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English Literature

英 国 文 学 习 题 集

总主编 田 强
主 编 张 瑾 赵嘉颖

哈尔滨工业大学出版社

英语专业课考试丛书

English Literature

英国文学
习题集

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序 言

近年来,随着我国英语专业在数量上和整体水平上的稳步提高,学习英语专业“综合英语”部分——语言学、英美文学、英美文化——内容的同学越来越多。能够迅速提高水平,进而在各种相应的考试中获得好的成绩,这是同学们的希望,当然也是老师们应该关注和予以帮助的重要方面。

在这一点上,《英语专业课考试丛书》的同仁们做了一件十分有益的事情。内容全面、形式多样、针对性强,这是我读过《丛书》书稿后的印象,从中也足见《丛书》编撰者的良苦用心。我与这些中、青年同事大多都很熟悉,了解他们的素质和业务能力,也了解他们的为人。相信同学们很快就会从书中感受到这一点。

“综合英语”所包含的内容不仅是重要的专业知识,更代表着理论素养和总体语言水平。可以说,一个人如果这些方面能力强、水平高,那么他的英语的整体能力一定也强,水平一定也高;反之,如果他相关领域的知识和能力都很差,他的整体能力不可能强,水平也不可能高。即便是有自称“例外”的人,他的能力和水平也是有明显“缺陷”的。

《丛书》的总主编田强同志嘱我为《丛书》作序,我不想耽搁大家太多的时间来读序言,还是多留些时间来读《丛书》的内容吧。

祝同学们学习和考试获得成功!

贾玉新

乙酉年于哈工大

英语专业的一个特征(代总前言)

近年来越来越多次地听到有人谈论这样一个问题:英语专业和英语公共课有什么区别?言下之意,一是英语专业的专业特征越来越不明显了,二是英语专业已经越来越没有优势可言了。其佐证是非英语专业的英语学习者(通过“双学位”等方式)参加英语专业四、八级考试(特别是专业四级)的通过率常常相当高;相反,近年来有相当一批英语专业的学生去参加大学英语四、六级考试结果却常常是铩羽而归。

这样来看待英语专业是很不公平的:

根据之一,获准参加专业四、八级考试的非英语专业同学基本上都是“主动的”,他们大多都是公共课学习的佼佼者,并且都经过了一段时间的英语专业学习或培训,成绩自然“骄人”;而与此同时,那些参加大学英语四、六级考试的英语专业学生则大多是平日成绩不甚理想或专业四级考试未获通过(更不用说八级了)者。用这样两类不同的考生进行对比恐怕有失公允。

根据之二,我们多数人把考试成绩看得过重,为了准备各种考试而耽搁了正常的专业学习。其他专业除了四、六级外还能拿出别的属于自己专业的东西。英语专业本来也不是没有,只不过不是那样“显著”,而且又“老套”了一点而已;但现在大家却把它放弃了。结果仿佛是英语专业除了四、八级什么也没有了。这就是问题的症结所在。

但是,从另外一个角度讲,我们也不能不问自己这样一个问题:英语专业的专业特征究竟是什么呢?

有人曾提出以“守正出新”为英语专业发展的指导思想,通俗地讲就是“站稳脚跟,再伸出一只手去”。无论是“守正”还是“站稳脚跟”,实际上都是强调要保留和坚持英语专业的传统“内核”。这个“内核”的一个非常重要的组成部分就是语言学、英语国家文学(习惯称之为“英美文学”)和英语国家文化(习惯称之为“英美概况”)。

语言学的学习具有多重意义:它既是语言学习的理论框架和认识

基础;从一定意义上说它又应该是我们语言学习实践活动的指导。因而,在一定程度上它代表或折射了现代人的某些思维和行为特征,是人类新的认识高度和水平的体现。

英语国家文学是英语专业的“传统项目”,但近些年来却受到越来越多的“冷落”。但是,作为英语专业的学生,文学的学习至少体现在两个方面:首先,文学是任何一种“成熟”语言——包括古代和现代——的重要组成部分;更准确地说,文学是语言中最具“艺术”性、最“高级”的那部分。任何一部好的文学作品都是艺术化和“升华”了的生活再现,它会帮助我们获得更多的人生经历,取得更多的人生经验。我们的英语学习者大多都是青少年,所缺少的不正是这样的人生经历和经验吗?

英语专业学生学习英语国家文化的一个“通病”就是把英语国家文化当成《英美概况》这门“课程”来学习——就像许许多多的英语学习者硬要把英语“分解”和“简化”成词汇和语法来学习一样。结果是学得很“累”,效果也不尽如人意。正确的方法是要把英语国家的文化当作一个整体、系统的知识结构来学习和掌握。一种语言学习的最终目标应该是文化的交融,英语学习过程中的乐趣和目的都存在于文化层面。由于历史和现实因素的影响,很多人都把英语学习看成是一个“独立”的东西:要先“学会”英语,然后再拿英语去做事情。可怕的是我们一直把这事倍功半的做法当成是正常的。

* * * *

以上赘言只是想告诉大家:无论是“求生存者”——为了课程考试能够顺利通过的同学,还是“求发展者”——准备“考研”的同学,切记:欲要“出新”,必先“守正”;英语专业有“正”(而不是“证”)可“守”,这是十分重要的。

这就是本丛书成书的主要动机。

总主编
于红森林工作室

前 言

随着对外交流的不断发展,外语教学在各类学校中的地位变得越来越重要,而英国文学是英语专业本科教育的一项重要内容。对英国文学史和文学作品的学习能够拓展学习者的知识面,培养他们的理解能力和鉴赏能力,加深对所学语言国家的了解,从而提高学习者运用语言的综合能力及其文化素养。

英国文学的发展历史悠久,源远流长。文学名著可谓浩如烟海,名家可谓群芳争艳,这就不可避免地使英国文学覆盖的知识范围较广,所涉及的作家作品也较多。基于这点,本书在覆盖面上力求完整,在作家作品的选取上尽量不遗漏重要作家及他们的代表作品,同时也兼顾了其他一些较有影响力的作家及作品。在编排上以时间为序,从古英语、中世纪时期起,历经 17、18 世纪及浪漫主义时期,直到 20 世纪及二战后的各个时期,以期学习者能够通过这本书对英国文学知识作一较全面、较系统的了解。

本书题型多样,新增了部分知名院校的考研试题。内容上基本覆盖了英国文学各阶段的要点,题解详细,旨在提供线索,拓展思路,活跃思维。故本书不但可以作为考研者、自考生的学习指导书,也可作为英国文学的授课教师及钻研外国文学的读者学习时的参考书。

由于作者水平所限,疏漏之处在所难免,敬请读者在使用本书的过程中给予批评和指教。

编 者

2005 年 8 月于哈工大

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Old & Middle English Literature

I . Essay questions.

1. What are the three parts told in the story of *Beowulf*? How is heroic ideal reflected in *Beowulf*?
2. State the social significance of William Langland's *Piers the Plowman* and comment on the poem's writing features.
3. Compare Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* with old English poetry and the works of other Middle English poets to illustrate that Chaucer is the first realistic writer in English literature.
4. What is the function of the General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*?

II . Define the following terms.

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Old English period (the Anglo-Saxon period) | 3. Prose |
| 2. Alliteration | 4. Courtly love |
| | 5. Morality play |

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 6. Couplet | 11. Middle English period |
| 7. Meter | 12. Anglo-Norman period |
| 8. Foot | 13. Arthurian legend |
| 9. Scottish Chaucerians | 14. Romance |
| 10. Ballad (Popular ballad) | |

III. Fill in the blanks.

- The Old English poetry can be divided into two groups: the _____ poetry and the _____ poetry.
- _____ is regarded as the "Father of English Song", the first known religious poet of England.
- The history of English literature begins in the _____ century.
- _____ is the most prevailing literary form in the Middle Ages.
- The most magnificent prose work of the 15th century is *Morte d' Arthur* concerning with _____ legend.
- The only important prose writer in the 15th century is Sir _____.
- Critics tend to divide Chaucer's literary career into three periods: the _____ period, the _____ period and the _____ period.
- Among the Middle English poets, three are the greatest. One is the author of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The other two are _____ and _____.
- The Canterbury Tales* contains the _____ and 24 tales, two of which left unfinished.
- Chaucer employed the _____ couplet in writing his greatest work *The Canterbury Tales*.
- The framework in *The Canterbury Tales* is a _____.
- When Chaucer died on the 25th of October 1400, he was the first to be buried in _____.
- Besides Chaucer, King James I also wrote in verses of seven lines, so this kind of verse came to be called the _____.
- Compared with Chaucer, "Father of English poetry", _____ in the

14th century can be called "Father of Scottish Poetry and Scottish History".

15. The _____ is an important stream of the British literature in the 15th century.
16. The _____ century has traditionally been described as the barren age in English literature.
17. Poetry can be classified as narrative or lyric. Narrative poems stress action, and lyrics _____.

IV. Choose the best answer.

1. *Beowulf* is a _____ poem, describing an all-round picture of the tribal society.
A. pagan
B. Christian
C. romantic
D. lyric
2. Caedmon's life story is vividly described in _____'s *Historic Ecclesiastica*.
A. Grendel
B. Bede
C. Cynewulf
D. Beowulf
3. The most important work of Alfred the Great is _____, which is regarded as the best monument of the Old English prose.
A. *The Song of Beowulf*
B. *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*
C. *Apollonius of Tyre*
D. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*
4. In the 14th century, the important writers are the following EXCEPT _____.
A. William Langland
B. John Gower
C. Thomas Malory
D. Geoffrey Chaucer
5. Chaucer was once influenced by Italian literature. His major work during this period is _____.
A. *Troilus and Criseyde*
B. *The Romaunt of the Rose*

- C. *The Legend of Good Women* D. *The Canterbury Tales*
6. Chaucer's active career provided him not only with knowledge but also experiences, which accounted for the wide range of his writings. The followings are all his career EXCEPT _____.
- A. legislator and ambassador B. soldier and office-holder
C. businessman and churchman D. justice and knight
7. Chaucer's narrative poem _____ is based on Boccaccio's poem "Filostrato".
- A. *The Legend of Good Women*
B. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
C. *The Book of the Duchess*
D. *Troilus and Criseyde*
8. All the following writers belong to the Scottish Chaucerians EXCEPT _____.
- A. Robert Henryson B. William Dunbar
C. Thomas Malory D. King James I
9. In English poetry, a four-line stanza is called _____.
- A. heroic couplet B. quatrain
C. Spenserian stanza D. terza rima
10. The work that presented, for the first time in English literature, a comprehensive realistic picture of the medieval English society and created a whole gallery of vivid characters from all walks of life is most likely _____.
- A. William Langland's *Piers the Plowman*
B. Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*
C. John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*
D. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

V. Short-answer questions.

1. What are the main characteristics of Anglo-Saxon literature?

2. What are the artistic features of Old English poetry?
3. What are the major subjects that the English romance mainly deals with?
4. Summarize Chaucer's literary career and the representative works of each period.
5. How many groups do the popular ballads fall into according to the contents or subjects?
6. What are the stylistic features of ballads?

VI. Answer the questions according to the following poem.

When the sweet showers of April fall and shoot
 Down through the drought of March to pierce the root,
 Bathing every vein in liquid power
 From which there springs the engendering of the flower,
 When also Zephyrus with his sweet breath
 Exhales an air in every grove and heath
 Upon the tender shoots, and the young sun
 His half-course in the sign of the Ram has run,
 And the small fowls are making melody
 That sleep away the night with open eye
 (So nature pricks them and their heart engages)
 The people long to go on pilgrimages
 And palmers long to seek the stranger strands
 Of far-off saints, hallowed in sundry lands,
 And specially, from every shire's end
 In England, down to Canterbury they wend
 To seek the holy blissful martyr, quick
 In giving help to them when they were sick.

Questions:

1. What is expressed in these opening lines of *The Canterbury Tales*?
2. How does the author emphasize the transition from nature to divinity?

3. Comment on Chaucer's contribution of rhymed stanzas.

Keys

I . Essay questions.

1. Structurally speaking, *Beowulf* is built around three fights. The first part deals with the fight between Beowulf and the monster Grendel that has been attacking the great hall of Heorot, built by Hrothgar, the Danish King. The second part involves a battle between Beowulf and Grendel's mother, a water-monster, who takes revenge by carrying off one of the king's noblemen. The last part is about the fight between Beowulf and a fire-drake that ravages Beowulf's kingdom.

Beowulf is a pagan poem concerned with the heroic ideal of kings and kingship in North Europe. Battle is a way of life at that time. Strength and courage are basic virtues for both kings and his warriors. The king should protect his people and show gentleness and generosity to his warriors. And in return, his warriors should show absolute obedience and loyalty to the king. By praising Beowulf's wisdom, strength and courage, and by glorifying his death for his people, the poem presents the heroic ideal of a king and his good relations to his warriors and people.

2. *Piers the Plowman* remains a classic in popular literature. It was very popular throughout the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. It praises the poor peasants, and condemns and exposes the sins of the oppressors. It played an important part in arousing the revolutionary sentiment on the eve of the Rising of 1381 headed by Wat Tyler and John Ball. It is a realistic picture of medieval England. But *Piers* is not a representative of the poor peasants. He is one of the well-to-do peasants. He has no intention of upsetting the feudal order of society, and he accepts the existing social relations. This is the limitation of the poem.

Writing features:

- (1) *Piers the Plowman* is written in the form of a dream vision. The author

tells his story under the guise of having dreamed it.

(2) The poem is an allegory which relates truth through symbolism.

(3) The poet uses indignant satire in his description of social abuses caused by the corruption prevailing among the ruling classes, ecclesiastical and secular.

(4) The poem is written in alliteration.

3. The vast bulk of Old English poetry is specifically Christian, devoted to religious subjects. More importantly, it is almost all in the heroic mode due to the great influence of the heroic ideal, i.e. *Beowulf* is the ideal of kingly behavior. The idealized hero figures predominantly in Old English literature. Middle English romance generally concerns the knight. It makes liberal use of the improbable, often of the supernatural. Religious writing reflects the unchanging principles of medieval Christian doctrine, which looked to the world to come for the only answer to men's troubles. William Langland's *Piers the Plowman* reflects the great religious and social issues of his day, yet it is written in the form of a dream vision. It is Chaucer alone who, for the first time in English literature, presented to us a comprehensive realistic picture of the English society of his time and created a whole gallery of vivid characters from all walks of life in his masterpiece *The Canterbury Tales*.
4. The General Prologue is usually regarded as the greatest portrait gallery in English literature. It is largely composed of a series of sketches differing widely in length and method, and blending the individual and the typical in varying degrees. The purpose of the General Prologue is not only to present a vivid collection of character sketches, but also to reveal the author's intention in bringing together a great variety of people and narrative materials to unite the diversity of the tales by allotting them to a diversity of tellers engaged in a common endeavour, to set the tone for the story-telling—one of jollity which accords with the tone of the whole work: that of grateful acceptance of life, to make clear the plan for the tales, to motivate the telling of tales and to introduce the pilgrims and the time and occasion of the pilgrimage. The pilgrims are people from various parts of England. They

serve as the representatives of various sides of life and social groups. Each of the pilgrims or narrators is presented vividly in the Prologue. Ranging in status from a knight to a humble plowman, the pilgrims are a microcosm of 14th-century English society. On the other hand, there is also an intimate connection between the tales and the Prologue, both complementing each other. The Prologue provides a framework for the tales.

II . Define the following terms.

1. **Old English period (the Anglo-Saxon period)**: The Old English Period, extended from the invasion of Celtic England by Germanic tribes (the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes) in the first half of the fifth century to the conquest of England in 1066 by the Norman French under the leadership of William the Conqueror. Only after they had been converted to Christianity in the seventh century did the Anglo-Saxons, whose earlier literature had been oral, begin to develop a written literature.
2. **Alliteration**: Alliteration is the repetition of a speech sound in a sequence of nearby words. The term is usually applied only to consonants, and only when the recurrent sound begins a word or a stressed syllable within a word.
3. **Prose**: Prose is an inclusive term for all discourse, spoken or written, which is not patterned into the lines either of metric verse or free verse.
4. **Courtly love**: It is a doctrine of love, together with an elaborate code governing the relations between aristocratic lovers, which was widely represented in the lyric poems and chivalric romances of western Europe during the Middle Ages.
5. **Morality play**: Morality plays are medieval allegorical plays in which personified human qualities acted and disputed, mostly coming from the 15th century. They developed into the interludes, from which it is not always possible to distinguish them, and hence had a considerable influence on the development of Elizabethan drama.
6. **Couplet**: A couplet is a pair of rhymed lines that are equal in length.
7. **Meter**: Meter is the recurrence, in regular units, of a prominent feature in

the sequence of speech-sounds of a language.

8. **Foot:** A foot is the combination of a strong stress and the associated weak stress or stresses which make up the recurrent metric unit of a line. The relatively stronger-stressed syllable is called, for short, "stressed"; the relatively weaker-stressed syllables are called "light," or most commonly, "unstressed". The four standard feet distinguished in English are: (1) Iambic (the noun is "iamb"): an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. (2) Anapestic (the noun is "anapest"): two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable. (3) Trochaic (the noun is "trochee"): a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable. (4) Dactylic (the noun is "dactyl"): a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables.

A metric line is named according to the number of feet composing it:

monometer: one foot

dimeter: two feet

trimeter: three feet

tetrameter: four feet

pentameter: five feet

hexameter: six feet

heptameter: seven feet

octameter: eight feet

9. **Scottish Chaucerians:** The name is traditionally given to a very diverse group of 15th- and 16th- century Scottish writers who show some influence from Chaucer, although the debt is now regarded as negligible or indirect in most cases.
10. **Ballad (Popular ballad):** Ballad is also known as the folk ballad or traditional ballad. It is a song, transmitted orally, which tells a story. Ballads are thus the narrative species of folk songs, which originate, and are communicated orally, among illiterate or only partly literate people.
11. **Middle English period:** The four and a half centuries between the Norman Conquest in 1066, which effected radical changes in the language, life, and culture of England, and about 1500, when the standard literary