

Literary Tourism Project

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How has reading British literature in a British setting specifically influenced your understanding of these texts?

Reading British Literature on its own has been incredibly enlightening, but actually reading it in Britain has been completely transformative. When studying somebody else's work, especially if the text was written by an individual who lived in a time period disparate from my own, or in a language that it is challenging to understand, I find that it is often difficult refrain from distancing myself from the text. By reading these works where they originated, however, the experience has become so much more immersive. I was able to better understand and comprehend the purpose of the work, what the author was saying, and could also more completely visualize the imagery being presented, especially if the scenes pertained to nature. Overall, the opportunity to study in England has been unforgettable. These texts have altered my outlook on writing, and have forever changed my perspective of literature as a student and as a lover of language.





Chained Books in St. Wulfram's Church & Library

"Adam Lay Ibounden"

"Adam lay ibounden, / Bounden in a bond:
/ Foure thousand winter / Thought he not
too long. / And all was for an apple, / An
apple that he tok, / As clerkes finden /
Wreten in here book" (1-8).

Reflection on St. Wulfram's Church in Grantham

The medieval chained book collection within St. Wulfram's Church in Grantham was a privilege to see. In a small alcove located at the top of a narrow stone staircase, an incredible collection of valuable antique books were chained to bookcases that stood around the perimeter of the room.

The purpose of the chains were originally to protect the volumes from potential theft, or to prevent them from being loaned out to library patrons. There are a variety of genres within the collection at St. Wulfram's, ranging from histories to classical texts, but the library is largely dedicated to religious books that pertain to the church. Various versions of the Bible, in which Adam's story was first told, "Wreten in here book," are located within the collection; numerous copies can be seen to the far right of the top shelf in the photograph at the left-hand side.

The presence of these religious texts in the collection emphasizes the power and enduring significance of books like the Bible, as well as the importance of preserving them throughout time. Had a literary work like "Adam Lay Ibounden" been lost or stolen after it was written, the story never could have reached or inspired other writers and readers. Without original copies of many of these texts, stories and commentaries from individuals who lived centuries ago would have been lost, and any potential knowledge of the people, and the time period, would have tragically vanished along with them.



Meadow and River in Stamford

Milton's Paradise Lost Book VIII

"Stood on my feet; about me round I saw / Hill,
dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains, / And
liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these, /
Creatures that lived, and moved, and walked, or
flew, / Birds on the branches warbling; all things
smiled, / With fragrance and with joy my heart
o'er flowed" (260-266).

Reflection on Stamford

One of the most popular applications of imagery in British Literature concerns either the lively nature of cities, or the vast splendor of the English countryside. Upon visiting Stamford, the quaint appeal of the 17th and 18th century storybook houses, and the grandness of their medieval parish churches, were breathtaking. Apart from the city, near the center of Stamford was a large, picturesque field, complete with expansive trees, and a flowing river that ran underneath a small, scenic bridge joining two sides of the city.

In reading Milton's description of "Paradise," it is easy to imagine how many English writers found their inspiration for writing about nature, as well as the feelings that it evoked, within their country. In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the magnificence and antiquated charm of the meadow, the natural paradise of Stamford, is reflected within the description. Milton, an English poet, would have drawn inspiration from the places around him; while he may not have directly visited Stamford, it certainly exhibits the natural beauty of England.



Tattershall Castle

Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* Act 3 Scene 1

“Erected is a castle passing strong, Within those walls such stores of ordnance, And double cannons, fram'd of carved brass, As match the days within one complete year—Besides the gates and high pyramides” (36–40).

Tattershall Castle Reflection

Lord Cromwell's Tattershall Castle on a cloudy afternoon in England is magnificent; on a rare day when it is illuminated by the shining sun, its grandeur is almost unparalleled.

The castle, a massive structure made out of red brick, is an amazing historical monument built in the 15th century in Lincolnshire, England. In *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*, Christopher Marlowe mentions a castle that, while it may not be Tattershall, certainly brings it to mind. Marlowe provides an image of an ostensibly strong, fortified structure with a suggestion of refined sophistication, given his details of the “stores of ordnance,” and “fram'd carved brass.”

The turrets and double moat, which were dug in order to provide an extra layer of protection and more seclusion from enemies, give Tattershall a strong, if slightly foreboding, appearance. Within the walls, there are stunning engravings in the stone halls and mantles of the fireplaces, with elegant, decorative details in the corridors and large feature rooms. The red brick that it was constructed of was not just a fashionable and relatively new material for the time period that Tattershall was built, but it was also a rather expensive choice, giving the castle an immediate expression of wealth. Tattershall Castle, a building that is as impressive on the inside as it is on the outside, is similar to Marlowe's description: very much focused on defense, but still with an architectural elegance.

Lincolnshire Reflection

One of the most memorable moments of the British Studies trip to Lincolnshire was the visit to the Lincoln Cathedral. The exterior of the cathedral is unbelievable—a gothic architectural wonder complete with spires, turrets, and flying buttresses. The interior is just as astounding, with stained glass windows and impossibly high ceilings. While the structure of the cathedral evoked a sense of wonderment, the real highlight was Lincoln Cathedral's history, as well as its connection to British Literature.



Lincolnshire Cathedral

Geoffrey Chaucer, in *The Prioress's Tale*, wrote about a little boy who was murdered. The boy is believed to be “Little Saint Hugh,” a young Christian child who was allegedly killed by the Jewish population in the city. Young Hugh was buried in Lincoln Cathedral in a marble tomb after he died, and a shrine was constructed in his memory. While there are many underlying themes of anti-Semitism within this story, which have been disproved by scholars, Little Saint Hugh's tomb and shrine are present in Lincoln Cathedral. Seeing the marble construct as it was described in Chaucer's story, “And in a temple of marbul stones cleere,” was not only a surreal experience, but also a reminder that fictional literature often has a compelling foundation in truth.

Chaucer's *The Prioress's Tale*

And in a temple of marbul stones cleere / Enclosen they his litel body sweete. / Ther he is now, God leve us alle for to meete!” (247–249).