Dahlia Porter, *Science, Form, and the Problem of Induction in British Romanticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. 293. £75. ISBN 9781108418942.

Porter's expansive study traces the history of mixed and composite forms from the seventeenth-century induction method into the Romantic self-conscious mixing of 'the oil of verse with the water of prose' (7). The 'problem' of induction central to the work revolves around the requirement to quote and cite borrowed material, whose 'seams and stitchery' were visible on the page, which in turn hindered the attempt to assimilate such material into a coherent 'expression of synthetic principles' (60).

Chapter 1 provides a history of the inductive method from its seventeenth-century Baconian origins, leading Porter to pinpoint how the method moved from a means of collecting and expounding knowledge to functioning as a model for textual production in the prose-verse composites of early Romanticism. The book's illuminating exploration of induction's seams and stitchery is then split across two parts which gives equal weighting to considering these composites in relation to 'making texts' and 'making minds'. The first part considers induction in the 'baggy blank verse' (7) of long and heavily annotated poetry, whilst the second investigates embedded verse and quotation in prose and pedagogical texts.

Chapter 2 is an insightful look into Erasmus Darwin's poems within the history of the 'philosophical poem', placing Darwin's work as a transitional moment in mobilising the distinctions between verse and prose to make knowledge. Porter looks closely at Darwin's push and pull between the linguistic realms of poetry and science, drawing attention to how the compositional form and page layout of these works broadcast the 'impossibility of sustaining this opposition' (76) between the two. Chapter 3 continues this focus on impossibilities, tracing the 'impossibility of grasping the secret relations between things' (142) and refusal to coalesce them into a coherent narrative in the structure of Robert Southey's long poems. Porter notes that Southey embraces the subversive and satirical potential of footnotes in his compositional process of accumulation without coalescing to reveal tensions between competing versions of history. The first 'landing place' of the book explores these impossibilities and tensions across a broader chronological range of poetic works, where the annotated poems of Smith, Shelley, Byron and Scott (among others) are read briefly but so richly that it makes you long for more sustained attention to them.

The second part of the book begins with its exploration of 'making minds' by considering the pedagogical function of the poetic extract in Chapter 4, examining the inductive method in the educational texts by the Edgeworths, Charlotte Smith, and Anna Laetitia Barbauld. Porter examines the form and format of Barbauld's pedagogical works to trace how she leads young readers through the inductive method to engender 'formal coherence' and develop a 'specific way of apprehending the world' (179-80). Porter then moves to examine how prose and verse were methodised by Edgeworth and Smith, tracing their uses of verse extracts as a means of inculcating ways of seeing and interpreting the world for young readers. Chapter 5 turns to Coleridge as 'an inveterate collector of textual scraps' (221). It examines Coleridge's compiling, arranging, and synthesising of quotation in his attempts at reinvigorating the inductive method in opposition to his criticisms of texts composed of extracts stitched together. This chapter returns us to the 'problem' of induction: how can the 'endlessly proliferation databank of particulars' (245) of induction result in a coherent work on the laws of nature? Coleridge's answer lies in the extracts themselves: by transforming 'quotations into sententiae' and aphorisms (224), Porter argues, he connects remote and distant passages through the power of accumulated meaning. Porter unravels how Coleridge enacts this through a reading of *The Friend*, with the discussion of the excerpt from *Paradise Lost*

(249) being an especially clear example of how Porter's arguments are made all the stronger by the study's rich close readings.

In the book's final landing place, Porter centres on the figure of Victor Frankenstein's creature to stitch together different strands of the study: 'his mind is a miscellany, his philosophical origin is an irresolvable 'problem,' his body the bastardization of empiricism' (259). The creature becomes the embodiment of the text-composite, while Victor Frankenstein is aligned with Wordsworth and Coleridge to reveal Shelley's critique of their 'retreat from the composite order' after the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*. If the composite still provoked anxiety at the endpoint of this study, Porter argues, it also held out the 'promise of revolution, resistance, revolt' (266), and perhaps it still does. Porter draws parallels between the information saturation point of 1800 and our current continuous production of data, and this stays on the mind throughout. Porter's rich examination of the broader cultural connotations of quotation and extracts across these texts causes a renewed look at all of these works and highlights the significance and timely nature of its argument in our age of 'cut and paste' (266).

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