Contents

Foreword by George Levine  ix
Preface to the first edition xv
Preface to the second edition xvii
Preface to the third edition xxxiii

Introduction 1
   I The remnant of the mythical 1
   II ‘The second blow’ 8
   III Problems of knowledge 14

Part I. Darwin’s language 23
  1. ‘Pleasure like a tragedy’: imagination and the material world 25
  2. Fit and misfitting: anthropomorphism and the natural order 44

Part II. Darwin’s plots 71
  3. Analogy, metaphor and narrative in The Origin 73
  4. Darwinian myths 97
     I Growth and its myths 97
     II Growth and transformation 99
     III Transformation, retrogression, extinction: Darwinian romance 114

Part III. Responses: George Eliot and Thomas Hardy 137
  5. George Eliot: Middlemarch 139
     I The vital influence 139
     II Structure and hypothesis 148
     III The web of affinities 156
## Contents

7. Descent and sexual selection: women in narrative | 196  
8. Finding a scale for the human: plot and writing in Hardy’s novels | 220  
9. Darwin and the consciousness of others | 242

### Notes

Select bibliography of primary works | 282  
Further reading related to Charles Darwin | 288  
Index | 290