

LITERATURE

修订版

A COURSE BOOK OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

(Revised Edition)

VOLUME TWO

英国文学教程

(下)

主编 张伯香
Zhang Boxiang



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Part V

A Course Book of English Literature

The Romantic English Literature (1798 – 1832)

Chapter 1 Introduction to Romanticism

I . Historical Background

Romanticism was in effect a revolt of the English imagination against the neo-classical reason, which prevailed from the days of Pope to those of Johnson. And some of the great imaginative writings in English literature sprang from the confrontation of radicals and conservatives at the close of the 18th century, as the history in England started to move with a new urgency. This urgency was provoked by two important revolutions: the French Revolution of 1789 – 1794 and the English Industrial Revolution, which happened more slowly, but with astonishing consequences.

1.1 The French Revolution

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a French philosopher, was one of the leading thinkers in the second half of the 18th century. In 1762 he published two books that electrified Europe — *Du Contrat Social* and *Èmile*, in which he explored new ideas about Nature, Society and Education. These ideas of Rousseau's provided necessary guiding principles for the French Revolution, for they inspired an implacable resentment against the tyrannical rule in France and an immense hope for the future. In 1789 there broke out the epoch-making French Revolution. The news of the Revolution, especially the *Declaration of Rights of Man* and the storming of Bastille, aroused great sympathy and enthusiasm in the English liberals and radicals. Patriotic clubs and societies multiplied in England, all claiming Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Then, in October, 1790, Edmund Burke published his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Burke's pamphlet was designed as a crusade against the spread of such radical innovations and the overthrow of the established privileges he saw enshrined in the church, the hereditary power of the