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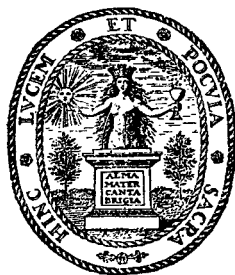
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# WORDSWORTH'S CAMBRIDGE EDUCATION

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BY  
BEN ROSS SCHNEIDER JR.



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AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

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*For*  
**M.S.T. and G.B.T.**

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## PREFACE

WHEN I began this study of Wordsworth's undergraduate days, I resolved that I would relate my findings as closely as possible to the works of the mature poet. If my approach has been successful, the credit is largely due to the nature of my subject. For soon after beginning my investigations I found myself in an interesting position: in studying Wordsworth at Cambridge, I seemed to be studying the point of contact between a poet and his tradition, in this case (for I knew in advance the ending of my story) the great poet of the nineteenth century in contact with the eighteenth-century culture that he would eventually help to destroy, or, perhaps it is better to say, transform. It seemed to be my duty, under such circumstances, to go as far as I could toward a definition in concrete terms of the Romantic 'revolt', or at least of Wordsworth's share in it. And there was some likelihood that I could contribute something useful on the subject, because, instead of deducing the nature of the revolt from a comparison of major works picked more or less at random, which is the usual procedure, I could with reasonable certainty reconstruct it from the very materials that had actually produced it. The study which has resulted, however, does little damage to established views on this subject. The common hypothesis that Wordsworth owed much to the tradition that he appeared to be rejecting is not weakened here, but verified. The reader will perhaps be more surprised at how and why the revolt took place than at what it was, though I hope that he will feel less vague on the last subject after reading the book than before.

The process of defining Wordsworth's revolt has led me to consider several matters which I have found interesting in themselves as well as most relevant to the main enterprise. Chief of these are the Cambridge educational system, which I have treated in some detail, and Cambridge politi-

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cal radicalism, to which I have devoted most of chapter v.

I have tried to avoid falling prey to one temptation to which my subject has exposed me: the tendency to give too much credit, in assessing Wordsworth's achievement, to particular influences on him, and too little credit to his own genius. That Wordsworth was not a simple vector sum of certain forces working on him is proved by the obvious fact that there is only one Wordsworth, even though hundreds of young men were subject to those same forces. I hope that my attempt in the last chapter to distinguish Wordsworth's achievement from the achievements of those whose work he built on will successfully mitigate the impression the reader may possibly have received in other chapters that I had been leaving nothing for Wordsworth to do.

My debts of gratitude to those teachers and scholars who have helped me to accumulate material and present it on paper are immense. This study owes an incalculable debt to the experience and imagination of Professor Emery Neff of Columbia, who has given me unlimited stimulation, encouragement, advice, and time. To Professor Basil Willey, I am indebted not only for his guidance of my researches at Cambridge, but also for his books, which have enabled me to understand Wordsworth's philosophical training. Miss Helen Darbishire, Mrs Mary Moorman, Miss Margaret Crum and Mr T. W. Thompson have provided me with valuable materials I would never have seen otherwise and have generously shared with me their extensive knowledge of Wordsworth's life and works. Miss Darbishire, Mrs Moorman, Professor Marjorie Nicolson, Professor Basil Willey, Professor Andrew Chiappe and Professor Craig Thompson, by their careful reading of the text, have greatly improved its style and content. Thanks to the kindness of Professor Lewis Patton, who sent me his typescript of the Duke University microfilm of Godwin's MS. Diary, I have been able to make full use of that revealing document.

St John's, Trinity, and Jesus Colleges, Cambridge, and the

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## P R E F A C E

officers and librarians of these colleges, have been most kind in making available to me material on Wordsworth's Cambridge years.

In addition, my thanks are due to St John's College for permission to quote the College's MS. Examination Reports; to Trinity College for permission to quote the MS. of Christopher Wordsworth's Undergraduate Diary; to Jesus College for permission to quote the MS. College Declamations preserved there; to the Trustees of Dove Cottage for permission to quote William Wordsworth's MS. Cambridge Notebook and Dorothy Wordsworth's MS. Goslar Notebook; to Professor C. L. Shaver and the Houghton Library of Harvard University for permission to use the MS. Catalogue of Wordsworth's Library; to Duke University for permission to refer to their microfilm of Godwin's MS. Diary; to Cambridge University for permission to use MS. Grace Book A.

My thanks go also to the friends who have helped me with many perplexities, in particular Mr Arthur Cash, who explained to me Locke's position on associational psychology. It will be hard to recompense my family and my wife for the great amount of moral support and physical labour which they have given to this enterprise.

B. R. S.

February 1957.