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英语专业考研
英美文学真题与
核心考点高分有道

考天下 ◎主编

中国石化出版社

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教·育·出·版·中·心

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

英语专业考研英美文学真题与核心考点高分有道 /
考天下主编. —北京: 中国石化出版社, 2016. 6
ISBN 978-7-5114-4115-7

I. ①英… II. ①考… III. ①英语-阅读教学-研究生-入学考试-自学参考资料②英国文学-文学欣赏③文学欣赏-美国 IV. ①H319.4: I

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2016) 第 135142 号

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中国石化出版社出版发行

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北京科信印刷有限公司印刷

全国各地新华书店经销

*

787×1092 毫米 16 开本 16 印张 441 千字

2016 年 6 月第 1 版 2016 年 6 月第 1 次印刷

定价: 36.00 元

前言

Preface

本书为英语专业本科生参加全国研究生入学考试准备,对报考英美文学方向或涉及英美文学知识点的考生非常具有备考参考价值。此外,本书是根据全国各大高校英语专业通用的英美文学教材并参考各高校历年英美文学考研真题而编写的。主要参考的教材有:吴伟仁主编的《英国文学史及选读》和《美国文学史及选读》,刘炳善主编的《英国文学简史》,常耀信主编的《英国文学简史》《美国文学选读》和《美国文学简史》,王佐良主编的《英国文学名篇选注》,陶洁主编的《二十世纪美国文学选读》等。

本书主要分为英国文学、美国文学和附录(高频文学术语),其中英国文学七章,美国文学四章。每章基本包括五部分:第一部分为历史背景,并附有本章重要的文学思潮,帮助考生更好地理解各种文学潮流产生的原因,以及作家作品产生的大环境;第二部分为代表作家和代表作品,附有重要作品的简介和作品赏析;第三部分是高频考点,帮助考生有目标、有重点的备考;第四部分是高校英美文学考研真题精选,供考生巩固复习并测试学习效果;第五部分提供参考答案,供考生参考。

最后,由于各高校自主命题,参考书目也不尽相同,考生应根据目标院校指定书目以及出题形式,来确定本书中哪些内容予以重点复习。相信本书全面、翔实、紧扣考点的特点,一定会让广大考生各取所需,如虎添翼。

编 者

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第一部分 英国文学

第一章

中古时期的英国文学

一、历史背景

中古时期的英国文学分为古英语文学和中世纪文学

Old English literature (about 450~1066): This period extends from about 450 to 1066, the year of the Norman-French conquest of England. The Germanic tribes brought with them the Old English, or Anglo-Saxon language, the basis of Modern English. Thus, English literature began with the Anglo-Saxon settlement. Old English literature was in the form of poems or songs by Anglo-Saxon minstrels who sang of the heroic deed of old time to the chiefs and warriors. For example, *Beowulf*, the first well-preserved epic, is a long poem of over 3,000 lines, which tells the story of Beowulf, a hero, who killed Grendel, a sea monster (thought to be the offspring of Cain, first murderer in the Genesis). It reflects the features of the tribal society of ancient times. Its artistic forms, such as kenning(隐喻语) and alliteration had a great influence upon the poets that followed.

Medieval English literature (1066~Middle of 14th century): The Medieval English literature starts in 1066, the year of the Norman Conquest, and ends around the end of the 15th century. While in the later period, starting from the second half of the 14th century; English literature flourishes with the appearance of writers like Geoffrey Chaucer and William Langland. The literature of this time was composed of religious writings as well as secular works. Theological(神学的) works were the dominant form of literature typically found in libraries during the Middle Ages. Secular(世俗的;非宗教的) literature in this period was not produced in equal quantity as religious literature, but much has survived and we possess today a rich corpus.

Compared with Old English literature, Middle English literature is much more diversified and deals with a wider range of subjects with more voices and in a greater diversity of styles, tones and genres. Furthermore, Middle English literature is greatly influenced by the principles of the medieval Christian doctrine, mostly concerned with the issue of personal salvation. Romance becomes a popular literary form at this period.

二、代表作家/代表作品

1. 贝奥武甫

作品简介 *The Song of Beowulf* (贝奥武甫)

General introduction:

Written in the 8th century, it is a typical example of Old English poetry and is seen as the greatest surviving national epic (史诗) of the Anglo-Saxons. It shows how the primitive people fight against the forces of the natural world under a wise and mighty leader.

The whole epic consists of 3,182 lines and is to be divided into three parts. Beginning and ending with the funeral of a great king, and composed against a background of impending disaster, it describes the exploits of a Scandinavian cultural hero, Beowulf, in destroying the monster Grendel, Grendel's mother, and a fire-breathing dragon.

There are three central conflicts; Grendel's domination of Heorot Hall; the vengeance of Grendel's mother after Grendel is slain; and the rage of the dragon after a thief steals a treasure that it has been guarding. The poem's overarching conflict is between close-knit warrior societies and the various menaces that threaten their boundaries.

The narrator recounts the story in the third person, from a generally objective standpoint—detailing the action that occurs. The narrator does, however, have access to every character's depths.

The feature:

It is a pagan instead of a Christian poem of all advanced pagan civilization, presenting an all-round picture of the tribal society. So the poem has a great social significance.

The use of the strong stress and the predominance of consonance are very notable in the poem. Each line is divided into two halves. Each of the two halves of an Anglo-Saxon line contains two stressed syllables, and an alliterative pattern *must* be carried over across the caesura (中间停顿) between the two halves (两个半行). Any of the stressed syllables may alliterate *except* the last syllable; so the first and second syllables may alliterate with the third together, or the first and third may alliterate alone, or the second and third may alliterate alone. For instance: *Lade ne letton. Leoht eastan com. Lade, letton, leoht, and eastan* are the four stressed words.

The use of alliteration is another notable feature and makes the strong stress more emphatic. Of the 4 stresses in each line, three of which show alliteration, as can be seen from the quotation below.

“Thus made their mourning the men of Geatland,
For their hero's passing, his hearth-companions,
Quoth that of all the kings of earth,
Of men he was the mildest and most beloved,
To his kin the kindest, keenest to praise.”

There are also a lot of metaphors (the most common of metaphors used in old poetry is *kenning*, which is a short metaphorical description of a thing used in place of the thing's name; thus a ship might be called a “sea-rider,” or a king a “ring-giver.”) and understatements in the poem.

Metaphors (kenning) such as “Ring-giver” for the king, “the swan’s path” or “whale’s road” for sea, “sea wood” for ships occurs in great numbers. Understatements as “not troublesome” for very welcome, “need not to praise” for a right to condemn, give an impression of reserve and at time of ironical humor. This quality is often regarded as a permanent characteristic of the English literature.

● 作品赏析 *The Song of Beowulf*

Wise sir, do not grieve. It is always better
to avenge dear ones than to indulge in mourning.
For every one of us, living in this world
means waiting for our end. Let whoever can
win glory before death. When a warrior is gone,
that will be his best and only bulwark(堡垒).

(Line 1,384~1,389)

Beowulf utters this compressed statement of the heroic code after Grendel’s mother kills Aeschere, Hrothgar’s trusted advisor. Although Hrothgar’s grief seems understandable in light of the principle of loyalty that operates in this culture, Beowulf speaks of it as an “indulgence”—an inappropriate and ineffective way of responding to the death of a comrade. Beowulf’s reminder to Hrothgar that vengeance(复仇) is the *real* warrior’s response and the truest sign of love and loyalty reflects a fundamental value of warrior culture, namely an aggressive approach to life. Part of this approach involves the understanding that only reputation will perpetuate a warrior’s existence after death. Beowulf, for example, perceives life as a race to glory (“Let whoever can / win glory before death”). This speech encapsulates (讲述) the poem’s tension between doom and death, on the one hand, and the necessity of behaving courageously and honorably, on the other. Beowulf’s energetic emphasis on action helps temper the pessimism surrounding the inevitability of death that saturates (充斥) the poem.

2. William Langland

Life:

William Langland (ca. 1332~ca. 1386) was born and raised in the west midland of England, but moved to London later, which is a principal subject of the early parts of his poem, and made a scanty living by singing masses, copying legal documents and doing other odd jobs. He is generally thought to be the author of the 14th-century English dream-vision *Piers Plowman*.

● 作品简介 *Piers Plowman*

Piers Plowman is considered by many critics to be one of the early great works of English literature along with Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. It is a poem that gives a picture of the life in feudal England but also and also is a protest of the then social injustice.

The Story: The poem begins in the Malvern Hills in Malvern, Worcestershire. A man named Will falls asleep and has a vision of a tower set upon a hill and a fortress (*donjon*) in a deep valley; between these symbols of heaven and hell is a “fair field full of folk”, representing the world of mankind. In the early part of the poem Piers, the humble plowman of the title, appears and offers

himself as the narrator's guide to Truth. The latter part of the work, however, is concerned with the narrator's search for Dowel, Dobet and Dobest.

The Feature: It is written in unrhymed alliterative (头韵体的) verse (each line contained three alliterative words, two of which were placed in the first half, and the third in the second half), of which three texts have been left to us. The poem *Piers Plowman*—part theological allegory, part social satire—concerns the narrator's intense quest for the true Christian life, which is told from the point of view of the medieval Catholic mind. This quest entails a series of dream-visions and an examination into the lives of three allegorical characters, Dowel (“*Do-Well*”), Dobet (“*Do-Better*”), and Dobest (“*Do-Best*”).

Piers the Plowman is a realistic picture of medieval England. Its artistic merits may be shown by its portraits of the Seven Deadly Sins:

Pride is a braggart—

Lechery is a villain—

Wrath is a cook who always sets people by the ears wherever he is—

Avarice is a heartless usurer—

Sloth is a lazy parson—

Glutton, on his way to the church, somewhat went into a tavern.

All these sins stated above come from the idle rich, because “Poverty avoideth (avoids) the seven deadly sins.” When we read these vivid sketches of London's life of the 14th century, we seem to be face to face with the author's neighbors in the street.

3. The English and Scottish Popular Ballads: “Robin Hood Ballads”

The ballad is an important part of English folk literature. A ballad is a form of verse meant to be sung or recited, usually in four-line stanzas, rhymed *abcb* (or sometimes *abab*—the key is that the second and fourth lines rhyme). The first and third lines have four stressed words or syllables, while the second and fourth have three. Ballad meter is usually iambic (抑扬格的). Here is a stanza from “*Sir Patrick Spens*,” a medieval ballad:

’I saw the new moon late yestreen

Wi’ the auld moon in her arm;

And if we gang to sea, master,

I fear we’ll come to harm.’

The English popular ballad flourished from the 12th century to the 15th century, reflecting people's life at that time. And the most outstanding ones are the Robin Hood Ballads, which are many about an outlawed hero, Robin Hood, who lives in the forest with his men, robs the rich and helps the poor.

📖 作品介绍及赏析 *Robin Hood Ballads*

Among the medieval ballads, Robin Hood Ballads are of the most remarkable. The Robin Hood legend has been subject to numerous shifts and mutations throughout its history. Robin himself has evolved from a yeoman bandit to a national hero of epic proportions, who not only supports the poor by taking from the rich, but heroically defends the throne of England itself from unworthy and venal claimants.

(1)人物简介 Robin Hood is a partly historical and partly legendary character, depicted in the ballads as a valiant outlaw, skilled in archery, living under the greenwood tree with his merry men, taking from the rich and giving to the poor. He is an archetypal (原型的) figure in English folklore, whose story originates from medieval times but who remains significant in popular culture.

(2)性格特征 The character of Robin Hood is many-sided, strong, brave and clever. He is at the same time tender-hearted and affectionate.

But the dominant key of his character lies in his hatred for the cruel oppressors and his love for the poor and down-trodden. A typical example is the ballads by the sheriff of Nottingham, a man noted for rapacity and treachery, who meets his death in the hands of Robin Hood and his merry men of the green wood. As counterpart of his hostility towards the upper ranks of society is his tenderness for the peasants, his own folk, Robin Hood's talk with his friend Little John can serve as a natural consequence of the social outlook and social origin of the hero.

Another feature of Robin's view is his reverence for the king. This reverence is to be found in the ballads side by side with the most outspoken attacks on the lay and ecclesiastical nobility(非神职和神职贵族). The king appears in the ballads as an intermediary between the outlaws and his officials and judges, as the humorous and understanding guest in the green wood, feasting on his own stolen dear.

Despite this, the Robin Hood ballads show the fighting spirit, indomitable courage and revolutionary energy of the English peasantry. They best exemplified the views of the exploited classes of feudal society.

4. Geoffrey Chaucer

Geoffrey Chaucer, the father of English poetry, was born in London in the early 1340s. In 1400 he died and was buried in Westminster Abbey, thus founding the "Poets' Corner". Though essentially still a medieval writer, Chaucer bore marks of humanism and anticipated a new era to come. As a forerunner of humanism, he praises man's energy, intellect, quick wit and love of life. His tales exposed and satirized the evils of his time. These tales attacked the degeneration of the noble, the heartlessness of the judge, the corruption of the church, etc. Chaucer is remembered as the author of *The Canterbury Tales* which ranks as one of the greatest epic works of world literature.

Chaucer's achievements: Chaucer's contribution to English poetry lies chiefly in the fact that he introduced from France the rhymed stanzas of various types, especially the rhymed couplet of iambic pentameter (抑扬格五音步). And in his masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*, he employed heroic couplet with true ease and charm for the first time in the history of English literature. He presented a comprehensive realistic picture of medieval English society and created a whole gallery of vivid characters in his works, especially in *The Canterbury Tales*; He anticipated a new era, the Renaissance, to come under the influence of the Italian writers; He developed his characterization to a higher level by presenting characters with both typical qualities and individual dispositions; he greatly contributed to the maturing of English poetry. Small wonder latter-day writer, John Dryden would call him "the Father of English Poetry". Today, Chaucer's reputation has been securely established as one of the best English poets for his wisdom, humor and humanity.

作品简介与赏析

The Canterbury Tales 《坎特伯雷故事集》 is Chaucer's masterpiece and one of the monumental works in English literature. In The Canterbury Tales, he presents, for the first time in English literature, a comprehensive realistic picture of the medieval English society and creates a whole gallery of vivid characters from all walks of life.

The Canterbury Tales, about 17,000 lines, is a collection of stories told by a group of pilgrims on their way to Canterbury. It was influenced by Boccaccio's (薄伽丘) Decameron (《十日谈》). The poem shows Chaucer's humanism and anticipates a new era to come.

Outline of the story

The poem introduces a group of pilgrims journeying from London to the shrine (圣地) of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. At the Tabard Inn, a tavern in Southwark, near London, the narrator joins a company of twenty-nine pilgrims. The host of the inn suggests that the group ride together and entertain one another with stories. He decides that each pilgrim will tell two stories on the way to Canterbury and two on the way back. Whomever he judges to be the best storyteller will receive a meal at Bailey's tavern, courtesy of the other pilgrims. The pilgrims draw lots and determine that the Knight will tell the first tale. The knight begins with a chivalrous romance by telling the tale of two knights in love with one lady. The Knight's Tale is a romance that encapsulates the themes, motifs, and ideals of courtly love. The prioress tells a pathetic story of the murder of a choir-boy; the monk goes on pouring forth a series of "example" illustrating the fall of men of great estate, until the host cuts short the dreary monotony. The swindling Pardoner shows how he illustrates his sermon on the love of money by the grisly tale of Death and the three gamblers. Sometimes the pilgrims tell stories against each other, e. g., the Miller and the Reeve, the Friar and the Summoner. Sometimes the stories form a group. Most famous is what has been known as the "marriage group". At first the Wife of Bath describes her own experience of matrimony and maintains that happiness in marriage depends on the acceptance of the wife's mastery. The Oxford scholar tells how a woman submitted to her husband and was rewarded by happiness. Finally the Franklin shows by his own story that domestic life should be governed by mutual tolerance and forbearance as well as confidence and love. Altogether 24 stories were written, among which the Tales of the Knight, the Pardoner, the Nun's Priest and the the Wife of Bath, together with the Prologue, are generally regarded as the best of the whole collection.

作品简介与赏析 The Prologue

Function of the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* :

The Prologue provides a framework for the tales. It contains a group of vivid sketches of typical medieval figures. All classes of the English feudal society, except the royalty and the poorest peasant, are represented by these thirty pilgrims. They range from the knight and squire (乡绅) and priories, through the landed proprietor and wealthy tradesman, to the drunken cook and humble plowman. There are also a doctor and a lawyer, monks of different orders and nuns and priests, and a summoner, a sailor, a miller, a carpenter, a yeoman, and an Oxford scholar. Finally, in the center of the group is the wife of Bath, the owner of a large cloth factory.

Every figure is drawn with the accuracy of a portrait. It is no exaggeration to say that the

Prologue supplies a miniature of the English society of Chaucer's time. Looking at his word-pictures, we know at once how people lived in that era. That is why Chaucer has been called "the founder of English realism".

On the other hand, there is also an intimate connection between the tales and the Prologue, both complement each other.

Symbols in *The Canterbury Tales*《坎特伯雷故事集》中的象征

Symbols are objects, characters, figures, and colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.

Springtime: *The Canterbury Tales* opens in April, at the height of spring. The birds are chirping, the flowers blossoming, and people long in their hearts to go on pilgrimages, which combine travel, vacation, and spiritual renewal. The springtime symbolizes rebirth and fresh beginnings, and is thus appropriate for the beginning of Chaucer's text.

Clothing: In the General Prologue, the description of garments, in addition to the narrator's own shaky recollections, helps to define each character. In a sense, the clothes symbolize what lies beneath the surface of each personality. The Physician's love of wealth reveals itself most clearly to us in the rich silk and fur of his gown. The Squire's youthful vanity is symbolized by the excessive floral brocade (锦缎) on his tunic (长袍). The Merchant's forked beard could symbolize his duplicity, at which Chaucer only hints.

Physiognomy: Physiognomy (面相术) was a science that judged a person's temperament and character based on his or her anatomy. Physiognomy plays a significant role in Chaucer's descriptions of the pilgrims in the General Prologue. The most exaggerated facial features are those of the peasants. The Miller represents the stereotypical peasant physiognomy most clearly: round and ruddy, with a wart on his nose, the Miller appears rough and therefore suited to rough, simple work. The Pardoner's glaring eyes and limp hair illustrate his fraudulence (欺骗性).

5. Medieval Romance 传奇故事/Chivalric Legends 骑士传奇: a medieval popular literary form

Romance was a type of literature that was very popular in the Middle Ages. It is about the life and adventures undertaken by a knight. It reflected the spirit of chivalry (骑士制度). The content of romance: love, war, chivalry and loyalty to the king. It involves fighting, adventures. The most famous ones are Beowulf, King Arthur, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.

For example, the alliterative poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, likely written in the mid to late fourteenth century is a romance of knightly adventure and love. Most English romances are concerned with the knights of King Arthur. In *Sir Gawain*, against a background of chivalric gallantry, the tale is told of the knight's resistance to the blandishments of another man's beautiful wife.

三、本章高频考点

文学术语: epic 史诗, ballad 民谣, Robin Hood 罗宾汉, Medieval romance 中世纪罗曼史/骑士文学, heroic couplet 英雄对偶诗等

作家作品: *Beowulf*《贝奥武甫》, Geoffrey Chaucer 乔叟, *The Canterbury Tales*《坎特伯雷故事集》。

四、名校历年真题精选

Part one: Define the following terms

1. Understatement (吉林大学真题)
2. Ballad; Simile(国际关系学院真题)
3. Beowulf(北京航空航天大学真题)
4. The Father of English Poetry (四川大学真题)

Part two: Multiple Choices

Directions: In each question there are four choices. Decide which one would be the best answer to the question or to complete the sentence the best.

1. _____ is a pagan poem which portrays a panoramic picture of the tribal society in British Island. (北京第二外国语学院真题)
A. the legends of King Arthur B. Beowulf
C. the Tall Tales D. the Canterbury Tales
2. Most of the Ballads of the 15th century focused on the legend about _____ as a heroic figure. (温州大学真题)
A. Green Nights B. Gawain
C. Robin Hood D. Hamlet
3. Generally speaking, it is in _____ that the English literary history starts. (北京第二外国语学院真题)
A. 6th C. B. C. B. 5th C. B. C.
C. 6th C. A. D. D. 5th C. A. D.
4. Knights of the Round Table are characters serving _____ in legends, which depict chivalry in early literature. (北京第二外国语学院真题)
A. Sir Lancelot B. Sir Godwin
C. King Arthur D. King Henry VII
5. Geoffrey Chaucer, regarded as the first famous English poet in the history of English literature, wrote the following except _____. (天津外国语学院真题)
A. The Canterbury Tales B. The House of Fame
C. The Parliament of Fowles D. Boethius
6. _____ is a pagan poem which portrays a panoramic picture of the tribal society in British Island. (北京第二外国语学院真题)
A. The Legends of King Arthur B. Beowulf
C. The Tall Tales D. The Canterbury Tales
7. The history of English literature begins in the _____ century. (北京第二外国语学院真题)
A. 7th B. 6th C. 5th D. 4th

Part three: Identify name of the author and the work

Good table manners she had learnt as well; She never let a crumb from her mouth fall; She never soiled her fingers, dipping deep Into the sauce; when lifting to her lips. Some morsel, she was careful not to spill So much as one small drop upon her breast. Her greatest pleasure was in

etiquette. (北京外国语大学真题)

Part four: Essay Questions

Why is the Knight first in the General Prologue to tell a tale in *The Canterbury Tales*? (北京航空航天大学真题)

五、参考答案

Part one: Define the following terms

(1, 2, 3 题参见附录)

4. (1) It usually refers to Geoffrey Chaucer whose masterpiece *The Canterbury Tales* ranks as one of the greatest poetic works in English literature. (2) Chaucer made a great contribution to English poetry by introducing from France the rhymed stanzas of various types to English poetry to replace the Old English alliterative verse. It was he who used for the first time in English the rhymed couplet of iambic pentameter which was later called the "heroic couplet". (3) Chaucer was the first to write in the current English language. Though drawing influence from French, Italian and Latin models, he did much in making the dialect of London the foundation for modern English language. (4) In his works Chaucer developed his characterization to a higher artistic level by presenting characters with both typical qualities and individual dispositions. That is why John Dryden called him the Father of English Poetry.

Part two: Multiple Choices

1. B 2. C 3. D 4. C 5. D 6. B 7. C

Part three: Figure out the name of the author and the work

Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Canterbury Tales*

Part four: Essay Questions

The Knight is described first, as he is a "worthy man" of high status. The Knight has fought in the Crusades in numerous countries, and always been honored for his worthiness and courtesy. Everywhere he went, the narrator tells us, he had a "sovereyn prys" (which could mean either an "outstanding reputation", or a price on his head for the fighting he has done).

Thus, in the narrator's eyes, the Knight is the noblest of the pilgrims, embodying military prowess, loyalty, honor, generosity and good manners.

The Knight conducts himself in a polite and mild fashion, never saying an unkind word about anyone. To some extent, Chaucer's style was also influenced by the Roman literature at that time, which was prevailing in feudal England. The central character of Romance always was the noble knight to seek adventures. Therefore, the Knight is the first to tell a tale in *The Canterbury Tales*.