TRANSFIGURING THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

In this important and innovative study Jon Klancher shows how the Romantic age produced a new discourse of the “Arts and Sciences” by reconfiguring the Enlightenment’s idea of knowledge and by creating new kinds of cultural institutions with unprecedented public impact. He investigates the work of poets, lecturers, moral philosophers, scientists, and literary critics— including Coleridge, Godwin, Bentham, Davy, Wordsworth, Robinson, Shelley, and Hunt—and traces their response to book collectors and bibliographers, arts-and-sciences administrators, painters, engravers, natural philosophers, radical journalists, editors, and reviewers. Taking a historical and cross-disciplinary approach, he opens up Romantic literary and critical writing to transformations in the history of science, history of the book, art history, and the little-known history of arts-and-sciences administration that linked early modern projects to nineteenth- and twentieth-century modes of organizing “knowledges.” His conclusions transform the ways we think about knowledge, both in the Romantic period and in our own.

Jon Klancher is Professor of English at Carnegie Mellon University. His areas of research include Romantic and Victorian studies, history of books and reading, and the sociology of cultural fields. He is editor of A Concise Companion to the Romantic Age (2009).
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.

The categories produced by Romanticism have also been challenged by recent historicist arguments. The task of the series is to engage both with a challenging corpus of Romantic writings and with the changing field of criticism they have helped to shape. As with other literary series published by Cambridge, this one will represent the work of both younger and more established scholars, on either side of the Atlantic and elsewhere.

*For a complete list of titles published see end of book.*
TRANSFIGURING THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

Knowledge and Cultural Institutions in the Romantic Age

JON KLANCHER
For Joan,

and my daughters Emily, Sophia, and Maya
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