

## WORDSWORTH AFTER WAR

William Wordsworth's later poetry complicates possibilities of life and art in war's aftermath. This illuminating study provides new perspectives and reveals how his work following the end of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars reflects a passionate, lifelong engagement with the poetics and politics of peace. Focussing on poetry and prose from between 1814 and 1822, Philip Shaw constructs a unique and compelling account of how Wordsworth, in both his ongoing poetic output and in his revisions to earlier works, sought to modify, refute, and sometimes sustain his early engagement with these issues as both an artist and a political thinker. In an engaging style, Shaw reorients our understanding of the later writings of a major British poet and the post-war literary culture in which his reputation was forged. **This title is part of the Flip it Open Programme and may also be available Open Access. Check our website Cambridge Core for details.**

PHILIP SHAW is Professor of Romantic Studies at the University of Leicester. He has written extensively on Romantic-period literature, specialising in literary and visual responses to the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. His books include *Romantic Wars* (2000), *Waterloo and the Romantic Imagination* (2002), *The Sublime* (2006/2017), and *Suffering and Sentiment in Romantic Military Art* (2013).

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# WORDSWORTH AFTER WAR

*Recovering Peace in the Later Poetry*

PHILIP SHAW

*University of Leicester*



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## *Contents*

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> vi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	ix
Introduction	i
1 Conscripting ‘The Recluse’	34
2 Peace Out of Time: <i>The White Doe of Rylstone</i>	70
3 Thanksgiving after War	94
4 ‘Returning, Like a Ghost Unlaid’: <i>Peter Bell</i> and <i>The Waggoner</i>	120
5 Violent Waters: <i>The River Duddon</i> and <i>Ecclesiastical Sketches</i>	145
6 Wordsworth after Byron: <i>Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820</i>	174
After Wordsworth	209
<i>Notes</i>	221
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	259
<i>Index</i>	272

## Figures

- |   |  |        |
|---|--|--------|
| 1 | <i>Our English Lakes, Mountains, and Waterfalls, as Seen by William Wordsworth. Photographically Illustrated</i> (London 1864). Cuttings and title page. | page 2 |
| 2 | <i>Soldiers of the Machine Gun Corps</i> (c. 1916–1918).   | 20     |
| 3 | Joseph Priestley, from <i>A New Chart of History</i> (London 1769).  | 149    |
| 4 | Friedrich Strass, <i>Der Strom der Zeiten</i> ( <i>The Stream of Time</i> ) (1804).  | 150    |
| 5 | William Hogarth, <i>The Gate of Calais, or the Roast Beef of Old England</i> (1749).   | 181    |

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During the writing of this book, my teacher, mentor, and colleague Vincent Newey passed away. *Wordsworth After War* is dedicated to his memory and to the memory of my dad, Keith Shaw, who told me stories, taught me to write, and gave me books. As ever, I could not end these notes of gratitude without paying tribute to my wife, Sarah Knight: ‘In ours, the Vale of Friendship’. The Knight and Shaw families, *ex toto*, are my rock.

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I began *Wordsworth After War* in the winter of 2019–2020. Work on the book continued during the COVID-19 pandemic and was brought to completion when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Months later, like most people, I struggle to comprehend these events and wonder just what can be said, with any exactitude, about their long-term effects. This feeling of bewilderment is perhaps a reminder that there is no such thing as a time ‘after war’, or if there is, then it is not for us. I hope, nevertheless, that readers will find some comfort in this book, which attempts haltingly and against the odds to make time for peace.



## *Abbreviations*

Poetry is cited by line number(s) (l. 1; ll. 1–2); page numbers are preceded by p. or pp. (pp. 1–2). Unless noted otherwise, quotations from Wordsworth’s poetry are from the Cornell Wordsworth Collection, which will be cited in full in each first relevant note. Quotations from the Bible are taken from the King James Version.

- CWWH*     *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*. Ed. P. P. Howe. 21 vols. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1930–34.
- JDW*     *The Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt. 3 vols. London: Macmillan, 1941.
- Prose*     *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*. Ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.

Wordsworth letters: *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*. 2nd ed. Ernest de Selincourt; rev. Alan Hill, Mary Moorman, and Chester L. Shaver. 8 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967–1993. Abbreviations as follows:

- EY*     *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Early Years, 1787–1805*. Rev. Chester L. Shaver.
- MYI*     *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Middle Years, Part I: 1806–1811*. Rev. Mary Moorman.
- MYII*     *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Middle Years, Part II: 1812–1820*. Rev. Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill.
- LYI*     *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Later Years, Part I: 1821–1828*. Rev. Alan G. Hill.

*List of Abbreviations*

- LYII      *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Later Years, Part II: 1829–1834*. Rev. Alan G. Hill.
- SNL      *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth. A Supplement of New Letters*. Ed. Alan G. Hill.
- WTDQ    *The Works of Thomas De Quincey*. Ed. Grevel Lindop et al. 21 vols. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003.