



# From Eve to Evolution: Darwin, Science, and Women's Rights in Gilded Age America

*Kimberly A. Hamlin*

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**From Eve to Evolution: Darwin, Science, and Women's Rights in Gilded Age America** Kimberly A. Hamlin

*From Eve to Evolution* provides the first full-length study of American women's responses to evolutionary theory and illuminates the role science played in the nineteenth-century women's rights movement.

Kimberly A. Hamlin reveals how a number of nineteenth-century women, raised on the idea that Eve's sin forever fixed women's subordinate status, embraced Darwinian evolution—especially sexual selection theory as explained in *The Descent of Man*—as an alternative to the creation story in Genesis.

Hamlin chronicles the lives and writings of the women who combined their enthusiasm for evolutionary science with their commitment to women's rights, including Antoinette Brown Blackwell, Eliza Burt Gamble, Helen Hamilton Gardener, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. These Darwinian feminists believed evolutionary science proved that women were not inferior to men, that it was natural for mothers to work outside the home, and that women should control reproduction. The practical applications of this evolutionary feminism came to fruition, Hamlin shows, in the early thinking and writing of the American birth control pioneer Margaret Sanger.

Much scholarship has been dedicated to analyzing what Darwin and other male evolutionists had to say about women, but very little has been written regarding what women themselves had to say about evolution. *From Eve to Evolution* adds much-needed female voices to the vast literature on Darwin in America.

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