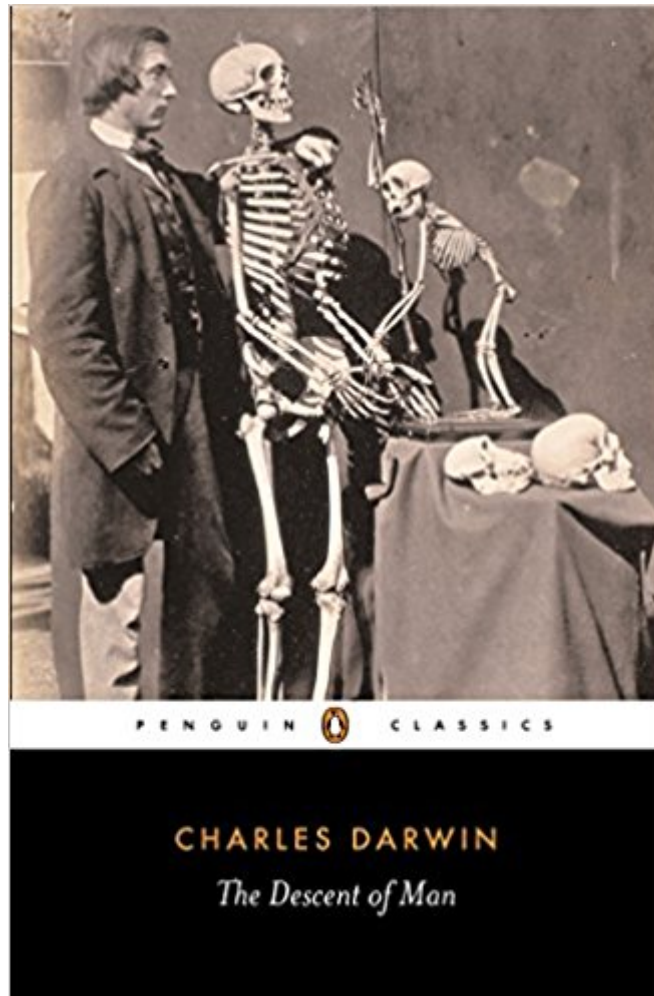




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# The Descent Of Man (Penguin Classics)



## Synopsis

Applying his controversial theory of evolution to the origins of the human species, Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man* was the culmination of his life's work. In *The Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin refused to discuss human evolution, believing the subject too 'surrounded with prejudices'. He had been reworking his notes since the 1830s, but only with trepidation did he finally publish *The Descent of Man* in 1871. The book notoriously put apes in our family tree and made the races one family, diversified by 'sexual selection' - Darwin's provocative theory that female choice among competing males leads to diverging racial characteristics. Named by Sigmund Freud as 'one of the ten most significant books' ever written, Darwin's *Descent of Man* continues to shape the way we think about what it is that makes us uniquely human. In their introduction, James Moore and Adrian Desmond, acclaimed biographers of Charles Darwin, call for a radical re-assessment of the book, arguing that its core ideas on race were fired by Darwin's hatred of slavery. The text is the second and definitive edition and this volume also contains suggestions for further reading, a chronology and biographical sketches of prominent individuals mentioned. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

One of the ten most significant books. (Sigmund Freud)"

Charles Darwin, a Victorian scientist and naturalist, has become one of the most famous figures of science to date. Born in 1809 to an upper-middle-class medical family, he was destined for a career in either medicine or the Anglican Church. However, he never completed his medical education and his future changed entirely in 1831 when he joined HMS Beagle as a self-financing, independent naturalist. On returning to England in 1836 he began to write up his theories and observations which culminated in a series of books, most famously *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* in 1859, where he challenged and contradicted contemporary biological and religious beliefs with two decades worth of scientific investigation and theory. Darwin's theory of natural selection is now the most widely accepted scientific model of how species evolve. He died in 1882 and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Damien Hirst is an internationally renowned English artist, who has dominated the art scene in England since the 1990s. Known in particular for his series of works on death, Hirst here provides a contemporary, visual take on Darwin's theory of evolution - the struggle between life and death in nature. William Bynum is Professor Emeritus of the History of Medicine at University College, London, and was for many years Head of the Academic Unit of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine. He edited the scholarly journal *Medical History* from 1980 to 2001, and his previous publications include *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century*; *The Companion Encyclopedia of the History of Medicine* (co-edited with Roy Porter); *The Oxford Dictionary of Scientific Quotations* (with Roy Porter), *The Dictionary of Medical Biography* (with Helen Bynum), and *History of Medicine: A Very Short Introduction*. He lives in Suffolk.

"The Descent of Man and Principles of Sexual Selection", by Charles Darwin, [...] First Edition Feb. 24, 1871, 2nd. Ed. Sept. 1874. Re-Pub. 2007. SC 675/523 pgs. 152 Index 152 pgs. 8 7/8" x 6 1/8". This has heavy, loquacious prose, characteristic of 19th Century writing style which provided greater specificity in meaning, and, simultaneously instilling a greater rather than lesser wordiness in construction of logically structured thoughts, hereby occasioning some modest rereading frequency by many for clarity. What is especially notable in Darwin's writings was his attempt to provide such completeness of theory as to insure and provide full grounds for one to contemplate his (Darwin's) possession of feelings of insecurity - or, perhaps, by a compelling fear that any understatement might provide weakness of his arguments allowing someone else gaining

recognition for his theory. Nonetheless, the works by Darwin are monumental and the work of a genius - especially in the amount of material he instilled into his 'proofs', all without aid of a word processor or computer. I imagine he may have used index cards. He touched only lightly on the topic of creationism, knowing controversy would erupt, but, he nonetheless reserved a room for God; Charles was, himself, a caring, sincere, sensitive person and worldly person. The book is a slow, at times tedious, read; and, after 182 pages, the subject matter turns to "Principles of Sexual Selection" that deals with the secondary sexual characters: how those arose, became transformed and were progressively modified by sexual selection (sexual choices) rather than natural selection. This subject is taken up systematically by Orders & Classes, from lowest to highest, and finally to the Mammals, Primates, etc. to Man/Woman where virtually everything is considered: -- size, hairiness, strength, beauty, marriage customs, etc. The extensiveness of detail, often appearing minute, in diverse species or subspecies, geographic location, herd size, foods, etc. is awesome - but Darwin supported his writings with intensely scripted references to learned scholars in botany, biology, and anthropology, that, along with numerical support of his data, provides a comfortable bed for his arguments in support of his Natural Selection Theory. Interestingly, even with DNA evidences to support Ontogeny and Phylogeny, there are those who still see only a fabrication of purposeful lies by atheists and non-God Fearing peoples.- finis -

I always wanted to read this book due to its intriguing title, thinking that it would address the very issue from the beginning. Conversely, 90% of the book is about birds, animals, fish and other organisms...It gets very biological towards the middle and really detailed with birds...No matter how dissatisfied you are with Darwin's work you still have to read it. Analogous with an Al Pacino movie, even if it's not a good movie you will still be interested in watching it...All in all, it's worth spending the time with the option of quickly flipping through the birds chapters!!

anything by Darwin is indispensable for those not afraid to read him

This is the writing of Darwin himself. Darwin was one of the most acute observers in the world along with Michael Faraday but his presentation of material was not exciting. Excellent in facts but difficult to stay with. I will continue to try to read him but this may take some time.

The writing and subject material is still of interest so many years after written.

5 stars

The book came un good shape but lines are too long and captions too small, which is not good for your eyes.

Excellent.

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