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This original book examines the way in which the Romantic period's culture of posterity inaugurates a tradition of writing which demands that the poet should write for an audience of the future: the true poet, a figure of neglected genius, can only be properly appreciated after death. Andrew Bennett argues that this involves a radical shift in the conceptualisation of the poet and poetic reception, with wide-ranging implications for the poetry and poetics of the Romantic period. He surveys the contexts for this transformation of the relationship between poet and audience, engaging with issues such as the commercialisation of poetry, the gendering of the canon, and the construction of poetic identity. Bennett goes on to discuss the strangely compelling effects which this new reception theory produces in the work of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley and Byron, who have come to embody, for posterity, the figure of the Romantic poet.

Andrew Bennett is Reader in English Literature at the University of Bristol. His previous books include *Keats, Narrative and Audience: The Posthumous Life of Writing* (1994), and with Nicholas Royle *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel: Still Lives* (1995) and *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory: Key Critical Concepts* (1995; second edition 1999).

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For Anna

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Acknowledgements

In the last chapter of this book, chapter 8, I spend some time contemplating the complex ramifications of debt repayment, paying honour, and the rendering of a gift. In the context of having written that chapter, it should come as no surprise to me to find that the acknowledgements pages of a book turn out to be some of the hardest to write. In full knowledge of such difficulties, I would nevertheless like to thank a number of people. Michael Bradshaw, Nicholas Roe and the two readers for Cambridge University Press read an earlier draft of the book when I thought that it was more or less finished, and showed me that it wasn't: I am grateful to them for their detailed comments and for helping me to make sense of this book and, I hope, to make it make sense. Lucy Newlyn, whose work on the anxiety of reception in Romantic poetry and poetics is in many ways close to my own, generously allowed me to read some of her as yet unpublished research and has provided a sympathetic and challenging audience for parts of my book. Stephen Cheeke, Josie Dixon, John Lyon, Andrew Nicholson, Nicholas Royle, Timothy Webb, and the Cambridge Studies in Romanticism series editors made significant contributions to the final shape of the book by reading and commenting on my ideas as they developed. All of these people have given generously of their time and energy, and this would have been a lesser book without their responses, without their challenges to me to rethink and refine my ideas, and without their interest in my work. During the years that I have been writing this book I have taught English at the Universities of Tampere, Aalborg and Bristol, and I would like to acknowledge the way that the heads of department in all three institutions – Ralf Norrman, Ernst Ullrich-Pinkert and Timothy Webb – supported my research during this time. Undergraduate and post-graduate students, particularly at the University of Bristol, have responded, often quizzically, often energetically, to my attempts to develop some of these ideas in seminars. On a more personal level, I

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Parts of this book have already appeared elsewhere and are republished here by permission of the editors of the respective publications. Parts of chapters 1 and 2 were published as 'Coleridge on Reputation', in *La Questione Romantica* 5 (1999); a short section of chapter 4 appeared as 'Speaking with the Dead: New Historicism in Theory', in David Robertson (ed.), *English Studies and History* (Tampere English Studies, 1994); a slightly shorter version of chapter 6 appeared as 'Keats's Prescience, His Renown', in *Romanticism* 2:1 (1996); an earlier version of chapter 7 was published as 'Shelley in Posterity', in Betty T. Bennett and Stuart Curran (eds.), *Shelley: Poet and Legislator of the World* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); some paragraphs from chapter 1 appeared as part of an essay entitled 'On Posterity' in *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 12:1 (1999). I am grateful to the editors of these volumes for permission to use this material.

Abbreviations

Books

- BL* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 2 vols., eds. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983).
- BLJ* *Byron's Letters and Journals*, 11 vols., ed. Leslie A. Marchand (London: John Murray, 1973–81).
- CCH* *Coleridge: The Critical Heritage*, 2 vols., ed. J.R. de J. Jackson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970, 1991).
- CL* *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 6 vols., ed. Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford University Press, 1956–71).
- CN* *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn (8 vols. to date, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957–1990).
- CW* Lord Byron, *The Complete Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann, 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980–93).
- DQW* *De Quincey's Works*, 16 vols. (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1862).
- EY* *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Early Years, 1787–1805*, ed. Ernest de Sélincourt, 2nd edn., rev. Chester L. Shaver (Oxford University Press, 1967).
- KCH* *Keats: The Critical Heritage*, ed. G.M. Matthews (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971).
- LJK* *The Letters of John Keats, 1814–1821*, 2 vols., ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958).
- LY* *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years*, ed. Ernest de Sélincourt, 2nd edn., rev. Alan G. Hill, 4 vols (Oxford University Press, 1978–88).
- MY* *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years*, ed. Ernest de Sélincourt, 2nd edn., rev. Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill, 2 vols. (Oxford University Press, 1969–70).

List of abbreviations

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- OED* *Oxford English Dictionary*, prepared by J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).
- PBSL* *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964).
- PFL* *Penguin Freud Library*, 15 vols., ed. James Strachey *et al.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973–1985).
- Prose* *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).
- SCH* *Shelley: The Critical Heritage*, ed. James E. Barcus (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).
- SCW* *The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, new edn., 10 vols. (New York: Gordian Press, 1965).
- SPP* *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers (New York: Norton, 1977).
- Supplement* *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: A Supplement of New Letters*, ed. Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993).
- Talker* *Coleridge the Talker: A Series of Contemporary Descriptions and Comments*, eds. Richard W. Armour and Raymond F. Howes (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1940).
- TT* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Table Talk*, 2 vols., ed. Carl Woodring (London: Routledge, 1990).
- White* Newman Ivey White, *Shelley*, 2 vols. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940).
- Works* *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, 21 vols., ed. P.P. Howe (London: Dent, 1930–34).

Journals

- CI* *Critical Inquiry*
- ELH* *English Literary History*
- JEGP* *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
- KSJ* *Keats–Shelley Journal*
- MLQ* *Modern Language Quarterly*
- MP* *Modern Philology*
- SEL* *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*
- SiR* *Studies in Romanticism*