

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Histories of Emotions and the Senses

edited by
Jan Plamper
University of Limerick

SENSORY PERCEPTION, HISTORY AND GEOLOGY

*The Afterlife of Molyneux's Question
in British, American and Australian
Landscape Painting and Cultural
Thought*

Richard Read
UWA School of Design



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-009-09548-8 — Sensory Perception, History and Geology
Richard Read
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009095488
DOI: 10.1017/9781009091800

© Richard Read 2021

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2021

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

ISBN 978-1-009-09548-8 Paperback
ISSN 2632-1068 (online)
ISSN 2632-105X (print)

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Sensory Perception, History and Geology

The Afterlife of Molyneux's Question in British, American and Australian Landscape Painting and Cultural Thought

Elements in Histories of Emotions and the Senses

DOI: 10.1017/9781009091800
First published online: December 2021

Richard Read
UWA School of Design

Author for correspondence: Richard Read, richard.read@uwa.edu.au

Abstract: William Molyneux's question to John Locke about whether a blind man restored to sight could name the difference between a cube and a sphere without touching them shaped fundamental conflicts in philosophy, theology and science between empirical and idealist answers that are radically alien to current ways of seeing and feeling but were born of colonizing ambitions whose devastating genocidal and ecocidal consequences intensify today. This Element demonstrates how landscape paintings of unfamiliar terrains required historical and geological subject matter to supply tactile associations for empirical recognition of space, whereas idealism conferred unmediated but no less coercive sensory access. Close visual and verbal analysis using photographs of pictorial sites trace vividly different responses to the question, from those of William Hazlitt and John Ruskin in Britain to those of nineteenth-century authors and artists in the United States and Australia, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thomas Cole, William Haseltine, Fitz Henry Lane and Eugene von Guérard.

Keywords: Molyneux's question, colonial landscape painting, verbal/visual enquiry, William Hazlitt, Ralph Waldo Emerson

© Richard Read 2021

ISBNs: 9781009095488 (PB), 9781009091800 (OC)
ISSNs: 2632-1068 (online), 2632-105X (print)

Contents

1	Seeing as Painting	1
2	Hazlitt on Wilson	5
3	Hazlitt on Cuyp	15
4	Hazlitt on Poussin	19
5	Ruskin's 'Innocence of the Eye'	24
6	History: Molyneux's Question in America	27
7	Geology	38
8	Emerson's 'Eye-Ball'	44
9	Mixed Answers: Australia	58
10	Conclusion	64
	References	68