



Defining Darwin: Essays on the History and Philosophy of Evolutionary Biology

Michael Ruse

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Michael Ruse is one of the foremost Charles Darwin scholars of our time. For forty years he has written extensively on Darwin, the scientific revolution that his work precipitated, and the nature and implications of evolutionary thinking for today. Now, in the year marking the two hundredth anniversary of Darwin's birth and the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of his masterpiece, *On the Origin of Species*, Ruse reevaluates the legacy of Darwin in this collection of new and recent essays.

Beginning with pre-Darwinian concepts of organic origins proposed by the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant, Ruse shows the challenges that Darwin's radically different idea faced. He then discusses natural selection as a powerful metaphor; Alfred Russel Wallace, the co-discoverer of the theory of evolution; Herbert Spencer's contribution to evolutionary biology; the synthesis of Mendelian genetics and natural selection; the different views of Julian Huxley and George Gaylord Simpson on evolutionary ethics; and the influence of Darwin's ideas on literature. In the final section, Ruse brings the discussion up to date with a consideration of "evolutionary development" (dubbed "evo devo") as a new evolutionary paradigm and the effects of Darwin on religion, especially the debate surrounding Intelligent Design theory.

Ruse offers a fresh perspective on topics old and new, challenging the reader to think again about the nature and consequences of what has been described as the biggest idea ever conceived.

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