

*A Survey of  
British Literature*

英国文学简史

姚丽 著

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And spring's lease hath all too short a date;  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed,  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

科学技术文献出版社

# 英国文学简史

*A Survey of British Literature*

姚 丽 著

科学技术文献出版社

**图书在版编目(CIP)数据**

英国文学简史/姚丽著.-北京:科学技术文献出版社,2008.12

ISBN 978-7-5023-6184-6

I. 英… II. 姚… III. 文学史-英国 IV. I561.09

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2008)第 165984 号

- 出 版 者** 科学技术文献出版社  
**地 址** 北京市复兴路 15 号(中央电视台西侧)/100038  
**图书编务部电话** (010)51501739  
**图书发行部电话** (010)51501720,(010)51501722(传真)  
**邮 购 部 电 话** (010)51501729  
**网 址** <http://www.stdph.com>  
E-mail:stdph@istic.ac.cn
- 策 划 编 辑** 樊雅莉  
**责 任 编 辑** 樊雅莉  
**责 任 出 版** 王杰馨
- 发 行 者** 科学技术文献出版社发行 全国各地新华书店经销  
**印 刷 者** 富华印刷包装有限公司  
**版 ( 印 ) 次** 2008 年 12 月第 1 版第 1 次印刷  
**开 本** 850×1168 32 开  
**字 数** 351 千  
**印 张** 11.75  
**印 数** 1~3000 册  
**定 价** 24.00 元

© 版权所有 违法必究

购买本社图书,凡字迹不清、缺页、倒页、脱页者,本社发行部负责调换。

# 前 言

英国文学的历史源远流长，上可追溯到公元七八世纪的盎格鲁—撒克逊时期的吟游诗歌，下可追及到二十世纪末的当代文学。在它的历史长河中，大师辈出，群星璀璨，洋洋洒洒，杰作无数，英国文学是世界文学宝库中一颗耀眼的明珠。

英国文学史及选读是英语专业的必修课。虽然目前相关的书籍很多，但是大多覆盖面广，内容冗长，难度较大，无法满足二十一世纪英语专业学生的需求，因而我们编撰了《英国文学简史》一书，主要讲述英国文学从盎格鲁—撒克逊时代至二十世纪后期的文学史。本书意欲引领读者遍览英国文学宝库中的瑰宝，力图以浅易、流畅的语言向读者简洁而全面地介绍英国文学史的发展历程。

全书框架设计采用历史背景介绍、文学思潮及代表作家相结合的方式，脉络清晰，取材合理，讲述到位，二战后的部分更是填补了同类书籍这方面的空白。其突出的特点是在章节中设置了详细讨论题目，而且在书后配有文学术语解释以及重要文学作品名称英汉对照，方便查寻，有助于构思研究课题。同时，在书中还穿插了相应的文学家和名著的图片，以增强其生动性。在编撰过程中我们考虑到了读者的接受程度，力求条理清楚，语言浅显流畅，内容简约，易学易懂，不面面俱到。

本书实用性及通用性强，尤其适用于英语专业普通在校学生，同时可用于英语专业硕士研究生入学考试参考、教师授课与科研，以及其他各类考生和文学爱好者了解西方文化的需要。

在本书编撰过程中，徐凤娇、周雪、孙楠、于巍、姚焯、刘北辰、王欢、贾娜、毕世颖做了大量的工作，在此一并表示感谢。

由于作者水平有限，难免出现纰漏，敬请广大读者批评指正。

作者

2008年9月

# CONTENTS

<b>Chapter I Early Britain and Its Language</b> .....	1
<b>Section I Early Britain</b> .....	1
1. Roman Britain .....	1
2. Anglo-Saxons and the Danes .....	1
3. The Norman Conquest .....	2
<b>Section II The Origins and Development of English</b> .....	2
1. Old English (450 — 1100) .....	2
2. Middle English (1100 — 1500) .....	3
3. Modern English (1500 — present) .....	3
<b>Chapter II English Literature of the Anglo-Saxon Period</b> .....	5
<b>Section I Historical Background</b> .....	5
<b>Section II Literary Trends</b> .....	6
1. Poetry .....	6
2. Prose .....	6
<b>Section III Representative Writings of This Period</b> .....	7
1. Beowulf .....	7
2. Ballads .....	7
3. The Robin Hood ballads .....	8
<b>Chapter III English Literature of the Medieval Time</b> .....	11
<b>Section I Historical Background</b> .....	11

<b>Section II Literary Trends</b> .....	12
1. Allegory .....	12
2. Tales of chivalry and adventure .....	13
3. Arthurian legends .....	13
<b>Section III Representative Writers of This Period</b> .....	14
Geoffrey Chaucer (ca. 1342/3 — 1400) 杰弗雷·乔叟 .....	14
<b>Chapter IV English Literature of Renaissance</b> .....	21
<b>Section I Historical Background</b> .....	21
<b>Section II Literary Trends</b> .....	24
1. Renaissance poetry .....	24
2. Renaissance drama and prose .....	27
3. Late Renaissance and early 17th century .....	28
<b>Section III Representative Writers of This Period</b> .....	29
1. Sir Thomas More (1478 — 1535) 托马斯·莫尔 .....	29
2. Sir Philip Sidney (1554 — 1586) 菲利普·西德尼 .....	32
3. Edmund Spenser (1552 — 1599) 埃德蒙·斯宾塞 .....	33
4. Francis Bacon (1561 — 1626) 弗朗西斯·培根 .....	37
5. Christopher Marlowe (1564 — 1593) 克里斯托弗·马洛 .....	39
6. Ben Jonson (1572 — 1637) 本·琼森 .....	43
7. William Shakespeare (1564 — 1616) 威廉·莎士比亚 .....	50
<b>Chapter V English Literature of the 17th Century</b> .....	67
<b>Section I Historical Background</b> .....	67
1. The Revolution .....	67
2. The Restoration (1660) .....	68
<b>Section II Literary Trends</b> .....	69
<b>Section III Representative Writers of This Period</b> .....	69
1. John Donne (1572 — 1631) 约翰·邓恩 .....	69

2. George Herbert (1593 — 1633) 乔治·赫伯特 .....	70
3. John Milton (1608 — 1674) 约翰·弥尔顿 .....	71
4. John Bunyan (1628 — 1688) 约翰·班扬 .....	73
5. John Dryden (1631 — 1700) 约翰·德莱顿 .....	75

## **Chapter VI English Literature of the 18th Century** ..... 77

### **Section I Social Background** ..... 77

### **Section II Literary Trends** ..... 78

### **Section III Representative Writers of This Period** ..... 78

1. Jonathan Swift (1667 — 1745) 江奈生·斯威夫特 .....	78
2. Daniel Defoe (1660 — 1731) 丹尼尔·笛福 .....	80
3. Samuel Richardson (1689 — 1761) 塞缪尔·理查逊 .....	82
4. Henry Fielding (1707 — 1754) 亨利·菲尔丁 .....	84
5. Tobias George Smollett (1721 — 1771) 托比亚斯·乔治·斯摩莱特 .....	86
6. Laurence Sterne (1713 — 1768) 劳伦斯·斯特恩 .....	88
7. Oliver Goldsmith (1730? — 1774) 奥利弗·哥尔德斯密斯 .....	90
8. The eighteenth-century poetry	
Alexander Pope (1688 — 1744) 亚历山大·蒲柏 .....	92
9. Sentimentalism in poetry .....	95
10. Robert Burns (1759 — 1796) 罗伯特·彭斯 .....	96

## **Chapter VII English Literature of the Age of Romanticism**

..... 101

### **Section I Historical Background** ..... 101

### **Section II Literary Trends** ..... 104

### **Section III Representative Writers of This Period** ..... 107

1. William Blake (1757 — 1827) 威廉·布莱克 .....	107
2. William Wordsworth (1770 — 1850) 威廉·华兹华斯 .....	110
3. Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 — 1834) 塞缪尔·泰勒·柯尔律治 .....	114

4. George Gordon Byron (1788 — 1824) 乔治·戈登·拜伦 .....	118
5. Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 — 1822) 珀西·比西·雪莱 .....	122
6. John Keats (1795 — 1821) 约翰·济慈 .....	128
7. Sir Walter Scott (1771 — 1832) 沃尔特·斯科特 .....	133
8. Jane Austen (1775 — 1818) 简·奥斯汀 .....	136

**Chapter VIII English Literature of the Victorian Period 143**

**Section I Historical Background .....** 143

**Section II Literary Trends .....** 146

**Section III Representative Writers of This Period .....** 148

1. Charles Dickens (1812 — 1870) 查尔斯·狄更斯 .....	148
2. William Makepeace Thackeray (1811 — 1863)	
威廉·梅克比斯·萨克雷 .....	152
3. The Bronte Sisters 勃朗特姐妹 .....	158
4. George Eliot (1819 — 1880) 乔治·艾略特 .....	162
5. Anthony Trollope (1815 — 1882) 安东尼·特罗洛普 .....	166
6. Thomas Hardy (1840 — 1928) 托马斯·哈代 .....	169
7. Victorian poets and playwrights .....	171
(1) Robert Browning (1812 — 1889) 罗伯特·勃朗宁 .....	171
(2) Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806 — 1861)	
伊丽莎白·巴雷特·勃朗宁 .....	173
(3) Alfred Tennyson (1809 — 1892) 艾尔弗雷德·丁尼生 .....	178
(4) Mathew Arnold (1822 — 1888) 马修·阿诺德 .....	180

**Chapter IX English Literature of the First Half of the 20th Century .....** 187

**Section I Historical Background .....** 187

**Section II Literary Trends .....** 189

**Section III Representative Writers of This Period .....** 191



1. English poetry and prose fiction: 1900 — 1920 .....	191
(1) W. B. Yeats (1865 — 1939) 威廉·巴特勒·叶芝 .....	191
(2) Joseph Conrad (1857 — 1924) 约瑟夫·康拉德 .....	197
(3) John Galsworthy (1867 — 1933) 约翰·高尔斯华绥 .....	202
(4) W. Somerset Maugham (1874 — 1965) 威廉·萨姆塞特·毛姆 .....	204
(5) D. H. Lawrence (1885 — 1930) 大卫·赫伯特·劳伦斯 .....	210
2. English Drama: 1900 — 1930 .....	218
(1) G. B. Shaw (1856 — 1950) 萧伯纳 .....	218
(2) Seán O'Casey (1880 — 1964) 肖恩·奥凯西 .....	222
3. English Poetry and Prose Fiction: 1920 — 1940 .....	224
(1) T. S. Eliot (1888 — 1965) T. S. 艾略特 .....	224
(2) James Joyce (1882 — 1941) 詹姆斯·乔伊斯 .....	228
(3) Virginia Woolf (1882 — 1941) 弗吉尼亚·伍尔夫 .....	237
(4) E. M. Forster (1879 — 1970) 爱德华·摩根·福斯特 .....	241

**Chapter X English Literature since 1945 .....** 247

**Section I Historical Background .....** 247

1. Fiction .....	247
2. Poetry .....	253
3. Drama .....	257
4. The 21st century .....	261

**Section II Novelists in the 1940s and 1950s .....** 262

1. George Orwell (1903 — 1950) 乔治·奥威尔 .....	262
2. William Golding (1911 — 1993) 威廉·戈尔丁 .....	266
3. The Angry Young Men .....	270

**Section III Experimental Novelists .....** 271

1. An experimental novel .....	271
2. Angus Wilson (1913 — 1991) 安格斯·威尔逊 .....	272
3. Anthony Burgess (1917 — 1993) 安东尼·伯吉斯 .....	275

4. John Fowles (1926 — 2005) 约翰·福尔斯 .....	277
<b>Section IV Female Writers</b> .....	280
1. Muriel Spark (1918 — 2006) 缪丽尔·斯帕克 .....	280
2. Iris Murdoch (1919 — 1999) 艾丽丝·默多克 .....	283
3. Margaret Drabble (1939 — ) 玛格丽特·德拉布尔 .....	285
4. Anita Brookner (1928 — ) 安妮塔·布鲁克纳 .....	287
<b>Section V Ethnic Minority Writers</b> .....	290
1. V. S. Naipaul (1932 — ) 维·苏·奈保尔 .....	290
2. Salman Rushdie (1947 — ) 沙尔曼·拉什迪 .....	294
3. Kazuo Ishiguro (1954 — ) 石黑一雄 .....	295
<b>Section VI Contemporary Novelists</b> .....	297
1. Martin Amis (1949 — ) 马丁·艾米斯 .....	297
2. Julian Barnes (1946 — ) 朱利安·巴恩斯 .....	299
3. Peter Ackroyd (1949 — ) 彼得·阿克罗伊德 .....	300
4. Ian McEwan (1948 — ) 伊恩·麦克尤恩 .....	301
<b>Section VII Contemporary Poets</b> .....	302
1. Philip Larkin (1922 — 1985) 菲利浦·拉金 .....	302
2. Ted Hughes (1930 — 1998) 泰德·休斯 .....	304
3. Seamus Heaney (1939 — ) 谢默斯·希尼 .....	306
<b>Section VIII Contemporary Dramatists</b> .....	309
1. John Osborne (1929 — 1994) 约翰·奥斯本 .....	309
2. Harold Pinter (1930 — ) 哈罗德·品特 .....	311
3. Tom Stoppard (1937 — ) 汤姆·斯托帕德 .....	315
4. Peter Shaffer (1926 — ) 彼得·谢弗 .....	317
5. Political Theatre .....	319
<b>Appendix</b> .....	329

# **Chapter I Early Britain and Its Language**

## ***Section I Early Britain***

### **1. Roman Britain**

The earliest comprehensive historical records in British history date to the Roman period when Julius Caesar became the first Roman general to conduct a major expedition to the British Isles in 55 BC.

Although this was short-lived, Emperor Claudius again invaded in 61 and this time the Roman occupation was permanent with Britain becoming absorbed into the empire. Although the Romans didn't have a lasting influence on the Island they were responsible for the early growth of some of the cities featured in this guide such as London, York, Chester and Bath.

### **2. Anglo-Saxons and the Danes**

The Romans departed from Britain in 410 due to mounting pressures at the core of the empire. In their wake Southern Britain was increasingly settled by Germanic people from the Angle, Saxon, and Jute tribes. This influx pushed the native Romano-British to the north and west of the country and with time the various tribes were separated into what is now the South West of England, Wales and Scotland.

The Vikings made their first appearance in Britain during the raid on

Lindisfarne in 793. In time they began to settle and eventually ruled their own province known as Danelaw. This was essentially an area of England north of a line between Colchester and Chester.

### **3. The Norman Conquest**

In 1066 William of Normandy defeated King Harald Godwinson at the Battle of Hastings and became William I of England. The Norman era had begun and marked the end of Saxon and Danish rule in Britain. Despite the reforms of Henry I tensions remained high between Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman society and the 12th century saw power switch from the monarchy to the Norman feudal barons.

## ***Section II The Origins and Development of English***

The history of the English language really started with the arrival of three Germanic tribes who invaded Britain during the 5th century AD. These tribes, the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes, crossed the North Sea from what today is Denmark and northern Germany. At that time the inhabitants of Britain spoke a Celtic language. But most of the Celtic speakers were pushed west and north by the invaders—mainly into what is now Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The Angles came from England and their language was called Englisc—from which the words England and English are derived.

### **1. Old English (450 – 1100)**

The invading Germanic tribes spoke similar languages, which in Britain developed into what we now call Old English. Old English did not sound or look like English today. Native English speakers now would have great difficulty understanding Old English. Nevertheless, about half of the

most commonly used words in Modern English have Old English roots. The words *be*, *strong* and *water*, for example, derive from Old English. Old English was spoken until around 1100.

## **2. Middle English (1100 – 1500)**

In 1066 William the Conqueror, the Duke of Normandy (part of modern France), invaded and conquered England. The new conquerors (called the Normans) brought with them a kind of French, which became the language of the Royal Court, and the ruling and business classes. For a period there was a kind of linguistic class division, where the lower classes spoke English and the upper classes spoke French. In the 14th century English became dominant in Britain again, but with many French words added. This language is called Middle English. It was the language of the great poet Chaucer (c1340 – 1400), but it would still be difficult for native English speakers to understand today.

## **3. Modern English (1500 – present)**

### ***Early Modern English (1500 – 1800)***

Towards the end of Middle English, a sudden and distinct change in pronunciation (the Great Vowel Shift) started, with vowels being pronounced shorter and shorter. From the 16th century the British had contact with many peoples from around the world. This, and the Renaissance of Classical learning, meant that many new words and phrases entered the language. The invention of printing also meant that there was now a common language in print. Books became cheaper and more people learned to read. Printing also brought standardization to English. Spelling and grammar became fixed, and the dialect of London, where most publishing houses were, became the standard. In 1604 the first English dictionary was published.

**Late Modern English (1800 – Present)**

The main difference between Early Modern English and Late Modern English is vocabulary. Late Modern English has many more words, arising from two principal factors: firstly, the Industrial Revolution and technology created a need for new words; secondly, the British Empire at its height covered one quarter of the earth's surface, and the English language adopted foreign words from many countries.

**Questions:**

1. Who are the first English people?
2. What are the origins of English language?

## **Chapter II English Literature of the Anglo-Saxon Period**

### ***Section I Historical Background***

Old English or Anglo-Saxon Era extends from about 450 to 1066, the year of the Norman-French conquest of England. The Germanic tribes from Europe who overran England in the 5th century, after the Roman withdrawal, brought with them the Old English, or Anglo-Saxon language, which is the basis of Modern English. They also brought a specific poetic tradition, the formal character of which remained surprisingly constant until the termination of their rule by the Norman-French invaders six centuries later.

English, as we know, descends from the language spoken by the north Germanic tribes who settled in England from the 5th century A.D. onwards. They had no writing (except runes, used as charms) until they learned the Latin alphabets from Roman missionaries. The earliest written works in Old English were probably composed orally at first, and may have been passed on from speaker to speaker before being written. Old English literature is mostly chronicle and poetry-lyric, descriptive, but chiefly narrative or epic. By the time literacy becomes widespread, Old English is effectively a foreign and dead language. And its forms do not significantly affect subsequent developments in English literature.

## **Section II Literary Trends**

### **1. Poetry**

Much of Old English poetry was probably intended to be chanted, with harp accompaniment, by the Anglo-Saxon bard. Often bold and strong, but also mournful and elegiac in spirit, this poetry emphasizes the sorrow and ultimate futility of life and the helplessness of humans before the power of fate. Almost all this poetry is composed without rhyme, in a characteristic line, or verse, of four stressed syllables alternating with an indeterminate number of unstressed ones. This line strikes strangely on ears habituated to the usual modern pattern, in which the rhythmical unit, or foot, theoretically consists of a constant number (either one or two) of unaccented syllables that always precede or follow any stressed syllable. Another unfamiliar but equally striking feature in the formal character of Old English poetry is structural alliteration, or the use of syllables beginning with similar sounds in two or three of the stresses in each line. All these qualities of form and spirit are exemplified in the national epic of the English people *Beowulf*.

### **2. Prose**

Prose in Old English was represented by a large number of religious works. The imposing scholarship of monasteries in northern England in the late 7th century reached its peak in the Latin work *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (*Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 731) by Bede. The great educational effort of Alfred, King of the West Saxons, in the 9th century produced an Old English translation of this important historical work and of many others, including *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (*The Consolation of Philosophy*), by Boethius. This was a significant work of largely Platonic philosophy easily adaptable to



Christian thought, and it has had great influence on English literature.

### **Section III Representative Writings of This Period**

#### **1. Beowulf**

*Beowulf* is a long poem of over 3,000 lines and the oldest surviving epic poem in the English language and the earliest piece of vernacular European literature. It was written in Old English, the language of the Saxons. Drawing from Danish history and folk tales, it was composed, probably in the early 8th century, by a Northumbrian poet. Originally untitled, in the 19th century the poem began to be called by the name of its Scandinavian hero, whose adventures are its primary focus. Historical elements run through the poem, yet both the hero and the story are fiction. Written in unrhymed, four-beat alliterative metre of Old English poetry, it tells of the exploits of the hero Beowulf. The first part of the tale narrates Beowulf's youthful adventures in Denmark battling the monstrous creature Grendel on behalf of the King Hrothgar of the Danes, and the second part narrates his later life, including his fight with a fire-dragon, during his reign as the King of Geatland (traditionally located somewhere in southern Sweden or one of the Baltic island on the east coast of Sweden).

#### **2. Ballads**

Ballad, a folk song or orally transmitted poem telling in a direct and dramatic manner some popular stories usually derived from a tragic incident in local history or legend. The story is told simply, impersonally, and often with vivid dialogues. Ballads do share some typical features. The content tends to be tragic; the language is simple and unsentimental, and there is usually a refrain (repeated line or verse) linking everything together;