

<<新编英国文学>>

图书基本信息

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内容概要

《新编英国文学》内容新颖，条理层次分明，重点突出，便于读者在较短的时间内掌握有关的知识。较好地兼顾了思想性、艺术性、学术性、可读性和实用性。

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章节摘录

In Italy, Shelley's poetic genius quickly ripened. His spirit had kinship with light and fire, and under the blue Italian skies he created poetry of nature expressive of his own imagination. Of all his nature poems, the greatest is the Ode to the West Wind, where, in lines of impetuous speech, he likens his spirit to the wild force of approaching winter, which destroys that it may "quicken a new birth". Residence in Italy did not remove Shelley's interest in English politics. The occasion of his best-known political poem, The Mask of Anarchy (1819), was the receipt of the news of the Peterloo Massacre. Also in 1818; Shelley began his greatest work Prometheus Unbound. In 1822, Shelley was drowned in a storm off Spezzia in Italy. Besides the works mentioned above, Shelley's other important works include The Revolt of Islam (1817), The Cenci (1819), Adonais (1821), and Julian and Maddalo (1824), and his critical essay "A Defense of Poetry".

Thoughts Like his friend Byron, Shelley had an equally low view of "public applause" and an equally distinct distaste for the British Establishments, literary and political. Unlike Byron's, his work derives from a consistent ideology, one determined by a philosophical skepticism which questions its platonic roots as much as it steadily rejects Christian mythology and morality. Although Shelley's rejection of "revealed" religion and its dogmas remained a cardinal element in his thought, and though he systematically maintained his faith in the principle that "every reflecting mind must allow that there is no proof of the existence of a Deity", his later work suggests both a steady qualification of arguments based purely on "reason" and a search for the source of the mysterious "power" that he acknowledged to be implicit in wild nature and in the inspiration of poetry. This complex and intellectually demanding aspiration is paralleled by Shelley's abiding interest in the politics of revolution and evolution and by the idea of a gradual and inevitable social awakening. Shelley's political thought, informed as it is with experimental scientific theory and with the social ideas of his father-in-law Godwin, elucidates more than simply an opposition of liberty and tyranny; it explores future possibilities and not past defeats and, in attempting to adduce the nature of egalitarianism, it moves beyond the general disillusion resultant from the defeat of the ideals of the French Revolution. Shelley's radicalism, which led him with an almost adolescent enthusiasm to espouse a whole range of worthy causes from Irish nationalism to vegetarianism, was more than simply an instinctive rejection of the restrictive political, religious, and moral formulae of his aristocratic English background; it was at once the root and the fruit of his intellectual idealism. In fact, at the heart of Shelley's thinking is the idea that there is an eternal, rational order, a pattern for all our finest values: beauty, harmony, justice and love. Characteristically, his poems are cloudy and blurred, with images of indistinct, shadowy things, as he invokes an ideal that can be sensed but not described. In terms of poetry, Shelley, like several of his contemporaries, believed that poetry could reform the world. Central to this belief is that the creative power of the imagination and the poetry quest for beauty and the eternal truths of beauty will show the way to a better society. According to Shelley this makes poets "the unacknowledged legislators of the world". In his "A Defense of Poetry", Shelley wrote a poetic manifesto for these beliefs, making the poet a missionary, a prophet, a potential leader for a new society. The view of the creative artist as hero was later embraced by other writers in the Victorian and modern periods.

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