

Fuck: The Human Odyssey by Martin Rowson. Jonathan Cape 2008.

Martin Rowson is, inter alia, a cartoonist for the Guardian, whose pages he enhances with his brilliantly drawn, perceptive and thought-provoking work. Fuck is a cartoonist's version of the major events of world history, starting with the Big Bang and concluding with the end of the world.

The eponymous word appears in every cartoon except one, its omission being extraordinarily powerful in the context in which it fails to appear, and although some may find the word offensive, its repetition should reduce the unease they may feel.

Some of the cartoons are laugh out loud, others merit a giggle or just a smile, and one or two are profoundly shocking: all are beautifully drawn and executed and exemplify a brilliant cartoonist at the height of his powers as both artist and observer.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh