



西津·21世纪英美文学与文化系列教材

英国文学经典教程

姜涛主编

English Literary Canon: A Course Book

东南大学出版社

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English Literary Canon: A Course Book

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Part One

The Middle Ages (to ca. 1485)

第一部分 中世纪文学

英国民族来自欧洲大陆北部的某些日耳曼部族,这些部族主要是盎格鲁人、撒克逊人和朱特人。这些人居住在德国北部沿海一带低洼地区和丹麦南部。随着日耳曼民族大迁徙,陆续进入不列颠岛,他们把岛上的居民凯尔特人(Celts)赶入西部和北部山地,占领了肥沃的平原地带,并定居,这些日耳曼部族约在公元449年完成了他们对不列颠岛的侵略,从公元5世纪中叶开始,英国民族的祖先就已在新的土地上正式定居,并开始生产和劳动。

这些日耳曼部族的语言都属于印欧语系西日耳曼语支,因此相互之间很相似。但是这些部族语言之间也存在着一些区别,随着各部族在不列颠岛上不同地区定居下来,形成了古英语的不同方言。

古英语的方言共分四种:占据海岛东南角的朱特人所说的方言称为肯特方言(Kentish);撒克逊人的方言称为撒克逊方言(其中尤以居住在魏塞克斯的撒克逊部族的方言最为重要,称为西撒克逊方言,West Saxon);居住在泰晤士河与恒伯河之间地区的盎格鲁人的方言称为墨尔西亚方言(Mercian);居住在恒伯河以北平原地带的盎格鲁人说的是诺散伯利亚方言(Northumbrian)。

虽然当时英国没有共同的民族标准语,但在古英语后期还是存在一种标准化的文学语言。公元9世纪后叶,阿弗烈德大帝(Alfred the Great)在位时期(871—901),魏塞克斯王国的首都温奇斯特成为全英国的政治和文化中心,魏塞克斯王国的语言——西撒克逊方言——成为全英国的标准文学语言。阿弗烈德对外抵抗丹麦人的侵略,对内提倡学问和文学,他的文治和武功赢得历史学家的高度赞扬。他改革教育,在他的宫廷里有许多人从事翻译、抄录、编写和著述工作;自己也辛勤地致力于翻译,许多拉丁文著作被译成西撒克逊方言,这些译作在全国广为流传;他又让他宫廷中的抄写家把较早的诺散伯利亚和墨尔西亚方言的诗歌作品抄录保存,使这些作品以西撒克逊方言被保存下来并流传至今。由于阿弗烈德大帝的努力,西撒克逊方言成为古英语时期的标准文学语言,在阿弗烈德的时代,诺散伯利亚和墨尔西亚的诗人们也都使用西撒克逊方言来创作他们的诗歌作品。

由于丹麦人的侵略,魏塞克斯王国在公元11世纪初灭亡,西撒克逊方言因此失去了标准文学语言的地位,阿弗烈德大帝所建立起来的古英语文学传统就此中断。这种情况在英国被诺曼人(Normans)征服(公元1066年)以后变得变本加厉。在被诺曼人征服后,由于受到外族统治,所有的英国方言都处于不重要的地位。原有统一的文学语言消失,取而代之的是一些分歧很大的方言。作家和抄写家都用自己的方言进行创作和抄写,因此早期中古英语文学作品里出现了各种方言的特点。

中古英语早期存在三种主要方言:北部方言、南部方言和中部方言。地理上大概分界

是:南部方言和中部方言地区以泰晤士河为界,中部方言地区和北部方言地区以恒伯河为界。

诺曼人征服英国后,英国丧失了标准文学语言,但并没有丧失民族语言——英语,英国人民在外族统治下仍讲英语。作为口语的英语不仅没有死亡,反而生气勃勃地继续发展。统治英国的诺曼族国王并不企图消灭英国人民的语言,反而努力去学习英语。诺曼人和英国人很快融合成一个民族。在12世纪末,英语已成为英国社会各阶层人们共同的口语了。

从13世纪开始,用英语创作的民族文学作品在各方言地区陆续出现。虽然拉丁语和法语仍被用作文学语言,但是创造性的重要作品都是用英语写成的。同时,在13世纪,英语也部分地恢复了作为行政语言的地位。《亨利三世的公告》(1258年10月18日)是征服英国的诺曼国王威廉之后第一次用英语发表的公告,这个公告同时也用拉丁语和法语发表。

到了14世纪,英语在国家和社会生活各部门中都获得完全胜利。1385年,英语已代替法语作为学校正式语言。1362年,爱德华三世召开议会时第一次用英语致开幕词。在同一年,在下议院的请求下,爱德华颁布一道法令,规定法庭审讯必须使用英语,不再用法语。1399年,一封英语私人通信表明在社交生活中英语代替了法语。这一系列事实都说明,在14世纪,英语确定了在国家和社会生活中的地位。

更重要的是,英语逐渐上升为全英国文学语言。在诺曼人统治时期,虽然仍有不少人用英语写作,但是正式的文学语言仍是法语和拉丁语,而非英语。到了14世纪,随着英语成为宫廷、学校、法院、议会和行政语言,在文学领域内,英语也开始更多地取代了法语和拉丁语。先是诗歌方面,大量出现了古英语时期的头韵诗体(alliterative verse),例如兰兰德(Langland)的《农夫彼得之梦》。又例如乔叟(Chaucer),虽然乔叟模仿法国和意大利诗歌,但却始终用英语创作。用拉丁语写作的宗教改革家威克里夫(Wyclif)也参与了《圣经》译成英语的工作。英语在学术界和宗教界逐渐取代拉丁语。乔叟、兰兰德、高沃尔和威克里夫之后,英语已确立为全英国的文学语言。

自12世纪中叶,伦敦逐渐成为全国政治、经济和文化生活中心,成为英国各种方言聚会的地方。此外,伦敦的地理位置也很特殊。从14世纪起,伦敦方言中的南部方言成分愈来愈减少,而中东部方言成分愈来愈多,以至于到14世纪末,伦敦方言基本上成为中部方言。

促进英国民族标准语形成的最基本原因是英国封建自然经济逐渐过渡到资本主义经济。在14世纪,地主和佃农、雇主和受雇者之间的关系已变成几乎是现代单纯的金钱关系。拥有资本的人不仅在商业方面,而且在经营土地和组织工业方面都有很大的势力。在14世纪,英国产生了资产阶级关系,诞生了资产阶级。英国民族和英国民族标准语的形成已具备成熟条件。

乔叟和威克里夫的作品显著促进了英国民族标准语和文学语言的确立和传播。乔叟用伦敦方言创作,那是他的家乡话,同时也是首都方言。乔叟的作品流传极广,伦敦方言的特点被传播到全国各地,成为大家模仿的对象。同样,威克里夫和弟子们的活动范围也极为广阔,他们深入农村,接近人民群众。由于威克里夫和弟子们的著作受到人民极大欢迎,和伦敦英语非常近似的牛津英语在全国广泛流传。因此到了14世纪末,中东部方言(伦敦英语、牛津英语)已具有了全英国共同的书写语言和文学语言的性质。

到了15世纪,英国民族标准语得到进一步确立和传播。在15世纪中叶前,远在印刷术输入英国之先,无论公家或私人文件,用各地方言来写的现象愈为罕见。文学作品领域内,

情况更是如此。南部方言已失去作为文学语言的地位,北部方言只成为苏格兰民族的文学语言,不再是英吉利民族的书写语言了。

中世纪英国文学包括两个时期:古英语时期(或称盎格鲁撒克逊时期)和中古英语时期,这两个时期以诺曼人征服英国的年代1066年为分界线。留传下来最早的古英语作品是卡德曼(Coedmon)的赞美诗(公元7世纪末),因此可以把7世纪末做为中世纪英国文学史的上线。中世纪英国文学史的下线一般定为15世纪末,可用道德剧《凡人》的创作年代为标志。

Lesson 1 *Beowulf*

I. A Brief Review.

Beowulf is a heroic poem, the highest achievement of Old English literature and the earliest European vernacular epic. Preserved in a single manuscript from c. 1000, it deals with events of the early 6th century and is believed to have been composed between 700 and 750. It did not appear in print until 1815. Although originally untitled, it was later named after the Scandinavian hero Beowulf, whose exploits and character provide its connecting theme. There is no evidence of a historical Beowulf, but some characters, sites, and events in the poem can be historically verified.

The poem falls into two parts. It opens in Denmark, where King Hrothgar's splendid mead hall, Heorot, has been ravaged for 12 years by nightly visits from an evil monster, Grendel, who carries off Hrothgar's warriors and devours them. Unexpectedly, young Beowulf, a prince of the Geats of southern Sweden, arrives with a small band of retainers and offers to cleanse Heorot of its monster. The King is astonished at the little-known hero's daring but welcomes him, and after an evening of feasting, the King retires, leaving Beowulf in charge. During the night Grendel comes from the moors, tears open the heavy doors, and devours one of the sleeping Geats. He then grapples with Beowulf, whose powerful grip he cannot escape. He wrenches himself free, tearing off his arm, and leaves, mortally wounded. The next day is one of rejoicing in Heorot. But at night as the warriors sleep, Grendel's mother comes to avenge her son, killing one of Hrothgar's men. In the morning Beowulf seeks her out in her cave at the bottom of a mere and kills her.

The second part passes rapidly over King Hygelac's subsequent death in a battle (of historical record), the death of his son, and Beowulf's succession to the kingship and his peaceful rule of 50 years. But now a fire-breathing dragon ravages his land and the doughty but aging Beowulf engages it. The fight is long and terrible and a painful contrast to the battles of his youth. Painful, too, is the desertion of his retainers except for his young kinsman Wiglaf. Beowulf kills the dragon but is mortally wounded. The poem ends with his funeral rites and a lament.

Beowulf belongs metrically, stylistically, and thematically to the inherited Germanic heroic tradition. Many incidents, such as Beowulf's tearing off the monster's arm and his descent into the mere, are familiar motifs from folklore. The ethical values are manifestly the Germanic code of loyalty to chief and tribe and vengeance to enemies. Yet the poem is so infused with a Christian spirit that it lacks the grim fatality of many of the Eddic lays or the Icelandic sagas.

II. Texts.

Beowulf

Down off the moorlands' misting fells^① came
 Grendel^② stalking; God's brand was on him.
 The spoiler meant to snatch away
 from the high hall some of human race.
 He came on under the clouds, clearly saw at last
 The gold-hall of men, the mead^③-drinking place
 nailed with gold plates. That was not the first visit
 he had paid to the hall of Hrothgar the Dane:
 he never before and never after
 harder luck nor hall-guards found.

Walking to the hall came this warlike creature
 condemned to agony. The door gave way^④
 toughened with iron, at the touch of those hands.
 Rage-inflamed, wreckage-bent, he ripped open
 the jaws of the hall. Hastening on,
 the foe then stepped onto the unstained floor,
 angrily advanced: out of his eyes stood

an unlovely light like that of fire.
 He saw then in the hall a host of young soldiers,
 a company of kinsmen caught away in sleep,
 a whole warrior-band. In his heart he laughed then,
 horrible monster, his hopes swelling
 to a gluttonous meal. He meant to wrench
 the life from each body that lay in the place
 before night was done. It was not to be;
 he was no longer to feast on the flesh of mankind
 after that night.

Narrowly the powerful
 kinsman of Hygelac kept watch how the ravager

-
- ① fell: a hill
 - ② Grendel: the monster
 - ③ mead: an alcoholic drink made of honey and water
 - ④ gave away: yield

set to work with his sudden catches;
nor did the monster mean to hang back.
As a first step he set his hands on
a sleeping soldier, savagely tore at him,
gnashed at his bone-joints, bolted huge gobbets,^①
sucked at his veins, and had soon eaten
all of the dead man, even down to his
hands and feet.

Forward he stepped,
stretched out his hands to seize the warrior
calmly at rest there, reached out for him with his
unfriendly fingers: but the faster man
forestalling^②, sat up, sent back his arm.
The upholder of evils at once knew
he had not met, on middle earth's
extremest acres, with any man
of harder hand-grip: his heart panicked.
He was quit of the place no more quickly for that.

Eager to be away, he ailed for his darkness^③
and the company of devils; the dealings he had there
were like nothing he had come across in his lifetime.
Then Hygelac's brave kinsman called to mind
that evening's utterance, upright he stood,
fastened his hold till fingers were bursting.
The monster's desire was for darkness between them,
direction regardless, to get out and run
for his fen-bordered lair; he felt his grip's strength
crushed by his enemy. It was an ill journey
the rough marauder had made to Heorot.

The crash in the banqueting-hall came to the Danes,
the men of the guard that remained in the building,
with the taste of death. The deepening rage

-
- ① bolted huge gobbets: swallowed hastily large pieces of flesh
② forestalling: preventing Grendel from attacking by taking action first
③ he ailed for his darkness: He felt uneasy and was eager to get back to his dark place

of the claimants^① to Heorot caused it to resound.
 It was indeed wonderful that the wine-supper-hall
 withstood the wrestling pair, that the world's palace
 fell not to the ground. But it was girt firmly,
 both inside and out, by iron braces
 of skilled manufacture. Many a figured
 gold-worked wine-bench, as we heard it,
 started from the floor at the struggles of that pair.
 The men of the Danes had not imagined that
 any of mankind by what method soever
 might undo that intricate, antlered hall,
 sunder it by strength-unless it were swallowed up in
 the embraces of fire.

...

The Geat race then reared up for him
 a funeral pyre^②. It was not a petty mound,
 but shining mail-coats and shields of war
 and helmets hung upon it, as he had desired.
 Then the heroes, lamenting, laid out in the middle
 their great chief, their cherished lord.
 On top of the mound the men then kindled
 the biggest of funeral-fires. Black wood-smoke
 arose from the blaze, and the roaring of flames
 mingled with weeping. The winds lay still
 as the heat at the fire's heart consumed
 the house of bone^③. And in heavy mood
 they uttered their sorrow at the slaughter of their lord.

III. Notes.

《贝奥武夫》,大约完成于公元8世纪,是以古英语记载的传说中最古老的一篇。全诗共3182行,主要描写了斯堪的纳维亚英雄贝奥武夫的英勇事迹。全诗内容分为两部分:第一部分描叙丹麦国王赫洛斯伽修建了宏伟的“鹿厅”,不料众人的欢宴笑语激怒了一个叫做格伦德的怪物,它在夜晚来到鹿厅杀死、掳走了30名武士,并一直侵扰达12年。后来时逢瑞典南部济兹王子贝奥武夫率武士来访,协助除害。在一场惊心动魄的打斗中,贝奥武夫

① claimants: A claimant is a person who makes claim. Here both Beowulf and Grendel regard themselves as the guardians of the hall

② pyre: a pile of wood for the ceremonial burning of a dead body

③ the house of bone: a typical example of kenning, meaning “the body”

重伤格伦德,使其落荒而逃,并最终丧命。第二天晚上,格伦德的母亲前来为其子复仇,结果也被贝奥武夫在一湖泊的洞穴中杀死。第二部分描叙贝奥武夫返回家乡,被拥为国王,前后统治国家五十年。最后贝奥武夫以垂老之年,斩杀一喷火巨龙,但其个人亦因而身受重创,不治身死。诗末描写其葬礼,并有挽歌。

IV. Key Words(关键词).

Kenning: 隐喻语,或译“比喻的复合辞”。尤指古英语和古斯堪的纳维亚语诗中,一种比喻性的,在表名字或名词时常用的复合表达方式,如用“**bone house**”是来指代“**body**”或用“**whale-road**”来指代“**sea**”。

Epic: 史诗。史诗一词源于古希腊语,意为“故事”或“叙述”。它是一种叙述英雄传说和重大历史事件的叙事长诗。史诗主题严肃,形式庄重,主人公常为英雄人物。文学史上的代表性史诗作品包括《荷马史诗》,《罗摩衍那》和《贝奥武夫》等。

V. Questions.

1. Find out the examples of kenning in the excerpt.
2. Trace the history of the hall Heorot-why was it built, what happened within its walls, how and by whom was it destroyed?
3. Find examples of the combination of pagan and Christian elements in the epic.

Lesson 2 English and Scottish Popular Ballads

I. A Brief Review.

They are the narrative species of folk songs, which originate and are communicated orally. In all probability the initial version of a ballad was composed by a single author, but since each singer is apt to introduce some changes both to the text and to the tune, they exist in many variant forms. Typically, the popular ballad is dramatic, condensed and impersonal. Although many traditional ballads probably originated in the later Middle Ages, they were not collected and printed until the eighteenth century.

The border ballad is the type of spirited heroic ballad celebrating the raids, feuds, seductions, and elopements on the border between England and Scotland in the 15th and 16th centuries, where neither English nor Scottish law prevailed. Among the better known border ballads are “ohny Cock,” “ock o’ the Side,” “Hobie Noble,” and “The Bonny Earl of Murray.” Though a few deal with events of historical importance, most are concerned with the personal retributions of the outlaws and robber clans who maintained their own grim code on the border.

The interest in folk poetry evinced within literary circles, especially in England and Germany, in the 18th century. Actually, it was not a revival but a new discovery and appreciation of the merits of popular poetry, formerly ignored or despised by scholars and sophisticated writers. The trend that began in England in 1711 with the publication of Joseph Addison’s three *Spectator* papers cautiously defending “the darling Songs of the common People” crystallized in 1765 with the publication of Thomas Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, a collection of English and Scottish traditional ballads. The *Reliques* and a flood of subsequent collections, including Sir Walter Scott’s *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802), had great impact and provided the English Romantic poets with an alternative to outworn Neoclassical models as a source of inspiration. The impact was not reciprocal; literary ballads had no effect on the art or production of oral balladry, which was already in decline. In Germany the philosopher-critic Johann Gottfried von Herder conferred an almost mystical distinction on the ballad as the genuine expression of the spirit of the folk. The collection of lyrical and narrative folk songs *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1805—1808; “*The Boy’s MagicHorn*”), edited by Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim, was the dominant influence on German poetry throughout the 19th century.

II. Texts.

The Three Ravens

There were three rauens^① sat on a tree,

① In printed text of the time, u and v were often used interchangeably

downe a downe, hay downe, hay downe^①,
 There were three rauens sat on a tree,
 with a downe,

There were three rauens sat on a tree,
 They were as blacke as they might be.
 With a downe, derrie, derrie, derrie, downe, downe.

The one of them said to his mate,
 “Where shall we our breakfast take?”

“Downe in yonder greene field,
 There lies a Knight slain under his shield,

“His hounds they lie downe at his feete,
 So well they can their Master keepe,

“His Hawkes they flie so eagerly,
 There’s no fowle dare him come nie^②”

Downe there comes a fallow Doe,
 As great with yong as she might goe.

She lift up his bloody head,
 And kist his wounds that were so red.

She got him up upon her backe,
 And carried him to earthen lake^③.

She buried him before the prime,
 She was dead her self ere euen-song time.

God send euery gentleman,
 Such haukes, such hounds, and such a Leman^④.

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- ① The refrain consists of nonsense words that create a vocal musical interlude between lines of the stanza
 ② nie: Variant of nigh
 ③ lake: pit
 ④ leman: Sweetheart or mistress



Sir Patrick Spens

The king sits in Dunfermline toun,
 Drinkin' the bluid^① red wine
 "O whaur will I get a skeely skipper,
 To sail this ship o' mine?"

Then up and spak an eldern knicht^②,
 Sat at the king's richt knee,
 "Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor,
 That ever sail'd the sea."

Our king has written a braid letter,
 And seal'd it wi' his han',
 And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
 Was walkin' on the stran'.

"To Noroway, to Noroway,
 To Noroway owre the faim;
 The king's dochter o' Noroway,
 It's thou maun bring her hame."

The first line that Sir Patrick read,
 Sae lond, loud laughed he;
 The neist line that Sir Patrick read,
 The tear blinded his e'e.

"O wha is this has dune this deed,
 And tauld the king o' me,
 To send us oot at this time o' the year
 To sail upon the sea?"

Be't wind, be't weet, be't bail, be't^③ sleet,
 Our ship maun sail the faim;
 The king's dochter o' Noroway,

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- ① bluid: blood
 ② knicht: knight
 ③ be't: best

It's we maun fetch her hame. ”

They boys'd their sails on Mononday,
Wi' a' the speed they may;
They hae landed in Norway
Upon a Wodnesday.

...

“Mak ready, mak ready, my merry men a^①,
Our guid ship sails the morn,
O say na sae, my maister dear^②
For I fear a deidly storm. ”

I saw the new moon late yestreen,
Wi' the auld moon in her arm, ^③
And I fear, I fear, my maister dear,
That we will come to harm.

They had na sail'd a league, a leagne,
A league but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
And gurly grew the sea.

The ankers brak, and the tapmasts lap,
“Twas sic a deidly storm”
And the waves cam owre the broken ship,
Till a' her sides were torn.

III. Notes.

1. 《三只乌鸦》是一首脍炙人口的苏格兰民谣，它采用了三只乌鸦谈话的形式展开叙述。它们谈论哪里能找到食物。其中一只提到了刚被杀死不久的骑士，却发现骑士忠诚的苍鹰和猎犬一直在旁边守护着他，还有一只雌鹿走近，为其清洗伤痕，将其埋葬。乌鸦一无所获。而此时，诗人将视角从乌鸦身上转移，从自己的不同视角出发，对这一行为进行了评价。

2. 《派屈克·司本斯爵士》讲述了一个大海沉船的悲剧故事，感情至深的序幕与结尾在读者脑海中形成的悲剧性效果甚至超越了故事本身。主人公知道自己将无生还的机会，却

① make haste, make haste, my merry men all

② oh say no say, my master dear

③ with the old moon in her arm