the disciple must be also, as in this case he is, a critic, a man of letters, not, as too often happens, some relation or friend with no qualification for his task except affection for his author."

2. Letter to Bernard Barton (1816) in Christopher Wordsworth, *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, II (1851), 51.

be much injury to the minds of others, a stupid invention, either in prose or verse, is quite harmless.³

It is almost too much to expect of poor human nature, that a man capable of producing some effect in one line of literature, should, for the greater good of society, voluntarily doom himself to impotence and obscurity in another. Still less is this to be expected from men addicted to the composition of the "false or malicious criticism" of which Wordsworth speaks. However, everybody would admit that a false or malicious criticism had better never have been written. Everybody, too, would be willing to admit, as a general proposition, that the critical faculty is lower than the inventive. But is it true that criticism is really, in itself, a baneful and injurious employment; is it true that all time given to writing critiques on the works of others would be much better employed if it were given to original composition, of whatever kind this may be? Is it true that Johnson had better have gone on producing more *Irenes* instead of writing his *Lives of the Poets*; nay, is it certain that Wordsworth himself was better employed in making his *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* than when he made his celebrated Preface, so full of criticism, and criticism of the works of others? Wordsworth was himself a great critic, and it is to be sincerely regretted that he has not left us more criticism; Goethe was one of the greatest of critics,

3. W. Knight, *Life of Wordsworth*, III (1889), 433.

and we may sincerely congratulate ourselves that he has left us so much criticism. Without wasting time over the exaggeration which Wordsworth's judgment on criticism clearly contains, or over an attempt to trace the causes—not difficult, I think, to be traced—which may have led Wordsworth to this exaggeration, a critic may with advantage seize an occasion for trying his own conscience, and for asking himself of what real service at any given moment the practice of criticism either is or may be made to his own mind and spirit, and to the minds and spirits of others.

The critical power is of lower rank than the creative. True; but in assenting to this proposition, one or two things are to be kept in mind. It is undeniable that the exercise of a creative power, that a free creative activity, is the highest function of man; it is proved to be so by man's finding in it his true happiness. But it is undeniable, also, that men may have the sense of exercising this free creative activity in other ways than in producing great works of literature or art; if it were not so, all but a very few men would be shut out from the true happiness of all men. They may have it in well-doing, they may have it in learning, they may have it even in criticizing. This is one thing to be kept in mind. Another is, that the exercise of the creative power in the production of great works of literature or art, however high this exercise of it may rank, is not, at all epochs and under all conditions possible; and that therefore labor may be vainly spent in attempting it, which

might with more fruit be used in preparing for it, in rendering it possible. This creative power works with elements, with materials; what if it has not those materials, those elements, ready for its use? In that case it must surely wait till they are ready. Now, in literature—I will limit myself to literature, for it is about literature that the question arises—the elements with which the creative power works are ideas; the best ideas on every matter which literature touches, current at the time. At any rate we may lay it down as certain that in modern literature no manifestation of the creative power not working with these can be very important or fruitful. And I say *current* at the time, not merely accessible at the time; for creative literary genius does not principally show itself in discovering new ideas, that is rather the business of the philosopher. The grand work of literary genius is a work of synthesis and exposition, not of analysis and discovery; its gift lies in the faculty of being happily inspired by a certain intellectual and spiritual atmosphere, by a certain order of ideas, when it finds itself in them; of dealing divinely with these ideas, presenting them in the most effective and attractive combinations,—making beautiful works with them, in short. But it must have the atmosphere, it must find itself amidst the order of ideas, in order to work freely; and these it is not so easy to command. This is why great creative epochs in literature are so rare, this is why there is so much that is unsatisfactory in the productions of many men of real genius; because, for the crea-

tion of a masterwork of literature two powers must concur, the power of the man and the power of the moment, and the man is not enough without the moment; the creative power has, for its happy exercise, appointed elements, and those elements are not in its own control.

Nay, they are more within the control of the critical power. It is the business of the critical power, as I said in the words already quoted, "in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is." Thus it tends, at last, to make an intellectual situation of which the creative power can profitably avail itself. It tends to establish an order of ideas, if not absolutely true, yet true by comparison with that which it displaces; to make the best ideas prevail. Presently these new ideas reach society, the touch of truth is the touch of life, and there is a stir and growth everywhere; out of this stir and growth come the creative epochs of literature.

Or, to narrow our range, and quit these considerations of the general march of genius and of society—considerations which are apt to become too abstract and impalpable—everyone can see that a poet, for instance, ought to know life and the world before dealing with them in poetry; and life and the world being in modern times very complex things, the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies a great critical effort behind it; else it must be a comparatively poor, barren, and short-lived affair. This is why Byron's poetry had

so little endurance in it, and Goethe's so much; both Byron and Goethe had a great productive power, but Goethe's was nourished by a great critical effort providing the true materials for it, and Byron's was not; Goethe knew life and the world, the poet's necessary subjects, much more comprehensively and thoroughly than Byron. He knew a great deal more of them, and he knew them much more as they really are.

It has long seemed to me that the burst of creative activity in our literature, through the first quarter of this century, had about it in fact something premature; and that from this cause its productions are doomed, most of them, in spite of the sanguine hopes which accompanied and do still accompany them to prove hardly more lasting than the productions of far less splendid epochs. And this prematurity comes from its having proceeded without having its proper data, without sufficient materials to work with. In other words, the English poetry of the first quarter of this century, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force, did not know enough. This makes Byron so empty of matter, Shelley so incoherent, Wordsworth even, profound as he is, yet so wanting in completeness and variety. Wordsworth cared little for books, and disparaged Goethe. I admire Wordsworth, as he is, so much that I cannot wish him different; and it is vain, no doubt, to imagine such a man different from what he is, to suppose that he *could* have been different. But surely the one thing wanting to make Wordsworth an even greater poet than he is—his thought

richer, and his influence of wider application—was that he should have read more books, among them, no doubt, those of that Goethe whom he disparaged without reading him.

But to speak of books and reading may easily lead to a misunderstanding here. It was not really books and reading that lacked to our poetry at this epoch; Shelley had plenty of reading. Coleridge had immense reading. Pindar and Sophocles—as we all say so glibly, and often with so little discernment of the real import of what we are saying—had not many books; Shakespeare was no deep reader. True; but in the Greece of Pindar and Sophocles, in the England of Shakespeare, the poet lived in a current of ideas in the highest degree animating and nourishing to the creative power; society was, in the fullest measure, permeated by fresh thought, intelligent and alive. And this state of things is the true basis for the creative power's exercise, in this it finds its data, its materials, truly ready for its hand; all the books and reading in the world are only valuable as they are helps to this. Even when this does not actually exist, books and reading may enable a man to construct a kind of semblance of it in his own mind, a world of knowledge and intelligence in which he may live and work. This is by no means an equivalent to the artist for the nationally diffused life and thought of the epochs of Sophocles or Shakespeare; but besides that it may be a means of preparation for such epochs, it does really constitute, if many share in it, a quickening and sustain-