

CREATING ROMANTICISM

Case Studies in the Literature, Science and Medicine of the 1790s



Sharon Ruston

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Sharon Ruston is Chair in Romanticism at Lancaster University, UK. She has published *Shelley and Vitality* (2005), *Romanticism: An Introduction* (2007), and has edited *The Influence and Anxiety of the British Romantics: Spectres of Romanticism* (1999), *Literature and Science* (2008) and co-edited *Teaching Romanticism* (2010).

"...a fascinating and thoroughly convincing call to re-examine not just "Romanticism and Science" but "Romanticism" itself. If Ruston is correct about the deliberate use of scientific and medical ideas in some of the period's foundational literary texts - and I have every confidence that she is - then *Creating Romanticism* should find an audience well beyond those of us interested in the science of the day and become required reading for all students of the period."

— James Robert Allard, *Keats-Shelley Journal*

"...offers a lively, de-centred view of British Romanticism, considered from the multiple vantage points provided by the complex structure of its intellectual and social networks".

— Noah Heringman, *The Keats-Shelley Review*

'Ruston's book offers a valuable addition to the long history of research into science in the Romantic era: its strength resides particularly in its grasp of the political subtexts of the interpretation of scientific ideas in the period, as well as in the accounts of little-discussed texts, and in the importance it rightly accords to Davy.'

— Edward Larrissy, *The BARS Review*

About the book

This book argues that the term 'Romanticism' should be more culturally-inclusive, recognizing the importance of scientific and medical ideas that helped shape some of the key concepts of the period, such as natural rights, the creative imagination and the sublime. The book discusses a range of authors including Joanna Baillie, Edmund Burke, Erasmus Darwin, William Godwin, Joseph Priestly, Mary Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft. Chapters look at these figures from a new perspective, using their journal articles, diaries, manuscript notebooks and poetry, as well as unpublished letters. Humphry Davy is given particular attention and his poetry and chemistry are explored as central to Romantic efforts in both poetry and science.

