



Biographical Dictionary of Literary Influences: The Nineteenth Century, 1800-1914

John Powell

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Over the past two decades, the process of cultural development and, in particular, the role of reading has been of growing interest, but recent research has been episodic and idiosyncratic. In this biographical dictionary, research devoted specifically to the reading habits of 19th century individuals who shaped Western culture is brought together for the first time. While giving prominent coverage to literary and political figures, the volume's 270 entries also include musicians, painters, educators, and explorers. Each entry includes brief biographical information, a concise summary of literary influences on the subject, and clear direction for further research. The book provides a practical tool for scholars wishing to trace the reading experience of important Western cultural figures.

Subjects were selected from the people most responsible for the cultural development of Europe, Britain and the British Empire, and the Americas between 1800 and 1914. Although selective, the sample of 270 figures is substantial enough to suggest broad, cross-cultural habits and effects, enabling scholars to better understand the relationship between reading and culture. In an introductory essay, Powell explores the patterns and relationships that can be discerned from the entries. The first of three anticipated volumes, the book is an important step forward in researching the role of reading in cultural development.

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