



Those Who Write for Immortality: Romantic Reputations and the Dream of Lasting Fame

H. J. Jackson

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Great writers of the past whose works we still read and love will be read forever. They will survive the test of time. We remember authors of true genius because their writings are simply the best. Or . . . might there be other reasons that account for an author's literary fate?

This original book takes a fresh look at our beliefs about literary fame by examining how it actually comes about. H. J. Jackson wrestles with entrenched notions about recognizing genius and the test of time by comparing the reputations of a dozen writers of the Romantic period—some famous, some forgotten. Why are we still reading Jane Austen but not Mary Brunton, when readers in their own day sometimes couldn't tell their works apart? Why Keats and not Barry Cornwall, who came from the same circle of writers and had the same mentor? Why not that mentor, Leigh Hunt, himself?

Jackson offers new and unorthodox accounts of the coming-to-fame of some of Britain's most revered authors and compares their reputations and afterlives with those of their contemporary rivals. What she discovers about trends, champions, institutional power, and writers' conscious efforts to position themselves for posterity casts fresh light on the actual processes that lead to literary fame.

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