



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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Compiled by
LIU BINGSHAN

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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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2006年6月

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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