

*Romanticism in Perspective: Texts, Cultures, Histories*

General Editors: **Marilyn Gaull**, Professor of English, Temple University/New York University; **Stephen Prickett**, Regius Professor of English Language and Literature, University of Glasgow

This series aims to offer a fresh assessment of Romanticism by looking at it from a wide variety of perspectives. Both comparative and interdisciplinary, it will bring together cognate themes from architecture, art history, landscape gardening, linguistics, literature, philosophy, politics, science, social and political history and theology to deal with original, contentious or as yet unexplored aspects of Romanticism as a Europe-wide phenomenon.

*Titles include:*

Toby R. Benis  
ROMANTICISM ON THE ROAD  
The Marginal Gains of Wordsworth's Homeless

Richard Cronin (*editor*)  
1798: THE YEAR OF THE *LYRICAL BALLADS*

Péter Dávidházi  
THE ROMANTIC CULT OF SHAKESPEARE  
Literary Reception in Anthropological Perspective

Charles Donelan  
ROMANTICISM AND MALE FANTASY IN BYRON'S DON JUAN  
A Marketable Vice

Tim Fulford  
ROMANTICISM AND MASCULINITY  
Gender, Politics and Poetics in the Writings of Burke, Coleridge, Cobbett, Wordsworth, De Quincey and Hazlitt

David Jasper  
THE SACRED AND SECULAR CANON IN ROMANTICISM  
Preserving the Sacred Truths

Malcolm Kelsall  
JEFFERSON AND THE ICONOGRAPHY OF ROMANTICISM  
Folk, Land, Culture and the Romantic Nation

Mark S. Lussier  
ROMANTIC DYNAMICS  
The Poetics of Physicality

Andrew McCann  
CULTURAL POLITICS IN THE 1790s  
Literature, Radicalism and the Public Sphere

Ashton Nichols  
THE REVOLUTIONARY 'I'  
Wordsworth and the Politics of Self-Presentation

Jeffrey C. Robinson  
RECEPTION AND POETICS IN KEATS  
'My Ended Poet'

Anya Taylor  
BACCHUS IN ROMANTIC ENGLAND  
Writers and Drink, 1780–1830

Michael Wiley  
ROMANTIC GEOGRAPHY  
Wordsworth and Anglo-European Spaces

Eric Wilson  
EMERSON'S SUBLIME SCIENCE

John Wyatt  
WORDSWORTH'S POEMS OF TRAVEL, 1819–42  
'Such Sweet Wayfaring'

---

**Romanticism in Perspective**  
**Series Standing Order ISBN 0–333–71490–3**  
*(outside North America only)*

You can receive future titles in this series as they are published by placing a standing order. Please contact your bookseller or, in case of difficulty, write to us at the address below with your name and address, the title of the series and the ISBN quoted above.

Customer Services Department, Macmillan Distribution Ltd, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS, England

---

# The Politics of Romantic Poetry

In Search of the Pure Commonwealth

Richard Cronin  
*Reader in English Literature*  
*University of Glasgow*





First published in Great Britain 2000 by

**MACMILLAN PRESS LTD**

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and London  
Companies and representatives throughout the world

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-349-41423-9

ISBN 978-0-230-28705-1 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9780230287051

---



First published in the United States of America 2000 by

**ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, INC.,**

Scholarly and Reference Division,  
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010

ISBN 978-1-349-41423-9

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
Cronin, Richard.

The politics of romantic poetry : in search of the pure  
commonwealth / Richard Cronin.

p. cm. — (Romanticism in perspective)

Includes bibliographical references (p. ) and index.

ISBN 978-1-349-41423-9 (cloth)

1. English poetry—19th century—History and criticism.
2. Politics and literature—Great Britain—History—19th century.
3. Politics and literature—Great Britain—History—18th century.
4. English poetry—18th century—History and criticism.
5. Political poetry, English—History and criticism. 6. France—  
—History—Revolution, 1789–1799—Influence. 7. Romanticism—Great  
Britain. 8. State, The, in literature. I. Title. II. Series.

PR585.H5C76 1999

821'.709358—dc21

99–36364

CIP

---

© Richard Cronin 2000

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made  
without written permission.

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2000 978-0-333-76106-9

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written  
permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act  
1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright  
Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0LP.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to  
criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The author has asserted his right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with  
the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained  
forest sources.

10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
09	08	07	06	05	04	03	02	01	00

To Dorothy and John

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	viii
Introduction	1
<b>Part One: The Revolutionary Years</b>	19
Introduction – <i>Religious Musings</i>	21
1 Erasmus Darwin: from the Bastille to Birmingham	29
2 William Blake and Revolutionary Prophecy	48
3 The English Jacobins	61
<b>Part Two: The War against Napoleon</b>	83
Introduction – <i>The Poet's Pilgrimage to Waterloo</i>	85
4 Walter Scott and Anti-Gallican Minstrelsy	92
5 Wordsworth at War	110
6 Mapping <i>Childe Harold I and II</i>	128
<b>Part Three: England in 1819</b>	145
Introduction – <i>Peter Bell the Third</i>	147
7 Asleep in Italy: Byron and Shelley in 1819	156
8 Leigh Hunt, Keats and the Politics of Cockney Poetry	181
<i>Notes</i>	200
<i>Index</i>	221

# Acknowledgements

Versions of parts of this book have appeared as articles in *The Byron Journal*, *ELH*, *Essays and Studies*, *The Keats-Shelley Review*, *Review of English Studies*, and *SEL*, and I am grateful to the editors of these journals for permission to reuse the material. I am grateful to the many Romantic scholars with whom I have discussed this material over the years, especially to Jack Donovan, Marilyn Gaull, Michael O'Neill, Clifford Siskin and Timothy Webb. I have the great good fortune to be a member of a Department in which it is both a pleasure and an education to work. Amongst my colleagues I am, as always, particularly indebted to Dorothy McMillan and to Robert Cummings. I am also fortunate in having as my colleagues so many who share my interest in Romanticism. I have learnt much from all of them, and I would like to record here not only my debt to but my admiration for Drummond Bone, David Jasper, Alice Jenkins, Seamus Perry, Stephen Prickett, Nicola Trott and Duncan Wu. I have also learnt much from those who have been students at Glasgow both as undergraduates and postgraduates. Amongst many I would mention Alison Chapman, Thomas Docherty, Chankil Park, Jane Stabler and Ya-Feng Wu. Finally, I would like to record my debt to three colleagues who, by making the administrative burdens placed on me in recent years so much easier to bear, have greatly assisted me in completing this book; Pat Devlin, Anna MacMillan and Ingrid Swanson.