



普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材



A SHORT HISTORY OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE

NEWLY REVISED & ENLARGED EDITION

英国文学简史

(新增订本)

刘炳善 编著

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BY GEORGE G. COULTON

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《英国文学简史》新增订本改版说明

《英国文学简史》原为河南大学外语系(现为外语学院)英语专业自编教材,1979年12月教育部邀请全国21所高校教师开会审稿,决定先内部发行,供有关院校试用;1981年7月由上海外语教育出版社出版,作为大学教材向全国发行。1993年,经编著者对本书进行全面修订,交河南人民出版社出版新修订版本,并经国家教委高等学校外语专业指导委员会批准,作为大学英语本科教材,再次向全国发行。这一教材,由于保持中国特色,内容简明扼要,语言浅显易懂,插图丰富生动,二十余年来受到我国各方学习者的欢迎。现为适应新世纪教学需要,根据国内外研究新成果,对本书内容进一步修订,增加第二次世界大战后至20世纪中后期重要诗人、小说家一编,补充插图,并提高印装质量,改为国际流行的大开本,希望能为我国高校的英语教学、有关专业本科生考研以及英语自学者继续做出贡献。

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PREFACE TO THE NEWLY REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION

This *Short History of English Literature* is a book for beginners who know little about English literature but who want to get some rudimentary knowledge about its history. The question which I have been considering during the compilation and revision of my book is how to make it useful and easily accessible to Chinese students. Such a purpose determines the way in which the book is made. I have tried to gather together, within the scope of such a short work, those materials which I deem necessary for beginners and rewrite them in simple English for easier understanding. In doing so, I have followed the examples of popularizers of literary history like John Macy, Lafcadio Hearn and our forerunners in this field: the late Professors Fan Cunzhong, Chen Jia (both of Nanjing University), Dai Liuling (of Zhongshan University, Guangzhou), and Wang Zuoliang (of Beijing Foreign Languages University).

This textbook was originally compiled for the students of English language in the provincial universities and normal colleges in our country. Efforts have been made to apply the basic views of Marxism, mainly those of historical materialism, in tracing the historical development of English literature. Each literary period is introduced first by a brief comment on its social, political and ideological conditions, and by a summary of the prevailing literary trends and schools of the time, but emphasis is laid on the description of the lives and careers of the great and major writers, especially on the analysis of their representative works, whereas the less important authors and those writers whose works are out of the reach of our students for the time being are merely mentioned in passing or even omitted altogether. So the book is far from all-embracing. I call it *a short history* because it is *short* of many things which appear in those profound works on English literature written by learned scholars.

But the making of this little book has taken me dozens of years, during which I have thrown into it a few drops of my heart-blood. The study of literature is a labour of love. A book devoted to literature should be vivid in content and attractive in form. For this reason, I have included in this book a number of stories and anecdotes about writers and poets as well as some quotations from their

writings. For illustrations I have chosen pictorial materials from various sources and invited some artists (mostly teachers and students of the Art Department of Henan University) to reproduce a part of them in black and white drawings. All this, I hope, may help to raise the students' interest in English writers and their works.

This book has now gone through three editions, i. e., the trial edition published by Foreign Languages Department, Henan University, in 1980, the first formal edition published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press in 1981, and the New Revised Edition of Henan People's Publishing House in 1993, totalling around 360,000 copies all told. During the past 25 years, many colleagues and scholars have kindly supported me in its publications and revisions, and I have expressed my acknowledgements to them in my previous Prefaces. But here I should express my special thanks to late Professor Li Funing (of Beijing University) and late Professor Xu Guozhang (of Beijing Foreign Languages University), who had given me selfless encouragement and assistance on the first publication of this book and the preparation for its New Revised Edition.

The present New Revised and Enlarged Edition has been made on the basis of the New Revised Edition of my *Short History*. In some parts of the latter I have now made a few minor revisions or increased one or two supplementary passages. But a great improvement has been made by the addition of a whole part, Part Nine, to the former edition. The ninth part contains 11 new chapters which bring the time limit of my book to the 1960s. In keeping with the enlargement of content, the number of illustrations has also increased. I hope they may help to raise our students' interest in some new writers of comparatively recent period.

A list of references expresses my acknowledgements to all the works on English history and English literature, which I have consulted in the composition and revision of this book.

I am also indebted to the users of my *Short History* from all corners of our country, who have assisted me with their kind suggestions regarding the revision of this book.

In conclusion, I repeat that this textbook is compiled for beginners. If only our students need it, like it, and find it useful as a stepping-stone in their study of English literature, I would think my time and labour has not been spent in vain.

Liu Bingshan
Kaifeng
May 2006

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CONTENTS

PREFACE TO THE NEW REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION

.....	1
REFERENCES	1

PART ONE

EARLY AND MEDIEVAL ENGLISH LITERATURE

CHAPTERS

1. The Making of England	1
The Britons, 1 — The Roman Conquest, 1 — The English Conquest, 2	
— The Social Condition of the Anglo-Saxons, 2 — Anglo-Saxon Religious Belief and Its Influence, 2	
2. <i>Beowulf</i>	3
Anglo-Saxon Poetry, 3 — The Story of <i>Beowulf</i> , 3 — Analysis of Its Content, 4 — Features of <i>Beowulf</i> , 5	
3. Feudal England	5
The Danish Invasion, 5 — The Norman Conquest, 5 — The Influence of the Norman Conquest on the English Language, 6 — Social Feature of the Feudal England, 6 — The Miseries of the Peasants, 7 — The Rising of 1381, 7 — The Content of the Romance, 8 — The Romance Cycles, 8 — The Class Nature of the Romance, 9 — Malory's <i>Le Morte D'Arthur</i> , 9	
4. Langland	11
<i>Piers the Plowman</i> and Its Author, 11 — A Picture of Feudal England, 11 — Artistic Features, 15	
5. The English Ballads	16
Oral Literature, 16 — The Ballads, 17 — The Robin Hood Ballads, 17	
6. Chaucer	19
Life, 19 — Chaucer's Literary Career, 21 — <i>Troilus and Criseyde</i> , 21 — <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> (1387—1400), 22	

PART TWO

THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE

CHAPTERS

1. **Old England in Transition** 27
 The New Monarchy, 27 —The Reformation, 27 —The English Bible, 28
 —The Enclosure Movement, 29 —The Commercial Expansion, 30
 —The War with Spain, 30 —The Renaissance and Humanism, 30
 —William Caxton, 31 —The Beginning of the English Renaissance, 32
2. **More** 32
 Life, 32 —*Utopia*, 33 —*Utopia*, Book One, 33 —*Utopia*, Book
 Two, 35 —More's Limitations, 37 —Engels on the Renaissance, 37
3. **The Flowering of English Literature** 38
 The Flourishing of Literature, 38 —Sidney and Raleigh, 39 —Edmund
 Spenser, 40 —John Lyly, 43 —Francis Bacon, 44
4. **Drama** 46
 The Miracle Play, 46 —The Morality Play, 47 —The Interlude, 47
 —The Classical Drama, 47 —The London Theatre, 47 —The
 Audience, 48 —The Playwrights, 49
5. **Marlowe** 50
 Life, 50 —Work, 51 —*Doctor Faustus*, 52 —Social Significance of
 Marlowe's Plays, 54 —Marlowe's Literary Achievement, 55
6. **Shakespeare** 55
 Life, 55 —A Chronological List of Shakespeare's Plays, 59 —Periods of
 Shakespeare's Dramatic Composition, 60 —The Great Comedies, 67
 —The Mature Histories, 70 —The Great Tragedies, 80 —*Hamlet*, 84
 —The Later Comedies, 89 —The Poems, 90 —Features of
 Shakespeare's Drama, 91
7. **Ben Jonson** 93

PART THREE

THE PERIOD OF THE ENGLISH BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION

CHAPTERS

1. **The English Revolution and the Restoration** 97

The Weakening of the Tie Between Monarchy and Bourgeoisie, 97	—The Clashes Between the King and Parliament, 97	—The Outburst of the English Revolution, 98	—The Split within the Revolutionary Camp, 98	—The Bourgeois Dictatorship and the Restoration, 98	—The Religious Cloak of the English Revolution, 99	—Literature of the Revolution Period, 99
2. Milton	100					
Life and Work, 100	— <i>Paradise Lost</i> , 107	— <i>Samson Agonistes</i> , 110	—Brief Summary, 111			
3. Bunyan	112					
Life, 112	— <i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i> , 114					
4. Metaphysical Poets and Cavalier Poets	116					
John Donne, 116	—George Herbert, 118	—Andrew Marvell, 118	—Henry Vaughan, 119			
5. Some Prose-Writers	120					
Robert Burton, 120	—Thomas Browne, 120	—Jeremy Taylor, 121	—Izaak Walton, 121			
6. Restoration Literature	122					
Restoration Comedy, 122	—John Dryden, 124					

PART FOUR

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTERS

1. The Enlightenment and Classicism in English Literature	126
The Enlightenment and 18th Century England, 126	—Classicism, 128
2. Addison and Steele	128
Steele and <i>The Tatler</i> , 128	—Addison and <i>The Spectator</i> , 130
3. Pope	134
Life, 134	—Work, 135
	—Workmanship and Limitation, 137
4. Swift	138
Early Life, 138	— <i>A Tale of a Tub</i> and <i>The Battle of the Books</i> , 139
— <i>Bickerstaff Almanac</i> (1708), 140	— <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> , 140
—Pamphlets on Ireland, 143	—Illness and Death, 144
	—Swift's Style, 145
5. Defoe and the Rise of the English Novel	146
The Rise of the English Novel, 146	—Defoe, 147
	—Defoe's Novels, 149
	— <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> , 150
6. Richardson	153

7. Fielding	156
Life, 156 —Fielding as a Playwright, 157 — <i>Joseph Andrews</i> , 159	
— <i>Jonathan Wild</i> , 162 — <i>Tom Jones</i> , 164 —Summary, 168	
8. Smollett and Sterne	171
Smollett, 171 —Sterne, 174	
9. 18th Century Drama and Sheridan	176
18th Century English Drama, 176 —Sheridan, 178	
10. Johnson	180
Life, 180 —Johnson's <i>Dictionary</i> , 181 —Boswell's <i>Life of Johnson</i> , 183	
11. Goldsmith	183
Life, 183 —Work, 184	
12. Gibbon	189
Life, 189 — <i>The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire</i> , 190	
13. Sentimentalism and Pre-Romanticism in Poetry	192
Sentimentalism in English Poetry, 192 —Pre-Romanticism, 193	
14. Blake	195
Life, 195 — <i>Songs of Innocence</i> (1789) and <i>Songs of Experience</i> (1794), 197 — <i>The Marriage of Heaven and Hell</i> (1790), 200 —Blake's Position in English Literature, 201	
15. Burns	201
Life, 201 —The Poetry of Burns, 203 —Features of Burns' Poetry, 208	

PART FIVE

ROMANTICISM IN ENGLAND

CHAPTERS

1. The Romantic Period	210
2. Wordsworth	212
3. Coleridge and Southey	217
Coleridge, 217 —Southey, 221	
4. Byron	222
Life, 222 — <i>Childe Harold's Pilgrimage</i> , 226 — <i>Don Juan</i> , 228	
5. Shelley	232
Life, 232 — <i>Queen Mab</i> , 235 — <i>The Revolt of Islam</i> , 237	
— <i>Prometheus Unbound</i> , 238 — <i>The Masque of Anarchy</i> and Other Political Lyrics, 239 —Lyrics on Nature and Love, 240 — <i>A Defence of Poetry</i> ,	

243	
6. Keats	244
Life, 244 — Long Poems, 246 — Short Poems, 250	
7. Lamb	253
Life, 254 — Lamb's Literary Career, 255 — <i>The Essays of Elia</i> , 256	
8. Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt	258
Hazlitt, 258 — Leigh Hunt, 262	
9. De Quincey	263
10. Scott	265
Life, 265 — His Historical Novels, 266 — Features of Scott's Historical Novels, 269	

PART SIX

ENGLISH CRITICAL REALISM

CHAPTERS

1. The Rise of Critical Realism in England	271
Social Background, 271 — Chartist Movement and Chartist Literature, 272 — English Critical Realism, 276	
2. Dickens	277
— Dickens' Novels, 280 — The First Period (1836—1841), 280 — The Second Period (1842—1850), 287 — The Third Period (1851—1870), 295 — Dickens: Man and Writer, 300	
3. Thackeray	303
Life and Work, 303 — <i>Vanity Fair: A Novel Without a Hero</i> , 305	
4. Some Women Novelists	308
Jane Austen, 309 — The Brontë Sisters, 310 — Mrs. Gaskell, 314 — George Eliot, 316	

PART SEVEN

PROSE-WRITERS AND POETS OF THE MID AND LATE 19TH CENTURY

CHAPTERS

1. Carlyle	321
Thomas Carlyle, 321 — <i>Sartor Resartus</i> , 323 — <i>The French Revolution</i> , 324	

— <i>Heroes and Hero-Worship</i> , 325	— <i>Past and Present</i> , 325	—Carlyle as a Literary Critic, 326	—Engels on Carlyle, 326
2. Ruskin and Some Other Prose-Writers	.....	327	
Ruskin, 327	—Arnold, 331	—Macaulay, 334	
3. Tennyson	.....	336	
Tennyson's Life and Career, 336	— <i>In Memoriam</i> , 337	— <i>The Idylls of the King</i> , 339	
4. The Brownings	.....	341	
Browning's Early Life and Career, 341	—Elizabeth Barrett (Mrs. Browning), 342	—Browning's Main Achievement in Poetry, 344	—Browning's Short Lyrics, 345
5. The Rossettis and Swinburne	.....	348	
Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 348	—Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830—1894), 351	—Fitzgerald's <i>Rubaiyat</i> , 353	—Algernon Charles Swinburne, 355
6. William Morris	.....	356	
Life, 357	— <i>A Dream of John Ball</i> , 359	— <i>News from Nowhere</i> , 360	
7. Literary Trends at the End of the Century	.....	364	
Naturalism, 364	—Neo-Romanticism, 365	—Aestheticism, 367	

PART EIGHT

TWENTIETH CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE

CHAPTERS

1. The New Century: Social and Historical Background	.....	371
2. English Novel of Early 20th Century	.....	372
The Realists, 373	—Kipling, Bennett and Conrad, 374	—Henry James, 376
—Katharine Mansfield, 377		
3. Hardy	.....	378
Life and Work, 378	— <i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i> , 379	— <i>Jude the Obscure</i> , 380
4. Galsworthy	.....	381
Life and Work, 381	— <i>The Forsyte Saga</i> , 382	
5. The Irish Dramatic Movement	.....	384
The Abbey Theatre and Lady Gregory, 384	—J. M. Synge, 385	—O'Casey, 385
6. Bernard Shaw	.....	386
Life, 386	—Dramatic Work, 388	— <i>Mrs. Warren's Profession</i> , 389
— <i>Major Barbara</i> , 391	— <i>Heartbreak House</i> , 393	

7. Some Poets of Early 20th Century	394
8. Modernism in Poetry	396
Imagism, 396 — W. B. Yeats, 396 — T. S. Eliot, 399	
9. The Psychological Fiction	402
D. H. Lawrence, 403 — The “Stream of Consciousness” School of Novel, 405 — James Joyce, 406 — Virginia Woolf, 408	
10. Robert Tressell: A Working-Class Novelist	411
11. Marxist Literary Criticism	415
Ralph Fox and <i>The Novel and the People</i> , 415 — Christopher Caudwell, 418 — Other Marxist Critics, 420	

PART NINE

POETS AND NOVELISTS WHO WROTE BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

CHAPTERS

1. Social and Historical Background	421
2. W. H. Auden	423
3. Dylan Thomas	430
4. Hugh MacDiarmid	434
5. E. M. Forster	442
6. Evelyn Waugh	445
7. Graham Greene	448
8. Aldous Huxley	451
<i>Point Counter Point</i> , 452 — <i>Brave New World</i> , 452	
9. George Orwell	454
10. William Golding	456
11. Doris Lessing	459