

SCIENCE, FORM, AND THE PROBLEM OF INDUCTION IN BRITISH ROMANTICISM

Exploring a topic at the intersection of science, philosophy, and literature in the late eighteenth century Dahlia Porter traces the history of induction as a writerly practice – as a procedure for manipulating textual evidence by selective quotation – from its roots in Francis Bacon’s experimental philosophy to its pervasiveness in Enlightenment moral philosophy, aesthetics, literary criticism, and literature itself. Porter brings this history to bear on an omnipresent feature of Romantic-era literature, its mixtures of verse and prose. Combining analyses of printed books and manuscripts with recent scholarship in the history of science, she elucidates the compositional practices and formal dilemmas of Erasmus Darwin, Robert Southey, Charlotte Smith, Maria Edgeworth, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. In doing so, she re-examines the relationship between Romantic literature and eighteenth-century empiricist philosophy, and forms of art and explores how Romantic writers engaged with the ideas of Enlightenment empiricism in their work.

DAHLIA PORTER is Lecturer in English Literature and Material Culture at the University of Glasgow. Her articles on literature, science, medicine, and visual art have appeared in *Representations*, *Romanticism*, and *The Eighteenth-Century: Theory and Interpretation*, and in essay collections on Samuel Johnson, Charlotte Smith, and *The Afterlives of Eighteenth-Century Fiction*. She co-edited Coleridge and Wordsworth’s *Lyrical Ballads, 1798 and 1800* (2008) with Michael Gamer and is a member of The Multigraph Collective, a group of 22 scholars who co-wrote *Interacting with Print: Elements of Reading in the Era of Print Saturation* (2018).

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University of Glasgow



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As a scholar of the book as a physical object, I found this issue deeply disturbing for several years, and I decided to rectify it in February 2017. It became clear very, very quickly that this was untenable – it was not possible to reconstruct which facsimile, or even which platform, I had used on 1 May 2005, 12 August 2009, or 28 February 2014. When you encounter a reference to Maria Edgeworth's *Harry and Lucy Concluded* or Erasmus Darwin's *Loves of the Plants* or Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Friend*, bear this in mind: Each citation contains invisible multitudes, the absence of which points to the author's compositional method of extracting – with

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screen shot, text clip, or page download – bits and pieces of digitized books, building an archive on which to perform her induction.

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Abbreviations

- BL* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 2 vols., James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (eds.), vol. 7 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).
- CIP* Charlotte Smith, *Conversations Introducing Poetry*, Judith Pascoe (ed.), vol. 13 of *The Works of Charlotte Smith* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), pp. 59–237.
- CL* *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 6 vols., Earl Leslie Griggs (ed.) (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956–1971).
- EL* Maria Edgeworth, *Early Lessons*, Elizabeth Eger, Cliona ÓGallchoir and Marilyn Butler (eds.), vol. 12 of *The Novels and Selected Works of Maria Edgeworth* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2003), pp. 65–267.
- EV* Erasmus Darwin, *The Botanic Garden; A Poem, in two parts. Part I. Containing The Economy of Vegetation* (London: J. Johnson, 1791).
- F* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Friend*, 2 vols., Barbara E. Rooke (ed.), vol. 4 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969).
- LC* *Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, Charles Cuthbert Southey (ed.) (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1855).
- LL* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lectures 1808–1819: On Literature*, 2 vols., R. A. Foakes (ed.), vol. 5 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, and London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987).
- LP* Erasmus Darwin, *The Botanic Garden, Part II. Containing The Loves of the Plants, A Poem with Philosophical Notes* (Lichfield: J. Johnson, 1789).

- NO* Francis Bacon, *The Great Instauration and the New Organon*, in vol. 4 of *The Works of Francis Bacon: Translations of the Philosophical Works*, James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath (eds.) (London: Longman et al., 1858).
- PE* Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Poetry Explained for the Use of Young People* (1802), new edn. (London: R. Hunter, 1821).
- RS* *Robert Southey: The Critical Heritage*, Lionel Madden (ed.) (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).
- RW* Charlotte Smith, *Rural Walks*, Elizabeth Dolan (ed.), in vol. 12 of *The Works of Charlotte Smith* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), pp. 1–112.
- SFE* Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799), in *Selected Writings of Hannah More*, Robert Hole (ed.) (London: William Pickering, 1996).
- SL* *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, 4 vols., John Wood Warter (ed.) (London, 1856).
- T* Robert Southey, *Thalaba the Destroyer*, Tim Fulford (ed.), vol. 3 of *Robert Southey: Poetical Works, 1793–1810* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2004).