

新经典
ENGLISH MAJOR

高等学校英语专业系列教材



HISTORY AND
ANTHOLOGY OF
ENGLISH
LITERATURE

吴伟仁（编）

英国文学史
及选读

重排版

2

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FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

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出版说明 >>

《英国文学史及选读》和《美国文学史及选读》是吴伟仁教授编写的一套经典英美文学教材，自出版以来，迄今已重印四十余次，受到广大读者的一致称赞。本教材根据英语专业英美文学教学的实际需求，通过“史”、“选”结合的方式对英美文学的核心内容进行了全面梳理和系统讲解，在全国高校英语专业师生中有着广泛而深远的影响。

因出版年代久远，编者资料有限，该套教材在文学史介绍及选篇部分存在个别舛错，并且有少量印刷错误，我们在此次重排版中均进行了认真核实、修改。同时，我们调整了部分内容的顺序、体例，使全书结构更加清晰明了。此外，还对教材封面和内文版式进行了全新设计，使之更加美观易读。

英美文学界在对某些文学史的讲述、作品版本的选择、个别作家生卒年代及作品写作与出版年代等方面，经常存在争议。在重排版中，我们充分尊重编者的研究视角、方法和成果，除对明显的错误进行更正外，对涉及争议的以上内容，除与权威版本（如 *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, *Encyclopedia Britannica* 等）存在重大出入处我们进行了修改外，尽量尊重原文而未擅作改动。特此说明。



«前言»

我国高等院校英语专业在高年级课程中，开设有“英美文学史”和“英美文学作品选读”两门课程。讲授“文学史”以伴随“文学作品选读”为宜，否则容易形成脱节现象，或者形成教学中的重复。再者，文学史是根据历史的顺序以系统讲授为主，由于课时的限制，往往重头轻尾，完不成全面教学的任务。“文学作品选读”只能选一部分重要作家和重要作品进行讲授，略古详今。这样，“史”和“选读”分作两门课程讲授，往往不能相辅而行。从时间上说，也有课时不经济的情况。所以，这两门课程最好结合起来：“史”的部分在书中简明扼要地概述，“选读”部分尽可能遴选文学史上的重要作家和重要作品进行讲授。教师根据班级的具体情况，可多选，也可少选，灵活掌握，因材施教。

本套教材编写的体例，除“史”的部分有简明扼要的叙述以外，作家作品部分有：(1) 作家生平与创作介绍；(2) 作品内容提要（如选文为作品节录时）；(3) 选文；(4) 注释。在教学中每周以四学时计，共两个学期（有的院校是四个学期），课堂以讲授作品为主，“史”的部分由教师掌握，供学生参考。“史”与“选读”结合，进行教学，可事半功倍，收到良好的教学效果，这是编写《英国文学史及选读》和《美国文学史及选读》的目的。

《英国文学史及选读》分为两册：第一册涵盖盎格鲁-撒克逊时期至18世纪英国文学，第二册涵盖浪漫主义时期至20世纪英国文学。

本套教材可供高等院校英语专业作为英美文学史和文学作品选读的教学用书或参考书，也可供广大中学英语教师及具有一定程度的英语自学者和英美文学爱好者作为进修读物。

教材定稿前，曾由原国家教委高校外语教材编审委员会召开审稿会。参加审稿会的有主审人张健教授（山东大学）；审稿人孟广龄教授（北京师范大学）、常耀信教授（南开大学）和李乃坤教授（山东大学）。会议期间，审稿人提出了许多有关作家、选文和注释方面的宝贵意见。编者根据这些意见作了必要的修改。在此，对参加审稿的同志表示衷心的感谢。

教材在编写过程中，曾参考了国内外出版的许多文学史和作品选读方面的书籍，注释部分也参照了有关各书的注释，在此不一一列举。由于编者水平有限，书中错误、缺点和考虑不周之处在所难免，恳切希望读者和专家们批评指正。

编者



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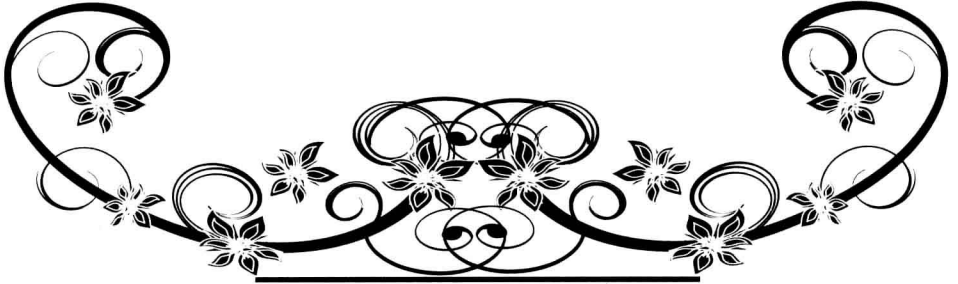


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Part V

The Romantic Period





Romanticism as a literary movement came into being in England in the latter half of the 18th century. It first made its appearance in England as a renewed interest in medieval literature. The movement was ushered by Thomas Percy (1729–1811), James Macpherson (1736–1796) and Thomas Chatterton (1752–1770). William Blake and Robert Burns represented the spirit of what is usually called Pre-Romanticism.

With the publication of William Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) in collaboration with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Romanticism began to bloom and found a firm place in the history of English literature. In fact, the first half of the 19th century recorded the triumph of Romanticism.

As is known to all, literature develops with the development of the society, and is often under the influence of social ideologies, especially of politics which is the most decisive; literature reflects the mental attitudes of a time and a nation. The class struggles motivate the development of literature. And economics is also an important factor in the development of literature. These are true of the literature of all countries. The English Romanticism is no exception. It was greatly influenced by the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution.

After the Industrial Revolution, Britain became the “workshop of the world” and the English bourgeoisie fattened on world trade, plunder and colonisation. No country was strong enough to compete with England. The Industrial Revolution pushed the bourgeoisie to the dominant position in the country. It became the ruling class. The aristocratic class retained some prestige and influence in social life and was still prominent in Parliament and bureaucracy, but it had to submit to the rising, powerful bourgeoisie. As the victim of the “Enclosure Movement”, the peasants became landless and had to find new ways of living. Ruined by the rapid capitalist development, the peasants had to wander for work. They became hired workers in the countryside and cities. Thus, a new class, the proletariat, sprang into existence. All the working people lived in dreadful poverty. They were mercilessly exploited and in some places sixteen hours' labour would hardly pay for the daily bread. In many large cities hungry men and women formed groups against the exploiters. The bourgeoisie got richer and richer while the

labourers became poorer and poorer until they could not support themselves. It was under this unbearable economic condition that the workers' struggle broke out, finding expression in the spontaneous movement of the Luddites (1811–1817), or “frame-breakers”, who broke their masters' weaving machines to show their hatred of the capitalists and capitalist exploitation.

July 14, 1789 saw a great event in Europe. That was the French Revolution. The heavily-exploited Parisian people rose and stormed the Bastille, the symbol of feudalism. The Revolution destroyed the feudal economic base. Its influence swept all over Europe. It is almost impossible for those who had no knowledge of the world history of this period to imagine the extraordinary effect of the French Revolution on the life and thought of England in both cultural and political terms.

The Revolution proclaimed the natural rights of man and the abolition of class distinctions. This, of course, was welcomed by the labouring people in Britain, where the labouring people and the progressive intellectuals hailed the French Revolution and its principle. Clubs and societies such as the London Corresponding Society and other radical organisations multiplied in Britain, all asserting the doctrine of “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity”, the watchwords of the Revolution. The Revolution had such a strong influence on Britain that many writers such as William Blake, Robert Burns, George Gordon Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Charles Lamb and even William Wordsworth and S. T. Coleridge, to mention a few, got their inspirations from it and wrote beautiful poems or prose. Wordsworth was at first very much excited by the Revolution and had been to France twice. Even after he had lost faith and hope and gained a comfortable income, Wordsworth, when writing about the Revolution, would still say:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven.

The French Revolution inspired the working people and the progressive intellectuals of Britain, but it scared the bourgeoisie, especially its upper stratum, who, though having launched their own revolution, could not bear the idea of another nation having a revolution. The British government



regarded the French Republic as a most dangerous enemy which threatened its very existence. Under the banner of patriotism and fighting “Jacobinism”, the British government supported and joined the “Holy Alliance”, which was formed in 1815 by the rulers of Russia, Austria and Prussia to suppress the democratic revolutionary movement in Europe. By doing this, the British government attempted to turn people’s thoughts from their own affairs to their neighbours’ and so to prevent a threatened revolution at home. The reactionary measures of the British government resulted in the notorious “Peterloo Massacre” in 1819 at St Peter’s Fields, Manchester, when hundreds of workers were killed and wounded by the troops during a mass rally demanding political reform for which the working people had been fighting for many years.

The political writings of the time also reflected the acute struggle. Edmund Burke (1729–1797) spoke against the French Revolution and sang elegies for the downfall of the royalty in France. He wrote a pamphlet *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), which soon became an anti-revolutionary manifesto for all reactionaries in Europe. Thomas Paine (1737–1809), who had been fighting for freedom, was repulsed by Burke’s picture of the sufferings of French royalty and nobility, saying “He [Burke] pitied the plumage and forgot the dying bird.” In response, Paine wrote the famous pamphlet *Rights of Man* (1791–1792), in which he advocated that politics was the business of the whole mass of common people instead of a mere governing oligarchy. People would not like a government that failed to secure people the rights to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”. People had the right to overthrow such a government, if necessary, by revolution. This pamphlet was published soon after the destruction of the Bastille, and added fuel to the flames kindled in Britain by the French Revolution. In consequence, *Rights of Man* was banned and Paine was found guilty of treason. He did not attend the trial, for he had been warned by William Blake of the likelihood of immediate arrest. Instead of returning to his lodgings where the police waited with a warrant, he escaped to France.

The English people became more and more dissatisfied with the reality of their country. Fighting for “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity” also became

their national spirit and they never stopped demanding reform for many years to come.

Some reforms had been made in England since 1815: the destruction of the African slave trade; the mitigation of horribly unjust laws, which included poor debtors and petty criminals in the same class; the prevention of child labour; the freedom of the press; the extension of manhood suffrage; the abolition of restrictions against Catholics in Parliament; the establishment of hundreds of popular schools under the leadership of Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster. These were but a few of the reforms which marked the progress of civilisation in a single half century. The Reform Bill of 1832 shifted the centre of political power to the middle class.

It was amid these social conflicts that Romanticism arose as a main literary trend, which prevailed in England from 1798 to 1832. It began with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* and ended with Walter Scott's death (1832).

The 19th century was decidedly an age of verse. Most of the great writers were eminent in poetry. The public taste was set in the poetic direction, and the literary distinction was easier to achieve in poetry than in prose. Poetry has long been held as the highest form of literary expression in England, and seems to have been most in harmony with the noblest powers of the English genius. As in the Elizabethan age, the young enthusiasts turned as naturally to poetry as a happy man to singing.

In addition to poetry, this age also produced some influential prose works. Walter Scott's novels have attained a very wide reading; Charles Lamb's essays and Jane Austen's novels have made an impact on the history of English literature. S. T. Coleridge, Robert Southey and William Wordsworth formed the trio of so-called "Lake Poets", but Coleridge and Southey wrote far more prose than poetry. And Southey's prose is much better than his verse. There was also a noteworthy development of the novel, which began to establish itself as the favourite literary form of the 19th century. By comparison, the drama was the only great literary genre that was not adequately represented. Although many of the great poets and other writers tried their hands at dramatic work, they only created some noble poems written in the dramatic form. There was probably not a single great drama in the strict sense. The

novel was also preferred to the drama as a medium for the portrayal of complex stories and characters.

The literature of this age was rich and varied. There was a vast body of excellent works. The great literary impulse of the age was the impulse of Individualism in a wonderful variety of forms.



Chapter 19

William Wordsworth (1770–1850)

William Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth, Cumberland, in northwest England. His family was physically vigorous and sound as well as healthy in its moral tone. He lost his parents at an early age, and was left to the care of uncles who discharged their trust in a praiseworthy manner.

Wordsworth went to school in his ninth year at Hawkshead, a village on the banks of Esthwaite Water. These school days were happy ones. He boarded in the village with a kind old dame, whom he fondly described in *The Prelude* (1850), and, out of school hours, he was free from the supervision of tutors. He wrote: “I was left at liberty then, and in the vacation, to read whatever books I liked.” He was also free to go about as he pleased, and he roamed early and late over the mountains.

The healthy out-of-door life hardened the fibres of his sturdy frame and kept him vigorous, and the constant sight of nature in the wondrous beauty of the Lake District awoke love and reverence in him. He enjoyed the sports of hunting, skating, and rowing. Little by little, the glories of Nature grew upon him, until his soul seemed flooded with unutterable delight when in her presence. This profound passion was fostered by his life in these early years, and grew steadily with his youth. At seventeen, he went to Cambridge and, for a time, was dazzled by the intercourse with town-bred men, but the infatuation was of short duration, and his four years at college were the least congenial of his life.

His travels on the Continent in his last vacation and after his graduation brought him in contact with the French Revolution, and he came under its spell, as did most of the enthusiastic young men of the time. His hopes were



stirred and his imagination fired with dreams of an ideal republic, which he fancied would arise from the Revolution. He says:

I gradually withdrew
Into a noisier world, and thus erelong
Became a Patriot; and my heart was all
Given to People, and my love was theirs. (*The Prelude*, Book IX)

He was prepared to throw himself personally into the struggle, when his relatives recalled him to England to face the ugly spectre of poverty. The rude shock came too suddenly upon his ardent aspirations, and, following closely upon it, came the failure of the revolutionists, the period of anarchy and imperialism in France. He sank into a dejection as deep as his hopes had been high, and, as he slowly recovered from his disappointment, he became more and more conservative in his politics, and less in sympathy with any violent reactions. For this he was censured by Byron, Shelley, and other strong adherents of liberty, but such moderation was more natural to Wordsworth than the excitement of his early years. To the end of his days, he never failed to utter for genuine liberty a hopeful, though calm and tempered note.

He returned from France in 1792. In 1795 a bequest of 900 pounds relieved the financial strain which had caused him anxiety, and secured for him and his sister Dorothy a modest maintenance. They went back to the Lake District, where they spent the rest of their lives save an occasional tour. The two places most associated with the poet are Grasmere, where he wrote the best of his poetry between the years 1798 and 1808, and Rydal Mount, where he lived in his later years. Dorothy was his lifelong companion. She won him back from his hopelessness over the Revolution and urged upon him the duty of devoting himself to poetry. Their favourite pastime was walking.

In 1797 he made friends with S. T. Coleridge, and a year later they jointly published *Lyrical Ballads*. The majority of poems in this collection were written by Wordsworth. S. T. Coleridge's chief contribution was his masterpiece "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". Many of Wordsworth's poems in *Lyrical Ballads* were devoted to the position of landless and