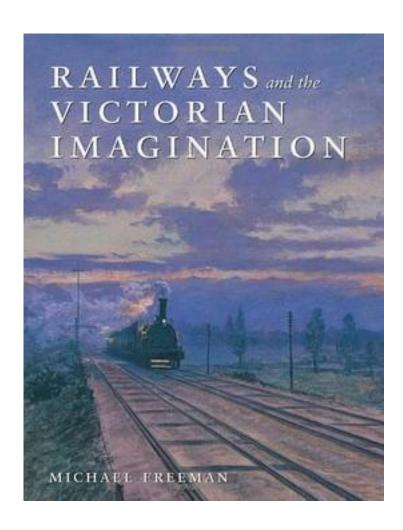
Railways and the Victorian Imagination



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This book offers a new cultural history of the railway age in Britain. As the newly constructed railways transformed the landscape and the economics of nineteenth-century Britain, they transformed the very culture itself, and this richly

illustrated account records and illuminates that transformation. From geological studies to the walls of the Royal Academy; from rapidly growing atheism to innovative games for children; from Darwinism to the temples of capitalism -- almost every aspect of human endeavor was informed by and related to the developing railway. Musical scores that sought to mimic the rhythms of steam locomotion and libraries of books devised to be read on trains and sold at station book stalls were just some of the consequences of feats of physical engineering that exceeded all previous undertakings, and of joint-stock companies larger by far than the East India Company or any other previously in existence. These developments also brought about new attitudes to time, to distance and consequently to employment, to leisure, and to life itself. This lively book recovers through its images, its anecdotes, and its arguments the life and the world that the railways made. The cultural dimension of the railway age is often overshadowed by its mechanical and physical elements. Here, the very centrality of the railway in the literary, artistic, and imaginative life of the nation is set side by side with its financial, speculative, and economic dimension to provide a highly original and fascinating insight into the realities of Victorian life.

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