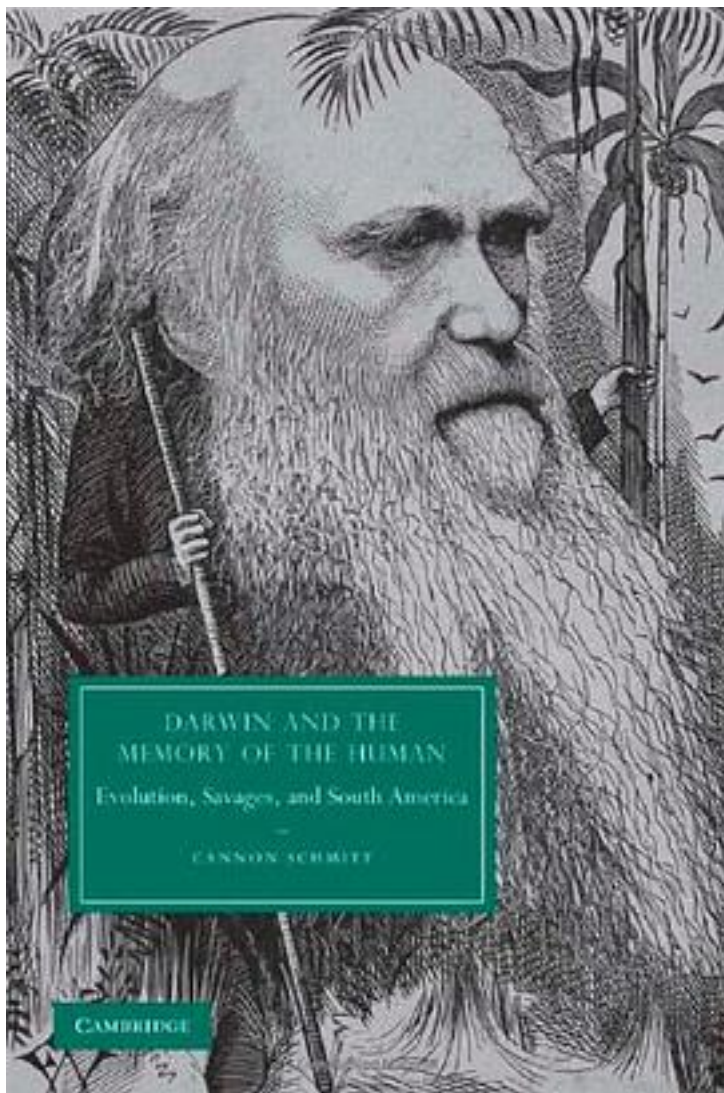


Darwin and the Memory of the Human



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When the young Charles Darwin landed on the shores of Tierra del Fuego in 1832, he was overwhelmed: nothing had prepared him for the sight of what he called 'an untamed savage'. The shock he felt, repeatedly recalled in later years, definitively shaped his theory of evolution. In this original and wide-ranging study, Cannon Schmitt shows how Darwin and other Victorian naturalists transformed such encounters with South America and its indigenous peoples into influential accounts of biological and historical change. Redefining what it means to be human, they argue that the modern self must be understood in relation to a variety of pasts - personal, historical, and ancestral - conceived of as savage. Schmitt reshapes our understanding of Victorian imperialism, revisits the implications of Darwinian theory, and demonstrates the pertinence of nineteenth-century biological thought to current theorizations of memory.

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