

APPRECIATIONS OF WESTERN LITERATURE

西方名著欣赏

左金梅 主编



中国海洋大学出版社
CHINA OCEAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

*Appreciations of
Western Literature*

西方名著欣赏

主 编 左金梅
副 主 编 李旭奎 张德玉
 王政吉

中国海洋大学出版社
• 青 岛 •

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

西方名著欣赏/左金梅主编. —青岛:中国海洋大学出版社,2008.9(2009.01重印)

ISBN 978-7-81125-260-6

I. 西… II. 左… III. 文学欣赏—西方国家 IV. I106

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2008)第 209376 号

出版发行 中国海洋大学出版社

社 址 青岛市香港东路 23 号

邮政编码 266071

网 址 <http://www.ouc-press.com>

电子信箱 pankeju@126.com

订购电话 0532—82032573(传真)

责任编辑 潘克菊

电 话 0532—85902533

印 制 日照报业印刷有限公司

版 次 2008 年 9 月第 1 版

印 次 2009 年 1 月第 2 次印刷

成品尺寸 140 mm×203 mm

印 张 8.5

字 数 400 千字

定 价 20.00 元

前言

为满足社会主义市场经济的需要、培养复合性人才,近些年来我国高等院校陆续开设了西方文学方面的课程,我们所编著的系列文学教材《美国文学》、《英国文学》、《西方文学》、《当代西方文论》等被全国多所高校选用,深受广大师生和西方文学爱好者的欢迎。《西方名著欣赏》是本着理论联系实际的原则,根据教学的实际需要,凭借我们近几年来编写、出版教材的经验,在教学实践中不断完善的基础上编写而成的又一部力作。其特点是内容新颖,资料翔实,理论与实践相结合,趣味性、实用性强,条理分明,对文艺爱好者和英语语言文学考研生有一定的参考价值。

本书分四部分:小说、散文、诗歌、戏剧。每部分首先概述了该文学体裁的定义、包含的类别以及其构成要素,接着从不同的类别和角度精选了西方文学史上经典作者的代表作品,并对所选作者和作品做了简要介绍,作品后有对该作品的评论和供学生讨论的思考题。小说部分包括希腊神话、伊索寓言、安徒生童话、霍桑短篇小说等;散文部分有柏拉图、培根、梭罗等著名作家的哲理议论文等;诗歌部分从叙事、抒情等方面列入了从荷马史诗、莎士比亚十四行诗、英国浪漫主义的自由体颂歌到艾略特的现代主义试验体。戏剧部分包括古希腊悲剧、莎士比亚悲剧、易卜生的现实主义戏剧、贝克特荒诞派戏剧等。

书中疏误之处,恳请读者予以指正。

左金梅

Contents

Part One Fiction	(1)
1 Definition and Types of Fiction	(3)
2 Elements of Fiction	(7)
3 Greek Mythology	(12)
(1) The Creation of Man by Prometheus	(13)
(2) The Wanderings of Dionysus	(14)
(3) Apollo and Hyacinthus	(16)
(4) Heracles' Eleventh Labor: The Apples of the Hesperides	(17)
4 Fables	(20)
(1) The Tortoise and the Eagle	(20)
(2) The Father and His Sons	(21)
(3) The Miser	(21)
(4) A Fable	(22)
5 Fairy Tales	(26)
(1) The Husband Who Was to Mind the House	(26)
(2) The Naughty Boy	(28)
(3) Puss in Boots	(31)
(4) The Twelve Brothers	(35)
(5) The Three Little Men in the Wood	(40)
(6) The Queen Bee	(46)
6 Short Stories	(49)



(1) The Storm	(49)
(2) A Dill Pickle	(58)
(3) The Black Cat	(66)
(4) Young Goodman Brown	(78)

Part Two the Essay (95)

1 Definition of the Essay	(97)
2 Types of Essays	(99)
3 Elements of Essays	(101)
4 The Symposium	(103)
5 Of Revenge	(109)
6 The Battle of the Ants	(112)
7 Living like Weasels	(117)
8 A Modest Proposal	(123)

Part Three Poetry (133)

1 Definition of Poetry	(135)
2 Types of Poetry	(136)
3 Elements of Poetry	(138)
4 The Iliad	(153)
5 Metamorphoses	(159)
6 When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes	(166)
7 On His Blindness	(169)
8 A Hymn to God the Father	(171)
9 Ode to a Nightingale	(173)



10	A Poison Tree	(180)
11	Ulysses	(184)
12	Journey of the Magi	(188)
13	Birches	(191)
14	Aunt Jennifer's Tigers	(194)
Part Four Drama		(197)
1	Definition of Drama	(199)
2	Types of Drama	(200)
3	Elements of Drama	(202)
4	Oedipus the King	(205)
5	Othello	(213)
6	A Doll's House	(231)
7	Krapp's Last Tape	(251)

Part One Fiction

1

Definition and Types of Fiction

Fiction (from Latin meaning "to form, create") is the genre of imaginative prose literature, including novels and short stories. More generally, fiction is written and oral imaginative literature, including the early forms of myths, legends, parables, fables, and fairy tales.

Myth is the earliest and most basic form of fiction. Present-day anthropologists and folklorists have variously defined myth as: a narrative associated with a rite or ritual, usually untrue historically; a story about the gods and their actions, a religious tale from prehistory that deals with the creating and ordering of the universe and the problems that continue to confront mankind. Like Bible stories, myths are often entertaining, morally instructive, and inspirational. The Son of God, Jesus, turned water into wine, the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses, understood the speech of a burning bush, and Hercules, son of a mortal woman and the god Zeus, strangled snakes with his bare hands when he was new-born are in the category of myth.

A legend is a narrative of human actions that are perceived both by tellers and listeners to take place within human history and to possess certain qualities that give the tale verisimilitude, that is, legends are semi-historical accounts connected with historical per-



sons. Some famous legends are Atlantis, King Arthur, and the Knights of the Round Table, Robin Hood, Roland, Odysseus, and Shangri-La.

A **fable** is a brief allegorical narrative illustrating a moral thesis or satirizing human beings. The characters of a fable are usually animals who talk and act like people while retaining their animal traits. The oldest known fables are those in the Panchatantra, a collection of fables in Sanskrit, and those attributed to the Greek Aesop. Other important writers of fables include Jean de La Fontaine, the Russian poet Ivan Krylov, and the German dramatist and critic Gotthold Lessing.

In England the tradition of the fable was continued in the 17th and 18th century by John Dryden and John Gay. The use of the fable in the 20th century could be seen in James Thurber's *Fables for Our Time* (1940) and in George Orwell's political allegory, *Animal Farm* (1945). The American poet Marianne Moore wrote poems quite similar to fables in their using of animals and animal traits to comment on human experience; she also published an excellent translation of *The Fables of La Fontaine* (1954).

A **parable** is a brief, succinct story that teaches a lesson, often of a religious or spiritual nature. It differs from a fable in excluding animals, plants, inanimate objects, and forces of nature as actors that assume speech and other powers of humankind. The moral of the fable is stated explicitly; whereas the moral of the parable is implied. Examples of parable are Jesus of Nazareth's *Parable of the Prodigal Son* and Ignacy Krasicki's *The Blind Man and the Lame*.

A **fairy tale** is a simple narrative typically of folk origin dealing with supernatural beings. Fairy tales may be written or told for the amusement of children or may have a more sophisticated narrative containing supernatural or obviously improbable events, scenes, and personages and often having a whimsical, satirical, or moralis-



tic character. The term embraces popular folktales such as "Cinderella" and "Puss in Boots," as well as art fairy tales of later invention, such as those by Hans Christian Andersen. It is often difficult to distinguish between tales of literary and oral origins, because folktales have received literary treatment from early times, and literary tales can often be traced back to oral tradition.

A short story, a work of at least 2,000 words but under 7,500 words, is a form of short fictional narrative prose. Short stories tend to be more concise and to the point than longer works of fiction, such as novellas and novels. Because of their brevity, successful short stories rely on literary devices such as character, plot, theme, language, and insight to a greater extent than long form fiction.

A novelette (or novelet) is a piece of short prose fiction. The distinction between a novelette and other literary forms, like a novella, is usually based upon word count. The *Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America Nebula* defines the novelette as having a word count between 7,500 and 17,500, or 45 to 85 pages, in length.

A novella is a narrative work of prose fiction longer than a short story but shorter than a novel. While there is some disagreement of what length defines a novella, the *Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America Nebula* defines the novella as having a word count between 17,500 and 40,000, or 60 to 130 pages. Famous examples of novellas are Franz Kafka's, particularly *The Metamorphosis* and *In the Penal Colony*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, Philip Roth's *Goodbye, Columbus* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

A novel is an extended narrative, typically in prose. Until the eighteenth century, the word referred specifically to short fictions of love and intrigue. During the 18th century the novel adopted fea-



tures of the old romance and became one of the major literary genres. It is today defined mostly by its ability to become the object of literary criticism demanding artistic merit and a specific literary style.

2

Elements of Fiction

A fiction writer uses character, setting, plot, point of view, theme, and various kinds of symbols and languages to create artistic effects in fiction. These aspects of fiction are known as the formal elements. An understanding of the formal elements will enhance the reader's appreciation of any piece of fiction, as well as his or her ability to share perceptions with others. For example, the concept of setting helps a reader of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Young Goodman Brown* to recognize and discuss the significance of the "deep dusk of the forest" and the "uncertain light" encountered by Brown as he begins his dreamlike encounter with the devil.

Plot is the arrangement of events that make up the story. Typical fictional plots begin with an *exposition* that provides background information of the main characters and setting and then develop a series of *complications* or intensifications of the conflict that lead one or more characters to a crisis or moment of great tension. The conflict may reach a *climax* or turning point, a moment of greatest tension that fixes the outcome; then the action falls off as the plot's complications are stored out and resolved (the *resolution* or *denouement*). A story's **structure** can be examined in relation to plot. If plot is the sequence of unfolding action, structure is the design of the complicated action, the shape of content that the story as a



whole possesses. Structure has a "beginning-middle-end" in which each event is linked by a "cause and effect" relationship.

Characters are the humans, animals, or fantasized beings who are created by the author to act within a story for the author's purposes. In some instances, such as in historical fiction, there may be real human beings who lived during the time period of the story. Characters in fiction can be classified as major and minor, static and dynamic. A major character, sometimes called a protagonist, is an important figure at the center of the story's action or theme. Supporting the major character are minor characters whose function is partly to illuminate the major characters. Minor characters are often static, unchanging; they remain the same from the beginning of a work to the end. Dynamic characters, on the other hand, exhibit some kind of change of attitude, purpose or behavior as the story progresses. Characterization refers to the methods used by the author to create or reveal the characters in a story. The most common methods of revealing the characters are (1) by what the character says or thinks; (2) by what the character does; and (3) by what other characters say about the character.

Setting is the times and places in which the events of the story occur. Most stories have multiple settings which have been created by the author to tell the story. In identifying the setting, one may start by naming the town and year in which the story takes place (if these are identified by the author), and then by identifying the more specific locations of the story where the action takes place, such as specific rooms in a central character's home, a school classroom, a local store, a barn, a woods, a city street, an imaginary planet, etc.

Theme is the meaning or concept we are left with after reading a piece of fiction. Theme is an answer to the question, "What did you learn from this?" To identify the theme, one must look at the other



elements of fiction (plot, characters, setting, conflict, etc.) to explain how the author has tied all of these together. In this sense, theme is the central unifying element of the story which ties together all of the other elements of fiction used by the author to tell the story. It would be difficult to read Kate Chopin's *The Story of an Hour* without understanding that the institution of 19th-century marriage robbed Mrs. Mallard of her freedom and identity.

Point of view in fiction refers to the source and scope of the narrative voice. In the first-person point of view, usually identifiable by the use of the pronoun "I," a character in the story does the narration. Third-person point of view occurs when the narrator does not take part in the story. There are three types of third-person point of view. In third-person omniscient, the narrative voice can render information from anywhere, including the thoughts and feelings of any of the characters. This all-knowing perspective allows the narrator to roam freely in the story's setting and even beyond. In third-person limited, sometimes called third-person sympathetic, the narrative voice can relate what is in the minds of only a select few characters. In third-person objective, the narrator renders explicit, observable details and does not have access to the internal thoughts of characters or background information about the setting or situation. A character's thoughts, for example, are inferred only by what is expressed openly, in actions or in words. While the second-person point of view exists, it is not used very often because making the reader part of the story can be awkward.

Style in fiction refers to the language conventions used to construct the story. A fiction writer can manipulate diction, sentence structure, phrasing, dialogue, and other aspects of language to create style. Thus a story's style could be described as richly detailed, flowing, and barely controlled, as in the case of Jamaica Kincaid's "Girl," or sparing and minimalist, as in the early works of Raymond



Carver, to reflect the simple sentence structures and low range of vocabulary. The communicative effect created by the author's style can be referred to as the story's voice. To identify a story's voice, ask yourself, "What kind of person does the narrator sound like?" A story's voice may be serious and straightforward, rambunctiously comic, or dramatically tense. A story's style and voice contribute to its *tone*. Tone refers to the attitude that the story creates toward its subject matter. For example, a story may convey an earnest and sincere tone toward its characters and events, signaling to the readers that the material is to be taken in a serious, dramatic way. On the other hand, an attitude of humor or sarcasm may be created through subtle language and content manipulation. In the last line of Chopin's *The Story of an Hour*, for example, an ironic spin emerges when we learn that "the doctors said she died of heart disease, of joy that kills."

Symbols are often objects, like a toy windmill or a rose, or they may be parts of a landscape, like a river. While a normal image is generally used once, to complete a scene or passage, a symbol is often referred to repeatedly and carries meanings essential to the story. Some symbols are universal, like water for cleansing, but others are more culturally based. In some African societies, for example, a black cat is seen as good luck. Fiction writers use preexisting cultural associations as well as meanings drawn from the context of the story to create multiple levels of meaning. Faith's pink ribbons in *Young Goodman Brown* carry cultural connotations of innocence and purity, but the fact that the wind plays with the ribbons in one key image also brings to mind temptation, alluring chaos, the struggle with natural forces. Red is also a significant color in the story's final temptation scene, with its basin of "water, reddened by the lurid light? Or was it blood?" Faith's pink ribbons carry, of course, a tinge of red.