How have our conceptions of truth been shaped by romantic literature? This question lies at the heart of this examination of the concept of truth both in romantic writing and in modern criticism. The romantic idea of truth has long been depicted as aesthetic, imaginative, and ideal. Tim Milnes challenges this picture, demonstrating a pragmatic strain in the writing of Keats, Shelley, and Coleridge in particular, which bears a close resemblance to the theories of modern pragmatist thinkers such as Donald Davidson and Jürgen Habermas. Romantic pragmatism, Milnes argues, was in turn influenced by recent developments within linguistic empiricism. This book will be of interest to readers of romantic literature, but also to philosophers, literary theorists, and intellectual historians.

Tim Milnes is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Edinburgh.
This series aims to foster the best new work in one of the most challenging fields within English literary studies. From the early 1780s to the early 1830s a formidable array of talented men and women took to literary composition, not just in poetry, which some of them famously transformed, but in many modes of writing. The expansion of publishing created new opportunities for writers, and the political stakes of what they wrote were raised again by what Wordsworth called those ‘great national events’ that were ‘almost daily taking place’: the French Revolution, the Napoleonic and American wars, urbanisation, industrialisation, religious revival, an expanded empire abroad and the reform movement at home. This was an enormous ambition, even when it pretended otherwise. The relations between science, philosophy, religion, and literature were reworked in texts such as *Frankenstein* and *Biographia Literaria*; gender relations in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and *Don Juan*; journalism by Cobbett and Hazlitt; poetic form, content, and style by the Lake School and the Cockney School. Outside Shakespeare studies, probably no body of writing has produced such a wealth of comment or done so much to shape the responses of modern criticism. This indeed is the period that saw the emergence of those notions of ‘literature’ and of literary history, especially national literary history, on which modern scholarship in English has been founded.

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Pragmatism and Idealism in Keats, Shelley, Coleridge

TIM MILNES
University of Edinburgh
The truth about Romanticism: pragmatism and idealism in Keats, Shelley, Coleridge
Tim Milnes

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521198073

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First published 2010

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Milnes, Tim.
The truth about Romanticism : pragmatism and idealism in Keats, Shelley, Coleridge / Tim Milnes.
p. cm. – (Cambridge studies in Romanticism ; 83)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
PR590.M54 2010
821'.709145–dc22
2010004396

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To Michelle, with all my love
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Acknowledgements

The bulk of this book was written during a sabbatical year generously granted by the University of Edinburgh and funded partly by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Its earliest, incondite ideas were licked into shape at conferences in Aberystwyth, Nottingham, and Bristol, and by colleagues in the Department of English Literature at Edinburgh. Later revisions were greatly assisted by the patient and thorough commentary of the two anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press, and by the helpful oversight of James Chandler. Particular thanks are due to Liz Barry, Alex Benchimol, Liz Brown, Damian Walford Davies, Lesel Dawson, A. C. Grayling, Paul Hamilton, Sara Lodge, Susan Manning, Uttara Natarajan, Tom Paulin, Randall Stevenson, Jules Siedenburg, Samira Sheikh, Kerry Sinanan, Richard Marggraf Turley, Jane Wright, and Duncan Wu. Among my considerable non-academic obligations are those I owe to my parents, Les and Audrey Milnes. My largest single debt, however, is to the support and encouragement of my wife, Michelle Milnes, to whom I dedicate this book with love and gratitude.