



The Vital Science (Routledge Revivals): Biology and the Literary Imagination, 1860-1900

Peter Morton

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In this title, first published in 1984, Peter Morton argues that in late Victorian Britain a group of novelists and essayists quite consciously sought and found ideas in post-Darwinian biology that were susceptible to imaginative transformation. The period between 1860 and 1900 was a time of great confusion in biology; the natural selection hypothesis was in retreat before its acute critics, and no extension of evolutionary theory to human affairs was too bizarre to attract its quota of enthusiasts. Writers capitalised on this prevailing uncertainty and used it to their own artistic or polemic ends. A fascinating and interdisciplinary title, this reissue will interest students of late Victorian literature, as well as historians of biological theory between *The Origin of Species* and Mendel.

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