

## Romantic Consciousness

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WORDSWORTH AND THE HUMAN HEART

WORDSWORTH IN TIME

# Romantic Consciousness

## Blake to Mary Shelley

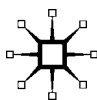
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*For Gillian*

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# List of Illustrations

1 'The Book ... written in my solitude': Title-page to *The First Book of Urizen*, courtesy of the Library of Congress page 16

2 'Death was not, but eternal life sprung': *The First Book of Urizen*, plate 3, courtesy of the Library of Congress. page 20

# Abbreviations

*Place of publication is London unless otherwise indicated.*

<i>APrW</i>	Matthew Arnold, <i>Complete Prose Works</i> , ed. R.H. Super (11 vols., Ann Arbor, MI, 1960–77)
<i>APW</i>	Matthew Arnold, <i>Complete Poems</i> , ed. Kenneth Allott; 2nd edn., ed. Miriam Allott (1979)
<i>BE</i>	<i>The Poetry and Prose of William Blake</i> , ed. D.V. Erdman and H. Bloom (New York, 1965)
<i>BK</i>	Blake, <i>Complete Writings, with Variant Readings</i> , ed. G. Keynes, 1957; reprinted with additions and corrections in the Oxford Standard Authors series (Oxford, 1966)
<i>BLJ</i>	Byron, <i>Letters and Journals</i> ed. L.A Marchand (12 vols., 1973–94).
<i>BPW</i>	Byron, <i>Works</i> , new edition: <i>Poetry</i> , ed. E. H. Coleridge (7 vols., 1898–1904).
<i>CAR</i>	Coleridge, <i>Aids to Reflection</i> [1825], ed. John Beer, CC 9 (1993).
<i>CBL</i>	Coleridge, <i>Biographia Literaria</i> , [1817]; ed. James Engell and Walter Jackson Bate, CC 7 (2 vols., 1983).
<i>CC</i>	<i>The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge</i> , general ed. Kathleen Coburn, associate ed. Bart Winer (Princeton, NJ and London 1969–2002).
<i>CCS</i>	Coleridge, <i>On the Constitution of the Church and State</i> [1829], ed. John Colmer CC 10 (1976).
<i>C Friend</i>	Coleridge, <i>The Friend</i> [1809–18]; ed. Barbara Rooke, CC 4 (2 vols., 1969).
<i>CL</i>	Coleridge, <i>Collected Letters</i> , ed. E.L. Griggs (6 vols., Oxford 1956–71).
<i>C Lects</i> (1795)	Coleridge, <i>Lectures 1795: On Politics and Religion</i> , ed. Lewis Patton and Peter Mann, CC 1 (1971).
<i>CLS</i>	Coleridge, <i>Lay Sermons</i> [1816–17]; ed. R.J. White, CC 6 (1972).
<i>CM</i>	Coleridge, <i>Marginalia</i> , ed. George Whalley, CC 12 (6 vols., 1980–2001).
<i>CN</i>	Coleridge, <i>Notebooks</i> , ed. Kathleen Coburn (5 vols., Princeton, NJ and London 1959–2002).



- CPL (1949) *The Philosophical Lectures, hitherto unpublished, of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn (1949).
- CPW (Beer) Coleridge, *Poems*, ed. J.B. Beer, new edn. Everyman (2000).
- CPW (EHC) Coleridge, *Poetical Works*, ed. E.H. Coleridge (2 vols., Oxford 1912)
- CPW (CC) Coleridge, *Poetical Works*, ed. J.C.C. Mays, CC 16 (6 vols., 2001)
- CShC Coleridge's *Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. T.M. Raysor (2 vols., 1936); 2nd edn. Everyman (2 vols., 1960).
- CTT Coleridge, *Table Talk*, ed. Carl Woodring, CC 14 (2 vols., 1990).
- DQCS De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater and Suspiria De Profundis* (Boston 1852).
- DQD *A Diary of Thomas De Quincey, 1803*, ed. H.A. Eaton (1927).
- DQW *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. D. Masson (14 vols., Edinburgh 1889).
- DWJ *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt (2 vols., Oxford 1941).
- HW *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P.P. Howe (21 vols., 1930–4).
- KL *Letters of John Keats, 1814–1821*, ed. H.E. Rollins (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass. 1958).
- KP *Poems of John Keats*, ed. M. Allott (1970).
- ML *The Letters of Mary W. Shelley*, ed. F.L. Jones (2 vols., Norman, Oklahoma 1944).
- MP John Milton, *The Complete Poems*, ed. B.A. Wright and G. Campbell (1980).
- RX John Livingston Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu* (1927).
- SBR Charles Robinson, *Shelley and Byron: The Snake and Eagle Wreathed in Fight* (Baltimore 1976)
- SBT E.J. Trelawny, *The Last Days of Shelley and Byron*, Being the complete text of Trelawny's 'Recollections' edited, with additions from contemporary sources, by J.E. Morpurgo (Westminster 1952). (References to Trelawny's 1878 edition of what becomes his *Records* are given separately.)
- SL *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. F.L. Jones (2 vols., Oxford 1964).

<i>SP</i>	<i>Shelley's Prose: or The Trumpet of a Prophecy</i> , ed. D.L. Clark (Albuquerque, New Mexico 1966).
<i>SPW</i>	Shelley, <i>The Complete Poetical Works</i> ed. T. Hutchinson (Oxford 1934).
<i>SW</i>	<i>The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley</i> , ed. R. Ingpen and W.E. Peck (10 vols., 1926–30)
<i>TP</i>	<i>The Poems of Tennyson</i> , 2nd edition, ed. Christopher Ricks (3 vols., 1987)
<i>WL</i> (1787–1805)	<i>The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Early Years, 1787–1805</i> , ed. E. de Selincourt, 2nd edn., revd C.L. Shaver (Oxford 1967).
<i>WL</i> (1821–53)	<i>The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Later Years, 1821–1853</i> , ed. E. de Selincourt; 2nd edn. revd A.G. Hill (4 vols., Oxford 1978–88)
<i>W Prel</i>	Wordsworth, <i>The Prelude</i> , ed. E. de Selincourt (1926); 2nd edn. revd Helen Darbishire (Oxford 1959).
<i>W Prel</i> (1799)	The 1799 text in <i>The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850</i> , ed. Wordsworth, Abrams and Gill (New York 1979).
<i>W Prel</i> (1805)	The 1805 text in <i>W Prel</i> above.
<i>WPrW</i>	Wordsworth, <i>Prose Works</i> , ed. W.J.B. Owen and J.W. Smyser (3 vols., Oxford 1974).
<i>WPrW</i> (Grosart)	Wordsworth, <i>Prose Works</i> , ed. A.B. Grosart (3 vols., 1876).
<i>WPW</i>	Wordsworth, <i>Poetical Works</i> , ed. Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (5 vols., Oxford 1940–9)

# Preface

This book and its successor trace the shape of an argument implicit in certain works of Western culture following the challenges to conventional approval of rational consciousness at the time of the French Revolution. The overall argument throughout is that the writers chiefly covered were responding to a contemporary perception that the mental structures created in such activity were not always adequate to the representation of all that was involved in the human psyche.

For some English writers particularly, the possibility that rational consciousness might need to be subsumed into a total sense of Being – in which the human might even be linked to the divine – was prominent. Although an intuition of the kind can be traced in Blake, the writer most responsible for articulating and developing it was Coleridge, his notable interest in psychology, particularly the unusual phenomena associated with animal magnetism, leading him to investigations that bordered constantly on pantheism before his religious experience convinced him that although the creative human imagination might *reflect* that of the creator God the only form of Being with which human beings could properly form a relationship was that of a morally judging Divinity. His earlier speculations, closer to pantheism yet resisting it, provided a powerful stimulus to Wordsworth's own ideas concerning Nature, with the result that 'Being' became for a time a centrally important word in the vocabulary of both poets. This is true not only of some memorable poems of the time but of *The Prelude*, occurring crucially in central passages where Wordsworth attempts to interpret his experiences. Yet despite their common use of the word, there was a crucial disparity between their usages, fruitful not only in the nature of Coleridge's influence on future writers, but in foreshadowing the form that twentieth-century discussions of 'Being' would take.

In two subsequent chapters use of the word 'Being', as such, becomes less prominent, but the underlying issues persist. Two major successors, Keats and De Quincey, each of whom encountered Coleridge at a crucial stage of his development, were both strongly drawn by the stimulus of his psychological discourse into speculations of his own concerning the existential significance of experiences in the unconscious. In Chapter 5 the actual word 'Being' moves again into the fore-

ground with the contention that some of the Cambridge Apostles – particularly Hallam and Tennyson – were drawn by way of discourses which Coleridge was still delivering to the young men who visited him in his old age to adopt the term as part of their own private ‘Apostolic’ vocabulary and their developing semi-mystical view of the world.

More intense exploration of the issues involved had already taken place earlier, however, in the interplay of mind between Shelley and Byron, and their ability to neglect even potential dangers in pursuing their respective concerns for the nature of Being, whether physical or spiritual. The volume ends with some account of their extreme attitudes, together with the effect of such discussions on the Mary Shelley who was to live on after them.

I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to the organizers of various conferences, including the annual Wordsworth Summer Conference in Grasmere, the biennial Coleridge conference at Cannington, the conference on English and German Romanticism at Houston and the All-India Teachers Conference in India, where some ideas in the book were given a first airing. Material in two chapters has been used for previous pieces: The discussion of De Quincey first appeared in the *Bicentenary Studies* of his work, edited by Robert Lance Snyder, and that of Tennyson and the Cambridge Apostles in *Tennyson: Seven Essays*, edited by Philip Collins. Both pieces, it is hoped, gain by being incorporated in the fuller argument of the present volume, the discussions in which are further complemented by those in a second, published simultaneously, *Post-Romantic Consciousness: Dickens to Plath*. This successor examines the interest in the relationship between consciousness and Being also shown by certain writers and thinkers from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day, their critical attitudes to such Romantic themes being matched, nevertheless, by evidences of a continuing debt.