



One Culture: Essays Sci/Lit (Science & Literature)

George Levine

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In this volume, the first in the series Science and Literature, editor George Levin has brought together the contributions of historians, critics, and philosophers of science to explore these relationships.

From the preface:

"The interaction between science and literature has been a subject of growing concern in criticism; the languages of science have increasingly found their way into literature and into discussions of it. And the traditional assumptions that literary people care nothing about science, scientists care nothing about literature have been belied throughout the twentieth century but particularly in recent years. There remain, however, large gaps of knowledge and of misunderstanding that make fruitful interchange and informed discussion difficult to achieve. And while this series will be aimed primarily at a literary audience, we are hoping to be of use as well to historians and philosophers of science at a level high enough to ensure the respect if not the agreement of the scientific community.

While the series will not take a 'position' in relation to controverted questions and will leave the directions of the arguments to the highly qualified and independent scholars and critics it seeks, it does grow from three assumptions, first, that science and literature are two alternative but related expressions of a culture's values, assumptions, and intellectual frameworks; second, that understanding science in its relation to culture and literature requires some understanding not only of its own internal processes, but of the pressures upon it exercised by social, political aesthetic, psychological, and biographical forces; third, that the idea of 'influence' of one upon the other must work both ways — it is not only science that influences literature, but literature that influences science. These assumptions, of course, are not uncontroversial, and they impinge on such large issues as the question of 'representation' in literature and entail corollaries —about such matters as the 'rationality' of science, or the degree to which it actually describes reality—that are at the center of contemporary battles within the philosophy of science. We hope that this series will throw light on these matters.

The subject is enormous, its importance inescapable. Vague as the enterprise may occasionally seem when viewed in the abstract, its significances are clear when we get down to cases, as the authors of the several essays in this volume do. The range of questions they address intimates the ambitions of the series."

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