



On Beyond Living Rhetorical Transformations of the Life Sciences Writing Science

By Richard Doyle

Stanford University Press. Paperback. Condition: New. 188 pages. Dimensions: 9.1in. x 6.0in. x 0.5in. What do biologists study when they study life today? Drawing on tools from rhetoric and poststructuralist theory, the author argues that the ascent of molecular biology, with its emphasis on molecules such as DNA rather than organisms, was enabled by crucial rhetorical softwares. Metaphors such as the genetic code made possible a transformation of the very concept of life, a transformation that often casts organisms as information systems. With careful readings of key texts from the history of molecular biology such as those of Erwin Schrödinger, George Gamow, Jacques Monod, and François Jacob the author maps out the complex relations between the practices of rhetoric and the technoscientific triumphs they accompanied, triumphs that bolstered a postvital biology that increasingly elides and questions the boundary between organisms and machines. There have been many popular books, and a few academic ones, on the Human Genome Initiative. *On Beyond Living* is a genealogy of these initiatives, a map of how we have come to equate human beings with information. Melding contemporary theory with scientific discourse, it is certain to provoke discussion (and controversy) in the fields of cultural studies, theory, and science...

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