



Born Bad: Original Sin and the Making of the Western World

James Boyce

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"Original sin is the Western world's creation story."

According to the Christian doctrine of original sin, humans are born inherently bad, and only through God's grace can they achieve salvation. In this captivating and controversial book, acclaimed historian James Boyce explores how this centuries-old concept has shaped the Western view of human nature right up to the present. Boyce traces a history of original sin from Adam and Eve, St. Augustine, and Martin Luther to Adam Smith, Sigmund Freud, and Richard Dawkins, and explores how each has contributed to shaping our conception of original sin.

Boyce argues that despite the marked decline in church attendance in recent years, religious ideas of morality still very much underpin our modern secular society, regardless of our often being unaware of their origins. If today the specific doctrine has all but disappeared (even from churches), what remains is the distinctive discontent of Western people—the feelings of guilt and inadequacy associated not with doing wrong, but with being wrong. In addition to offering an innovative history of Christianity, Boyce offers new insights in to the creation of the West.

Born Bad is the sweeping story of a controversial idea and the remarkable influence it still wields.



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