



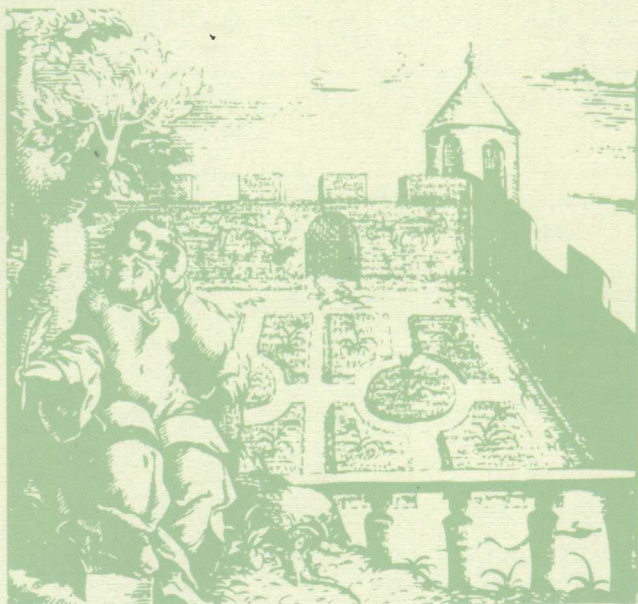
高等学校英语专业系列教材

简明英国文学史

刘意青
刘 旻

著

A Brief History of English Literature
— From the Old English Period to the 1990s



外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS



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编者的话

这部《简明英国文学史》教材是应外语教学与研究出版社之邀，为广大青年学子，特别是那些需要参加外国文学类考试的学生编写的。通观目前国内书市上已有的各种英国文学史、文学选读及文学词典，用英文写的简明版英国文学史并不多见，最具代表性的要算河南大学刘炳善教授于1981年出版的那一部。刘炳善教授是业内非常受尊敬的老先生，治学严谨，他编写的文学史直到今天在材料翔实、评介简明和体例清晰方面仍然是值得称道的。然而，毕竟二十多年过去了。随着文学创作的发展和新文学理论的出现，国际上对文学作品和作家的研讨都有了创新，加之我国改革开放后吸收了不少过去被我们忽视，甚至排斥的批评观念和理论，这样，编写一部新的《简明英国文学史》的任务就被提到了日程上来。编者在受命后，参照了过去的一些教材，拟订了自己的编写和选材原则。经过了近两年的努力，编者在日常繁忙的教学和科研任务中见缝插针，终于完成了这项有意义的工作。在这部教材即将出版并投入使用之际，我们想就编写的想法和使用方法做一些介绍，仅供读者参考。

首先要谈及的是这部教材的特点。总的说来，我们遵循了厚今薄古的原则，因此古代和中古时期的介绍相当简要。文艺复兴和莎士比亚戏剧讨论也基本上只是点到即止，因为莎士比亚可以说是国内最熟悉的作家，有关他的信息和评论已经很多了。而当介绍到17、18和19世纪的文学时，相关的内容就逐渐详尽起来。另一个特点是，这部文学史比较个性化。也就是说，它不过分追求面面俱到和观点持平，也不是用规则的分级标题明确地标示出固定的内容。考虑到我国长期以来的教学习惯，我们也采用了分层次标题，但是在比较概括的标题下内容不再那么死板。在照顾文学史完整性的前提下，我们注重反映编著者个人的选取侧重，

以及多年教学实践中的体会和见解，并且注意培养学习者的独立思考意识，用国际国内有争议的观点激发他们的学习兴趣，从而改变过去此类教材只是单纯传授知识和信息，学习者常常陷于死记硬背的局面。实际上，本书更接近国际上非工具书类型的评介性文学史，但我们不仅没有像那些文学史一样彻底去除文学分段和作者名字之外的其他各种标题，还应出版社要求配上了一些练习，从而符合了我国教材出版的需要。

由于英国文学内容丰富，前后数百年的作家和作品是不可能在40万字的篇幅内含括的，而且书厚了或卷数增加了，既不方便读者，又要提高售价，因此我们只能在至今选取最多的、或最为重点的作家和作品中进一步筛选。这方面遗憾和无奈很多，而且仁者见仁，智者见智，恐怕不少人会对我们的选材有不同看法。比如18世纪的女性作家和思想家玛丽·沃尔斯通克拉夫特和她的女权主义著作，19世纪玛丽·雪莱的科幻和哥特式小说《弗兰肯斯坦》，特洛罗普和盖斯凯尔夫人的作品等就没能收入本教材。另外，在评介作家和作品时，面面俱到的介绍几乎是不可能的。在篇幅有限的情况下，一种办法是提纲挈领地列出框架，尽量减少讲述，以增加涵盖面；另一种办法就是简明扼要，抓住比较重要或有争议的内容进行相对深入的讲解。我们基本上选择了后一种做法，因为上面提到过第一种写法容易把教材写成工具书。既有工具书可查，又何需这部教材？还有一个基于实际教学效果的更重要的考虑，那就是课堂教学的目的在于抛砖引玉。课堂上照本宣科会令教师和学生都觉得乏味。只有当教材留给教师一定的发挥空间时，才能使教师在教学中充分发挥个人才智并提高教学质量。只有当教材能够通过某些切入点引发学生的思考并使其产生兴趣时，才能促使学生主动学习，并逐渐掌握方法。但是，这样一来，使用工具书和参考资料就显得尤为重要，而学会使用参考书是大学学习过程中的重要环节。我们在教材后面提供了参考书目，也鼓励使用者自己去网上去查找相关资料参考。

最后要说明的一点是关于评介中如何处理故事情节的问题。适当介绍情节几乎是国内同类教材的共有做法，然而在操作中很难把握详略。在这部简明文学史教材中我们力求在能说明问题的情况下少讲故事。但是，为了让分析不成为空话，或为了讲清楚某个观点，有时不得不涉及到人物或故事的细节。因此，在尽量少讲故事的原则下，本书形成了以下三个特点：1) 小说和戏剧比诗歌多一些内容和情节介绍；2) 对戏剧和小说中不为中国读者熟悉的作品介绍要详细些；3)

19 世纪之前的文学在内容方面的介绍一般要比 20 世纪的详尽。最后一个特点的成因有两个：一是 19 世纪之前的名家名作大多已有定论，不论从数量上还是从评介内容上都比较明确，可以突出几个详细介绍，而 20 世纪的新作品和作家还有待历史进一步评断，因此我们采取了尽量收录的策略，但一般不做类似莎士比亚、乔叟、华兹华斯、或狄更斯那种长篇的介绍。二是进入 20 世纪后各种实验派创作推崇意识流和心理描写而淡化情节，许多作品的故事情节本身就十分单薄，从而导致内容介绍也相对简单。

由于时间仓促，本书会存在不少问题和不足，欢迎广大读者批评指正。

编者

2008 年春于北京

执笔分工

刘意青：第一部分 古代和中世纪英国文学

第二部分 文艺复兴和莎士比亚

第三部分 17 世纪英国文学

第四部分 18 世纪英国文学

第五部分 英国浪漫主义文学

第六部分 维多利亚英国文学

参考书目

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第八部分 20 世纪中期英国文学

参考书目

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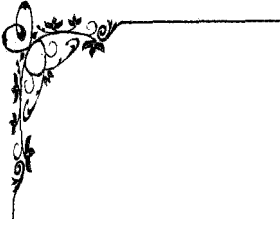
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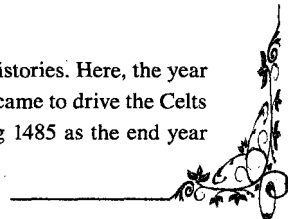
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Part I

Old and Middle English Periods (450-1485)¹

-
1. There are different division years in different literary histories. Here, the year 450 is the year around which Angles, Saxons and Jutes came to drive the Celts away; and we follow the *Norton Anthology* in choosing 1485 as the end year of the Middle English Period.



Chapter 1

Old English Period and *Beowulf* (450-1066)

I. Old English Period

1. A Brief Account of the Historical Situation

In about BC 600 Celts, who inhabited the upper Rhineland, started to migrate to the British Isles, and among them the Britons, a branch of the Celts, came to the Isles in BC 400 to BC 300, from whom Britain got its name. At the time of migration, the Celts were tribal people at the early stage of the Iron Age. Later, troops led by Julius Caesar of the Roman Empire invaded the British Isles, defeated the Celts and ruled there from BC 55 to AD 407, bringing with them the slave system. The Roman reign over Britain went on for three and a half centuries, but the Britons never ceased fighting against them. At the beginning of the 5th century, the Roman Empire declined and in AD 410 all their troops were withdrawn. The Romans had built towns, roads, walls, and military fortresses during their rule, but because they did not really settle down or mix up with the Celts, they left little influence on the native people.

After the Romans, the Teutonic or Germanic tribes of Angles, Saxons and Jutes moved to live in the British Isles. This happened in about AD 450. They drove the Celts to Wales, Scotland and Ireland, settled down themselves and named the central part of the island England, that is the land of Angles. These tribes were a seafaring people who originally lived along the coast of Denmark and Germany. They became the masters of England and the ancestors of the English people. By the end of the 6th century there had established seven Saxon kingdoms in England, and a feudal society gradually replaced the primitive tribal life.

In the modern English language, almost no traces of the Celtic language

of the ancient Britons can be found. Despite the fact that in the course of its development the English language has gradually changed, such as the loss of most of the flexions of the old Anglo-Saxon, both the grammatical rules and the body of the short words that form the basic word-stock of Modern English are of Anglo-Saxon origin.

Starting from the late 8th century, the Danes from Scandinavia came plundering the Isles. They were a strong sea people known as the Vikings and at first they mainly invaded the eastern coast of England. But soon they pushed inland to plunder the whole country. It was in the second half of the 9th century and united under the Wessex King, Alfred the Great (849-c. 899), that the English people drove the Viking Danes off. King Alfred also made contributions other than military. He encouraged education and literature. The first Anglo-Saxon chronicle was written during his reign, which was a landmark of the Old English Period. After his death, the Danes overcame the Saxons again in 1013. It was not until 23 years later in early 11th century that the pirating of the Vikings was finally put to a stop. Although some Danes made permanent settlements in the British Isles, yet like the Romans before them, they failed to leave much influence behind.

The greatest historical event that followed was the Norman Conquest of 1066. The Normans came from Normandy in northern France to attack England and won a decisive victory at the battle of Hastings under the leadership of the Duke of Normandy, usually known as William the Conqueror. William then claimed the English throne, promising the last Saxon king Harold that he would protect England from the Vikings' invasions. France at that time was more advanced in the social system and economy. The Norman Conquest not only hurried England toward a more developed feudal society, but its influence in the evolution of the English language, life style and culture was also very significant. The year 1066 was then marked as a dividing point in the English history. Although the Norman rulers spoke French, English survived. In 1349 English was officially introduced at schools and in 1362 at courts of law. And gradually the English language entered a new period of its history, which is known as the Middle English.

Before finishing this brief historical account, we must also say something about the beginning of Christianity in Britain. Both the earliest Celtic settlers and the Angles, Saxons and Jutes came to England as heathens. They worshipped their own gods that were related to the mythology of Northern Europe. It was in the year of 597 that Pope Gregory the Great of the

Roman Catholic Church sent St. Augustine to England to convert the Anglo-Saxons. King Ethelbert of Kent was the first to be converted and he founded in Kent the Canterbury Abbey. In the north, the earlier Christianised Ireland was engaged in sending missionaries to the Angles. The monasteries built by them in Northumbria were the earliest civilising influences, and the well-known Northumbrian School in literary history refers to the learned monks in these monasteries. From Canterbury and Northumbria, Christianity spread throughout the country. However, it took the Roman Catholic Church about a century to Christianise all England. More monasteries were set up and, like the situation in Europe, monks who were trained in Latin became the most learned people of England. The great Latinist of Northumbrian School was the Venerable Bede (c. 673-735), a learned theologian and historian with works such as a natural history and a chronology of the Christian era. His most outstanding work is *The Ecclesiastical History of the Angles*, which is still the chief authority for knowing the Old English Period, including its earliest poetry, poets and literary achievements.

2. Chief Literary Achievements of the Period

Old English Poetry: The earliest forms of English literature have perished. We know very little of the Old English poetry in its rudest shape. The first English poet known to us is Widsith, meaning the “Wide Wanderer”, who was a scop or itinerant minstrel of the 6th century. Widsith left us a poem named after himself called *Widsith*, which is around 150 lines long about his own life, his joy and grief. Then there is a moving elegy *The Wanderer* of 115 lines, a lament of a man who has lost his protecting lord, and wanders afterwards over the waters to find a resting place. Another piece *The Seafarer* is usually read as a dialogue between an old man who knows the joyless life of the sea and a young man who will not be persuaded away from the sea adventures. There are other fragmentary poems such as *The Wife’s Complaint* and *The Husband’s Message*, etc. But the poor shape of the manuscript makes all of the poems difficult to read. *Beowulf* is the most readable and complete one of them. It tells the hard, joyless yet heroic lives of the old English forefathers, and is regarded as their great national epic poem.

Christian Poetry: Christian poetry occupies an important place in the literature of this period too. Augustine and the Roman monks who came to convert England changed much of the subject matter and feeling of English



RAND 7 hwaðe liguþ þilce ðe þa brættun
 ne cūþ þinon 7 þyrtas. forþon hie þegira
 þe: god 7 for syndon. hie hwa 7 gū beþre.
 7 hliþ of þi hyge. noldon aþfaldan. þone þe þe
 þuan. hæfdon rice micel. þe nō þa beþæl
 lðe: þy ne to botme. on þa hætan hēll. þun hlyge
 lðre: 7 þun of ðunæto: 7 oþeon of þe land: þ þæt
 lðnef lðar: 7 þæt lēf þall. þyrt for micel þy nō
 on gæton: þ hie hæfdon geþreled. þreawun þun
 hæpa miclan mod. 7 þun miht god 7 þun of þe
 met to ðalpa. 7 þoþe: þa þæt þæt fe of þun oðer
 þe ær þæt ætla. 7 þonof. hie of on hie þe: 7 hie
 hie þun lðar. oþerene þy ne. oð hie to dole. þunon.
 þ hie for gylt cepe: god 7 þæt þæt d. mihtas on mo
 de þy ne. þæt þe hie on þe monðe. in nan. nō þe. on
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 ne þæt þe an. helle. 7 þæt þe. 7 þæt þe. nall þe. þæt god
 þæt þe an. Saetan. maðe lode. 7 þæt þe. 7 þæt þe. þe
 helle. þæt þe. hie lðan. 7 þæt þe. 7 þæt þe. þæt þe. 7 þæt þe.
 þæt þe. 7 þæt þe. hie on hie þe. oð hie hie þe
 ge for þæt þe. 7 hie of þe. 7 þæt þe. 7 þæt þe. þe
 ne þe. 7 þæt þe. oþerene. þe. þæt þe. 7 þæt þe. þe
 on in nan. hie ymb hie hie an. hie þæt þe. 7 þæt þe.
 þæt þe. 7 þæt þe. he þa þe. cepe. 7 þæt þe. 7 þæt þe. 7 þæt þe.
 ungelic. 7 þæt þe. þe. oðerene. þe. 7 þæt þe. hie an

A page of Old English verse

poetry, but left its form and artistic features unaltered. For instance, the subject changed from describing people's hard and melancholy life to the story of Christ and the deeds of saintly heroes, but the form of the verse line and the shape of the poem remain the same as those of *Beowulf*. Also, St. Augustine's theological influence stayed, but mainly in the south. In the north, the monasteries were sometimes headed by Celtic Christians, and thus northern English literature was touched by a Celtic influence, the effect of which was to make English poetry more subjective and lyric. Among the early Anglo-Saxon poets Caedmon (fl.670) from Northumbria

must be mentioned. He grew up and lived in a monastery ruled by a Celtic Abbess and was remembered for his Christian poetry. According to him, he was told in a vision to sing of God. When he woke up, he remembered the lines and wrote them down. And this event started him on the road of composing poetry. He wrote in Anglo-Saxon a poetic paraphrase of the Bible. Another important poet who appeared a century later after Caedmon was Cynewulf (fl.750). He was the author of poems on religious subjects.

II. Anglo-Saxon Epic Poem *Beowulf*

The Anglo-Saxons came to England with their own folklore and their early poetry mostly tells of events which took place on the European Continent. After their settlement in England the tribal form of social life gave

way to the rising feudal system, which was accompanied by the consolidation of Christian faith that finally replaced the pagan beliefs in the 7th century. But even after Christianity was officially adopted by the ruling classes and Latin was taught in monastic schools, the common people continued to keep in their memory the songs and epics created by the ancient scop. And in this way some of the ancient Anglo-Saxon poetry were preserved. The written Anglo-Saxon later developed on the basis of the Latin alphabet and was practised by scribes and scholars who were often of “low birth”. These monastery-trained writers knew Latin and were influenced by the Latin language and Christian culture. They recorded and passed down ancient poems of which *The Song of Beowulf* was the most important.

1. The Story of *Beowulf*

Part One: The story begins with a description of the reign of the Danish king Hrothgar who had built a great feast-hall Heorot to entertain his kinsmen and warriors. But the feasts attracted a huge sea-monster Grendel, who was a man-eater and lived in the neighbouring swamps. He regularly appeared in Heorot at night-time and ate some warriors. The hall was soon deserted. The news of the disaster reached Beowulf, Hrothgar’s nephew and a young and mighty warrior of Geats (Jutes) who has won fame and respect everywhere for his bravery and self-sacrifice spirit. He immediately sailed forth with a small band of warriors to Demark. Hrothgar welcomed them and gave a banquet. In the dead of the night the monster came and killed a warrior. Beowulf fought Grendel and caught the monster in an iron grip. Their fight was so fierce that the walls of the hall shook. At last Grendel tore himself away, but left his arm in Beowulf’s hand. He escaped and crawled back to his lair to die.

The next night a great feast was thrown to celebrate Beowulf’s victory. But Grendel’s mother, a water-witch, came to avenge her son and killed one of the warriors. Beowulf and his warriors set out to the lair of Grendel’s mother at the bottom of a stagnant pool full of sea-serpents and frothing with blood. Beowulf plunged into the pool. In the castle of Grendel’s mother, he found a magic sword. With this powerful weapon he killed the old monster. Then he saw Grendel’s dead body and cut off his head. Hrothgar heaped valuable gifts on the hero and his followers, but he brought his share of treasures back to Jutland (the land of Jutes) and gave all of it to Hygelac, his king.