ROMANTIC BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

To start with, you should read *Lyrical Ballads* and study its Preface and its background, and 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', very closely; then you should read the whole of the 1805 *Prelude*. Next you should study *The Songs of Innocence and of Experience* in specific relation to Blake's own illustrated presentation of these texts; then progress to Byron's *Don Juan* and Shelley's *The Triumph of Life* and Keats's 'Odes' and 'The Fall of Hyperion'. These are all substantial works and demand close, meditative reading; *Don Juan* requires to be read attentively but fast. Re-read Jane Austen (indoors). Read Coleridge's 'conversation poems' and the letters of Keats. If you should be near the top of a high mountain or the shores of a boundless sea, read Blake's *Jerusalem*, and De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, also Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* and 'Mont Blanc'. If the mountains should be wild and stormy, read Byron's *Manfred*. Ponder these works, and your reactions to them. Below are a few further starting-points, to guide you further on your way.


Keymer (Thomas) and Mee (Jon) (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1740-1830* (Cambridge, 2004).


S.T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria, Or, My Literary Life and Opinions*, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (2 vols, London, 1983) [the annotation to this edition is superior to that of any other].


David Wright (Penguin English Library; Harmondsworth, 1970 and reprinted).


McDonagh (Josephine), _De Quincey's Disciplines_ (Oxford, 1994).


Altieri (Charles), _Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry; The Contemporaneity of Modernism_ (Cambridge, 1989), Chap. 3: 'Abstraction and the Romantic Tradition'.

Armstrong (Isobel), _Language as Living Form in Nineteenth-Century Poetry_ (Brighton, 1982).

Arnold (Matthew), 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time' (1864), collected in his _Essays in Criticism_ (1865), later known as 'First Series'

Beer (John), *Romantic Consciousness; Blake to Mary Shelley* (Houndmills, 2003).

Bromwich (David), *Hazlitt; The Mind of a Critic* (New York, 1983).


Brownstein (Rachel M.), *Becoming a Heroine; Reading about Women in Novels* (Harmondsworth, 1984).


Chandler (James K.), *Romantic Metropolis; The Urban Scene of British Culture* (Cambridge, 2005).


Gage (John), *Colour in Turner; Poetry and Truth* (London, 1969); also (principally for the colour plates) the same author’s *J.M.W. Turner: A Wonderful Range of Mind* (New Haven, 1987); or (better still), a visit to the Tate Gallery, London.


J.H. Prynne, July 2006

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