

Romantic Rationalist

A William Godwin Reader

William Godwin • Edited by Peter Marshall

Foreword by John P. Clark

William Godwin's long life straddled two centuries. Not only did he live at the center of radical and intellectual London during the French Revolution, he also commented on some of the most significant changes in modern history. Shaped by the Enlightenment, he became a key figure in English Romanticism.

This work offers for the first time a handy collection of Godwin's key writings in a clear and concise form, together with an assessment of his influence, a biographical sketch, and an analysis of his contribution to anarchist theory and practice. The selections are taken from all of Godwin's writings including his groundbreaking work during the French Revolution, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, and arranged by editor Peter Marshall to give a coherent account of his thought for the general reader.

Godwin's work will be of interest to all those who believe that rationality, truth, happiness, individuality, equality, and freedom are central concerns of human enquiry and endeavor.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

William Godwin (1756–1836) was one of the first exponents of utilitarianism and the first modern proponent of anarchism. He was not only a radical philosopher but a pioneer in libertarian education, a founder of communist economics, and an acute and powerful novelist whose literary family included his partner, pioneering feminist writer Mary Wollstonecraft, and his daughter Mary Godwin (later Mary Shelley), who would go on to write *Frankenstein* and marry the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley.

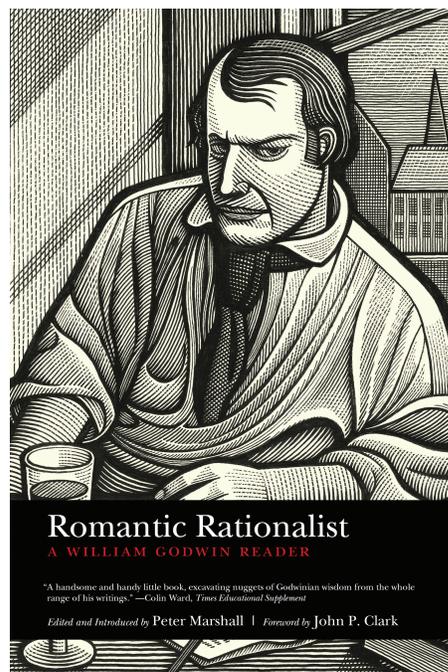
Peter Marshall is a historian, philosopher, travel writer, and poet. He has written sixteen books, which have been translated into as many different languages, including *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* and *William Godwin*, both republished by PM Press. His other works include *Nature's Web: Rethinking Our Place on Earth*, *Riding the Wind: Liberation Ecology for a New Era*, and *William Blake: Visionary Anarchist*. His circumnavigation of Africa was made into a British television series and an Italian series was based on his work on alchemy, *The Philosopher's Stone*. His latest book is *Poseidon's Realm: A Voyage around the Aegean*. He was a founder member of a libertarian community in England. He has a doctorate in the history of ideas and has taught part-time philosophy and literature at several British universities. His website is www.petermarshall.net.

John P. Clark is an eco-communitarian anarchist theorist and activist. He lives and works in New Orleans, where his family has been for twelve generations. He is Director of La Terre Institute for Community and Ecology, which is located on Bayou La Terre, in the forest of coastal Mississippi. He is the author or editor of fourteen books, most recently *The Tragedy of Common Sense* (Changing Suns Press). He writes a column, "Imagined Ecologies," for the journal *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, and edits the cyberjournal *Psychic Swamp: The Surregional Review*. He was formerly Curtin Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Loyola University. Over three-hundred of his texts can be found at <https://loyno.academia.edu/JohnClark>.

ACCOLADES

"An anarchist classic . . . with a valuable sketch of Godwin's life and an interpretation of his work. Much of what Godwin says is obvious common sense."

—Henry Geiger, *Manas Journal*



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www.pmpress.org
info@pmpress.org
(510) 658-3906

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