

*'...these exalted powers — Man still bears
the indelible stamp of his
lowly origin'*

In his *Origin of Species*, (1859), 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 repudiation 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 natural selection' — Darwin's provocative theory that female choice among competing males leads to diverging racial characteristics. As claimed 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.

Edited with an introduction by JAMES MOORE and ADRIAN DESMOND

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