

Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin

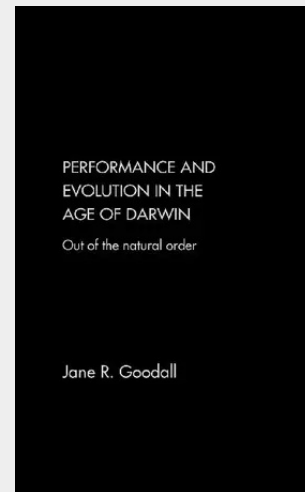
Out of the Natural Order

Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin reveals the ways in which the major themes of evolution were taken up in the performing arts during Darwin's adult lifetime and in the generation after his death. The period 1830-1900 was the formative period for evolutionary ideas. While scientists and theorists investigated the law and order of nature, show business was more concerned with what was out of the natural order. Missing links and throwbacks, freak taxonomies and exotic races were favourite subject matter for the burgeoning variety theatre movement. Focusing on popular theatre forms in London, New York and Paris, Jane Goodall shows how they were interwoven with the developing debate about human evolution. With this book, Goodall contributes an important new angle to the debates surrounding the history of evolution. She reveals that, far from creating widespread culture shock, Darwinian theory tapped into some of the long-standing themes of popular performance and was a source for diverse and sometimes hilarious explorations.

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206,30 €

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Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9780415243773

Medium: Buch

ISBN: 978-0-415-24377-3

Verlag: Routledge

Erscheinungstermin: 29.08.2002

Sprache(n): Englisch

Auflage: 1. Auflage 2002

Produktform: Gebunden

Gewicht: 529 g

Seiten: 288

Format (B x H): 145 x 222 mm

