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20世纪英美文学作品

精选与导读

上册·散文篇

• 王兆润 赵永欣 主编

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British & American Literature

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总 序

近年来,对大学生的人文素养状况调查和研究结果表明,培养学生人文素养的呼声越来越高,这是高等教育不容忽视的问题。改革开放后,为顺应外向型经济的发展需要,理工科大学生的英语课程成为必修课。为了提高英语教学质量,国家成立了全国高等学校外语教学指导委员会,80年代末期开始了全国大学英语统一考试(大学英语四、六级考试,英语专业四、八级考试),这在很大程度上促进了正规化教学。但是,在重视学生英语达标的同时,也强调了应试教学效果。很多学校并没有为理工科学生开设文学选修课程,甚至英语专业中的文学阅读课程普遍存在着课程体系不系统、课时量不足、各个阶段英语教学与内容脱节的现象,并导致学生文学知识面偏窄、思辨能力偏弱等问题。在教学实施上,教师对学生阅读文学作品的引导不足,文本分析多于思想内涵理解分析,忽视了对学生文学素养的培养;学生受当今社会流行的快餐文化、急功近利的学习方式影响,也直接导致了学生忽视自身文学素养的培养与提高。因此,无论从教学内容,还是教学方法上,改革势在必行。

“人文素质”内涵分广义和狭义两种,广义上是指一个人成为合格的社会公民和发展为人才的内在精神品格,狭义上是指一个人的文化素质和精神品质。文学素养是人文素养的一个重要方面,是指一个人在文学创作、交流、传播等行为及语言、思想上的水平。文学素养作为一个名词,相对“人文素质”更具有具体性。提高文学素养包含人文知识、人文精神、人文行为的学习。因此,在进行人文素质教育的过程中,传递人类文化知识是基础。大学的文学课程承担培养学生文学素养的重任,文学素养在一定程度上可以帮助学习者通过分析、综合、比较等思维活动,把学到的知识内化为人格、气质、修养,成为内在的精神品格,从而影响其行为表现,也就是由人文知识内化成人文素养,由人文素养外化成人文形态,这是我们素质教育的终极目标。

近年来,人们对如何培养学生人文素养展开了大量讨论。早在20世纪60年代,加拿大的教育专家就对幼儿教育开展了研究,尝试“以学科内容为依托的语言教学”方法。80年代,加拿大又将这一成功经验引入大学二语/外语教学,引起了专家和研究人员的极大兴趣。他们纷纷在美、英、澳等国家试验推广,使之演变成内容依托教学法(CBI)。随后流行于美国、英国的中小学外语

语言教育将语言教学同学科内容相结合,把语言作为内容学习的媒介,把内容作为语言学习的源泉。受此影响,我国从 20 世纪 90 年代开始,许多地方逐步开展以内容为依托的教学方法的研究与实践。人们认为结合专业进行语言教学应该是大学英语基础阶段衔接专业英语阅读教学的方向。Krashen (1985) 认为,使用扩展性强的文本阅读材料,如散文、小说或短篇小说,能帮助学生了解文学作品风格,了解历史与现实、社会与人生、文化与心理,扩展自然和人文知识,学生会在不知不觉中提高文学素养。

《20 世纪英美文学作品精选与导读》是由具有多年文学课程教学经验的教师经过多年的教学实践而编写的英语阅读教材。本书的设计遵循系统化培养学习者的文学修养水平的原则。散文篇和短篇小说篇分别精选了英美国家优秀的散文和短篇小说。全书编排系统合理,作者及话题涉及面较宽,蕴含了丰富的英语语言资源和文化信息,为学习者进入高级阶段文学作品赏析做好了铺垫。本书的编写体现了编者丰富的教学积累和温馨的人文关怀,培养学习能力和塑造人格并重,语言运用和思维训练并举。应该说本书的出版为以内容为依托的英语教学改革提供了教学材料,为英语学习者尽早接触文学名著提供了资源,是阅读者欣赏名家名篇的较好读本。

史耕山

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前 言

《20 世纪英美文学作品精选与导读》的编写基于目前英语教学改革要求, 依据西方 20 世纪 80 年代兴起的语言教学 CBI (Content-Based Instruction) 理念模式, “以学科内容为依托的语言教学”将语言教学同学科内容相结合, 把语言作为内容学习的媒介, 把内容作为语言学习的源泉。英语教学不仅要提高学生的语言技能, 还要训练其思维能力, 培养其文学素养。

散文是篇幅短小、题材广泛、真实自然、情文并茂的文学体裁, 通过对现实生活中片段或场景的描述来表达作者的观点、感情, 揭示社会意义。散文作品写作风格多样, 有的幽默风趣, 有的辛辣讽刺, 有的则清新雅致, 能够激发学习者的学习兴趣。一篇语言优美、内涵深刻的散文, 不仅能够帮助学生学习、扩展与词汇、修辞等语言基本技能方面相关的知识, 更重要的是能够开启学生的心智, 启发学生积极思考, 提高文学鉴赏的水平和品位。

目前, 市场上的英美文学选读读物多是为英语专业高年级学生或英语水平较高的爱好者编写, 而适合英语专业低年级学生和非英语专业英语水平一般的学生阅读的文学作品选读不多见。本书力求让英语专业低年级和非英语专业学生尽早地接触英美优秀文学作品原作, 培养学生对散文阅读的感受力、鉴赏力、思辨力和分析能力, 为他们进入英语学习高级阶段文学作品赏析做好知识水平上的铺垫。

本书特色:

(1) 选材: 注重思想性和文学性、作品的话题多样性。与国内同类教材相比, 所选的文章尽量避免与近几年相关英美文学作品选读雷同, 使读者享受全新的作品。

(2) 难易程度: 作品的选取充分考虑学生的语言接受能力和鉴赏水平, 无论是语言的表达方式还是所关注的社会话题, 都更容易引起读者的共鸣; 帮助学生在理解作品语言层面的基础上, 揣摩体会作品中所蕴含的人文思想和精神。

(3) 内容编排: 本书按照话题顺序排序; 对作品中涉及的文化背景现象做了一些标注, 力求帮助读者理解作品的语言, 促进他们对作品深刻内涵的思考; 原文后附有思考题, 有助于教师更加灵活地施教, 通过点拨、启发, 引导

学生创造性地解读文本;有助于课堂上实施探究式、讨论式、参与式教学方法,激发学生思考,提高学生的文学鉴赏能力,培养学生独立思考的能力以及批判性的思维意识。

(4) 读者对象:本书适合英语专业一、二年级学生及理工科专业本科生和研究生文学爱好者课程教学或课外阅读使用,是读者初步学会欣赏名家名篇的较好读本,为衔接短篇小说阅读奠定基础。

内容简介:

本书全部作品均选自20世纪作家和作品,包含20位著名作家的20篇作品,所选文章作者均为近现代文学史上有影响力的文学名家,话题涉及文化、人生、读书、自然、教育、家庭等方面。每篇文章包含:

(1) 导读:全英文的作者生平简介、作者的代表作、作者名言、所选作品的主题简介、写作特点简介,帮助学生从宏观上认识和了解作者及其作品,积累相关文学、文化背景知识。

(2) 作品。

(3) 脚注:对作品中涉及的相关文化背景做了一些脚注,帮助读者更好地理解原文。

(4) 思考题。

此外,书后有补充阅读文章,附录为修辞术语介绍。

本书在编写过程中参考并借鉴了国内外学界同仁的研究成果,参考了维基网的信息资料,在此表示深深谢意。感谢南开大学出版社张彤编辑的支持与帮助,其创新的策划意识促成了本书的出版。感谢英文编辑的细心审校。虽然每位编者均是一线教师,有着丰富的英美文学知识和教学经验,但书中也不免有这样或那样的不妥之处,望学界同仁和广大读者多加批评指正,使之再版更加完善。

编者:王兆润、赵永欣

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Youth

By Samuel Ullman



Nobody grows old merely by living a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul.

—Samuel Ullman

Guide to Reading

Samuel Ullman (1840-1924) was an American businessman, poet, humanitarian. Born in 1840 at Hechingen, Hohenzollern to Jewish parents, Ullman immigrated with his family to America to escape discrimination at the age of eleven. The Ullman family settled in Port Gibson, Mississippi. After briefly serving in the Confederate Army, he became a resident of Natchez, Mississippi. There, Ullman married, started a business, served as a city alderman, and was a member of the local board of education.

His poems and poetic essays cover subjects as varied as love, nature, religion, family, the hurried lifestyle of a friend, and living “young.” The message of “Youth,” its emphasis on optimism and its challenge to remain true to one’s ideals, reflects the substance of Ullman’s life. Spanning the experience of immigrant, soldier, businessman, and progressive community activist, Samuel Ullman’s story continues to provide inspiration to the world community decades after his death. When Ullman turned 80 in 1920, his family published his collected poems in a volume entitled *From the Summit of Years, Four Score*.

Youth is not a time of life; it is a state of mind; it is not a matter of rosy cheeks, red lips and supple knees; it is a matter of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions; it is the freshness of the deep springs of life.

Youth means a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease. This often exists in a man of 60 more than a boy of 20. Nobody grows old merely by a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals.

Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, fear, self-distrust bows the heart and turns the spirit back to dust.

Whether 60 or 16, there is in every human being's heart the lure of wonders, the unfailing appetite for what's next and the joy of the game of living. In the center of your heart and my heart, there is a wireless station; so long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, courage and power from man and from the infinite, so long as you are young.

When the aerials are down, and your spirit is covered with snows of cynicism and the ice of pessimism, then you've grown old, even at 20; but as long as your aerials are up, to catch waves of optimism, there's hope you may die young at 80.

(242 words)

Appreciation Questions

1. What is the theme of the essay?
2. What characteristics do you think being young is typical of?
3. What are the rhetorical devices used in the essay? Give some examples and analyze the effects created by them.
4. How to stay young in our life? And what benefits can we get from staying young?

University Days

By James Thurber

*Let us not look back in anger, nor forward in fear,
but around in awareness.*

—James Thurber



Guide to Reading

James Thurber (1894-1961) was an American author and cartoonist, best known for his contributions to *The New Yorker* magazine. He was on *The New Yorker* staff from 1927 to 1933 and remained a consistent contribution thereafter. His cartoons became some of the most popular in America. By 1952, Thurber had to give up drawing because his failing eyesight had developed into full blindness. In his works, Thurber described the comic frustrations and eccentricities of ordinary people.

“University Days” is an excerpt from his autobiography, *My Life and Hard Times*, as a series of linked stories, which tells the story of his college experience at Ohio State University in a humorous way.

I passed all the other courses that I took at my University, but I could never pass botany. This was because all botany students had to spend several hours a week in a laboratory looking through a microscope at plant cells, and I could never see through a microscope. I never once saw a cell through a microscope. This used to enrage my instructor. He would wander around the laboratory pleased with the progress all

the students were making in drawing the involved and, so I am told, interesting structure of flower cells, until he came to me. I would just be standing there. "I can't see anything," I would say. He would begin patiently enough, explaining how anybody can see through a microscope, but he would always end up in a fury; claiming that I could *too* see through a microscope but just pretended that I couldn't. "It takes away from the beauty of flowers anyway," I used to tell him. "We are not concerned with beauty in this course," he would say. "We are concerned solely with what I may call the mechanics of flowers." "Well," I'd say. "I can't see anything." "Try it just once again," he'd say, and I would put my eye to the microscope and see nothing at all, except now and again a nebulous milky substance—a phenomenon of maladjustment. You were supposed to see a vivid, restless clockwork of sharply defined plant cells. "I see what looks like a lot of milk," I would tell him. This, he claimed, was the result of my not having adjusted the microscope properly, so he would readjust it for me, or rather, for himself. And I would look again and see milk.

I finally took a deferred pass, as they called it, and waited a year and tried again. (You had to pass one of the biological sciences or you couldn't graduate.) The professor had come back from vacation brown as a berry, bright-eyed, and eager to explain cell-structure again to his classes. "Well," he said to me, cheerily, when we met in the first laboratory hour the semester, "we're going to see cells this time, aren't we?" "Yes, sir," I said. Students to the right of me and left of me and in front of me were seeing cell, what's more, they were quietly drawing pictures of them in their notebooks. Of course, I didn't see anything.

"We'll try it," the professor said to me, grimly, "with every adjustment of the microscope known to man. As God is my witness, I'll arrange this glass so that you see cells through it or I'll give up teaching. In twenty-two years of botany, I—" He cut off abruptly for he was beginning to quiver all over, like Lionel Barrymore, and he genuinely wished to hold onto his temper; his scenes with me had taken a great deal out of him.

So we tried it with every adjustment of the microscope known to man. With only one of them did I see anything but blackness or the familiar lacteal opacity, and that time I saw, to my pleasure and amazement, a variegated constellation of flecks, specks, and dots. These I hastily drew. The instructor, noting my activity, came from an adjoining desk, a smile on his lips and his eyebrows high in hope. He looked at my cell drawing. "What's that?" he demanded, with a hint of squeal in his voice.

"That's what I saw," I said. "You didn't, you didn't, you didn't!" he screamed, losing control of his temper instantly, and he bent over and squinted into the microscope. His head snapped up. "That's your eye!" he shouted. "You've fixed the lens so that it reflects! You've drawn your eye!"

Another course I didn't like, but somehow managed to pass, was economics. I went to that class straight from the botany class, which didn't help me any in understanding either subject. I used to get them mixed up. But not as mixed up as another student in my economics class who came there direct from a physics laboratory. He was a tackle on the football team, named Bolenciewicz. At that time Ohio State University had one of the best football teams in the country, and Bolenciewicz was one of its outstanding stars. In order to be eligible to play it was necessary for him to keep up in his studies, a very difficult matter, for while he was not dumber than an ox he was not any smarter. Most of his professors were lenient and helped him along. None gave him more hints, in answering questions, or asked him simpler ones than the economics professor, a thin, timid man named Bassum. One day when we were on the subject of transportation and distribution, it came Bolenciewicz's turn to answer a question, "Name one means of transportation," the professor said to him. No light came into the big tackle's eyes. "Just any means of transportation," said the professor. Bolenciewicz sat staring at him. "That is," pursued the professor, "any medium, agency, or method of going from one place to another." Bolenciewicz had the look of a man who is being led into a trap. "You may choose among steam, horse-drawn, or electrically propelled vehicles," said the instructor. "I might suggest the one which we commonly take in making long journeys across land." There was a profound silence in which everybody stirred uneasily, including Bolenciewicz and Mr. Bassum. Mr. Bassum abruptly broke this silence in an amazing manner. "Choo-choo-choo," he said, in a low voice, and turned instantly scarlet. He glanced appealingly around the room. All of us, of course, shared Mr. Bassum's desire that Bolenciewicz should stay abreast of the class in economics. For the Illinois game, one of the hardest and most important of the season, was only a week off. "Toot, toot, too-toooooot!" some student with a deep voice moaned, and we all looked encouragingly at Bolenciewicz. Somebody else gave a fine imitation of a locomotive letting off steam. Mr. Bassum himself rounded off the little show. "Ding, dong, ding, dong," he said, hopefully. Bolenciewicz was staring at the floor now, trying to think, his great brow furrowed,

his huge hands rubbing together, his face red.

"How did you come to college this year, Mr. Bolenciewicz?" asked the professor. "Chuffa chuffa, chuffa chuffa."

"M' father sent me," said the football player.

"What's on?" asked Bassum.

"I git an 'lowance," said the tackle, in a low, husky voice, obviously embarrassed.

"No, no," said Bassum, "Name a means of transportation. What did you ride here on?"

"Train," said Bolenciewicz.

"Quite right," said the professor. "Now, Mr. Nugent, will you tell us—"

If I went through anguish in botany and economics—for different reasons—gymnasium work was even worse. I don't even like to think about it. They wouldn't let you play games or join in the exercises with your glasses on and I couldn't see with mine off. I bumped into professors, horizontal bars, agricultural students, and swinging iron rings. Not being able to see, I could take it but I couldn't dish it out. Also, in order to pass gymnasium (and you had to pass it to graduate) you had to learn to swim if you didn't know how. I didn't like the swimming instructor, and after all these years I still don't. I never swam but I passed my gym work anyway, by having another student give my gymnasium number (978) and swim across the pool in my place. He was a quiet, amiable blonde youth, number 473, and he would have seen through a microscope for me if we could have got away with it, but we couldn't get away with it. Another thing I didn't like about gymnasium work was that they made your strip the day you registered. It is impossible for me to be happy when I am stripped and being asked a lot of questions. Still, I did better than a lanky agricultural student who was cross-examined just before I was. They asked each student what college he was in—that is, whether Arts, Engineering, Commerce, or Agriculture. "What college are you in?" the instructor snapped at the youth in front of me. "Ohio State University," he said promptly.

It wasn't that agricultural student but it was another whole lot like him who decided to take up journalism, possibly on the ground that when farming went to hell he could fall back on newspaper work. He didn't realize, of course, that that would be very much like falling back full-length on a kit on carpenter's tools. Haskins didn't seem cut out for journalism, being too embarrassed to talk to anybody and

unable to use a typewriter, but the editor of the college paper assigned him to the cow barns, the sheep house, the horse pavilion, and the animal husbandry department generally. This was a genuinely big “beat,” for it took up five times as much ground and got ten times as great a legislative appropriation as the College of Liberal Arts. The agricultural student knew animals, but nevertheless his stories were dull and colorlessly written. He took all afternoon on each one of them, on account of having to hunt for each letter on the typewriter. Once in a while he had to ask somebody to help him hunt. “C” and “L”, in particular, were hard letters for him to find. His editor finally got pretty much annoyed at the farmer-journalist because his pieces were so uninteresting. “See here, Haskins,” he snapped at him one day, “why is it we never have anything hot from you on the horse pavilion? Here we have two hundred head of horses on this campus—more than any other university in the Western Conference except Purdue—and yet you never get any real low down on them. Now shoot over to the horse barns and dig up something lively.” Haskins shambled out and came back in about an hour; he said something. “Well, start it off snappily,” said the editor. “Something people will read.” Haskins set to work and in a couple of hours brought a sheet of typewritten paper to the desk; it was a two-hundred word story about some disease that had broken out among the horses. Its opening sentence was simple but arresting. It read: “Who has noticed the sores on the tops of the horses in the animal husbandry building?”

(1,743 words)

Appreciation Questions

1. What is the purpose of mentioning his unsuccessful experience in botanical and economic courses?
2. Why does Thurber use the phrase “the familiar lacteal opacity” in Paragraph 4 in an essay of fairly simple language?
3. What is the general tone of the essay? And how does the author achieve its effect?
4. What is the thesis of the essay?
5. What is your impression on the author’s university life?

How Should One Read a Book

By Virginia Woolf



Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.

—Virginia Woolf

Guide to Reading

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) was an English author, feminist, essayist, publisher, and critic. She was regarded as one of the foremost modernist literary figures of the twentieth century. During the interwar period, Woolf was a significant figure in London literary society and a member of the Bloomsbury Group. Her most famous works include the novels *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *Orlando* (1928), and the book-length essay "A Room of One's Own" (1929).

As a novelist Woolf's emphasis was on how to represent a character's consciousness instead of the plot or characterization, which she brilliantly illuminated by the stream of consciousness technique and interior monologue.

The essay "How Should One Read a Book" is from *The Second Common Reader*, which includes twenty-six essays. In the book, Woolf writes of English literature in its various forms, including the poetry of Donne; the novels of Defoe, Sterne, Meredith, and Hardy; Lord Chesterfield's letters and De Quincey's autobiography. She writes, too, about the life and art of women.

It is simple enough to say that since books have classes—fiction, biography, poetry—we should separate them and take from each what it is right that each should give us. Yet few people ask from books what books can give us. Most commonly we come to books with blurred and divided minds, asking of fiction that it shall be true, of poetry that it shall be false, of biography that it shall be flattering, of history that it shall enforce our own prejudices. If we could banish all such preconceptions when we read, that would be an admirable beginning. Do not dictate to your author; try to become him. Be his fellow-worker and accomplice. If you hang back, and reserve and criticize at first, you are preventing yourself from getting the fullest possible value from what you read, but if you open your mind as widely as possible, then signs and hints of almost imperceptible fineness, from the twist and turn of the first sentences, will bring you into the presence of a human being unlike any other. Steep yourself in this, acquaint yourself with this, and soon you will find that your author is giving you, or attempting to give you, something far more definite. The thirty-two chapters of a novel—if we consider how to read a novel first—are an attempt to make something as formed and controlled as a building: but words are more impalpable than bricks; reading is a longer and more complicated process than seeing. Perhaps the quickset way to understand the elements of what a novelist is doing is not to read, but to write; to make your own experiment with the dangers and difficulties of words. Recall, then, some event that has left a distinct impression on you—how at the corner of the street, perhaps, you passed two people talking. A tree shook; and electric light danced; tone of the talk was comic, but also tragic; a whole vision, an entire conception, seemed contained in that moment.

But when you attempt to reconstruct it in words, you will find that it breaks into a thousand conflicting impressions. Some must be subdued; others emphasized; in the process you will lose, probably, all grasp upon the emotion itself. Then turn from your blurred and littered pages to the opening pages of some great novelist—Defoe, Jane Austen, Hardy. Now you will be better able to appreciate their mastery. It is not merely that we are in the presence of a different person—Defoe^①, Jane

① Defoe: (1600-1731), was an English trader, writer, journalist, pamphleteer and spy, now most famous for his novel *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).