EVOLUTION AND VICTORIAN CULTURE

In this collection of essays from leading scholars, the dynamic interplay between evolution and Victorian culture is explored for the first time, mapping new relationships between the arts and sciences. Rather than focusing simply on evolution and literature or art, this volume brings together essays exploring the impact of evolutionary ideas on a wide range of cultural activities including painting, sculpture, dance, music, fiction, poetry, cinema, architecture, theatre, photography, museums, exhibitions and popular culture. Broad-ranging, rather than narrowly specialized, each chapter provides a brief introduction to key scholarship, a central section exploring original insights drawn from primary source material, and a conclusion offering overarching principles and a projection towards further areas of research. Each chapter covers the work of significant individuals and groups applying evolutionary theory to their particular art, both as theorists and practitioners. This comprehensive examination of topics sheds light on larger and previously unknown Victorian cultural patterns.

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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 organization, 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.

A complete list of titles published will be found at the end of the book.
EVOLUTION AND VICTORIAN CULTURE

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