



# **Evolutionism in Eighteenth-Century French Thought (Currents in Comparative Romance Languages and Literatures)**

*Mary Efrosini Gregory*

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## **Evolutionism in Eighteenth-Century French Thought (Currents in Comparative Romance Languages and Literatures)** Mary Efrosini Gregory

This book examines how eight eighteenth-century French theorists - Maillet, Montesquieu, La Mettrie, Buffon, Maupertuis, Diderot, Rousseau, and Voltaire - addressed evolutionism. Each thinker laid down a building block that would eventually open the door to the mutability of species and a departure from the long-held belief that the chain of beings is fixed. This book describes how the philosophes established a triune relationship among contemporary scientific discoveries, random creationism propelled by the motive and conscious properties of matter, and the notion of the chain of being, along with its corollaries, plenitude and continuity. Also addressed is the contemporary debate over whether apes could ever be taught to speak as well as the issue of race and the family of man.

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