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中学教师进修高等师范本科(专科起点)教材

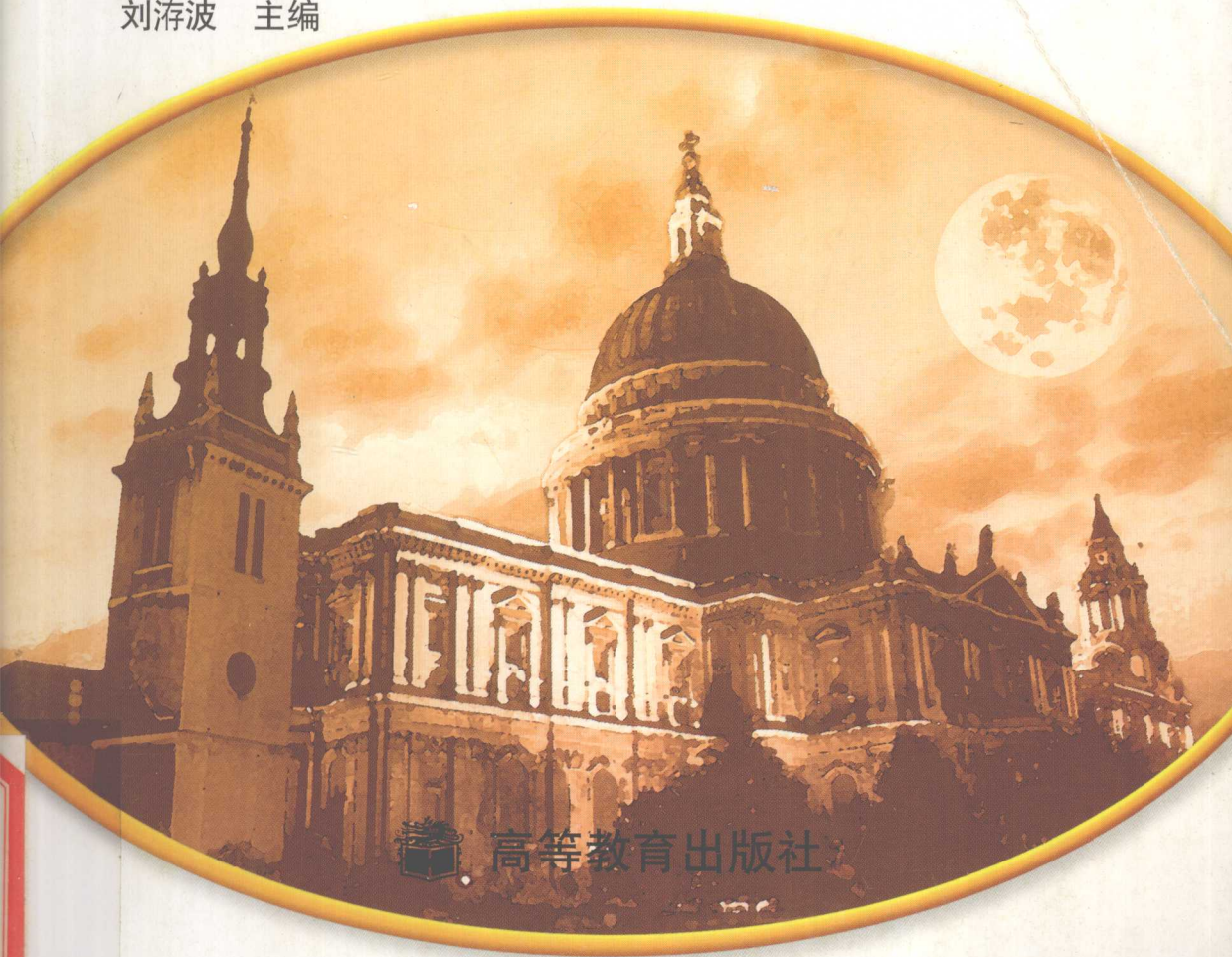
专升本

● 总主审 秦秀白

英美文学史 及作品选读 (英国部分)

Selected Readings in British and American Literature

刘洵波 主编



高等教育出版社

教育部师范教育司⁰¹³⁷³⁰¹组织编写
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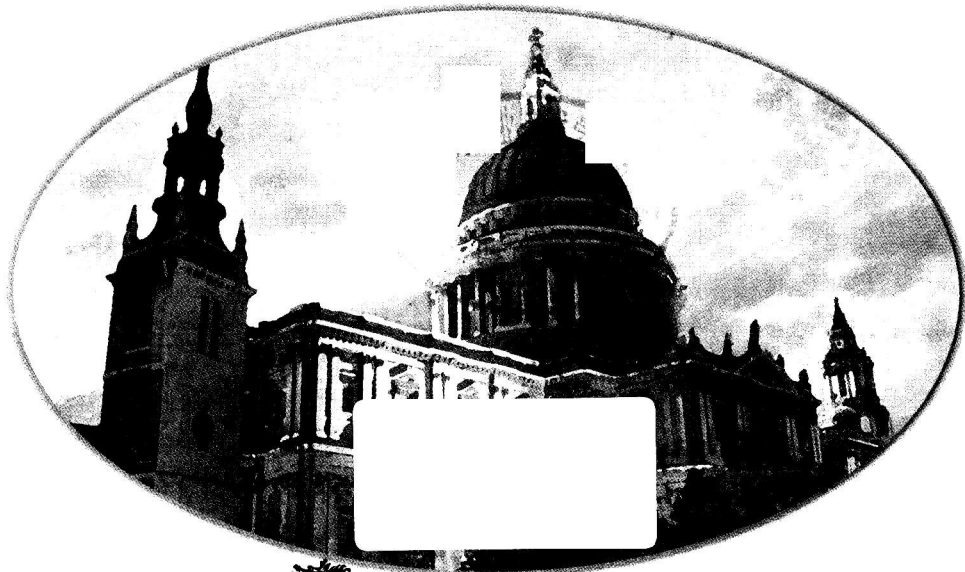
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*Selected Readings in British
and American Literature*

刘洵波 主 编
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内 容 简 介

本书是教育部师范司组织编写的“中学教师进修高等师范本科(专科起点)规划教材”。全书共由7章组成,分别介绍了英国各历史时期的文学状况、主要作家及其作品,并备有讨论题。

本书可作为中学英语教师进修高等师范英语专业本科之用,亦可供非英语专业人员和广大英语爱好者自学英语之用。

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前 言

为了全面贯彻和落实《面向21世纪教育振兴行动计划》，适应中学教育改革的发展和需要，教育部师范司制订了《中学教师进修高等师范本科（专科起点）的教学计划》（试行），并开始组织编写全国通用教材。本教材是师范司和高等教育出版社在全国范围内征求主编的中标项目，它严格按照《计划》的精神和课时规定，坚持“文学史与作品选读并重，重点突出”的原则，以文学史为线索，选择各个时期最具代表性的作家的代表作进行学习，使学生对英国文学有一个总体的认识和把握。作品的选读没有从《贝尔武甫》、《坎特伯雷故事集》开始，而是从莎士比亚的作品开始，这主要是考虑到《贝尔武甫》、《坎特伯雷故事集》的文字太古老和遥远，因此只对其作简要介绍。

本教材的目的是试图通过英国文学史的讲授和文学作品的阅读，使学员对英国各个不同历史时期，特别是18世纪以后的文学流派、代表作家及其经典作品有一定的了解，并在具体作品中学习体会各个时期的时代精神、作家的创作风格、创作手法和语言特色，培养并提高学员的阅读理解能力、文化理解能力、文学鉴赏能力和综合素质。

根据教育部师范司颁发的《中学教师进修高等师范本科（专科起点）教学计划》（试行）对本课程教学课时的规定并依据专升本教学的实际情况，建议师生在使用本教材时参考以下课时分配方案：

教学内容	课时分配				
	脱产	业余	函授		
			面授	自学	合计
第一章：早期及中世纪时期文学	2	2	2	4	6
第二章：文艺复兴时期文学	8	8	3	6	9
第三章：17世纪时期文学	6	6	3	6	9
第四章：18世纪时期文学	10	10	4	8	12
第五章：浪漫主义时期文学	8	8	4	8	12
第六章：维多利亚时期文学	12	12	6	8	14
第七章：20世纪文学	12	12	8	16	24

全书各章的编写体例为：A. 本时期社会、历史和文学简介；B. 作家简介；C. 作品梗概；D. 作品选读；E. 注释；F. 评述；G. 讨论题。

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徐安泉: 第一章、第七章(部分)
刘涪波: 第二章、第三章(部分)、第七章(部分)
钟 坚: 第三章(部分)
王永梅: 第四章
申劲松: 第五章、第七章(部分)
杨云红: 第六章、第七章(部分)
易 晴: 第三章(部分)

刘涪波、杨云红、申劲松同志对全书进行了认真、细致的校对和修改。美籍教师 Carol Rueckert 对全书进行了修改和润色。主审秦秀白教授在百忙之中通读了全书,并在编写体例、作家、作品的取舍、注释的繁简、讨论题的设计等方面提出了许多宝贵的修改意见。对此,我们谨致衷心的感谢。

由于我们的水平有限,本书一定存在不少的缺点和不足,恳望广大读者和同行专家不吝指正。

刘涪波

2001年4月

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One

C H A P T E R

Early and Medieval English Literature

The Roman Conquest (55B.C.—410 A.D.)

Before the middle of the first century B.C., the aboriginal Celtic tribes lived in what is now Britain. In 55 B.C., Roman troops led by Julius Caesar invaded the island. Then in 43 A.D., Claudius conquered it. In 78 A.D., Britain was completely subjugated to the Roman Empire and it became a Roman province. The Romans built roads, walls, garrisons and villas, and the Celts became either slaves or cultivators of the land. The Roman occupation also brought Christianity to Britain. Nearly 400 years of Roman rule in Britain ended in 410 A.D., as the Empire's declining fortunes led to the withdrawal of all Roman troops in that year.

The English Conquest or The Anglo-Saxon Period (410—1066 A.D.)

After the withdrawal of the Roman troops, a tribe of Teutons, called Jutes, landed on the Isle of Thanet. Another two Teutonic tribes, the Angles and the Saxons, followed. The Jutes occupied Kent in the south-eastern corner of the island; the Saxons Wessex, Essex and Sussex; and the Angles the east Midland, enslaving some of the native inhabitants while driving others to the hills north and west. They established small kingdoms and wars broke out among them. Gradually the Angles spread over the east Midland and flourished. They occupied more land and built the kingdom of the East Angles. More such kingdoms were built and by the 7th century these small kingdoms were combined to form a single larger kingdom: England, and the people were called English. The Anglo-Saxon dialect is what we now call Old English.

For more than 100 years beginning in the late 8th century, the Danes invaded and occupied large areas of north-eastern England. In the late 9th century, King Alfred the Great (849—901 A.D.) of the Kingdom of Wessex in the south led the English people in the fight against the invading Danes. The invaders were driven back. The Danes invaded England again in the early 11th century. They conquered and ruled throughout parts of England for a quarter of a century (1017—1042 A.D.). Then, following the expulsion of the Danes, the Normans invaded England in 1066. They defeated the English troops and William, the Duke of Normandy, was crowned as King of England, which marked the end of the Anglo-Saxon period and the beginning of the “Norman Conquest.”

The Norman Conquest (1066—1350 A.D.)

The Norman Conquest of Anglo-Saxon England under William began with the battle of Hastings in 1066. The conquest was completed with the defeat of the English troops, William's claim to the succession to the English throne and his suppression of the English revolts.

The Norman Conquest accelerated the development of feudalism in England. Only after the Conquest did England truly become a feudalist society. With the king as their head, feudal noblemen, barons or vassals, knights, bishops, archbishops, abbots and the like formed a whole ruling class of the church and the court, who held most land, great wealth and supreme power. The peasants toiled and paid heavy rents in grain, service, or cash to the gentle folks, which left them little to sustain themselves with. No one dared to say or do anything against the feudal order. The few who tried were often condemned as heretics and severely punished.

In the 1330s, the war between England and France caused a heavier burden upon the common people. From 1349 to the 60's a disease called Black Death swept over the country and reduced the whole population by almost a third. In 1350 the ruling class passed the Statutes of Labourers in parliament to compel homeless and landless peasants under sixty to work at low wages. The peasants who refused to do so were arrested or declared outlaws. In 1379 a poll-tax was imposed upon the peasantry, requiring 4 pence from every poor peasant, and the next year the tax-money was raised to 3 times as much. All the mounting feudal oppression completely pauperised the peasants and inevitably led to their great revolts, one of which was the peasant's uprising in 1381. English feudalism was declining.

The three centuries following the Norman Conquest saw the introduction of medieval French culture, including French modes of customs, manners, literature, and especially the Norman-French language into England on a large scale. For almost two hundred years after 1066 three languages—native English, Norman-French and Latin, existed side by side in England. The native English language, which descended from Anglo-Saxon or Old English, was the common speech of the overwhelming majority of the ordinary people, while the Norman lords and courtiers used French. Latin was used among the scholars in churches and courts. In the exchange of cultures throughout some four centuries the English language gradually underwent profound and extensive changes. Not only were thousands of words borrowed in the course of time, but many old inflectional forms of native English words disappeared and the formal grammar was considerably simplified. The language in this transitional stage from Old English to modern English, is generally known as Middle English.

Old English Poetry and Beowulf

The earliest forms of English literature, which are still preserved as the relics of the Anglo-Saxons, are poems originating from the collective efforts of the people. These poems or songs are partly historical stories and partly legendary stories passed around orally from generation to generation by unknown scop and gleemen. Among these poems *Beowulf*, a 3182-line alliterative verse, has generally been considered the monumental work in English poetry of the Anglo-Saxon period, or the national epic of the English people.

The poem probably existed in its oral form as early as the 6th century. It was written down in the 7th or 8th century though the extant manuscript, discovered in 1705, dated

back to the 10th century. The whole epic is divided into two parts with an interpolation in between. The whole song is essentially pagan in spirit and matter, while the interpolation is obviously an addition made by the Christian who copied the Song. Therefore, there is the mixing in the poem of pagan elements with Christian colouring, and in fact, Beowulf the hero and his adventures are placed in Denmark and southern Sweden, from which the Anglo-Saxons came.

This poem is about the deeds of the Teutonic hero Beowulf. He is the nephew of Hygelic, King of the Geat people in Jutland of Denmark. Because he hears that his kinsman, Hrothgar, King of the Danes, is attacked in a great hall by Grendel, a terrible monster, he sails with his warriors to lend help to Hrothgar. Beowulf's first battle with Grendel occurs when the monster comes to attack Beowulf and his companions who are about to go to sleep for the night in the hall after a welcoming feast hosted by Hrothgar. The battle results in the retreat of the mortally-wounded monster and the victory of Beowulf. Grendel's mother comes to avenge her son's death by taking away the king's close friend. Beowulf and his companions follow the bloody trail to a pool and he plunges into the water and reaches a cave underneath. There in the desperate struggle with Grendel's mother Beowulf succeeds in cutting off her head with a magic sword. When Beowulf and his companions go back to the hall, the triumph is celebrated with a feast and songs. Then in his homeland, Beowulf is chosen to be king. He rules gloriously over the Geats for fifty years. The closing part of the poem tells Beowulf's last fight with a fire dragon for his own people. Beowulf by now is an old man but he resolves to kill the dragon. The poem goes with reminiscences of his deeds before the description of the battle. When Beowulf wants to pierce the dragon's scales with his sword, the sword fails to bite and breaks and he falls under the threat of the fiery breath of the dragon and falls into great danger. In the nick of time, Wiglaf, one of his warriors, helps him and Beowulf kills the monster at last. Mortally wounded Beowulf dies after leaving the future of his people and his land in the care of his successor Wiglaf. According to Beowulf's last will, the people of Jutland built a funeral pile and cremated the hero's body. The poem ends with their praise of Beowulf as the mildest and kindest of men.

Beowulf, in its remote ideas, allusive style and story-telling form, towers above all other literary works written in Anglo-Saxon, chiefly because it is a powerful poem about a people's grand hero who is eager to help others in distress, is faithful to his people, and is ready to sacrifice his own life for their welfare.

Middle English Literature and The Canterbury Tales

During the Middle Ages, the English language developed into the dominant language in the country from simultaneously using two other languages: Norman-French and Latin. In Middle English literature, from the mid-11th to the mid-14th century folk literature and religious writings developed. However the most prevailing kind of literature was the romantic verse and prose. The romance or medieval stories usually told the adventures of some hero of chivalry. The heroes were the knights, usually of noble birth, who were described as the skilled men in the use of weapons, riding forth to seek adventures, taking part in tournaments, or fighting for their lords in battle. The qualities the knights were expected to have were courage, honour, courtesy, devotion to the weak and helpless and to the service of women. Furthermore, their loyalty to the church and the king was the corner stone of feudal morality.

Most of the English romances deal with three major themes: "The Matter of Britain," about the adventures of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table; "The Matter of France," about Emperor Charlemagne and his peers; and "The Matter of Rome," about tales of antiquity, from the Trojan War to the feats of Alexander the Great. Another feature of Middle English literature is that most of the English romances of the time were metrical, meter and rhyme having been adopted from French poetry in place of alliteration in Anglo-Saxon poetry. Among the English common people there were numerous ballads and these story-telling songs are the most important parts of English folk literature.



Geoffrey chaucer 1340—1400

Geoffrey Chaucer, the "father of English poetry," was born of a wine-merchant's family in London about 1340. He is said to have studied at Oxford and Cambridge. In 1357 he began life as a court page. Two years later he accompanied the English army to France, and was taken prisoner. After his release in 1360 he returned to England. He married Philippa, a maid of honour to the queen and relative of a noble man, who became his patron. In 1367 he entered the service of King Edward III, who sent him to the European Continent on several diplomatic missions, two of which brought him into contact with the new Renaissance trends in Italian literature. In 1373 he became the post of a Comptroller of Customs in the port of London. In 1386 he was elected member of Parliament for Kent. But in December of the

same year he was dismissed from his office due to the intrigues of his enemies. Though he was in these positions for many years, he seemed to also have known poverty. The death of his wife in 1387 and the subsequent loss of her annuity led to a change for the worse in Chaucer's financial circumstances. In 1389 he was appointed Clerk of the King's works at Westminster and Windsor, and King Henry IV granted him a pension. He died on the 25th of October 1400, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Because of Chaucer's broad and intimate acquaintance with persons high and low in all walks of life, and because of his wide reading and studying of the literary works of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio, he acquired an abundant knowledge of the world, which had profound influence upon his writing. In the first stage of his literary career, from the 1360s to about 1372, he fell chiefly under the influence of French poetry of the Middle Ages. In the second stage, from 1372 to 1386 he wrote under the spell of the great literary geniuses of the early Renaissance in Italy. He produced, in the last fifteen years of his life (1386—1400), works of full maturity free from any dominant foreign influence. He was at home in his own choice of subject, his own grasp of character and his own diction and plot, all of which has been found in his masterpiece *The Canterbury Tales*.

The Canterbury Tales was written chiefly in the years 1387—1400. The whole poem is a collection of twenty-four stories strung together with a simple plan. It opens with a general prologue that explains the occasion for the narration of the tales and gives a description of a company of some nine and twenty pilgrims who gathered at Tabard Inn in Southwark, a suburb of London, on a spring day. They are on their way to the shrine of St. Thomas, a Becket at Canterbury. The poet joins this company and, at the suggestion of the "jolly innkeeper," they agree to beguile the journey by story telling. Each of them is to tell two stories on the outward trip and two more on the way back. The best storyteller shall be treated with a free supper at the cost of all the rest. The innkeeper offers to go with them as their guide and judge. According to this arrangement, there should be in total 124 stories, but only 24 were written. The work was obviously left unfinished upon the poet's death in 1400.

The pilgrims are people from various parts of feudal England and except for the royalty and the poorest peasant, are representatives of various walks of life and social groups with various interests, tastes and predilections. Every figure is drawn with accuracy as the poet succeeds in linking their narrated stories together by his unity to the whole work, inviting, criticising, admiring and denouncing. Taken as a whole the 24 stories are of unequal merits and they represent practically the whole range of literary genres in

medieval and early Renaissance, embracing minstrelsy, chivalric romances, fabliaux, lays, legends, legendary epic sagas, animal epics, mythology, moral allegories and sermons.

Chaucer, as a forerunner of humanism, praised man's energy, intellect, quick wit and love of life; he also exposed, satirised and lashed the evils of the time. He was a great master of the English language, for he introduced the rhymed stanza of various types, specifically the rhymed couplet of five accents in iambic meter to English poetry, instead of the old Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse. He was the first great poet to write in the English language and was a great influence on making the dialect of London the standard for modern English speech.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What social changes took place in early and medieval English history?
2. Why does *Beowulf* tower above all other literary works written in Anglo-Saxon?
3. What is the social significance of *The Canterbury Tales* and what is Chaucer's contribution to English poetry and to the English language?

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The Renaissance

TWO

C H A P T E R

The Renaissance

During the 16th century in England, feudalism collapsed and the foundation of capitalism was established. In this period, Britain changed from an exporter of wool to a manufacturer of cloth. The increasing demand for wool resulted in the Enclosure Movement which drove peasants off their lands to towns, and became workers at low wages. They were the forefathers of the modern English proletariat.

The rise of the bourgeoisie resulted in an intellectual movement better known as the Renaissance. It first started in Italy in the 14th century and flourished in France, Germany, Spain and England in the 15th and 16th centuries. It saw the revival of art and sciences after the dark ages. People became interested in classical literature and many Greek and Latin works were translated into English. These classical works acted as models of literary

