SCIENCE AND SENSATION IN ROMANTIC POETRY

Romantic poets, notably Wordsworth, Blake, Coleridge, and Keats, were deeply interested in how perception and sensory experience operate, and in the connections between sense-perception and aesthetic experience. Noel Jackson tracks this preoccupation through the Romantic period and beyond, both in relation to late eighteenth-century human sciences, and in the context of momentous social transformations in the period of the French Revolution. Combining close readings of the poems with interdisciplinary research into the history of the human sciences, Noel Jackson sheds new light on Romantic efforts to define how art is experienced in relation to the newly emerging sciences of the mind and shows the continued relevance of these ideas to our own habits of cultural and historical criticism today. This book will be of interest not only to scholars of Romanticism, but also to those interested in the intellectual interrelations between literature and science.

Noel Jackson is Associate Professor in the Literature Section of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
This series aims to foster the best new work in one of the most challenging fields within English literary studies. From the early 1780s to the early 1830s a formidable array of talented men and women took to literary composition, not just in poetry, which some of them famously transformed, but in many modes of writing. The expansion of publishing created new opportunities for writers, and the political stakes of what they wrote were raised again by what Wordsworth called those “great national events” that were “almost daily taking place”: the French Revolution, the Napoleonic and American wars, urbanization, industrialization, religious revival, an expanded empire abroad, and the reform movement at home. This was an enormous ambition, even when it pretended otherwise. The relations between science, philosophy, religion, and literature were reworked in texts such as *Frankenstein* and *Biographia Literaria*; gender relations in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and *Don Juan*; journalism by Cobbett and Hazlitt; poetic form, content, and style by the Lake School and the Cockney School. Outside Shakespeare studies, probably no body of writing has produced such a wealth of comment or done so much to shape the responses of modern criticism. This indeed is the period that saw the emergence of those notions of “literature” and of literary history, especially national literary history, on which modern scholarship in English has been founded.

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Science and sensation in British romantic poetry
Noel Jackson

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge cb2 8ru, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521869379

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First published 2008

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

Jackson, Noel (Noel B.)
Science and sensation in British romantic poetry / Noel Jackson.
p. cm. – (Cambridge studies in romanticism ; no. 73)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. English poetry–19th century–History and criticism. 2. English poetry–18th century–History
and criticism. 3. Senses and sensation in architecture. 4. Mind and body in literature.
8. Literature and science–Great Britain–History–18th century. 9. Literature and

PR590.J33 2008
821’.709353–dc22
2007051328


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For Nora
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Acknowledgments

In the process of researching and writing this book I have accumulated numerous debts both professional and personal, and it is my pleasure to acknowledge them here. This project began life as a doctoral dissertation at the University of Chicago, where I was extremely fortunate to have as its first shepherds James Chandler and Bill Brown. Throughout my graduate years and beyond, Jim has been an incisive reader, strong advocate, and trustworthy guide; I have been honored to know and to work with him for over a decade now. Bill has also shared with me much of his time, knowledge, and experience; I owe a great deal to his astute and generous commentary on this and other projects, as well as to the inspiration of his teaching. Others at Chicago, particularly Elaine Hadley, Larry Rothfield, and Jay Schleusener, I must thank for their crucial assistance with portions of this project. Among friends and colleagues formerly at Chicago, I want to thank especially Bo-Mi Choi, Oliver Gaycken, Sam Baker, Jon Sachs, and Saree Makdisi, whose conversation, passion, and friendship sustained me through long Chicago winters.

I have been fortunate to find in the Literature Section at MIT an incredibly genial and dynamic group of colleagues. As section heads through the development of this project, Peter Donaldson and now James Buzard have shown uncommon leadership and generosity to this junior faculty member; Jim read and responded to several chapters and has been a continual source of encouragement and sound counsel. Among other colleagues in Literature I wish to thank Jim Cain, Diana Henderson, Alvin Kibel, Ruth Perry, Shankar Raman, and Stephen Tapscott for argument, conversation, and laughter over seminar, dinner, and billiard tables across Cambridge. David Thorburn gave a bracing and salutary critique of my introduction at an earlier stage of production, and Irving Singer of the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy provided valuable assistance with some particulars of philosophical thought.
Acknowledgments

I am pleased as well to acknowledge the considerable institutional support I have received both from MIT and elsewhere. As former Dean of the School of the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, Philip Khoury has been extraordinarily generous with both time and material support. I have been a grateful recipient of the Old Dominion Fellowship, the Homer A. Burnell Career Development Chair, and support from the SHASS Research Fund and Kelly-Douglas Funds, both of which supported a period of research at the Huntington Library, where I passed a blissful period as a Michael J. Connell Research Fellow. Numerous other libraries and archives have opened their doors to me, and I am grateful for their hospitality; special thanks to Dr. Frank James of the Royal Institution of Great Britain and Tina Craig of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, who showed more patience and courtesy than a young scholar had any right to expect.

I have been very lucky to find in the Boston area a rich and vibrant community of Romantic scholars. I am especially grateful to Chuck Rzepka (reader of several chapters of this project and fearless “Symposiarch” in bi-weekly discussions at the pub on Granby Street), Sonia Hofkosh and Ann Rowland (former co-chairs of the Romantic Literature and Culture seminar at Harvard University), Eric Idsvoog, James Engell, and Alan Richardson.

Earlier versions of chapters 3 and 6 appeared in *ELH* (70.1 [2003]) and *Modern Philology* (102.2 [2004]), respectively; I am grateful to the Johns Hopkins University Press and the University of Chicago Press for permission to reprint portions of these articles here.

The press readers for this project, Kevis Goodman and another anonymous reader for Cambridge University Press, responded to the manuscript with care and great energy; I am grateful for their generous and incisive remarks. At Cambridge, Linda Bree, Maartje Scheltens, Jodie Barnes, and the copy-editor for this project, Susan Beer, have efficiently and with good humor guided my book to print.

Thanks to my parents, David and Georgeanne Jackson, to my brothers Christopher and Doug, and to my sister Liz, for the love and support they have extended to me throughout this process.

My wife Nora has shown and given me more courage, faith, and love than I ever thought possible. With gratitude and love, I dedicate this book to her.
Abbreviations


List of abbreviations


