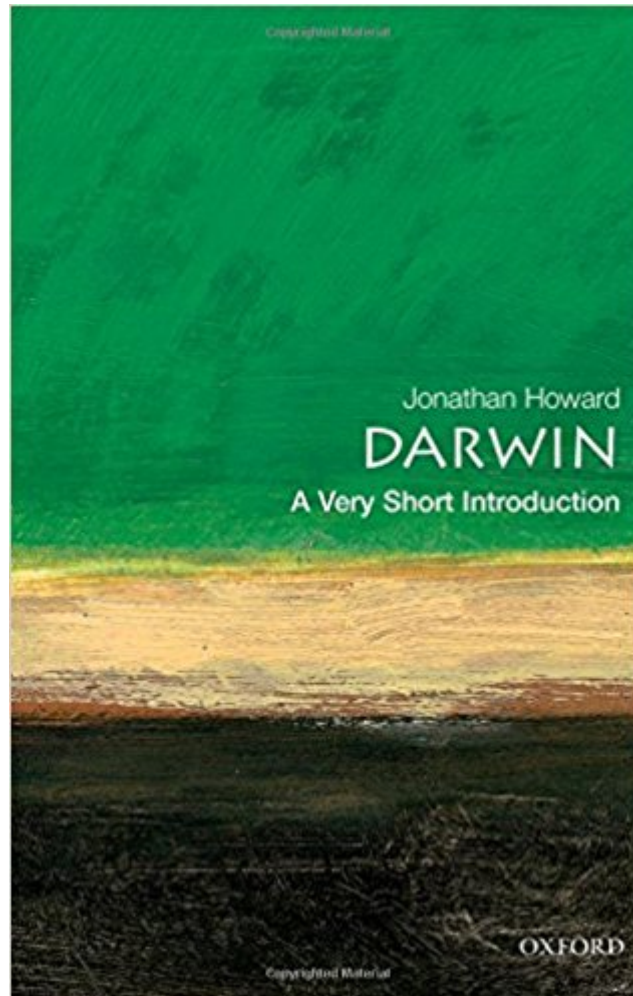


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Darwin: A Very Short Introduction



Synopsis

Darwin's theory that man's ancestors were apes caused an uproar within the scientific world, as well as public frenzy when *The Origin of Species* was published in 1859. Arguments still rage about the implications of his evolutionary theory, and skepticism about the value of Darwin's contribution to knowledge is widespread. In this analysis of Darwin's major insights and arguments, Jonathan Howard reasserts the importance of Darwin's work for the development of modern biology. He offers a stimulating view of the famous scientist in a concise, handy format, making it a masterpiece for all Darwinians as well as for all general readers of popular science.

About the Series: Combining authority with wit, accessibility, and style, Very Short Introductions offer an introduction to some of life's most interesting topics. Written by experts for the newcomer, they demonstrate the finest contemporary thinking about the central problems and issues in hundreds of key topics, from philosophy to Freud, quantum theory to Islam.

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Customer Reviews

I think the extent of knowledge most people know about Darwin is about evolution and even that is spotty. I just wanted to get a broad idea about the man and his theories and this book fit the bill. I feel like I can now speak about Darwin and actually know what I am talking about rather than make off handed comments with out fully realizing what I am talking about. I recommend this book to Atheists and people of faith since each of us could benefit from understanding what Darwin is about and the context of his theories.

Jonathan Howard's little book on Darwin is a disaster. It is hard to know what Oxford U.P. were up to when they bypassed the professional expertise of historians of science and invited an animal physiologist to write the life of Darwin, but this decision could well have been justified by some practical insight brought to bear on well-known problems of 19th-century biology. However, Howard insists on rewriting "The Origin of Species" as a modern evolutionary text, searching out its meaning for today's biologists and explaining where (and why) Darwin got it wrong. A sense of history, for what it's worth, is pushed aside. Time and place are left outside the covers, the detailed work of Darwin scholars studiously ignored. Even the heart of his book is depressingly myopic: the core of the matter, says Howard, is Darwin's contribution to biology not his impact on Victorian Britain. So all the important bits the very topics that students and others want to know about are missing.

This makes Darwin's concepts quick and easy to understand. This is a good read for anyone who isn't quite sure if they want to take on a more extensive book on Darwin's concepts just yet.

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