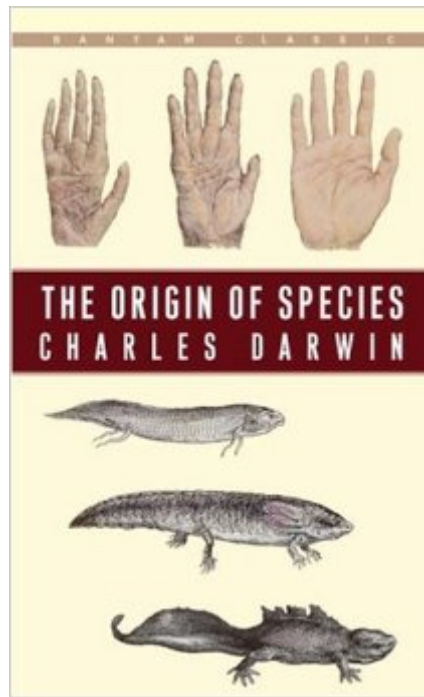


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The Origin Of Species



Synopsis

The publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859 marked a dramatic turning point in scientific thought. The volume had taken Darwin more than twenty years to publish, in part because he envisioned the storm of controversy it was certain to unleash. Indeed, selling out its first edition on its first day, *The Origin of Species* revolutionized science, philosophy, and theology. Darwin reasoned, documented arguments carefully advance his theory of natural selection and his assertion that species were not created all at once by a divine hand but started with a few simple forms that mutated and adapted over time. Whether commenting on his own poor health, discussing his experiments to test instinct in bees, or relating a conversation about a South American burrowing rodent, Darwin's monumental achievement is surprisingly personal and delightfully readable. Its profound ideas remain controversial even today, making it the most influential book in the natural sciences ever written—an important work not just to its time but to the history of humankind.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (1,083 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

The original book by Charles Darwin is a classic that should be on everyone's reading list. There are ample reviews here which address it, praise it, and I am completely in agreement with them.

Darwin's *Origin of Species* is a true masterpiece. Unfortunately, this review is to help readers/buyers realize that there is a 'vandalized' version which has been published, and to tell you how to avoid it and get the real thing. To explain; there is yet another edition also called "The Origin of Species, 150th Anniversary Edition", put out by Christian Fundamentalist Ray Comfort in an attempt to

discredit evolutionary theory and Charles Darwin, and it has some extra 50 pages of unintelligible drivel about creationism, as well as having ABRIDGED Darwin's original text. If you want to read about creationism, find another book... if you want the facts, read ALL of what Darwin has to say, and please don't give any money to Comfort by accidentally buying his ABRIDGED version. Note that he used the EXACT same name as the 'real' anniversary edition -- "The Origin Of Species: 150th Anniversary Edition by Charles Darwin". You can easily tell which version you're getting by who wrote the introduction - go with Julian Huxley, NOT Ray Comfort, and you'll have the correct and complete version. Also, note that reviews are mixed between the books (normally not a problem at all) - I hope they are straightening this out, but currently that's not the case. Sadly, the negative reviews of the Comfort version are bringing down the rating of the 'good/real' book. Sorry to have to write about the 'drama', but I'm sure you want to know that you have ordered the correct book, and I know you'll love it. Enjoy.

My four-star rating is more for this particular product than for the work of Darwin itself. Clearly Darwin's book is the cornerstone of modern biology, and I won't even pretend to try to rate its importance using one to five stars. However, I felt it was important to let people know that this is the *sixth* edition of the book. I ordered it thinking it was the first, although I admit I had no reason to believe that other than that it did not specify that it was any other edition. The main problem with later editions is that Darwin continually responded to his critics in subsequent editions, thus changing some aspects of his theory. He also added the obnoxious concession "by the Creator" to his beautiful final sentence in order to appease the religious critics. The sixth (final) edition even has an extra chapter in response to criticisms by Catholic biologist George Mivart (which chapter is present in this edition, thus proving it is the sixth edition). The benefit to later editions would be that they contain minor corrections to the writing, as well as these answers to objections and criticism, but at the same time I don't feel that Darwin's answers needed to be added to the book itself. "The Origin" should simply present his theory (as the first edition does) and he could easily have answered his critics in other ways and not by editing the actual theory itself. But to reiterate my main point, I am not reviewing the actual work of Darwin. I am posting this review to inform people of which edition they are getting with this particular book, because I wish I had known in advance. Edit: I should add that the copy I received did not have the same cover as what is displayed here. My copy shows a bird, a wildcat, and a dolphin on the cover. The cover shown on the product page at the time of writing is of a ship. However, my copy is still the 150th Anniversary Edition (Signet Classics) with an introduction by Julian Huxley.

I have to admit, I'm astonished by the ease with which one can be fooled into thinking they've procured the full and legitimate content of Darwin's signature work. A couple of easy clues, though: Darwin refers in this version to a diagram in chapter IV, to illustrate "The Probable Effects of the Process of Natural Selection Through Divergence of Character and Extinction, On the Descendants of a Common Ancestor." This diagram is absent in this version, and this absence is what started me on the road to identifying this version as a fraud. I began to search for other editions of "Origins" to see if they included the diagram. And that search found not only that most versions did contain the diagram, but that the full text of this work ran to over 550 pages - twice as many as are included in this version. I should also have known better than to have procured a free version. You truly do get what you pay for. Be aware, as you look for a reliable version of the work, that there are many fraudulent versions out there. I won't go into detail on this, as this review concerns this specific version. But I can say that I've purchased a version that I am satisfied is a faithful rendering of the complete content. The ISBN number is 978-0-451-52906-0. It's the 150th anniversary edition, with an introduction by Julian Huxley. Still, don't take my word for it, and do your own due diligence. There is another "150th anniversary" version with an introduction by Ray Comfort, who is a Christian prothselitizer. So be careful. Hopefully this will prevent you from having to start reading the work again from the beginning, as I've had to do. But I'm glad to have figured it out and separated fact from fiction.

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