Nerves And Narratives: A Cultural History Of Hysteria In Nineteenth-century British Prose

Peter Melville Logan

The British middle class of the early nineteenth century was defined by its nervous complaints--hysteria, hypochondria, vapours, melancholia, and other maladies. Peter Melville Logan explores the link between medical theories of nervous physiology and narrative issues central to the literary writing of the period. He examines the assumption, implicit in medical thinking at the time, that the nervous body--unlike its non-nervous counterpart--has a narrative inscribed on its nerve fibers. It becomes "the body with a story to tell." Logan takes up several literary works whose nervous na...
The race for cultural development. Elizabethan poetry and prose. Development of the English language. Sidney and Spenser. Abroad these energies expressed themselves in the growth of the British Empire. At home they were accompanied by rapid social change and fierce intellectual controversy. The juxtaposition of this new industrial wealth with a new kind of urban poverty is only one of the paradoxes that characterize this long and diverse period. In religion the climax of the Evangelical revival coincided with an unprecedentedly severe set of challenges to faith.