BYRON AND ROMANTICISM

This collection of essays represents twenty-five years of work by one of the most important critics of Romanticism and Byron studies, Jerome McGann. The collection demonstrates McGann’s evolution as a scholar, editor, critic, theorist, and historian. His “General analytic and historical introduction” to the collection presents a meditation on the history of his own research on Byron, in particular how scholarly editing interacted with the theoretical innovations in literary criticism over the last quarter of the twentieth century. McGann’s receptiveness to dialogic forms of criticism is also illustrated in this collection, which contains an interview and concludes with a dialogue between McGann and the editor. Many of these essays have previously been available only in specialized scholarly journals. Now McGann’s influential work on Byron can be appreciated by new generations of students and scholars.

JEROME MCGANN is the John Stewart Bryan University Professor, University of Virginia, and the Thomas Holloway Professor of Victorian Media and Culture, Royal Holloway, University of London. He is the author of Byron, Fiery Dust (1962) and Don Juan In Context (1972) and the editor of Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works (1980–1992).

JAMES SODERHOLM is Fulbright Scholar and Associate Professor of English and American Literature at Charles University in Prague. He is the author of Fantasy, Forgery, and the Byron Legend (1996) and Beauty and the Critic: Aesthetics in an Age of Cultural Studies (1997).
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 response or done so much to shape the responses of modern critician. 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.

The categories produced by Romanticism have also been challenged by recent historicist arguments. The task of the series is to engage both with a challenging corpus of Romantic writings and with the changing field of criticism they have helped to shape. As with other literary series published by Cambridge, this one will represent the work of both younger and more established scholars, on either side of the Atlantic and elsewhere.

For a complete list of titles published see end of book.
BYRON AND ROMANTICISM

JEROME McGANN
The John Stewart Bryan University Professor, University of Virginia

EDITED BY
JAMES SODERHOLM
Associate Professor, Charles University, Prague

© Cambridge University Press
www.cambridge.org
## Contents

*Acknowledgments*  
General analytical and historical introduction  ix  

**PART I**  
1 Milton and Byron  19  
2 Byron, mobility, and the poetics of historical ventriloquism  36  
3 “My brain is feminine”: Byron and the poetry of deception  53  
4 What difference do the circumstances of publication make to the interpretation of a literary work?  77  
5 Byron and the anonymous lyric  93  
6 Private poetry, public deception  113  
7 Hero with a thousand faces: the rhetoric of Byronism  141  
8 Byron and the lyric of sensibility  160  
9 Byron and Wordsworth  173  

**PART II**  
10 A point of reference  205  
11 History, herstory, theirstory, ourstory  223  
12 Literature, meaning, and the discontinuity of fact  231  
13 Rethinking Romanticism  236
List of contents

14  An interview with Jerome McGann   256
15  Poetry, 1780–1832                266
16  Byron and Romanticism, a dialogue (Jerome McGann and the editor, James Soderholm) 288

Subject index  306
Authors index  309
Acknowledgments

This book would not have appeared but for the insistence and persistence of two dear friends, James Chandler and James Soderholm. I hope it meets some of their standards and expectations.

Because the material has been culled from various essays published over the years in different venues, I have revised the original texts, often somewhat heavily. I thank the editors for giving their permission to reprint pieces from the following books and journals.

Copyright in all essays rests with Jerome J. McGann. Every attempt has been made to contact the original publishers of the material collected in this volume.


Acknowledgments


“An interview with Jerome McGann,” in Cambridge Quarterly (Fall 1993), with Steven Earnshaw and Philip Shaw, recorded at Warwick University, England.

“Byron and Wordsworth,” with thanks to the School of English Studies, University of Nottingham.