

The Third Culture: Literature and Science



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出版者:Walter de Gruyter

出版时间:1998

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9783110142921

The topic of "the two cultures" has been with us since the debates between Matthew Arnold and Thomas Huxley in the nineteenth century, and was renewed in the controversies between C.P.Snow and F.R.Leavis in the 1960s. More recently, Snow's notion of a possible "third culture" in which the literary and the scientific culture interact has been explored in new ways by theorists on both sides of the divide, seeking a terminology and set of procedures to investigate the common "cultural field".

The topics explored, using a range of European examples drawn from the period Romanticism to Post-Modernism, include the ideology of 'nature' which still informs both scientific and humanistic investigations and discussions; the creative process or serendipity in science and art; proper and improper analogies between the disciplines; modes of perception and experimental inquiry; the use of figures, images, and narrative forms in science; the representation and incorporation of science in literary works; and "bridging" exercise such as Naturphilosophie, occult or "soft" sciences, organic aesthetics, and anthropic arguments.

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