

MIMICRY AND DISPLAY IN VICTORIAN LITERARY CULTURE

Revealing the web of mutual influences between nineteenth-century scientific and cultural discourses of appearance, *Mimicry and Display in Victorian Literary Culture* argues that Victorian science and culture biologized appearance, reimagining imitation, concealment and self-presentation as evolutionary adaptations. Exploring how studies of animal crypsis and visibility drew on artistic theory and techniques to reconceptualise nature as a realm of signs and interpretation, Abberley shows that, in turn, this science complicated religious views of nature as a text of divine meanings, inspiring literary authors to rethink human appearances and perceptions through a Darwinian lens. Providing fresh insights into writers from Alfred Russel Wallace and Thomas Hardy to Oscar Wilde and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Abberley reveals how the biology of appearance generated new understandings of deception, identity and creativity; reacted upon narrative forms such as crime fiction and the pastoral; and infused the rhetoric of cultural criticism and political activism.

WILL ABBERLEY is Senior Lecturer in Victorian Literature at the University of Sussex. His other books are *English Fiction and the Evolution of Language 1850–1914* (Cambridge University Press, 2015) and *Underwater Worlds: Submerged Visions in Science and Culture* (2018). He is a BBC New Generation Thinker and Philip Leverhulme Prize recipient.

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MIMICRY AND DISPLAY IN VICTORIAN LITERARY CULTURE

Nature, Science and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination

WILL ABBERLEY

University of Sussex



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