


外语语言文学系列教材

# 英国文学选读新编

陈红 朱卫红 赖艳 主编

 华东师范大学出版社



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## 前 言

这套《英国文学选读新编》教材是我们几位参加编写工作的教师在数年教学实践的基础上,将实际教学内容归纳整理,并结合学生的反馈意见,多次调整修改后完成的。作为一部面向英语专业本科学生的教材,它具有如下特点:

1. 重点突出:本教材共设计了18讲的内容,每讲选取一个或两到三个作家的作品,并针对每部作品提出一个“主要关注点”,同时围绕此点设计一系列阅读前及阅读后的讨论问题,以此促使学生进行有重点的阅读和理解,更好地把握作家和作品的独特性。

2. 操作性强:本教材在设计每讲的内容时,从实际授课的需要出发,各教学环节基本上以问题的形式串联起来,既有背景知识问题及导入性的问题,又有启发性和拓展性的问题,有利于教学活动的循序渐进,层层深入。

3. 互动性强:本教材一方面十分强调学生在学习中的主动性,另一方面又强调教师对学生的启发和有效指导;在理想的状态下,课堂的大部分时间应该用来讨论问题,因此特别适合小班授课。如果条件不允许,也可适当增加课堂阅读或教师导读的时间。

4. 连贯性强:本教材所对应的“英国文学选读”课程应以“英国文学史”为先行课,前者在相当程度上是对后者的一种补充。学生通过对文本的阅读,有望掌握作家、作品及文学阶段的特征,使之前所学的抽象且空洞的史实具体和生动起来。同时,在问题的设计方面,有意识地突出文学传统的概念,突出重要文学思想的传承。

简而言之,本书编者期待着通过上述一系列的教材改革,为传统的“英国文学选读”课的教学带来新鲜元素,让学生在通过积极主动的学习打下良好文学基础的同时,成为真正的文学爱好者。

编 者

2009年1月

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# Lecture 1 Geoffrey Chaucer (1343—1400)

## 1. Background questions

- 1) To understand Chaucer's position as "Father of English Literature", it is important to have an idea of what English literature was like before him as well as during his time. What do you know about the Old English Period and the Medieval Period, such as their time span, their major literary forms, etc. ?
- 2) "Heroic" and "chivalric" are two key words people often use to describe the moral values of the Old and Medieval English Periods. Which of the two words goes for the Old English Period, and which for the other? What is(are) the major difference(s) between heroic and chivalric codes of behavior?

## 2. Selected readings

- **Central issue of concern**

Chaucer as a transitional figure between the Medieval period and the Renaissance period

- **Preview questions**

- 1) Which of the following expressions are likely to be found in an introduction to Chaucer? Influence of Italian Renaissance, messenger of humanism, Father of English Drama, the first important realistic writer, comic spirit, quiet life and career, heroic couplet.
- 2) As the first excerpt is a description of a knight and his squire, it is supposed to follow the tradition of romance or chivalric literature. What do you know about the medieval romance as a literary genre?
- 3) The second excerpt concerns Christian teachings of love, marriage and chastity.

What do you know about Christian views in these aspects?

**Text A: The General Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales***

A Knight ther was, and that a worthy man,  
 That fro the time that he first bigan  
 To riden out, he loved chivalrye,  
 Trouthe and honour, freedom and curteisye<sup>①</sup>.  
 5 Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,  
 And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre,  
 As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,  
 And<sup>②</sup> evere honoured for his worthinesse.  
 At Alisaundre<sup>③</sup> he was whan it was wonne.  
 10 Ful ofte time he hadde the boord bigonne<sup>④</sup>  
 Aboven alle nacions in Pruce;  
 In Lettou had he reised, and in Ruce,  
 No Cristen man so ofte of his degree;  
 In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be  
 15 Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye;  
 At Lyeis was he, and at Satalye,  
 Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See<sup>⑤</sup>  
 At many a noble arivee hadde he be.  
 At mortal batailes<sup>⑥</sup> hadde he been fifteene,  
 20 And foughten for oure faith at Tramissene  
 In listes<sup>⑦</sup> thries, and ay slain his fo.

① Trouthe: integrity. "Freedom" is here generosity of spirit, while "curteisye" is courtesy.

② And: And he was.

③ Alisaundre: The Knight has taken part in campaigns fought against all three groups of pagans who threatened Christian Europe during the 14th century: the Moslems in the Near East, from whom Alexandria was seized after a famous siege; the northern barbarians in Prussia, Lithuania, and Russia; and the Moors in North Africa. The place names in the following lines refer to battlegrounds in these continuing wars.

④ hadde the boord bigonne: sat in the seat of honor at military feasts.

⑤ the Grete See: the Mediterranean.

⑥ mortal batailes: tournaments fought to the death.

⑦ listes: lists, tournament grounds.

This ilke worthy Knight hadde been also  
 Sometime with the lord of Palatye<sup>①</sup>  
 Again another hethen in Turkye;  
 25 And everemore he hadde a sovereign pris.  
 And though that he were worthy<sup>②</sup>, he was wis,  
 And of his port as meeke as is a maide.  
 He nevere yit no vilainye ne saide  
 In al his lif unto no manere wight<sup>③</sup>;  
 30 He was a verray, parfit, gentil knight.  
 But for to tellen you of his array,  
 His hors were goode, but he was nat gay.  
 Of fustian he wered a gipoun<sup>④</sup>  
 Al bismotered with his haubergeoun<sup>⑤</sup>,  
 35 For he was late come from his viage,  
 And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.  
 With him ther was his sone, a yong Squier<sup>⑥</sup>,  
 A lovee and a lusty bachelor,  
 With lokkes crulle as they were laid in presse.  
 40 Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.  
 Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,  
 And wonderly delivered, and of greet strengthe.  
 And he hadde been som time in chivachye<sup>⑦</sup>  
 In Flaundres, in Artois, and Picardye,

① the lord of Palatye: a pagan. Alliances of convenience were often made during the Crusades between Christians and pagans.

② worthy: valiant.

③ no manere wight: any sort of person. In Middle English, negatives are multiplied for emphasis, as in these two lines: "nevere", "no", "ne", "no".

④ gipoun: tunic worn underneath the coat of mail.

⑤ haubergeoun: all rust-sustained from his hauberk (coat of mail).

⑥ Squier: bachelor, a young knight still in the service of an older one.

⑦ in chivachye: on cavalry expeditions. The places in the next line are sites of skirmishes in the constant warfare between the English and the French.

45           And born him wel as of so litel space<sup>①</sup>,  
               In hope to stonden in his lady grace.  
               Embrouded was he as it were a mede<sup>②</sup>,  
               Al ful of fresshe flowres, white and rede;  
               Singing he was, or floiting, al the day:  
 50           He was as fressh as is the month of May.  
               Short was his gowne, with sleeves longe and wide.  
               Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ride;  
               He coude songes make, and wel endite,  
               Juste<sup>③</sup> and eek daunce, and wel portraye and write.  
 55           So hote he loved that by nightertale<sup>④</sup>  
               He slepte namore than dooth a nightingale.  
               Curteis he was, lowely, and servisable,  
               And carf biforn his fader at the table.<sup>⑤</sup>  
               A Yeman<sup>⑥</sup> hadde he and servants namo  
 60           At that time, for him liste<sup>⑦</sup> ride so;  
               And he was clad in cote and hood of greene.  
               A sheef of pecok arwes, bright and keene,  
               Under his belt he bar ful thriftily,  
               Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly<sup>⑧</sup>:  
 65           His arwes drouped nought with fetheres lowe.  
               And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.  
               A not-heed hadde he with a brown visage,  
               Of wodecraft wel coude he al the usage.

① as of so litel space: considering the little time he had been in service.

② mede: mead, meadow.

③ Juste: joust, fight in a tournament.

④ by nightertale: at night.

⑤ And carf biforn his fader at the table: It was a squire's duty to carve his lord's meat.

⑥ Yeman: an independent commoner who acts as the Knight's military servant; "he" is the Knight.

⑦ him liste: it pleased him (to).

⑧ yemanly: in a workmanlike way.

70 Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer<sup>①</sup>,  
 And by his side a swerd and a bokeler<sup>②</sup>,  
 And on that other side a gay daggere,  
 Harneised wel and sharp as point of spere;  
 A Cristophre<sup>③</sup> on his brest of silver sheene;  
 An horn he bar, the bawdrik<sup>④</sup> was of greene.  
 75 A forster was he soothly, as I gesse.

(Selected from *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. M. H. Abrams, et al., eds. 7th ed. New York, London: Norton, 2001.)

### • Discussion questions

- 1) What does Text A tell us about chivalric codes of behavior? Point to the specific phrases or lines in the text that explicitly emphasize the importance of these values.
- 2) What qualities are required for a knight? Or for a squire? Or for a yeoman?

### Text B: The Prologue of "The Wife of Bath's Tale"

Experience, though no authority  
 Were in this world, were good enough for me  
 To speak of woe that is in all marriage:  
 For masters, since I was twelve years of age,  
 5 Thanks be to God who is for aye alive,  
 Of husbands at church door<sup>⑤</sup> have I had five;  
 For men so many times have wedded me;  
 And all were worthy men in their degree.  
 But someone told me not so long ago  
 10 That since Our Lord, save once, would never go

① gay bracer: wrist guard for archers.

② bokeler: buckler (a small shield).

③ Cristophre: St. Christopher medal.

④ bawdrik: baldric (a supporting strap).

⑤ at church door: The actual wedding ceremony was celebrated at the church door, not in the chancel.

To wedding that at Cana in Galilee,  
 Thus, by this same example, showed He me  
 I never should have married more than once.  
 Lo and behold! What sharp words, for the nonce<sup>①</sup>,  
 15 Beside a well Lord Jesus, God and man,  
 Spoke in reproving the Samaritan:  
 "For thou hast had five husbands," thus said He,  
 "And he whom thou hast now to be with thee  
 Is not thine husband." Thus He said that day,  
 20 But what He meant thereby I cannot say;  
 And I would ask now why that same fifth man  
 Was not husband to the Samaritan<sup>②</sup>?  
 How many might she have, then, in marriage?  
 For I have never heard, in all my age,  
 25 Clear exposition of this number shown,  
 Though men may guess and argue up and down.  
 But well I know and say, and do not lie,  
 God bade us to increase and multiply;  
 That worthy text can I well understand.  
 30 And well I know He said, too, my husband  
 Should father leave, and mother, and cleave to me;  
 But no specific number mentioned He.  
 Whether of bigamy or octogamy<sup>③</sup>:  
 Why should men speak of it reproachfully?  
 35 Lo, there's the wise old king Dan Solomon;  
 I understand he had more wives than one<sup>④</sup>;  
 And now would God it were permitted me

① for the nonce: to the purpose.

② the Samaritan: Christ was actually referring to a sixth man who was not married to the Samaritan woman.

③ octogamy: of two or even eight marriages. The Wife of Bath is referring to successive, rather than simultaneous marriages.

④ he had more wives than one: Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines.

To be refreshed one half as oft as he!  
Which gift of God he had for all his wives!  
40 No man has such that in this world now lives.  
God knows, this noble king, it strikes my wit,  
The first night he had many a merry fit  
With each of them, so much he was alive<sup>①</sup>!  
Praise be to God that I have wedded five!  
45 (Of whom I did pick out and choose the best  
Both for their nether purse and for their chest  
Different schools make divers perfect clerks,  
Different methods learned in sundry works  
Make the good workman perfect, certainly.  
50 Of full five husbands tutoring am I.)  
Welcome the sixth whenever come he shall.  
Forsooth, I'll not keep chaste for good and all;  
When my good husband from the world is gone,  
Some Christian man shall marry me anon;  
55 For then, the apostle<sup>②</sup> says that I am free  
To wed, in God's name, where it pleases me.  
He says that to be wedded is no sin;  
Better to marry than to burn within.  
What care I though folk speak reproachfully  
60 Of wicked Lamech<sup>③</sup> and his bigamy?  
I know well Abraham was holy man,  
And Jacob, too, as far as know I can;  
And each of them had spouses more than two;  
And many another holy man also.  
65 Or can you say that you have ever heard

---

① so much he was alive; so pleasant a life he lived.

② the apostle; St. Paul.

③ Lamech; the first man whom the Bible mentions as having two wives.



That God has ever by His express word  
Marriage forbidden? Pray you, now, tell me.  
Or where commanded He virginity?  
I read as well as you no doubt have read  
70 The apostle when he speaks of maidenhead;  
He said, commandment of the Lord he'd none.  
Men may advise a woman to be one,  
But such advice is not commandment, no.  
He left the thing to our own judgment so.  
75 For had Lord God commanded maidenhood,  
He'd have condemned all marriage as not good;  
And certainly, if there were no seed sown,  
Virginity— where then should it be grown?  
Paul dared not to forbid us, at the least,  
80 A thing where of his Master'd no behest.  
The dart<sup>①</sup> is set up for virginity;  
Catch it who can; who runs best let us see.  
But this word is not meant for every person,  
But where God wills to give it, of His might.  
85 I know well that the apostle was a virgin;  
Nevertheless, and though he wrote and urged in,  
He would that everyone were such as he,  
All is not counsel to virginity;  
And so to be a wife he gave me leave  
90 Out of permission; there's no shame should grieve  
In marrying me,<sup>②</sup> if that my mate should die,  
Without exception, too, of bigamy.<sup>③</sup>  
And though't were good no woman flesh to touch,

① dart: prize in a race.

② In marrying me: For me to marry.

③ Without exception, too, of bigamy: Without there being any legal objection on the score of remarriage.