

Anthology of British Literature

英国经典文学 作品选读

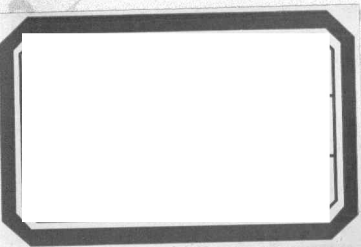
(注释加译文版)

姜晓瑜 董妍妍 邓纯旭 主编



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内容提要

本书是供普通高等学校学生使用的英国文学教材, 涵盖了英国从 Anglo-Saxon 时期到 20 世纪的主要作家作品。本书共 20 个单元, 可供上下学期使用。本书在介绍文学作品的同时, 巧妙地融合了作家及文学史的内容, 体系更完整。将文学批评方法融入每一单元, 帮助学生提高文学欣赏水平。每单元设有课后问答题, 便于学生更好地理解内容, 也有助于学生形成批判性思维, 激发学生的学习积极性, 活跃课堂气氛。

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姜晓瑜 董妍妍 邓纯旭 主 编

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姜晓瑜 董妍妍 邓纯旭 主 编

张文政 尹雪梅 高 娜 副主编

前 言

本书是根据英国文学历史的顺序结合作品选读所编写的一套适合我国普通高等院校及职业院校的非英语专业学生使用的教材。本教材力求做到内容丰富、观点正确，选文具有代表性，为学习者提供一个学习英国文学作品的平台。

本教材的整体框架包含三个部分。

第一部分：作家简介。通过对重要作家生平的简介，了解其人生经历对文学作品的影响，进而体会文学作品的深刻意义。

第二部分：作品选读。这一部分为本教材的核心部分。本教材选择了最具代表性的篇章段落，并附有中文翻译。学习者可在阅读的同时，学习英语单词，了解文化历史，领会文学作品的魅力。

第三部分：练习部分。这一部分主要是针对所选篇章段落的文学作品提出一些思考性的问题，指引学生把握文学作品的精髓。

本教材适用于广大的英语学习者，包括大中专院校的学生、各类英语自学者。学生可以在本教材的指引下，逐步提高自身的人文及文学修养。

在教材的编写中，我们参考了互联网、报刊和书籍的相关文献，由于篇幅有限，不能一一列出，在此向这些文献的所有者表示诚挚的谢意和敬意。

本教材是集体智慧的结晶，编写过程中得益于全体编委的努力工作。特别感谢大

连医科大学的姜晓瑜、董妍妍、邓纯旭、张文政、尹雪梅以及朝阳市卫生学校高娜老师付出的辛劳，他们在出版过程中做了一次次的深入探索与尝试，力图做到细致入微、精益求精。尽管如此，其中必定还有疏漏之处，敬请各位同仁和广大使用者批评指正。

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Unit 1 Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?—1400)

Life

Geoffrey Chaucer was born in London sometime around 1343, though the precise date and location of his birth remain unknown. His father and grandfather were both London vintners; several previous generations had been merchants in Ipswich. In 1324 John Chaucer, Geoffrey's father, was kidnapped by an aunt in the hope of marrying the twelve-year-old boy to her daughter in an attempt to keep property in Ipswich. The aunt was imprisoned and the £250 fine levied suggests that the family was financially secure—bourgeois, if not elite. John Chaucer married Agnes Copton, who, in 1349, inherited properties including 24 shops in London from her uncle.



While records concerning the lives of his contemporary poets, William Langland and the Pearl Poet are practically non-existent, since Chaucer was a public servant, his official life is very well documented, with nearly five hundred written items testifying to his career. The first of the “Chaucer Life Records” appears in 1357, in the household accounts of Elizabeth de Burgh, the Countess of Ulster, when he became the noble woman's page through his father's connections, a common medieval form of apprenticeship for boys into knighthood or prestige appointments. The countess was married to Lionel, Duke of Clarence, the second surviving son of the king, Edward III, and the position brought the teenage Chaucer into the close court circle, where he was to remain for the rest of his life. He also worked as a courtier, a diplomat, and a civil servant, as well

as working for the king from 1389 to 1391 as Clerk of the King's Works.

In 1359, in the early stages of the Hundred Years' War, Edward III invaded France and Chaucer travelled with Lionel of Antwerp, 1st Duke of Clarence, Elizabeth's husband, as part of the English army. In 1360, he was captured during the siege of Rheims. Edward paid £16 for his ransom, a considerable sum, and Chaucer was released.

After this, Chaucer's life is uncertain, but he seems to have travelled in France, Spain, and Flanders, possibly as a messenger and perhaps even going on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Around 1366, Chaucer married Philippa (de) Roet. She was a lady-in-waiting to Edward III's queen, Philippa of Hainault, and a sister of Katherine Swynford, who later became the third wife of John of Gaunt. It is uncertain how many children Chaucer and Philippa had, but three or four are most commonly cited.

According to tradition, Chaucer studied law in the Inner Temple (an Inn of Court) at this time. He became a member of the royal court of Edward III as avarlet de chambre, yeoman, or esquire on 20 June 1367, a position which could entail a wide variety of tasks. His wife also received a pension for court employment. He travelled abroad many times, at least some of them in his role as a valet. In 1368, he may have attended the wedding of Lionel of Antwerp to Violante Visconti, daughter of Galeazzo II Visconti, in Milan. Two other literary stars of the era were in attendance: Jean Froissart and Petrarch. Around this time, Chaucer is believed to have written *The Book of the Duchess* in honour of Blanche of Lancaster, the late wife of John of Gaunt, who died in 1369.

A possible indication that his career as a writer was appreciated came when Edward III granted Chaucer "a gallon of wine daily for the rest of his life" for some unspecified task. This was an unusual grant, but given on a day of celebration, St George's Day, 1374, when artistic endeavours were traditionally rewarded, it is assumed to have been another early poetic work. It is not known which, if any, of Chaucer's extant works prompted the reward, but the suggestion of him as poet to a king places him as a precursor to later poets laureate. Chaucer continued to collect the liquid stipend until Richard II came to power, after which it was converted to a monetary grant on 18 April 1378. Chaucer obtained the very substantial job of comptroller of the customs for the port of London, which he began on 8 June 1374. He must have been suited for the role as he continued in it for twelve years, a long time in such a post at that time. His life goes undocumented for much of the next ten years, but it is believed that he wrote (or began) most of

his famous works during this period. He was mentioned in law papers of 4 May 1380, involved in the raptus of Cecilia Chaumpaigne. What raptus means is unclear, but the incident seems to have been resolved quickly and did not leave a stain on Chaucer's reputation. It is not known if Chaucer was in the city of London at the time of the Peasants' Revolt, but if he was, he would have seen its leaders pass almost directly under his apartment window at Aldgate.

While still working as comptroller, Chaucer appears to have moved to Kent, being appointed as one of the commissioners of peace for Kent, at a time when French invasion was a possibility. He is thought to have started work on *The Canterbury Tales* in the early 1380s. He also became a Member of Parliament for Kent in 1386. On 15 October that year, he gave a deposition in the case of *Scrope v. Grosvenor*. There is no further reference after this date to Philippa, Chaucer's wife, and she is presumed to have died in 1387. He survived the political upheavals caused by the Lords Appellants, despite the fact that Chaucer knew some of the men executed over the affair quite well.

On 12 July 1389, Chaucer was appointed the clerk of the king's works, a sort of foreman organising most of the king's building projects. No major works were begun during his tenure, but he did conduct repairs on Westminster Palace, St. George's Chapel, Windsor, continue building the wharf at the Tower of London, and build the stands for a tournament held in 1390. It may have been a difficult job, but it paid well: two shillings a day, more than three times his salary as a comptroller. Chaucer was also appointed keeper of the lodge at the King's park in Feckenham, which was a largely honorary appointment.

He is believed to have died of unknown causes on 25 October 1400, but there is no firm evidence for this date, as it comes from the engraving on his tomb, erected more than one hundred years after his death. There is some speculation—most recently in Terry Jones' book *Who Murdered Chaucer? : A Medieval Mystery*—that he was murdered by enemies of Richard II or even on the orders of his successor Henry IV, but the case is entirely circumstantial. Chaucer was buried in Westminster Abbey in London, as was his right owing to his status as a tenant of the Abbey's close. In 1556, his remains were transferred to a more ornate tomb, making Chaucer the first writer interred in the area now known as Poets' Corner.

The Canterbury Tales

The Canterbury Tales is a collection of 24 stories that runs to over 17000 lines written

in Middle English by Geoffrey Chaucer. In 1386, Chaucer became Controller of Customs and Justice of Peace and, three years later, Clerk of the King's work in 1389. It was during these years that Chaucer began working on his most famous text, *The Canterbury Tales*. The tales (mostly written in verse, although some are in prose) are presented as part of a story-telling contest by a group of pilgrims as they travel together on a journey from London to Canterbury to visit the shrine of Saint Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral.

It has been suggested that the greatest contribution of *The Canterbury Tales* to English literature was the popularization of the English vernacular in mainstream literature, as opposed to French, Italian or Latin. English had, however, been used as a literary language centuries before Chaucer's time, and several of Chaucer's contemporaries—John Gower, William Langland, the Pearl Poet, and Julian of Norwich—also wrote major literary works in English. It is unclear to what extent Chaucer was seminal in this evolution of literary preference.

While Chaucer clearly states the addressees of many of his poems, the intended audience of *The Canterbury Tales* is more difficult to determine. Chaucer was a courtier, leading some to believe that he was mainly a court poet who wrote exclusively for nobility.

The Canterbury Tales is generally thought to have been incomplete at the end of Chaucer's life. In the General Prologue, some thirty pilgrims are introduced. According to the *Prologue*, Chaucer's intention was to write two stories from the perspective of each pilgrim on the way to and from their ultimate destination, St. Thomas Becket's shrine (making for a total of four stories per pilgrim). Although perhaps incomplete, *The Canterbury Tales* is revered as one of the most important works in English literature. Not only do readers find it entertaining, but it is also open to a wide range of interpretations.

Comments on *The Canterbury Tales*

The Canterbury Tales was written during a turbulent time in English history. The Catholic Church was in the midst of the Western Schism and, though it was still the only Christian authority in Europe, was the subject of heavy controversy. Lollardy, an early English religious movement led by John Wycliffe, is mentioned in the *Tales*, which also mention a specific incident involving pardoners (sellers of indulgences, which were believed to relieve the temporal punishment due for sins that were already forgiven in the Sacrament of Confession) who nefariously claimed to be collecting for St. Mary Rouncival hospital in England. *The Canterbury*

Tales is among the first English literary works to mention paper, a relatively new invention that allowed dissemination of the written word never before seen in England. Political clashes, such as the 1381 Peasants' Revolt and clashes ending in the deposing of King Richard II, further reveal the complex turmoil surrounding Chaucer in the time of the *Tales*' writing. Many of his close friends were executed and he himself moved to Kent to get away from events in London.

While some readers look to interpret the characters of *The Canterbury Tales* as historical figures, other readers choose to interpret its significance in less literal terms. After analysis of Chaucer's diction and historical context, his work appears to develop a critique of society during his lifetime. Within a number of his descriptions, his comments can appear complimentary in nature, but through clever language, the statements are ultimately critical of the pilgrim's actions. It is unclear whether Chaucer would intend for the reader to link his characters with actual persons. Instead, it appears that Chaucer creates fictional characters to be general representations of people in such fields of work. With an understanding of medieval society, one can detect subtle satire at work.

The Prologue

The *Prologue* is the key to *The Canterbury Tales* that narrates about the gathering of a group of people in an inn that intend to go on a pilgrimage to Canterbury next morning.

In the *Prologue*, the narrator of *The Canterbury Tales*, who is one of the intended pilgrims, provides more or less accurate depictions of the members of the group and describes why and how *The Canterbury Tales* is told. If we trust the *General Prologue*, Chaucer determined that each pilgrim should tell two tales on the way to Canterbury and two tales on the way back. The host of the inn offers to be and is appointed as judge of the tales as they are told and is supposed to determine the best hence winning tale. As mentioned before, *The Canterbury Tales* was never finished.

It 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.

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 live in that era. That is why Chaucer has been called "the founder of English realism."

The Prologue^[1]

Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote,
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus^[2] eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram^[3] his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale foweles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open ye,
So priketh hem Nature in hir corages,
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres^[4] for to seken straunge strondes,
To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The hooly blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.



Notes

[1] In the modern English-translation by Theodore Morrison, Chaucer's original metrical form, the heroic couplet, is used.

[2] zephyrs: the west wind

[3] Ram: sign of the Zodiac; the Sun is the Ram from March 12 to April 11.

[4] Palmers: pilgrims, who, originally, brought back palm leaves from the Holy Land.



Questions

1. Can you enjoy the beautiful scenery written by Chaucer?
2. What is Heroic couplets?
3. What are the characteristics of the description of the prologue?

Analysis of *The Prologue*

The Prologue is actually a gallery of all walks of people. Chaucer widely selected his materials from English society of that age. Except the top of royal and the lowest salves, we can nearly find the representative of all social classes. Though reading the book, we can have a better understanding and broaden our eyesight of English society in 14th century, as well as enjoy the feature of art.

The prologue is rich in content. There is the knight who has participated in no less than fifteen of the great crusades of his era; the wife of Bath who has been married five times and well practiced in the art of love; the pardoner who is associated with shiftiness and gender ambiguity; just name a few. They belong to different parts of the society, living in different background, thus had different life styles, habits and custom. They chartered, joked, quarreled, and compromised; they discussed, praised, criticized, and persuaded. They adopted their particular way to present their life experience, providing a vivid series of narratives which differ in content and style.



中文译文

序诗

夏雨给大地带来了喜悦，
送走了土壤干裂的三月，
沐浴着草木的丝丝经络，
顿时百花盛开，生机勃勃。
西风轻吹留下清香缕缕，
田野复苏吐出芳草青青；
碧蓝的天空腾起一轮红日，
青春的太阳洒下万道金辉。
小鸟的歌喉多么清脆优美，
迷人的夏夜怎好安然入睡。
美丽的自然撩拨万物的心弦，
多情的鸟儿歌唱爱情的欣欢。
香客盼望膜拜圣徒的灵台，
僧侣立愿云游陌生的滨海。

信徒来自全国东西南北，
众人结伴奔向坎特伯雷，
去朝谢医病救世的恩主，
以缅怀大恩大德的圣徒。

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Unit 2 William Shakespeare (1564—1616)

Life

William Shakespeare was an English poet, playwright, and actor, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. He is often called England's national poet, and the "Bard of Avon." His extant works, including collaborations, consist of approximately 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses, some of uncertain authorship. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.



Shakespeare was born and brought up in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathaway, with whom he had three children: Susanna, and twins Hamnet and Judith. Sometime between 1585 and 1592, he began a successful career in London as an actor, writer, and part-owner of a playing company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later known as the King's Men. He appears to have retired to Stratford around 1613, at age 49, where he died three years later. Few records of Shakespeare's private life survive, which has stimulated considerable speculation about such matters as his physical appearance, sexuality, and religious beliefs, and whether the works attributed to him were written by others.

Shakespeare produced most of his known work between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were primarily comedies and histories, and these are regarded as some of the best work ever produced in these genres. He then wrote mainly tragedies until about 1608, including Hamlet,