

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

1

外语教学与研究出版社
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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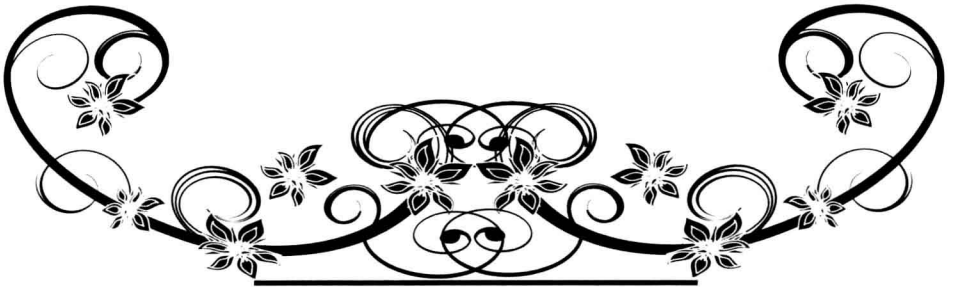
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Part 1

The Middle Ages





Chapter 1

The Anglo-Saxon Period (449–1066)

After the fall of the Roman Empire and the withdrawal of Roman troops from Britain, the aboriginal Celtic population in the larger part of the island was soon conquered and almost totally exterminated by the Teutonic tribes of Angles, Saxons and Jutes who came from the Continent and settled in the island, naming its central part Anglia, or England.

For nearly four hundred years prior to the coming of the English, Britain had been a Roman province. In 410 AD, the Romans withdrew their legions from Britain to protect Rome against swarms of Teutonic invaders. About 449 AD, a band of Teutons, called Jutes, left Denmark, landed on the Isle of Thanet. Warriors from the tribes of the Angles and the Saxons soon followed, and drove westward the original inhabitants.

Before the invasion of Britain, the Teutons inhabited the central part of Europe as far south as the Rhine, a tract which in a large measure coincided with modern Germany. The Jutes, Angles, and Saxons were different tribes of Teutons. These ancestors of the English dwelt in Denmark and in the lands extending southward along the North Sea.

The Angles, an important Teutonic tribe, furnished the name for the new home, which was called Angle-land, and afterward shortened into England. The language spoken by these tribes was generally called Anglo-Saxon or Saxon.

The literature of this period fell naturally into two divisions—pagan and Christian. The former represented the poetry which the Anglo-Saxons probably brought with them in the form of oral sagas, the crude material out of which literature was slowly developed on English soil; the latter represented

the writings developed under teaching of the monks. After the old pagan religion had vanished, it still retained its hold on the life and language of the people. In reading the earliest poetry of England it is well to remember that all of it was copied by the monks, and seems to have been more or less altered to give it a religious colouring.

The coming of Christianity meant not simply a new life for England, but also the wealth of a new language. The scop was replaced by the literary monks, and the monks, though living among common people and speaking with the English tongue, had behind them all the culture and literary resources of the Latin language. The effect was seen instantly in early English prose and poetry.

More voluminous are the survivals of the Christian poetry preserved in the monasteries. Among the early Anglo-Saxon poets we may mention Caedmon who lived in the latter half of the 7th century and wrote a poetic paraphrase of the Bible, and Cynewulf, the author of poems on religious subjects.

But the names of those who preserved and put down in written form the surviving pieces of old Anglo-Saxon poetry, have sunk into oblivion. And yet these unknown scribes probably deserve to occupy a higher place in the history of English literature than the two above-mentioned ecclesiastic poets. It was these unknown scribes that passed down to later generations the great epic *Beowulf* and such poems as *Widsith* or *The Traveller's Song*, and *The Seafarer*.

Beowulf¹

Beowulf can be justly termed England's national epic and its hero Beowulf, one of the national heroes of the English people.

The only existing manuscript of *Beowulf* was written by an unknown scribe at the beginning of the 10th century. This epic was composed much earlier, and reflected events which took place on the Continent approximately at the beginning of the 6th century, when the forefathers of the Jutes lived in the southern part of the Scandinavian Peninsula and maintained close



relations with kindred tribes, eg with the Danes who lived on the other side of the straits.

The whole epic consists of 3,182 lines and is divided into two parts with an interpolation between the two. The whole song is essentially pagan in spirit and matter, while the interpolation is obviously an addition made by the Christian who copied *Beowulf*.

The Story

This poem describes the deeds of the Teutonic hero Beowulf. Hrothgar, the King of the Danes, built a magnificent mead hall to which he gave the name of Heorot. While the Danes were eating and drinking their fill in this famous hall, Grendel, a monster, came from the moor, burst in upon them, mangled thirty warriors, and then rushed off into the darkness. For twelve years this monster harried the warriors whenever they feasted in the hall, and even the bravest were afraid to enter it.

When Beowulf heard of this, he sailed with his warriors to Heorot, and persuaded the Danes to feast with him in the hall. After they had fallen asleep there, Grendel burst in the door, seized a warrior, and devoured him in a few mouthfuls. Then he grasped Beowulf. The hero, disdaining to use a sword against the dire monster, grappled with him, and together they wrestled up and down the hall. In their mad contest they overturned the tables and made the vast hall tremble as if it were in the throes of an earthquake.

Finally Beowulf, with a grip like that of thirty men, tore away the arm and shoulder of the monster, who rushed out to the marshes to die. The next night a banquet was given in Heorot in honour of the hero. After the feast, the warriors slept in the hall, but Beowulf went to the palace. He had been gone for a short time, when Grendel's mother rushed in to avenge the death of her son. She seized a warrior, the king's dearest friend, and carried him away.

Beowulf followed the bloody trail of Grendel's mother to the terrible flood. Undaunted by the dragons and serpents that made their home within the depths in the flood, he grasped a sword and plunged beneath the waves. He saw Grendel's mother, who came forward to meet him. She dragged him into her dwelling, where there was no water, and the fight began. The issue

was for a time doubtful, but at last Beowulf ran her through with a gigantic sword, and she fell dead upon the floor of her dwelling. A little distance away, he saw the dead body of Grendel. The hero cut off the heads of the monster and his mother and hastened away to Hrothgar's court. After receiving much praise and many presents, Beowulf sailed homeward with his warriors, where he ruled as the king for fifty years.

The closing part of the poem tells how one of Beowulf's subjects stole some of the treasure which a fire-drake had been guarding in a cavern for three hundred years. The enraged monster with his fiery breath laid waste the land. Beowulf sought the dragon in his cavern and slew the monster after a terrible fight, but he was mortally wounded, and died after seeing in the cavern the heaps of treasure which he had won for his people. The dying hero was glad to learn that by his death he had gained more wealth for his people. He instructed Wiglaf, who was to succeed him, how to bury his body and how to rule the country after his death. His last words were full of care for the future of his land.

According to Beowulf's last will, the people of Jutland built a large bonfire on a headland which stretched far into the sea and cremated the hero's body. Then they laid all the treasures from the dragon's cave with Beowulf's ashes to show that the gold could in no way compensate for their great loss, and buried them under a tremendous mound. They piled the earth and stones so high that, in accordance with Beowulf's will, the mound thereafter became a beacon for the seafarers who sailed along the coast. Thus, even after his death, Beowulf continued to serve the people.

Mourning their dead champion, the people of Jutland composed a dirge praising the great deeds of Beowulf who

of men was the mildest and most beloved,
to his kin the kindest, keenest for praise.
Then the Goth's people reared a mighty pile
With shields and armour hung, as he had asked,
And in the midst the warriors laid their lord,
Lamenting. Then the warriors on the mound
Kindled a mighty bale fire; the smoke rose



Black from the Swedish pine, the sound of flame.
Mingled with sound of weeping;... while smoke
Spreads over heaven. Then upon the hill
High, broad, and to be seen far out at sea.
In ten days they had built and walled in it
As the wise thought most worthy, placed in it
Rings, jewels, other treasures from the hoard.
They left the riches, golden joy of earls,
In dust, for earth to hold, where yet it lies,
Useless as ever. Then about the mound
The warriors rode, and raised a mournful song
For their dead king, exalted his brave deeds,
Holding it fit men honour their liege lord,
Praise him and love him when his soul is fled.
Thus the (Geats) people, sharers of his hearth,
Mourned their chief's fall, praised him of kings, of men
The mildest and the kindest, and to all
His people gentlest, yearning for their praise.

(Morley's version)

Prologue: The Earlier History of the Danes

Yes, we have heard of the glory of the Spear-Danes, kings in the old days—how the princes of that people did brave deeds.

Often Scyld Scefing² took mead-benches away from enemy bands, from many tribes, terrified their nobles—after the time that he was first found helpless³. He lived to find comfort for that, became great under the skies, prospered in honours until every one of those who lived about him, across the whale-road, had to obey him, pay him tribute. That was a good king.

Afterwards a son was born to him, a young boy in his house, whom God sent to comfort the people: He had seen the sore need they had suffered during the long time they lacked a king. Therefore the Lord of Life, the Ruler of Heaven, gave him honour in the world, Beow⁴ was famous, the glory of the son of Scyld spread widely in the Northlands. In this way a young man ought

by his good deeds, by giving splendid gifts while still in his father's house, to make sure that later in life beloved companions will stand by him, that people will serve him when war comes. Through deeds that bring praise, a man shall prosper in every country.

Then at the fated time Scyld the courageous went away into the protection of the Lord. His dear companions carried him down to the sea-currents, just as he himself had bidden them do when, as protector of the Scyldings⁵, he had ruled them with his words—long had the beloved prince governed the land. There in the harbour stood the ring-prowed ship, ice-covered and ready to sail, a prince's vessel. Then they laid down the ruler they had loved, the ring-giver, in the hollow of the ship, the glorious man beside the mast. There was bought great store of treasure, wealth from lands far away. I have not heard of a ship more splendidly furnished with war-weapons and battle-dress, swords and mail-shirts. On his breast lay a great many treasures that should voyage with him far out into the sea's possession. They provided him with no lesser gifts, treasure of the people, than those had done who at his beginning first sent him forth on the waves, a child alone. Then also they set a golden standard high over his head, let the water take him, gave him to the sea. Sad was their spirit, mournful their mind. Men cannot truthfully say who received that cargo, neither counsellors in the hall nor warriors under the skies.

(I) Then in the cities was Beow of the Scyldings beloved king of the people, long famous among nations (his father had gone elsewhere, the king from his land), until later great Healfdene was born to him. As long as he lived, old and fierce in battle, he upheld the glorious Scyldings. To him all told were four children born into the world, to the leader of the armies: Heorogar and Hrothgar and the good Halga. I have heard tell that (...) was Onela's queen,⁶ beloved bed-companion of the Battle-Scylfing.

Beowulf and Grendel

The Hall Heorot Is Attacked by Grendel

Then Hrothgar was given success in warfare, glory in battle, so that his retainers gladly obeyed him and their company grew into a great band of



warriors. It came to his mind that he would command men to construct a hall, a great mead-building that the children of men should hear of forever, and therein he would give to young and old all that God had given him, except for common land and men's bodies⁷. Then I have heard that the work was laid upon many nations, wide through this middle-earth, that they should adorn the folk-hall. In time it came to pass—quickly, as men count it—that it was finished, the largest of hall-dwellings. He gave it the name of Heorot⁸, he who ruled wide with his words. He did not forget his promise; at the feast he gave out rings, treasure. The hall stood tall, high and wide-gabled, it would wait for the fierce flames of vengeful fire⁹; the time was not yet at hand for sword-hate between son-in-law and father-in-law to awaken after murderous rage.

Then the fierce spirit¹⁰ painfully endured hardship for a time, he who dwelt in the darkness, for every day he heard loud mirth in the hall; there was the sound of the harp, the clear song of the scop¹¹. There he spoke who could relate the beginning of men far back in time, said that the Almighty made earth, a bright field fair in the water that surrounds it, set up in triumph the lights of the sun and the moon to lighten land-dwellers, and adorned the surfaces of the earth with branches and leaves, created also life for each of the kinds that move and breathe.—Thus these warriors lived in joy, blessed, until one began to do evil deeds, a hellish enemy. The grim spirit was called Grendel, known as a rover of the borders, one who held the moors, fen and fastness. Unhappy creature, he lived for a time in the home of the monsters' race, after God had condemned them as kin of Cain. The Eternal Lord avenged the murder in which he slew Abel. Cain had no pleasure in that feud, but He banished him far from mankind, the Ruler, for that misdeed. From him sprang all bad breeds, trolls and elves and monsters—likewise the giants who for a long time strove with God; He paid them their reward for that.

(II) Then, after night came, Grendel went to survey the tall house—how, after their beer-drinking, the Ring-Danes had disposed themselves in it. Then he found therein a band of nobles asleep after the feast; they felt no sorrow, no misery of men. The creature of evil, grim and fierce, was quickly ready, savage and cruel, and seized from their rest thirty thanes. From there he turned to go back to his home, proud of his plunder, sought his dwelling with that store

of slaughter.

Then in the first light of dawning day Grendel's war-strength was revealed to men; then after the feast weeping arose, great cry in the morning. The famous king, hero of old days, sat joyless; the mighty one suffered, felt sorrow for his thanes, when they saw the track of the foe, of the cursed spirit; that hardship was too strong, too loathsome and long-lasting. Nor was there a longer interval, but after one night Grendel again did greater slaughter—and had no remorse for it—vengeful acts and wicked he was too intent on them. Thereafter it was easy to find the man who sought rest for himself elsewhere, farther away, a bed among the outlying buildings—after it was made clear to him¹², told by clear proof the hatred of him who now controlled the hall. Whoever escaped the foe held himself afterwards farther off and more safely. Thus Grendel held sway and fought against right, one against all, until the best of houses stood empty. It was a long time, the length of twelve winters, that the lord of the Scyldings suffered grief, all woes, great sorrows. Therefore, sadly in songs, it became well-known to the children of men that Grendel had fought a long time with Hrothgar, for many half-years maintained mortal spite, feud, and enmity—constant war. He wanted no peace with any of the men of the Danish host, would not withdraw his deadly rancour, or pay compensation; no counsellor there had any reason to expect splendid repayment at the hands of the slayer¹³. For the monster was relentless, the dark death-shadow, against warriors old and young, lay in wait and ambushed them. In the perpetual darkness he held to the misty moors, men do not know where hell-demons direct their footsteps.

Thus many crimes the enemy of mankind committed, the terrible walker-alone, cruel injuries one after another. In the dark nights he dwelt in Heorot, the richly adorned hall. He might not approach the throne, (receive) treasure, because of the Lord; He had no love for him.¹⁴

This was great misery to the lord of the Scyldings, a breaking of spirit. Many a noble sat often in council, sought a plan, what would be best for strong-hearted men to do against the awful attacks. At times they vowed sacrifices at heathen temples, with their words prayed that the soul-slayer¹⁵ would give help for the distress of the people. Such was their custom, the hope