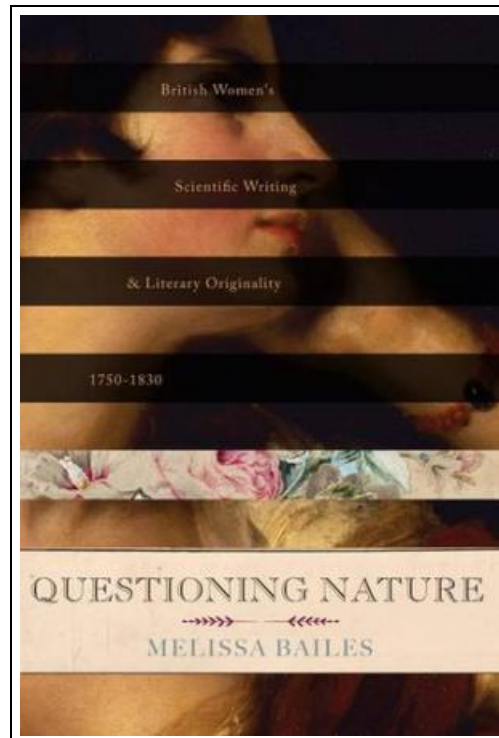


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University of Virginia Press, United States, 2017. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. In the mid-eighteenth century, many British authors and literary critics anxiously claimed that poetry was in crisis. These writers complained that modern poets plagiarized classical authors as well as one another, asserted that no new subjects for verse remained, and feared poetry s complete exhaustion. Questioning Nature explores how major women writers-including Mary Shelley, Anna Barbauld, and Charlotte Smith-sought to solve this problem of literary innovation by turning to the era s rising fascination with new discoveries in developing disciplines of natural history such as botany, zoology, and geology. Recognizing the sociological implications of inquiries in the natural sciences, these authors renovated notions of originality through natural history while engaging with questions of the day. Classifications, hierarchies, and definitions inherent in natural history were appropriated into discussions of gender, race, and nation. Further, their concerns with authorship, authority, and novelty led them to experiment with textual hybridities and collaborative modes of originality that competed with conventional ideas of solitary genius. Exploring these authors and their work, Questioning Nature explains how these women writers imaginative scientific writing both shaped the literary canon and ultimately led to their exclusion from it, unveiling a new genealogy for Romantic originality.

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