Although *The Origin of Species* contained just a single visual illustration, Charles Darwin’s other books, from his monograph on barnacles in the early 1850s to his volume on earthworms in 1881, were copiously illustrated by well-known artists and engravers. Jonathan Smith explains how Darwin managed to illustrate the unillustrable – his theories of natural selection – by manipulating and modifying the visual conventions of natural history, using images to support the claims made in his texts. Moreover, Smith looks outward to analyze the relationships between Darwin’s illustrations and Victorian visual culture, especially the late Victorian debates about aesthetics, and shows how Darwin’s evolutionary explanation of beauty, based on his observations of color and the visual in nature, were a direct challenge to the aesthetics of John Ruskin. The many illustrations reproduced here enhance this fascinating study of a little known aspect of Darwin’s lasting influence on literature, art, and culture.

**Jonathan Smith** is Professor of English at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. He has published widely on nineteenth-century literature and science, and is the author of *Fact and Feeling: Baconian Science and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1994).
Nineteenth-century British literature and culture have been rich fields for interdisciplinary studies. Since the turn of the twentieth century, scholars and critics have tracked the intersections and tensions between Victorian literature and the visual arts, politics, social organisation, economic life, technical innovations, scientific thought – in short, culture in its broadest sense. In recent years, theoretical challenges and historiographical shifts have unsettled the assumptions of previous scholarly synthesis and called into question the terms of older debates. Whereas the tendency in much past literary critical interpretation was to use the metaphor of culture as ‘background’, feminist, Foucauldian, and other analyses have employed more dynamic models that raise questions of power and of circulation. Such developments have reanimated the field. This series aims to accommodate and promote the most interesting work being undertaken on the frontiers of the field of nineteenth-century literary studies: work which intersects fruitfully with other fields of study such as history, or literary theory, or the history of science. Comparative as well as interdisciplinary approaches are welcomed.

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