

新世纪应用型高等教育英语类课程规划教材

英国文学概况

*Sketches of
British Literature*

总主编 范纯海 主 编 黄 嵘



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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

英国文学概况 / 黄嵘主编. — 大连: 大连理工大学出版社, 2011.8

新世纪应用型高等教育英语类课程规划教材

ISBN 978-7-5611-6497-6

I. ①英… II. ①黄… III. ①英语—高等学校—教材
②文学—作品—介绍—英国 IV. ①H319.4:I

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2011)第 176077 号

大连理工大学出版社出版

地址:大连市软件园路80号

邮政编码:116023

发行:0411-84708842 邮购:0411-84703636 传真:0411-84701466

E-mail: dutp@dutp.cn

URL: <http://www.dutp.cn>

大连印刷三厂印刷

大连理工大学出版社发行

幅面尺寸:185mm×260mm

印张:19.75

字数:456千字

印数:1~2000

2011年8月第1版

2011年8月第1次印刷

责任编辑:张剑宇

责任校对:王翠竹

封面设计:张莹

ISBN 978-7-5611-6497-6

定价:48.00元

总序

教育部《国家中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要》(2010-2020年)的出台标志着中国教育改革与发展已进入新时期。《纲要》提出高等教育要“优化结构办出特色”,“重点扩大应用型、复合型、技能型人才培养规模”,以“适应国家和区域经济社会发展需要”。近年来由专科升本科的院校及独立学院等“新兴学院”的建立及发展正是《纲要》精神的贯彻和实践。相比于传统本科院校,新兴学院以市场定位专业,以技能和实践要求建立课程体系,及以就业为导向的办学理念,使其在激烈的人才市场竞争中,具有独特的灵活性和优势。

本系列教材以新兴学院英语专业的学生为对象,教材设计目标以培养应用型人才为主,应用型和通用型并举,定位于实用性、适应性及专业特色。内容“贴近时代、贴近人才市场的需求和贴近人的生存发展需求”,总体呈现以下特色:

1. 经典性与时代性。

本系列教材传承优秀的英语文化和世界文化,语言材料确保传统和经典,以训练标准的英语语言;同时注重新信息及语言的不断发展所展现的时代特征。资料来源途径:经典的传统教材,国内外相关网站,近年内出版的外文书籍及报纸杂志。

2. 专业特色与人才市场的适应性。

在《教育部关于“十二五”普通高等教育本科教材建设的若干意见》中,“鼓励编写、出版适应不同类型高等学校教学需要的不同风格和特色教材;积极推进高等学校与行业合作编写实践教材”。在专业教材的开发上,如商贸、科技、旅游领域等,本系列教材以“动态的、多变的、有地方特色”的市场需求为导向,从深入的“需求分析”入手,追踪市场经济,瞄准就业行情,并与相关企业、公司等合作,编写适时、实用、具专业特色和就业前景的实践教材。

3. 人文性、个性与趣味性。

本系列教材始终坚持人文主义教育观,内容追求有趣可读、新颖活泼、展示个性、弘扬真善美。通过读书使学生学会思考、热爱生活、追求理想、完善人格。

本系列教材依照国家关于英语教学以及教材建设的最新指示,遵循英语教改之路编写而成,作者团队均来自于教学一线,具有丰富的教学实战经验,包括汉口学院、武汉工业学院、黄冈师范学院、襄樊学院、武汉理工大学等院校的专家和老师;大连理工大学出版社在本系列教材的组建和出版方面给予了大力的支持与帮助,在此一并致谢。望本教材会为英语专业教学的探索和深入尽微薄之力,愿为莘莘学子的求学之路点亮希望。教材在编写过程中难免有不足之处,欢迎广大师生和读者给予宝贵建议。

范纯海

2011年8月

前言

英国文学浩如烟海,源远流长。国内介绍、评述英国文学的各类书籍及教材亦是汗牛充栋,不胜枚举,足见中国学者对世界文化的尊重和喜爱。呈现于此的这一单薄卷本,也是这种热情的结果。

本教材共八章。章节的划分与命名,有的以文学运动流派命名,如文艺复兴、启蒙主义、浪漫主义、现代主义时期;有的按历史阶段命名,如盎格鲁-撒克逊、中世纪、革命和王政复辟、维多利亚时期。各章节名称后都注明起始时间,便于在历史进程中展示英国文学流派运动的兴亡。

各章内以综述开始,介绍本时期的历史背景和文坛动态;后按体裁分节:诗歌、戏剧、散文、小说,以利于描述各文学体裁的发端和盛衰。这样作家出场不以绝对的时间为序,而是以历史进程和流派为经,以文体分类为纬,纵横交错,编织作家方队,追溯英国文学的演化沿革,流派的更迭,及各文学体裁的发生、成熟和式微。

每位作家以生平、作品、评论及章节选读勾勒。叙述作家、作品力求客观,但诗无达诂,评论作品难有终极的解释,本编尽量避开不同文学批评流派的观点,提供一种较为共识的解读,一种与广大读者的对话和互动。选取经典、名篇的同时,编者更着力充实了二十世纪文学,因为现代性的诉求仍是当下我们这个时代的主题。

本编的初衷,是想实现一种梦想:“尽量用细线条勾画出一个庞然大物”。遗憾的是,英国文学的富丽、厚实,往往使纤细线条难以承载,作家介绍、作品选读的结果是挂一漏万。本书只写到二战后的五十年代,留下了五六十年代的空白。其实这段时间的英国文坛仍是一派姹紫嫣红,且硕果累累,单是自2000年以来,就先后有奈保尔、库切、莱辛三位英国作家荣获诺贝尔文学奖。惭愧之余,敬请读者谅解。

本教材可作为大专院校英语专业本科生教材,及同等程度的英国文学爱好者的读本。之于博大、古老的英国文学,英专学生常感魅惑、神秘而又“高不可攀”。缘于此,本教材力求以简洁的文字素描式地叙述英国文学的清晰图景,使学生能较轻松地“探幽览胜”。本教材配教师用书,提供教材对应章节的补充资料,如作品的详细注释及解读、汉语译文、补充作品选读及章后练习参考答案等,既是教材的延伸,也方便教学。

本教材在编选过程中,曾查阅参考了国内外许多书籍资料,作为附录列于书末,并表示感谢。在此特别感谢本系列教材的总主编范纯海老师,没有他的信任、鼓励及支持,本教材难以成形;同时向上海应用技术学院的钟玲老师、四川教育学院的姜平老师在本教材拟稿阶段所给予的审读和所提出的建设性宝贵意见表示感谢;大连理工大学出版社的马赛老师对全书文稿进行了细致认真的编校,在此一并表示致谢。由于编者水平所限,书中缺点、错误在所难免,恳请各用书院校及广大读者批评指正。

所有意见和建议请发往:dutpwy@163.com

欢迎访问我们的网站:<http://www.dutpgz.cn>

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黄 嵘

2011年8月于武汉工业学院

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Chapter 1

The Anglo-Saxon Period (450–1066)

1.1 Overall View

1.1.1 Historical Context

England has a long history of civilization. But historians are still uncertain about who first came to the island. The earliest settlers living in what is now Britain were the Celtic tribes, known as the Celts, and speaking Celtic. The native Celtic Britons suffered repetitive invasions by foreign forces.

1.1.1.1 The Roman Conquest (55 B.C. ~ A.D. 410)

From 55 B.C. to A.D. 410 the British Isles were under the control of the Roman Empire. In 55 B.C., Roman troops led by Julius Caesar invaded Britain, and Britain became a Roman province for nearly 400 years. The Romans, however, did not gain full control of Britain. In Scotland, Wales, and Ireland the Celts remained free and wild and there were frequent conflicts between the native Celts and the Roman invaders.

During their rule the Romans, for military purpose, built roads, walls, garrisons, villas, etc. which remained useful for a long time to come. Along these roads grew up scores of towns, and London, one of them became an important trading centre.

By the 4th century, the Roman Empire was weakening. In A.D. 410, the Romans withdrew from the island, ending the 400-year invasion.

1.1.1.2 The Anglo-Saxon Conquest (A.D. 410 ~ 1066)

Not long after the withdrawal of Roman troops, came the three Germanic tribes: the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, known simply as Anglo-Saxons. The native Celts fought for their independence, many of them killed or enslaved, but they were finally defeated by the Anglo-Saxons who became the new master of the British Isles and the ancestors of the present English people.

While still on European Continent, the Anglo-Saxons were in the later stages of tribal

society. Settlement in Britain hastened the disintegration of tribalism as the tribal chieftains and thanes had the possession of large tracts of land and grew in wealth and power while the free farmers became more and more dependent economically. Therefore the Anglo-Saxon period witnessed a transition from tribal society to feudalism.

The Anglo-Saxons—a multitude of wealthy, independent lords and kings—also fought among themselves. Small kingdoms were established as fast as they collapsed. By the 7th century, seven kingdoms of fairly large territories emerged out of numerous smaller kingdoms. Of the seven Mercia and then Northumberland in the north flourished particularly in wealth and culture, and Wessex in the south became a more important centre of military and political power and culture.

Beginning from about A.D. 787 England was troubled intermittently by the Danes for more than a century. In late 9th century King Alfred the Great (A.D. 849-901?) of the Kingdom of Wessex led the English people to repulse the invaders, and gradually all the kingdoms in England were united into one.

In A.D. 1017 the Danes again came to invade England and ruled over all England for a quarter of century. The Danes were eventually defeated, and the Anglo-Saxons returned to rule in 1042. Yet the peace did not last long. In 1066 they were conquered by the Normans from France, marking the end of the Anglo-Saxon period.

1.1.2 Literary Trends

Unlike the Roman Conquest, the Anglo-Saxons exerted a great influence on England in every possible way of culture. They not only brought to England the Anglo-Saxon language which become the early form of English, Old English, but also a specific poetic tradition, which is bold and strong, mournful and elegiac in spirit. The Anglo-Saxons were heathen upon their first arrival in England. In A.D. 597 the first missionaries led by St. Augustine came to England from Rome and converted King Ethelbert of Kent, and within a century all England was Christianized. Churches were built and the monks were among the most learned in the country. Heathen mythology was gradually replaced by Christian religion.

Old English literature encompasses literature written in Old English, also called Anglo-Saxon, during the 600-year Anglo-Saxon period of England, from the mid-5th century to the Norman Conquest of 1066. These works include genres such as epic poetry, hagiography, sermons, Bible translations, legal works, chronicles, riddles, and others. In all there are about 400 surviving manuscripts from the period, a significant corpus of both

popular interest and specialist research.

Among the most important works of this period is the poem *Beowulf*, which has achieved national epic status in Britain.

1.2 Epic: *Beowulf*

Beowulf is an Old English heroic epic poem consisting of 3182 alliterative long lines, set in Scandinavia, commonly cited as one of the most important works of Anglo-Saxon literature. Its composition by an anonymous Anglo-Saxon poet is dated between the 8th and the early 11th century.

In the poem, the main protagonist, Beowulf, a hero of the Geats, battles three antagonists: Grendel, Grendel's mother, and an unnamed dragon. Hrothgar, the king of the Danes, built the great hall Heorot in which he and his warriors nightly spend their time singing and celebrating, until Grendel, angered by the singing, attacks the hall and kills and devours many of warriors. Hrothgar and his people, helpless against Grendel's attacks, abandon Heorot. Beowulf, a young warrior from Geatland, hears of Hrothgar's troubles and leaves his homeland to help Hrothgar. Beowulf and his men spend the night in Heorot, Grendel enters the hall devouring one of Beowulf's men. A terrible battle follows, and finally, Beowulf tears Grendel's arm from his body at the shoulder and Grendel runs to his home in the marshes to die.

The next night, after celebrating Grendel's death, Hrothgar and his men sleep in Heorot. Grendel's mother appears and kills Hrothgar's most trusted warrior in revenge for her son's death. Beowulf, and their men track Grendel's mother to her lair under a lake. Beowulf dives into the lake and is engaged in a fierce combat with Grendel's mother. At first, Grendel's mother appears to prevail. Beowulf at last grasps a mighty sword of the giants from Grendel's mother's armoury, which no other man could have hefted in battle, and beheads her.

Later in his life, Beowulf is himself king of the Geats, and finds his realm terrorized by a dragon whose treasure had been stolen from his hoard in a burial mound. Beowulf and his warriors come to fight the dragon. His warriors run away in fear of the dragon, only his young Swedish relative Wiglaf stays to help him. Beowulf finally slays the dragon, but is mortally wounded. He is buried in a tumulus by the sea.

Beowulf is considered an epic poem in that the main character is a hero who travels great distances to prove his strength at impossible odds against supernatural demons and beasts. The poet, while objective in telling the tale, nonetheless utilizes a certain style to maintain

excitement and adventure within the story. An elaborate history of characters and their lineages are spoken of, as well as their interactions with each other, debts owed and repaid, and deeds of valor. *Beowulf* is the oldest surviving epic in British literature and survives in a single manuscript.

List of Works

Beowulf 《贝奥武夫》