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THE ORIENT AND THE YOUNG ROMANTICS

Through close readings of major poems, this book examines why the second-generation Romantic poets – Byron, Shelley, and Keats – stage so much of their poetry in Eastern or Orientalized settings. It argues that they do so not only to interrogate their own imaginations, but also as a way of criticizing Europe's growing imperialism. For them the Orient is a projection of Europe's own fears and desires. It is therefore a charged setting in which to explore and contest the limits of the age's aesthetics, politics, and culture. Being nearly always self-conscious and ironic, the poets' treatment of the Orient becomes itself a twinned criticism of "Romantic" egotism and the Orientalism practiced by earlier generations. The book goes further to claim that poems like Shelley's *Revolt of Islam*, Byron's "Eastern" Tales, or even Keats's *Lamia* anticipate key issues at stake in postcolonial studies more generally.

ANDREW WARREN is Associate Professor of English at Harvard University, specializing in Romanticism, poetry, philosophy and critical theory.

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

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Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107071902

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First published 2014

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

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

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Warren, Andrew, 1978– author.

The Orient and the Young Romantics / Andrew Warren.

pages cm. – (Cambridge Studies in Romanticism ; 109)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-07190-2 (hardback)

1. English poetry—19th century—History and criticism.
2. English literature—Asian influences.
3. Civilization, Oriental, in literature.
4. Romanticism—Great Britain.
5. East and West in literature.
- I. Title.

PR129.A78W37 2014

820.9'325—dc23

2014020425

ISBN 978-1-107-07190-2 Hardback

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This book would not have been possible without the help, care, and attention of so many. From U.C. Irvine, I thank my dissertation committee for their indefatigable support and guidance: Hugh Roberts, Robert Folkenflik, and Julia Lupton. I am also grateful for the generative feedback on and conversations about particular aspects of the book I found at Irvine – my thanks go out to Étienne Balibar, Vinayak Chaturvedi, Jerome Christensen, Susanne Hall, Andrea Henderson, Wolfgang Iser, Anna Kornbluh, Mia McIver, Laura O'Connor, Radha Radhakrishnan, James Steintraeger, Rei Terada, Elisa Tamarkin, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and (especially) Aaron Winter. Thank you, too, to those at Harvard who have taken the time to read and discuss my work; those conversations have been invaluable: David Alworth, Homi Bhabha, Stephen Burt, Amanda Claybaugh, James Engell, Philip Fisher, Adam Kelly, Leah Price, Peter Sacks, James Simpson, Gordon Teskey, Helen Vendler, and Nicholas Watson. Parts of this book were given as talks, made possible by Gregg Camfield, Frédéric Conrod, Elizabeth Fay, Jacques Khalip, Thomas Robert Parker, Murielle M. Perrier, Tilottama Rajan, Emily Rohrbach, and Harvard's Long 18th Century and Romanticism Colloquium, coordinated by Matthew Ocheltree, Jacob Risinger, and Julia Tejblum. I also thank Jeanne Moskal and Emily Brewer for their help editing the *Epipsychidion* section, and to *Keats-Shelley Journal* for permission to republish it; and my editors at Cambridge – Anna Bond, Linda Bree, and James Chandler – for all of their care and hard work.

For their generous support, I'd like to thank the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities' Visiting Fellowship – University of Edinburgh, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science – University of Tokyo Kaken Grant, Postdoctoral Research Fellowship – National Tsing Hua University of Taiwan, the U.C. Irvine Chancellor's Club Fund for Excellence, the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism Graduate Travel Bursary, the U.C. Irvine Summer Research Initiative

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Acknowledgments

Grant & Pre-Doctoral Humanities Fellowship, the Dartmouth Ethics Institute Research Grant, and the Warren-Hrivnak Foundation for Lost Children. The majority of the book was written at the Getty Research Institute, which was welcoming beyond measure.

Finally, this book would not exist in any form without my friends and family: Michael Baron, Matthew Thornley Hunt, Minh Lê, Nathan Sebold, Christopher Van Ginhoven, Jordan Wilhelms, and Suzanne Wrubel; the Hrivnak, Johari, Vohlers, and Warren families; my sister Lizzie and her partner Joe; my parents Tim and Cathy; and my wife, Priti, to whom this work is dedicated.