LITERATURE AND DANCE IN
NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

Jane Austen to the New Woman

Literary critics often pursue analyses of music or painting and literature as “sister arts,” yet this is the first full-length study of the treatment of social dance in literature. A vital part of social life and courtship with its own symbolism, dance in the nineteenth century was a natural point of interest for novelists writing about these topics; and indeed ballroom scenes could themselves be used to further courtship narratives or illustrate other significant encounters.

Including analyses of works by Jane Austen, W. M. Thackeray, George Eliot, and Anthony Trollope, as well as extensive material from nineteenth-century dance manuals, Cheryl A. Wilson shows how dance provided a vehicle through which writers could convey social commentary and cultural critique on issues such as gender, social mobility, and nationalism.

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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.
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CHERYL A. WILSON
To my parents
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In Anthony Trollope’s *Can You Forgive Her?*, the widow Mrs. Greenow remarks “when people grow old they must be dull. Dancing can’t go on forever” – with all due respect, I think it can.
Abbreviations (full citations in bibliography)

AB  Adam Bede
AL  Aurora Leigh
Almack’s  Almack’s: A Novel
BH  Bleak House
CDQ “Country Dance and Quadrille”
E  Emma
Exclusives  The Exclusives
MA  Mrs. Armytage
NA  Northanger Abbey
ODH “One Doubtful Hour”
PM  Pin Money
P&P  Pride and Prejudice
SMW  The Story of a Modern Woman
VF  Vanity Fair
W&D  Wives and Daughters
WLN  The Way We Live Now
YL “The Yellow Leaf”