

<<理解诗歌>>

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内容概要

《理解诗歌（第4版）》是美国大学文学系广为采用的教科书，也是新批评派的代表作。它对理解英语诗歌做了全面、系统的处理，强调文本细读的方法，注重诗歌结构和语义分析，对中国读者具有重要意义。

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作者简介

沃伦，美国密歇根州的城市，北与底特律城相邻。
是底特律郊外住宅及工业城市。
人口16.1万。
1955年建城后发展迅速，1960—1970年间人口增加了一倍。
重要的汽车制造中心，还生产钢、电气器材、机床等。
沃伊肯尼亚南部城镇，在塔伊塔山东麓。
重要铁路枢纽。
蒙巴萨—乌干达铁路干线经此，支线通卡亥连接坦桑尼亚铁路系统。
坦桑尼亚东北部部分外贸物资经此出蒙巴萨港。
紧靠察沃国家公园。
有航空站。
沃什湾英国英格兰东部临北海的浅水湾。
长35公里，宽24公里。
有威士姆、韦兰特、尼尼和乌斯等河流注入。
沿岸主要港口有波士顿和金斯林。

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章节摘录

The poem begins with a lilting rhythm appropriate to the joyful occasion。

The beacons have been lighted up and down the land* in celebration of the half-century of order , prosperity , and power specified in Tennyson ' s “ On the Jubilee , ” and far and wide people are singing the national anthem : “ God Save the Queen.

” But something occurs in the second stanza of Housman ' s poem that provides a key to the attitude the poet really holds : it is the shift in feeling that occurs when we move from line 6 to lines 7 and 8 : Because ' tis fifty years tonight That God has saved the Queen.

“ God Save the Queen ” is a phrase out of a ritual , a phrase grammatically petrified , as it were.

We are , therefore , momentarily shocked to hear it suddenly fitted into a matter-of-fact statement , with the change of tense and the other syntactical adjustments that take it out of ritual and into commonplace statement.

The effect is a little like that of seeing a priest , clad in his ritual garments , suddenly take the heavily embroidered maniple from his arm and begin to use it as if it were an ordinary towel-which it was originally before it was divorced from workaday chores and formalized into a band of embroidered cloth.

The poet , of course , wants to give shock here , a shock which in this poem is not playful but sobering. Indeed , we could argue that the rest of the poem is devoted to working out the implications of this forcing of a ritual phrase into ordinary grammar.

In short , the poem may be described as a realistic and ironic examination of the real meaning of “ God Save the Queen ” words often uttered on such occasions glibly and without thought.

God may indeed have saved the Queen , but He seems to have used ordinary human beings as His chosen instruments.

The British infantryman , the lads of the Fifty-third Regiment (line 28) , those who have not come home to celebrate the jubilee but lie in lonely graves in Africa or Asia , are , in their absence , mute testimony to this fact .

What Housman is doing in his jubilee poem comes out clearly when we compare it with Tennyson ' s straightforward praise of the Queen in his laureate poem.

Tennyson , of course , would not have denied that Englishmen had perished to make Victoria empress , or that blood had been shed to build the empire and to guarantee the “ ever-broadening Commerce ” of which the poet laureate sings.

But he evidently did not feel it appropriate to mention the fact on this occasion.

Tennyson's tone in his jubilee poem is calm , deferential to the crown , even almost reverential , as he praises Victoria for what she has accomplished.

To be sure , as the poem closes he does sound more ominous notes.

He asks , “ Are there thunders moaning in the distance ?

i ' But he expects these “ thunders ” to pass , and the ominous “ spectres ” to vanish.

Housman , on the other hand , has clearly abjured the laureate tone : he is realistic and ironic.

Some readers might even regard him as irreverent.

Notice lines 11-13 , where he turns aside from the general celebration to say , “ Lads , we'll remember friends of ours / Who shared the work (of saving the Queen) with God.

” The irreverence becomes even more pointed in the next stanza when the poet ironically echoes the words with which Christ was mocked on the cross : “ He saved others , himself he cannot save.

” Are the young British soldiers who did not come back here being compared to Christ ?

In one sense , at least , they are : they gave themselves to save the Queen , and the ultimate terms of that service entailed not being able to save themselves.

Did Housman , then , regard the young British soldiers as innocent dupes ?

Did he deplore the wars in which they perished ?

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He has left it on record* that he did not , and it is possible to read the last stanza of the poem , not as a bitter irony but as a genuine exhortation to the living Englishmen to beget the breed of men who , in spite of the human cost , will cheerfully , as their fathers did , serve the Queen in peace and war.

Nevertheless , the difference in tone between Tennyson ' s poem and Housman's is sharply defined. Tennyson pretty well confines himself to counting up the blessings that Victoria ' s reign has provided , Housman , on the other hand , makes his primary concern on this occasion honoring those who did not come back 'to joiYn the other veterans now loyally singing “ God Save the Queen.

” At the least , Housman ' s poem is aware of the bitter human cost of prosperity and glory.

We may get further help in defining the precise tone of Housman's “ 188T ’ by comparing it with another jubilee poem , that written by Rudyard Kipling on the occasion of Victoria's diamond jubilee , which was celebrated in 1897 , the sixtieth year of her reign.

Recessional Rudyard Kipling [1865-1936] God of our fathers , known of old , Lord of our far-flung battle-line , Beneath whose awful hand we hold Domuon over palm and pine- Lord God of Hosts , be with us yet , Lest we forget-lest we forget !

The tumult and the shouting dies ; The captains and the kings depart : Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice , An humble and a contrite heart.

Lord God of Hosts , be with us yet , Lest we forget-lest we forget !

Far-called , our navies melt away ; On dune and headland sinks the fire : Lo , all our pomp of yesterday Is one with Nineveh and Tyre !

Judge of the Nations , spare us yet , Lest we forget-lest we forget !

If , drunk with sight of power , we loose Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe , Such boastings as the Gentiles use , Or lesser breeds without the Law—— Lord God of Hosts , be with us yet , Lest we forget-lest we forget !

For heathen heart that puts her trust In reeking tube and iron shard , A11 valiant dust that builds on dust , And , guarding , calls not Thee to guard , For frantic boast and foolish word—— Thy Mercy on Thy People , Lordf !

The immediate occasion of this poem is the aftermath of the jubilee.

The kings and commanders and high dignitaries have come and gone , and the speaker , as he reflects on the display of pomp and power that has just ended , is moved to utter a prayer that his countrymen may not fall into the sin of pride and overweening self-trust.

Lines 9-10 refer , by the way , to Psalm 51 , verse 17 : “ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart , O God , thou wilt not despise.

” Here follow a few notes : Line 16 : Nineveh was a capital of the ancient empire of Assyria ; Tyre , the capital of ancient Phoenicia , which , like Great Britain , was a great sea power ; line 21 : Gentiles means literally non-Jews ; the suggestion here is that the British may feel themselves to be , like the Israelites , a chosen people

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编辑推荐

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