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*Possibility of Transcending:
Chaucer as an Intellectual*

丁建宁 / 著



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序 言

丁建宁同志的博士论文经过修订,即将由北京大学出版社出版,嘱我写序。作为她的论文指导教师,我欣然从命。

记得当初丁建宁和我联系,报考博士研究生时,国内英语语言文学专业的博士点数量还不多,华东师大的生源也相对较好,指导教师选择的余地大。因此,这一年开始,我明确要求,如果希望我指导论文,就请研究中世纪英国文学,她接受了这个挑战。

我希望博士生去做中世纪英国文学研究,一方面是因为自己的博士论文是在这个领域,另一方面也是因为国内中世纪英国文学研究者偏少,需要加强力量。对于后者,我想多说几句。中国是人口大国,近年来高校的发展和变化,造成英国文学研究者队伍不断扩容。部分研究领域可能已经人满为患。与此同时,仍然有一些领域问津者寥寥。做学问是要关心学术人口学的,它是一种生产劳动,要讲究劳动效率和产出。一个特定领域研究的人多了,可能会带来学术的繁荣,可能会多出一些专著和文章,但同时也会有负面的作用,会付出人才和人力浪费的代价。现在有些研究领域,不是参与者人数越多越好,而是研究者个体的学术研究水平需要提高。况且,即使研究者学术水平都很高,也不一定保证人人都能开辟新的领域,或有新的发现。

对于这一点,德裔美国学者汉娜·阿兰(Hannah Arendt, 1906—1975)说过:

有一些研究领域,现在只能做到博学,却不停地、无意义地要

求原创性学术,这或者导致地地道道的离题万里,即众所周知的那种对越来越无足轻重的研究对象日甚一日地刨根究底,或者导致伪学术的发展,从而事实上毁掉了学术研究本身。

(The ceaseless, senseless demand for original scholarship in a number of fields, where only erudition is now possible, has led either to sheer irrelevancy, the famous knowing of more and more about less and less, or to the development of a pseudo-scholarship which actually destroys its object.)

引用阿兰特的话,并非要给学术创新泼冷水,而是要说明学术创新不容易,有时甚至不太可能。中国的英国文学研究整体上说,还没有到“只能做到博学”的地步,而一些领域研究者过多,大大压缩了个体学术创新的空间,却是应该引起注意的。因此,除非有特殊的理由,要少在学术研究领域使用人海战术,要关注不该冷落但实际被冷落的领域,如中世纪英国文学。从国家人才培养合理性的层面来说,研究中世纪英国文学,不是钻冷门,而是需要。这一点,入学时的丁建宁同志亦表示认同。

学术研究本身,是不分国界的。国内似乎是冷门,国际上很可能是热门。中世纪英国文学研究的情况就是如此。因此,这又不是热门冷门、人多人少的问题。作为一名学者,如果希望自己的研究真正具有某种意义,就应该让自己的视野超越国界,不投机取巧,不瞒天过海,不夜郎自大,尽力使得学术研究有一些价值。丁建宁同志勤于思索,为此用力甚勤。

进入新领域的丁建宁,入学之后遇到种种困难。她要迅速进入研究领域,大量阅读中世纪文本,积累研究的基础,尽早熟悉学术研究前沿。同时,作为读博的在职人员,她要承担原单位繁重的教学任务;作为妻子和母亲,她在家庭中依然要承担种种责任和事务。但她的一个最大优点,是关键时刻终不放弃。论文做得很苦,时间也长,但心态是积极的,目标是明确的,即尽可能使研究有一些价值。2004年,牛津大学麦尔科姆·戈登教授(Malcolm Godden)专程来上海为华东师大英语系中世纪方向的研究生开设系列讲座时,主持了她的论文开题报告,对她的探索精神和研究思路甚为赞赏。为了写好论文,她前往北京中国社科院外文所学习和研究半年,广泛求教国内一流学者,后又

两次去英国牛津大学，一次为撰写博士论文在牛津大学英文系做了半年研究，另一次是提交论文后收到邀请，去参加中世纪文学研究国际学术会议。六年的时间，终于磨成一剑！

再说几句关于她的论著的话。受当代思想界知识分子研究的启发，丁建宁从知识分子的角度，重新阅读乔叟其人其作，揭示了作为知识分子的乔叟，所体现的一些超越时代的特征。这在西方乔叟研究领域，还没有谁如此明确地提出来和尝试过。她又将乔叟和中国封建社会的“士”进行比较，探讨英国中世纪身兼宫廷官员和文学家双重身份的乔叟所具有的知识分子特点，并且结合作品进行了新的阐述，从而又使乔叟研究获得了中国审视角度。如此转换研究的视角，言人所未言，且自成一说，就是我们所说的创新。它对西方中世纪英语文学研究长期以来的思维定式进行了冲击，为乔叟研究带来了活力。这也是为什么她的论文评审者之一，剑桥大学中世纪和文艺复兴研究教授（Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Studies）海伦·库柏（Helen Cooper）对丁建宁甚为赞赏的原因之一。

“作为知识分子的乔叟”是个很大的课题。我们不指望这部论著提供一个终结式的分析或解答，它只是这方面研究的开始。论文的一些方面，如乔叟和中国古代“士”的比较，限于论文主旨和篇幅，没有充分展开。有时，我们阅读作者的文字，饶有兴趣地聆听作者的分析时，她又很快从一个话题转向另一个话题，留给我们的，与其说是酣畅的分析，不如说是可能的思路。不过，当我们想到阿兰关于学术创新之难的大实话，我们欣赏那些可能的思路中包含的思想火花，对论著中的不足不是宽容，而是理解。唯一希望的，是作者有机会能就这一研究选题作进一步挖掘和梳理。

我期待她此书出版之后，继续一步一个脚印，和同行们一道，将中世纪英国文学研究推向深入。是为序。

刘乃银

2010年11月

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My six-month-stay in Oxford in 2005, helped with a grant from Jiangsu Overseas Academic Exchange Fund, is vital in widening my vision and upgrading the edging academic information. Prof. Malcolm Godden of the University of Oxford, who was also chair of the panel of my proposal judgment, made my visit to Oxford possible and pleasant. I would thank Prof. Vincent Gillespie of the University of Oxford for his being so supportive in providing advice on the subject. His remarks on Chaucer's literary strategies of presenting questions but leaving them open are especially inspiring to

my discussion of Chaucer as an enlightener. Prof. Helen Cooper of the University of Cambridge is not only helpful because of her meticulously-written work on Chaucer. More than that is her constant academic and spiritual support. She never hesitates to help. I still remember clearly how nice she was to come a long way by bike to meet me in her office despite the heavy rain when I visited her in Cambridge! The reading list she recommended me, and the stimulating suggestions she gave me are significant in helping me frame my dissertation, especially the part on Chaucer's role of a counselor or a critic. These genius and generous people have helped better my understanding and interest in English medieval literature in general, and made my particular research on Chaucer go smoothly. Given all the help I received, any errors, for all my best attempt to avoid, I claim sole responsibility.

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I also wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the many scholars who compiled, edited, and wrote about Chaucer. My main debt to the scholarly and critical work is listed in the selected bibliography.

My most profound debts are owed to my family. This dissertation would never have been possible without my husband Liu Hui's understanding and support. Though in a quite different field, he has spoiled my absence from time to time, one and a half year stay in Shanghai, half year in Oxford, another half year in Beijing! Thanks are to be extended to my mother Ma Youbi, who has taken such good care of the whole family since I started my PhD studying! Knowing nothing about English, she has been always ready to share my feelings, high or low. And I would also thank my son Liu Ruguan, who has kept my company

along my academic journey from his primary school to his junior middle school. I guess he might be among the very few junior students in China who knows Chaucer! My gratitude to them is beyond words. I will always bear them in my heart!

前 言

知识分子研究在 20 世纪的西方人文科学界可谓如火如荼,话语纷呈。其关注的焦点是知识分子与权力阶层的关系,似乎知识分子就是对现状不满、对权力阶层说不的人群。将六百多年前的中世纪诗人乔叟与知识分子相提并论难免有牵强之嫌,成为犯“时代错位”的典型案例。然而,一味强调社会批判性是知识分子应共有的唯一品质似乎又明显带有“现代”偏见,至少是一种狭隘的理解。知识分子的概念和内涵远不止此,它本具有更加广阔的视阈。因此,本书试图从广义的知识分子概念切入,结合现代知识分子研究成果,重新审视英国文学之父乔叟,探讨乔叟的文学创作与社会参与之间的互动关系,并借此论证乔叟在文学创作和思想方面具有超越其时代的现代性。

本书的引言梳理了知识分子的定义和分类,指出广义层面的知识分子通常具备高度的智力水平、知识优势和理性倾向。但现代知识分子的研究和发展将这一广义概念逐渐狭义化,原本中性的词汇由于历史的原因带上“贬义”的色彩。但这种变化的意义在于,知识分子的概念从关注个人特质转向探讨社会属性,强调知识分子的独立人格和非功利性,特别是他们对权力、对现状所持的“对立”姿态。本书从广义层面的知识分子特性,即个人智慧入手,论证乔叟在文学和世俗世界中的博学和智慧,足以将他归入“智者”(an intellectual man)名列;继而结合现代知识分子研究中的社会关注要素,探讨他的社会属性,论

证其成为现代意义知识分子(an intellectual)的可能性;并引出本文即将探讨的知识分子特质的三个核心要素:社会批评、启蒙和智慧及其相应的篇章安排。

第一章从现代知识分子概念中强调的社会批判角色与中世纪传统知识分子对王室的进谏、辅佐角色两方面,探讨作为宫廷文人的乔叟在愉悦王孙、谏言献策或是批评说教等多种职能之间的转换以及因此而面临的尴尬。笔者通过细读《坎特伯雷故事》中“梅勒比的故事”,论述乔叟运用“镜鉴文学”体裁写作的原因,是巧妙地隐批评于劝告中,是在模糊个人立场的表象下,传递自己的声音。继承“镜鉴文学”传统不是诗人文学创作所关注的全部,如何借诗传意,以及他本人的社会角色共同决定其文学选择。诗歌中的主题、风格、体裁选择以及对经典文本的取舍、改编都有一定的社会缘由。宫廷诗人乔叟不是纯粹的辅佐者或批评者,却在某种意义上兼扮两种角色。

第二章延续前章文学与社会语境互动的研究范式,在综述和分析当时社会结构的基础上,讨论乔叟所处的社会位置对他在进行社会评论时可能产生的影响。笔者认为,虽然乔叟作品中弥漫着观点并置、词语闪烁、回避或淡化社会事件的特点,因而对它们的解读不可避免呈现出多元性和开放性,但写作是“社会实践”的一种形式,文学文本的产生与社会势力之间的关系不可否认。与简单的文学社会决定论不同的是,两者之间不是镜子般的反映与被反映关系,而是存在一种不可分割的互动关系。因此,本章在讨论“女尼的教士的故事”时,比较了乔叟与同时代诗人或编年史者对1381年农民起义的指涉或描述,探讨乔叟对农民可能持有的同情和对社会阶层界限的模糊化倾向;之后,分别就乔叟在作品中对妇女和教会人员的刻画进行分析。本书选取《特洛伊斯和克里希德》中“不贞妇人”克里希德和《坎特伯雷故事》中的巴斯夫人为研究对象,指出乔叟对两者所作的圆形塑造,以及拒绝对他们的行为作简单的道德判断,这一行为本身实际上已超越了中世纪盛行的“唯道德服务”艺术观,同时也骚动了传统的父权观念。因此,他在某种意义上扮演了现代知识分子“搅局者”(disturber)的角色。本章在论述乔叟对当时教会问题的关注时,选取《坎特伯雷故事》中女修士、赎罪僧和牧师三个典型,指出乔叟对女修士世俗生活的温和嘲讽,以及对赎罪僧恶俗嘴脸的描绘,延续了他一贯的不动声色的风格。但是他对作为教会

典范的牧师形象的理想化塑造,衬托了其他教会神职人员的腐败堕落,流露出诗人的不满。因此,本章通过分析乔叟在作品中对社会事件、妇女命运和教会问题的关注,论证乔叟承当社会批评者,或者至少是社会评论者的知识分子特质。

第三章重点探讨了体现在乔叟身上的启蒙精神及他所做出的启蒙努力。首先,本章重申乔叟宫廷文人的多重角色,指出乔叟不是一个纯粹取悦王孙的朝廷弄臣,也没有现代意义知识分子的公开对抗性;但他的诗歌寓教于乐,完美地将审美与教益相结合,诗歌中呈现的启蒙精神更从另一维度体现了他的知识分子特性,而这种启蒙精神主要体现在他与“权威”(the authority)和“权威文本”(the authorities)的协商中。然后,本章理清启蒙与权威的关系,并阐释中世纪权威概念独特的双重含义,继而论证乔叟在对待权威问题上的巧妙和悖反:一方面,他是运用各种权威文本的好手,通古博今;另一方面,他对权威文本的权威性并非盲目信仰、完全臣服,而是尽己所有,为己所用。在诗歌创作方面,乔叟通过对各种权威文本的翻译、改写和创新,确立了自己在文学领域的权威地位;在对待性别权威方面,他在质疑父权制的同时,触及哲学层面的知识与经验的对立。以女性为具象的经验和以男性为代表的权威二者之间的对立、紧张关系在巴斯夫人形象中得到集中体现。巴斯夫人对主要来自权威文本的男性权威话语的运用,和对男性权威本身的质疑恰恰折射出乔叟本人的影子。因此,通过与权威和权威文本的协商,乔叟实际上扮演了启蒙者这一知识分子的另一社会角色。

第四章将讨论的着眼点从知识分子的社会属性转回个人特质,探讨乔叟的才智在文学领域和世俗世界中的共同体现和相互作用。本章结合文本细读,选择性地讨论了乔叟诗歌中选用的梦境体裁,并置与开放、节制等艺术手法,论证乔叟不仅是在延承文学传统,或进行艺术创新,更是在扮演知识分子的角色,策略地实践社会批评。乔叟现世生活中智慧的讨论则被置于和中国古代传统知识分子“士”的比较中,着眼两者类似的亦官亦文的多重社会角色,探讨他们作为知识分子如何关注 and 影响社会发展,突出他们在文与道、形与心之间游走的智慧。

对乔叟的知识分子性研究试图从现代视角,重新阅读文学经典。本书以知识分子的智慧品质和社会功能为两条线索,结合文本细读和

对当时英国社会、政治和文化历史原貌的追溯,探讨文学创作与历史语境的互动关系,解读诗人文本策略的社会意义。本书指出,乔叟不是任何单纯意义上的知识分子,但他身上却融合了知识分子的多种特质:社会批评、大众启蒙和为人、为文的智慧。讨论乔叟的知识分子性具有可行性和合理性,并可为阅读乔叟和理解知识分子的含义提供双重借鉴意义。

Foreword

The study of the intellectual was a heated academic area in the 20th century. Its focus was mainly laid on the intellectual's relation to the power, implicating that the intellectual was a special group courageous to say no to the authority. Therefore, to associate Chaucer, a medieval court poet, with "intellectual," a relatively recent notion, seems to be a forced or far-fetched attempt. The association could be the victim of anachronism. However, to privilege being a social critic the only feature commonly shared by the intellectuals is after all modern-prejudiced, or is at least a one-sided, narrow understanding of its meaning. "Intellectual," as a notion, basically has other implications than this particular one. This book therefore intends, from the perspective of the notion of "intellectual," its general sense and its modern sense, to revisit Chaucer the man and his works. It attempts to explore the interaction between his writing practice and his social engagement, and to argue that Chaucer transcends his age and can then be considered to be a modern writer not only for his literary creation but also his philosophical ideas.

After a retrospective study on the concept of "intellectual," and a review of those scholars who have touched on this issue, the introductory part primarily argues for the plausibility and significance of a systematic study on Chaucer as an intellectual. The definitions and classifications of the concept help to illuminate the bi-foci of the

notion; one indicating the personal wisdom of an intellectual, the other concerning an intellectual's social function, a more contested point in modern intellectual study. Then Chaucer's intelligence and his social function as a court poet are discussed, and the three key aspects of the present study on Chaucer as an intellectual are introduced: his role of a social commentator, of an enlightener, and his wisdom exhibited in both his private writing and his public world.

From both a historical and a modern view, Chapter One explores the social roles traditional intellectuals in the court played as prince-pleasers and/or counselors, and the modern intellectuals' function as social critics. It elaborates the complex relationship of the roles Chaucer played as a court poet and a civil servant; his dilemma of pleasing the royal and aristocratic, or providing counseling advice and making criticism. Making a detailed analysis on the *Melibee's Tale* in the *Canterbury Tales*, especially its relationship with the genre of "Mirror for Prince," the chapter argues about the interrelationship between Chaucer's literary choices and the social roles he played. It argues that by adopting the genre of "Mirror for Prince" for the *Melibee's Tale*, Chaucer not only inherited the literary tradition but also achieved his social criticism strategically. The choice of subject, genre, and style may all have social reasons and significance. It is argued thus the inheritance of literary tradition is not the only factor that influences Chaucer's writing. Literary choices are determined by the interaction between literary tradition and the social roles the writer played.

The second chapter continues studying the relationship between Chaucer's work and his social roles under the frame of the interaction between literary texts and their social context. Based on a general survey of the medieval social structure, this chapter starts with a discussion about Chaucer's position in and on the society. In the second section, Chaucer's attitude toward the 1381 rebels is explored through a comparative study between Chaucer's treatment of the event in the *Nun's Priest's Tale* and the descriptions of it by other contemporary writers and chroniclers. The third and fourth sections of this chapter focus on Chaucer's depictions of women and clerics respectively. Sampling on two of the most contested women

characters in Chaucer: Criseyde, “the false woman” in *Troilus and Criseyde*, and the Wife of Bath in the *Canterbury Tales*, the third section argues for Chaucer’s denial of making any simple moral judgment. It argues that by so doing, Chaucer was in fact shaking the traditional idea of patriarchy. He was, therefore, in some sense playing the role of a “disturber” as a modern intellectual. The fourth section elaborates on Chaucer’s attitude towards the clerics. Offering literary portraits of contemporary clerics, Chaucer betrayed his dissatisfaction with the corruptions of some of the clerics, though still in a cool and calm manner, without any radical attacks upon them. In all, Chaucer’s concern with the social events, the fate of women, and the problems of the clerics in fact exhibits his role of an intellectual as a social commentator.

Chapter Three elaborates on Chaucer’s role of an intellectual as an enlightener. After the mystery of “authority” in medieval time is cleared up, the chapter focuses on Chaucer’s negotiating with the authority(ies), which is manifested in both his literary creation and his reflection on male superiority. It exposes Chaucer’s ingenuity in taking advantages of the authorities and his paradoxical relationship with them, in the sense that he established his own *authority* in literature by exploiting these *authorities*, that is, the sources taken as canon. In terms of gender authority, the tension between the male and the female in his works is expanded to the conflict between the authority, which is usually embodied in men, and the experience, which is usually embodied in women. Being a constant issue in Chaucer’s works, the opposition between authority and experience is illuminated in the *Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale*. It is also argued that Chaucer’s Wife of Bath mirrors Chaucer the poet himself; both apply the authorities against the authority.

Chapter Four turns to the discussion of Chaucer’s personal wisdom. Nevertheless, the apparent shift of focus doesn’t deny the interactive relationship between Chaucer’s personal attributes and his public position. It is argued that Chaucer’s artistic devices or textual strategies are not a pure matter of literary art, but a way of fulfilling his role of a social commentator. Compared with *Shi*, the group of traditional Chinese intellectuals, Chaucer’s wisdom in both

his private writing and his public life is manifested. Chaucer and *Shi* shared the same wisdom, knowing how to survive in an age of turmoil without giving up pursuing their spiritual ideal.

On the basis of a close reading of Chaucer's works, and with the reference to Chaucer's critical heritage and the related documents concerning the history and the culture of his time, the book tries to read the interaction between Chaucer's texts and the historical, social and cultural context of his time. Thanks to its double threads: the general sense and the modern sense, the notion of "intellectual" lends itself to an advantageous perspective of doing so. It allows a new angle to see the interaction between Chaucer's literary works and his social roles. Chaucer's intellectuality can be perceived, not only in his knowledge and intelligence, but also, more importantly, in his ambivalent and dual roles of both a counselor and a critic, in the skeptical challenge and enlightening effects in his poetry, and in his wisdom exhibited in both his literary and social life.

The attempt to examine Chaucer's poems both on their literary attributes and their social and cultural context is textually as well as contextually meaningful. The interaction between the text and the context helps us see not only the social and cultural significance of Chaucer's textual strategies, furthering a better understanding of the excellence of the writing itself, but also Chaucer's importance to and influence upon the advancement of society and culture as an intellectual.