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A Guide to the Classics of English Literature

英语文学原著导读

陈敬玺

编著

陕西新华出版传媒集团
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Section 1
The UK & Ireland
英国与爱尔兰



A General Survey of the Literary Development

British or “English” (before 1948, Irish was also included) literature began with the Anglo-Saxon invasion of what is now England during the 5th century and has ever since undergone seven periods or stages of development:

1) Old English Period (600—1066), ending with the Norman Conquest in 1066. Remarkable achievement includes: *The Dream of the Rood* (perhaps the first real English long poem), “*Beowulf*” (a folk epic— notable for its alliteration) and *King Alfred’s* translation of Latin works and chronicles.

2) Middle English Period (1066—1476), (when “rime” or “rhyme” is introduced from France), which may be further divided into three ages (ending with William Caxton’s establishment of a printing press at Westminster): A) Anglo-Norman Age (1066—1340), major achievement of which includes *King Arthur*—metrical romances and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. B) Age of Chaucer (1340—1400), major achievement of which includes *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer, “father of English poetry and literature”. C) Fifteenth Century (1400—1476), major achievement of which includes Sir Thomas Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur*.

3) Period of the Renaissance (1476—1660), which may be further divided into three ages, (ending with the Restoration of Charles II): A) Age of Experiment (1476—1579), major achievement of which includes the poetic work of Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder & Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, Thomas Moore’s *Utopia* and Edmund Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*. B) Age of Shakespeare (1579—1616), major achievement of which includes Thomas Marlowe’s & William Shakespeare’s drama or plays, Francis Bacon’s *Essays*, the *King James’ Bible*, and Sir Philip Sidney’s poems and literary criticism. C) The Puritan Age (1616—1660), major achievement of which includes the poetic work of Ben Jonson, John Donne, George Herbert, and Robert Herrick, Andrew Marvell’s (“Metaphysical School”) poems, and John Milton’s sonnets, several longer poems & three epics, including *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* & *Samson Agonistes*.



4) Period of Neo-classicism (1660—1798), which may be further divided into three ages (ending with the publication of the Lake Poets' *Lyrical Ballads*): A) Age of Restoration (1660—1700), major achievement of which includes John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and John Dryden's *Dramatic Poesy* and dramatic work. B) Age of Pope (1700—1740), major achievement of which includes Alexander Pope's poems & *An Essay on Criticism*. This period also saw the rise and flourish of prose (*novels and essays*) with such well-known novelists and novels as Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* & *Moll Flanders*, Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal* & *Gulliver's Travels*, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* & *Clarrisa Harlowe* (an epistolary novel), Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* & *Johnathan Wilde*, Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (an experimental or "post-modern" novel), Tobias Smollet's *The Adventures of Roderick Random*, and Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*. C) Age of Johnson (1740—1798), major achievement of which includes Samuel Johnson's *The Lives of Poets* and other work, James Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (which marks the beginning of modern biography), and the "Sentimentalist poems" like Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (the "Graveyard School") as well as Oliver Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village*.

5) The Romantic Period (1798—1837), which ends with the accession of Queen Victoria, witnesses such literary achievement as: A) Poetry, in which well-known and best-loved writers are Robert Burns's lyrics (such as *My Love Is Like a Red Red Rose*) and William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* & *Songs of Experience*, the poetic work of the "Lake poets" or "Lakers" of William Wordsworth, Samuel T. Coleridge & Robert Southy, as well as Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* & *Don Juan*, Percy Bysshe Shelly's *Ode to the West Wind* and John Keats's *odes*. B) Prose work, the major achievement of which is Walter Scott's historical novels like *Waverley*, *Ivanhoe* & *The Heart of Midlothian*, and Jane Austin's family novels like *Pride & Prejudice* & *Sense & Sensibility*.

6) The Victorian Period (1837—1901), when Britain boasted a global empire where "the sun never sets" and English literature flourished in every possible aspect.

A) In essays there are Thomas Carlyle's *The French Revolution & Past and Present*, Thomas B. Macaulay's *The History of England from James II*, John Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism* & *On Women*, John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* & *The Stones of Venice*, Mathew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* & *Literature and Science*, and Thomas Henry Huxley's *Science and Culture*, etc.

B) The novels enjoy another renaissance and include such great works as Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, *Great Expectations* & *A Tale of Two Cities* etc., William



Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, *Silas Marner* & *The Mill on the Floss*, the Brontës's novels such as Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*, Emily's *Wuthering Heights* and Anne's *Agnes Gray*, Thomas Hardy's *Tess of D'Urbervilles* & *Jude the Obscure*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* & *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* & *Allan Quatermain*, and Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* & *The Way of All Flesh*.

C) In poetry there are such well-reputed poets and poems as Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, Alfred Lord Tennyson's *Ulysses* (dramatic monologue) and other poems, Robert Browning's *My Last Duchess* (dramatic monologue), William Morris' *The Earthly Paradise* & *News from Erewhon*, Dante Gabriel Rossetti & Cristina Rossetti's poems of dream, love and beauty, Thomas Hardy's *Wessex Poems* & *The Dynasts*, and Algernon Charles Swinburne's *The Garden of Proserpine* etc.

D) Dramatic masterpieces include Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Ernest* and George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *The Widower's Property*, *Major Babara*, *Pygmalion* and *The Bleak House* etc.

7) **The Twentieth Century**, which may be further divided into two ages around the end of the Second World War, i. e. modernist and post-modernist literature.

A) Before World War II or the first half of the century saw great achievement in drama, prose as well as in poetry. Great dramatic work includes John Galsworthy's *The Silver Box* trilogy, John Millington Synge's *Riders to the Sea*, and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* & *Endgame*. Major novelists and novels include Rudyard Kipling's (the first British Nobel prize winner) *Kim* & *The Jungle Book*, Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo*, *Heart of Darkness* & *The Secret Agent*, Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*, John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, Arnold Bennett's *Old Wives' Tale*, David H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* & *Lady Chatterlery's Lover*, E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* & *Howards End*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, H. G. Wells' *Tono-Boungay* & *Time Machine*, Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, *Waves* & *Mrs. Dalloway*, James Joyce's *The Dubliners*, *Ulysses* & *Finnegan's Wake*, Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies*, *Decline and Fall*, *A Handful of Dust* & *Brideshead Revisited*, Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter*, *Brighton Rock* & *The Third Man*, J. B. Priestley's *Good Companions*, Agathe Christie's detective stories like *Death on the Nile* & *Murder in the Orient Express*, Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* series, and Robert Graves' *I, Claudius* & *Count Belisarius*. Major poets and poetic works include A. E. Houseman, Rupert Brooke, Rudyard Kipling, Siegfried Sassoon, John Masefield, Dylan Thomas, Stephen Spender, and most notably W. H. Auden's *Petition*, *In Praise of Limestone* & *The Shield of Achillies*,



William Butler Yeats' *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*, *The Wild Swan at Coole*, *Sailing to Byzantium* & *The Winding Stair* etc. and T. S. Eliot's *Prufrock and Other Observations*, *The Waste Land*, *Four Quartets* & *The Hollow Men* etc.

B) After World War II or the second half and the turn of the century saw greater achievements in almost every genre of literature. Major novelists and novels in this period include George Orwell's *Animal Farm* & *Nineteen Eighty Four*, William Golding's *Lord of Flies* & *Darkness Visible*, Angus Wilson's *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* & *As If By Magic*, and "Angry Young Men" writers of Kingsley Amis' *Lucky Jim* and John Wain's short stories, together with John Fowels' *The Collector* & *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Muriel Sarah Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* & *Loitering with Intent*, Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*, *Children of the Violence* & *The Golden Notebook* and science fiction, Iris Murdoch's *Under the Net*, *The Black Prince* & *The Sea, the Sea*, Martin Amis' *Money: A Suicide Note* & *Time's Arrow*, David Lodge's *Small World* & *Changing Places*, Graham Swift's *Waterland* and Julian Barnes' *Flaubert's Parrot*, A. S. Byatt's *Possession* and Margaret Drabble's *The Ice Age*, V. S. Naipaul's *Miguel Street*, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, *A Bend in the River*, *A Way in the World* & *The Enigma of Arrival*, Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, *Shame*, *Midnight's Children* & *East, West*, Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills*, *An Artist of the Floating World*, *The Remains of the Days*, *The Unconsoled*, *When We Were Orphans* & *Never Let Me Go*, and Timothy Mo's *The Monkey King*, *Sour Sweet* & *An Insular Possession*.

Major playwrights and dramatic work include Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* & *Endgame* (Theatre of Absurdity), John Osborne's *Looking Back in Anger* (1956, a realist play), Arnold Weskers *Chicken Soup with Barley*, Harold Pinter's "comedies of menace" such as *Chandeliers and Shadows* (1950), *Room* (1957), *The Dumb Waiter* (1957), *Homecoming* (1964), *Tea Party* (1965), *Old Times* (1971), *Mountain Language* (1988), *Moonlight* (1993), *God Bless America* (2003) & *Special Relationship* (2004)—"one way of looking at Pinter's plays is to say that they are dramatic stratagems that uncover nakedness", Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1967), *The Real Inspector Hound* (1968) & *Indian Ink* (1993), and Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*'s (a musical "上帝的宠儿"). Major poets and poetic work include Hugh MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*, Robert Graves, Louis MacNeice, Edith Sitwell, Philip Larkin's *Church Song*, Ted Hughes' *The Seven Sorrows*, Seamus Heaney *Station Island* and other poems.

英国(包括1948年前的爱尔兰)文学是生活在欧洲西部不列颠群岛上的居民在漫长的历史发展进程中所创造的文化与文明之精华,也是世界文学宝库之中一颗璀璨耀



眼的明珠。迄今为止，已有 15 位英国(包括爱尔兰)作家获得了诺贝尔文学奖，他们分别是：R. Kipling (1907), W. B. Yeats (1923), G. Bernard Shaw (1925), John Galsworthy (1932), T. S. Eliot (1948), Bertrand A. W. Russell (1950), Winston Churchill (1953), Samuel Becket (1969), Elias Canetti (1981, novelist and dramatist mainly using the German language), William Golding (1983), Seamus Heaney (1995), V. S. Naipaul (2001), Harold Pinter (2005), Doris Lessing (2007) 和 Kazuo Ishiguro (2017).



William Shakespeare: *Hamlet*

莎士比亚：《哈姆莱特》

《哈姆莱特》为莎士比亚四大悲剧之一，该剧沿用丹麦王子为父复仇这一传统题材，通过独特的艺术手法塑造了哈姆莱特——一个灌注了作者人文主义理想的典型人物形象。剧情大致如下：哈姆莱特(Hamlet)之叔父克洛狄斯(Claudius)毒死哈姆莱特的父亲，篡夺王位并娶王后为妻。冤死的国王亡魂显灵，将自己遇害的经过告知王子，要求王子为父报仇。得知真相后的哈姆莱特万分震惊，陷入忧郁和苦闷之中。他一面暗中观察，通过“戏中戏”的策略证实了亡魂所言，一面又故意装疯卖傻，以防克洛狄斯对其复仇的计划有所觉察。大臣泼洛涅斯(Polonius)以为这种精神异常表现为王子与其女奥菲莉娅(Orphelia)的苦恋所致，于是建议克洛狄斯在暗处窥视二人的会面。哈姆莱特与母后谈话时发觉有人在幕后偷听，以为是国王，遂拔出佩剑将其刺死，不期误杀泼洛涅斯。克洛狄斯发现王子已得知真相，便设计把哈姆莱特送至英国国王处，以借刀杀人。哈姆莱特在途中识破阴谋，巧妙地调换了书信，然后秘密地返回丹麦。在蓄意安排的一场决斗之中，泼洛涅斯之子莱欧提斯(Laertes)与克洛狄斯被刺死，王后误饮毒酒死去，王子终于完成复仇，但也被毒剑所伤而死去。

《哈姆莱特》(*Hamlet*)为莎剧中最长的一部，仅王子的台词就有1,500多行。台词多用长段的独白来表现主人公的内心矛盾。选文1为哈姆莱特对“人”(而非神)的赞美和自己郁闷的表白，使用的是散文体；选文2为哈姆莱特著名的一段关于生与死的独白，使用的是无韵体诗行。两段选文都有助于我们了解所谓的“哈姆莱特的延宕”。



Excerpt 1

Act II, Scene II

Hamlet: ...I have of late—but wherefore I know not^①—lost all my mirth, foregone all custom^② of exercises; and indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame^③, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air^④, look you, this brave^⑤ o’erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire^⑥—why, it appeareth no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation^⑦ of vapors. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In form and moving how express and admirable!^⑧ In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals! And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me^⑨—no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

朱生豪译文：

哈姆莱特：……我近来不知为了什么缘故，一点兴致都提不起来，什么游乐的事都懒得过问；在这一种抑郁的心境之下，仿佛负载万物的大地，这一座美好的框架，只是一个不毛的荒岬；这个覆盖众生的苍穹，这一顶壮丽的帐幕，这个金黄色的火球点缀着的屋宇，只是一大堆污浊的瘴气的集合。人类是一件多么了不起的杰作！多么高贵的理性！多么伟大的力量！多么优美的仪表！多么文雅的举动！在行为上多么像一个天使！在智慧上多么像一个天神！宇宙的精华！万物的灵长！可是在我看来，这一个泥土塑成的生命算得了什么？人类不能使我发生兴趣；不，女人也不能使我发

① I do not know why it happened.

② “Mirth” means “joy, delight”, and “custom” means “kind, sort”.

③ This pretty land (seems to be now a barren headland).

④ i. e. the excellent sky.

⑤ i. e. this splendid vast sky. “Brave” means wonderful, splendid, as in “brave new world”.

⑥ i. e. this magnificent roof furnished with the burning sun.

⑦ i. e. a dirty, harmful gathering of gases.

⑧ “Faculties” refers to abilities and “express” means exact or precise.

⑨ Man does not delight me. (Women do not give me joy, either.)



生兴趣，虽然从你现在的微笑之中，我可以看到你在这么想。

Excerpt 2

Act III, Scene I (Line 64—98) ①

Hamlet: To be, or not to be, that is the question:^②
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
 And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep—
 No more; and by a sleep to say we end
 The headache and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to.^③ 'Tis a consummation^④
 Devoutly to be wished. To die—to sleep,
 To sleep—perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub!
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
 When we have shuffled off the mortal coil,^⑤
 Must give us pause. There's the respect
 That makes calamity of so long a life.
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,^⑥
 The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,^⑦
 When he himself might his quietus make

① 独白使用了 blank verse 但比规范的十音节多出一个音节，大概是想表达“迟疑”“沉思”的特殊效果。朗读时切忌人为地把轻重音读得过于分明，切忌将跨行句在行末做久的停顿，而应自然而然地连读至下一诗行。

② 此句可能暗含数种意义。卞之琳将此译为：活下去，还是不活下去，这是一个问题。梁实秋的译文为：死后是存在，还是不存在，这是个问题。

③ The human body has to bear or endure.

④ It is the final settlement.

⑤ That is, to shake off (wipe out) the earthly turmoil.

⑥ "Contumely" is used as a noun, meaning "a rude expression intended to offend or hurt".

⑦ That the patient merit (worthy people) takes of (from) the unworthy (people).



With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death—
 The undiscovered country, from whose bourn^①
 No traveler returns—puzzles the will,
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have
 Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus conscience^② does make cowards of us all,
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
 And enterprises of great pitch and moment
 With this regard^③ their currents turn awry
 And lose the name of action. —*Soft you now!*^④
The fair Ophelia! —*Nymph, in thy orisons*
Be all my sins rememb' red.

朱生豪译文：

生存还是毁灭，这是一个值得考虑的问题；
 是默然地忍受命运的暴虐的毒箭，
 或是挺身反抗人世的无涯的苦难，
 通过斗争把它们扫清，这两种行为，
 哪一种更为高贵？死了，睡着了；
 什么都完了；要是在一种睡眠之中，
 我们心头的创痛，以及其他无数血肉之躯
 所不能避免的打击，都可以从此消失，
 那正是我们求之不得的结局。死了，睡着了；
 睡着了也许还会做梦；嗯，阻碍就在这儿：
 因为我们摆脱了这一具朽腐的皮囊以后，
 在那死的睡眠里，究竟将要做些什么梦，
 那不能不使我们踌躇顾虑。人们甘心

① “Bourn” refers to the boundary. “The undiscovered country” refers to death.

② “Conscience”即“良心”“顾虑”，本为红色(ruddy)但变为“苍白”，即“儿女情长，英雄气短”也。

③ i. e. on this account, or “because of this consideration”. “Sickly” means “make sb. ill / pale”.

④ Hush! Be silent!

久困于患难之中，也就是为了这个缘故；
 谁愿意忍受人世的鞭挞和讥嘲、
 压迫者的凌辱、傲慢者的冷眼、
 被侮辱的爱情的惨痛、法律的迁延、
 官吏的横暴和费尽辛勤所换来的小人的鄙视，
 要是他只要用一柄小小的刀子，
 就可以清算他自己的一生？
 谁还愿意负着这样的重担，
 在烦劳的生命的压迫下呻吟流汗，
 倘不是因为惧怕不可知的死后，
 惧怕那有去无回的神秘之园，
 是它迷惑了我们的意志，
 使我们宁愿忍受目前的折磨，
 不敢向我们所不知道的痛苦飞去？
 这样，重重的顾虑使我们全成了懦夫，
 决心的赤热光彩，被审慎的思维盖上了一层灰色，
 伟大的事业在这一种考虑之下，
 也会逆流而退，失去行动的意义。
 且慢！美丽的奥菲利娅！——女神，
 在你的祈祷之中，不要忘记替我忏悔我的罪孽。

★ *Topics for discussion*

1. Why does Hamlet lose interest in anything even life itself though he is singing very high praise for man?
2. Why sleep is so frightening, according to Hamlet, since it can “end” the headache and the thousand natural shocks?
3. Why would people rather bear all the sufferings of the world instead of choosing death to get rid of them, according to Hamlet?
4. What, after all, makes people lose their determination to take action? Please explain in relation to the so-called *hesitation of Hamlet* .

William Shakespeare also wrote 2 long poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* , and 154 sonnets, usually numbered in order, of which over 100 are addressed to a