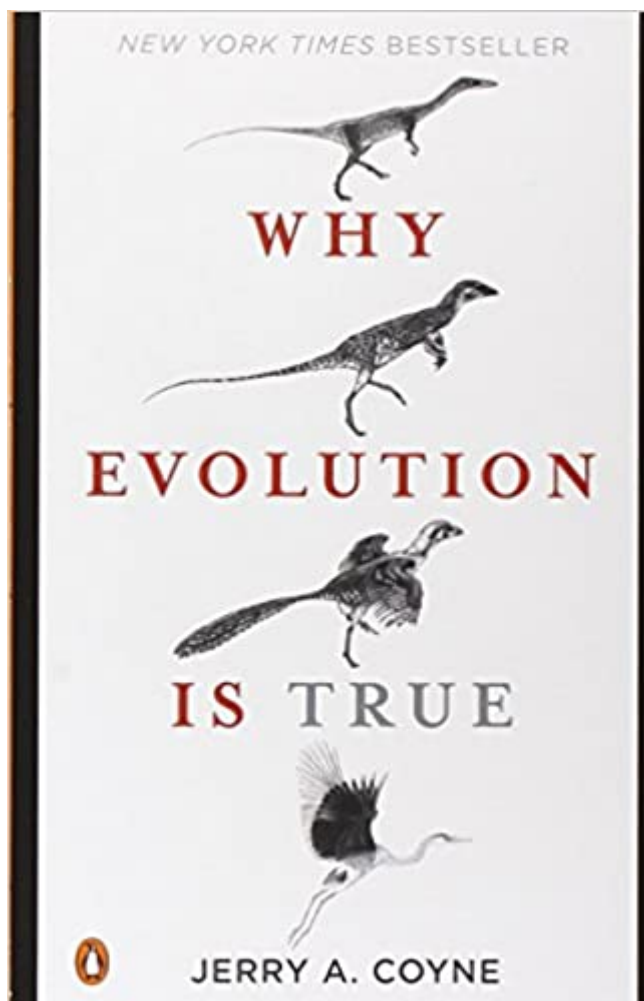


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# Why Evolution Is True



## Synopsis

"Coyne's knowledge of evolutionary biology is prodigious, his deployment of it as masterful as his touch is light." -Richard Dawkins In the current debate about creationism and intelligent design, there is an element of the controversy that is rarely mentioned-the evidence. Yet the proof of evolution by natural selection is vast, varied, and magnificent. In this succinct and accessible summary of the facts supporting the theory of natural selection, Jerry A. Coyne dispels common misunderstandings and fears about evolution and clearly confirms the scientific truth that supports this amazing process of change. Weaving together the many threads of modern work in genetics, paleontology, geology, molecular biology, and anatomy that demonstrate the "indelible stamp" of the processes first proposed by Darwin, *Why Evolution Is True* does not aim to prove creationism wrong. Rather, by using irrefutable evidence, it sets out to prove evolution right.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. With great care, attention to the scientific evidence and a wonderfully accessible style, Coyne, an evolutionary geneticist at the University of Chicago, presents an overwhelming case for evolution. Ranging from biogeography to geology, from anatomy to genetics, and from molecular biology to physiology, he demonstrates that evolutionary theory makes predictions that are consistently borne out by the data—basic requirements for a scientific theory to be valid. Additionally, although fully respectful of those who promote intelligent design and creationism, he uses the data at his disposal to demolish any thought that creationism is supported by the evidence while also explaining why those ideas fall outside the bounds of science. Coyne directly addresses

the concept often advanced by religious fundamentalists that an acceptance of evolution must lead to immorality, concluding that evolution tells us where we came from, not where we can go. Readers looking to understand the case for evolution and searching for a response to many of the most common creationist claims should find everything they need in this powerful book, which is clearer and more comprehensive than the many others on the subject. Illus. (Jan. 26) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**\*Starred Review\*** Far more presentational than disputatious, Coyne's demonstration that evolution has proven itself in lab and field is still a deliberate answer to anti-evolutionism, especially creationism or intelligent design (ID). At its most comprehensive, creationism/ID claims that each species is the product of a separate creative act; less universally, that at least humans were so created. Frequently throughout lucid, accessible chapters on the fossil record, vestigial features of modern bodies (e.g., the tail rarely seen but documented in newborns), biogeography, natural selection, sexual selection, speciation, and human evolution—the basic areas of evolutionary investigation—Coyne remarks that the material evidence confirms evolution, not creationism/ID. For the evidence shows complexities and imperfections that creationism/ID can't explain or even allow, for that would necessitate positing a sloppy, imperfect creator or intelligence that couldn't fashion creatures to ideally fit either their habitats or their bodies. Evolution, on the other hand, expects imperfection and jerry-rigging, and the physical findings, lately made much more precise by genetic analysis, just bolster confidence in it. In conclusion, Coyne wonders what it would take to convince the apparently reasonable people who still deny evolution. A new Milton, perhaps, to justify evolution's ways in great poetry? Meanwhile, at a time—the Darwin bicentennial and Origin of Species sesquicentennial—when good evolution books are rife, Coyne has given general readers one of the best. --Ray Olson --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This was a masterpiece - concise yet comprehensive, and very interesting. Even though I majored in a science (chemistry) when I was in university, I learned a great deal. Dr. Coyne makes an unassailable case for the validity of the Theory of Evolution, supporting his statements with evidence from a variety of scientific disciplines. I must add that you definitely don't have to be a scientist to understand it. I'm going to keep this book as my primary reference when I encounter deniers of evolution.

Coyne's book is terribly fascinating and educational. The wonder of the living world is magnified and put in perspective when seen from the view of biological science. Coyne does an excellent job of covering many aspects and examples that prove the science of evolution. God would have to be a fool not to be an evolutionist.

Mr Coyne does a brilliant job of addressing every aspect of evolutionary theory and details exactly why there should be no more doubt. As a former special creationist of 30+ years I found the book particularly informative and well written. Even when I had a strong suspicion that evolution was correct and most likely the best explanation of our current state I had a few hang ups and doubts, but after reading this incredible book I have learned that any hang ups I had about evolution and natural selection were either misinformed or just completely wrong. A lot of propaganda and mockery is perpetrated by special creationists and this book dispels it all, in my mind. I'm glad I read this book.

Coyne does an outstanding job explaining current evolutionary theory and supporting his assertions with evidence. The book is relatively thin but remarkably informative. Why four stars instead of five? While Coyne makes an utterly convincing argument in regard to the reality of common ancestry and the mechanics of evolution, he glosses over the mystery of the initial appearance of life and makes no mention of the statistical improbabilities/impossibilities of such an occurrence. There also seems to be a larger underlying issue with the origin and expression of the information stored in DNA that wasn't adequately explained. I have a hard time wrapping my head around the idea that such mindbogglingly complex building instructions (even for the "simplest" organism) came about by chance. I'm new to the subject and further investigation is obviously necessary to answer my questions.

It's difficult to take a complicated topic that has so many different subjects blanketed within and try to condense it into a 250 page book. Jerry Coyne has done a pretty fantastic job at it though. If you're new to pop science books that discuss evolution, you can't do much better than start here. If you've already read a few, you probably won't find much new information here. I've read a couple of Dawkins books, as well as Evolution textbooks and this book takes the most overt and accesible approach in order to get the point across: Evolution is true. My favorite thing about it is how Mr. Coyne remains nonthreatening. He doesn't disparage or denigrate opposing viewpoints, but he

does point out flaws in their logic in an non-condescending way that can be missing in Dawkins. Personally, I'm a fan of Dawkins, but if you'd prefer something with less aggression, Coyne is your man.

I'd like to start by saying, if you have read any other sizable book on Evolutionary theory, skip this one and move on to *The Greatest Show on Earth: The Evidence for Evolution*, it is a much more enjoyable read packed with more esoteric evidence for Evolution. This book is strictly for people who are uninformed (whether simply uneducated or religiously indoctrinated) about even the basics of Evolutionary Biology. *Why Evolution is True* is a book about the vast body of scientific evidence in support of Evolution. It deals with topics such as the characteristic distribution of flightless animals, undeniable genetic and morphological similarities between all animals, the many ineptitudes of Young Earth Creationism (like radiometric and other dating clocks), and many many others. If I had to give one book to a Creationist to persuade them towards the fact of Evolution, it would definitely be this book. It presents a barrage of evidence and asks the reader how they would justify it with creation myths. Of course, there are better books out there for specific cases (I'll recommend some further on), this book acts as a great intro to many fields of Evolution, and should pique the reader's curiosity.

**RECOMMENDED FOR:**

- Any Open Minded Creationist:** Do you consider Creationism to be a \*scientifically factual\* account of life's true origin? If so, you owe it to yourself to examine the evidence on your own. After all, if Creationism were true, shouldn't the evidence point that way?
- The Undecided Laymen:** Not sure what you think about the origin of life? You're not alone! This book presents the evidence for Evolution in an easily accessible manner. You won't feel overwhelmed with the information here, I promise!
- Former Theists:** Have you given up faith in God, but are unknowledgeable about Evolution? This book is perhaps suited to you most of all! With your eyes unclouded by years of indoctrination or faith, you stand to gain a lot of knowledge about Evolutionary Theories.

**NOT RECOMMENDED FOR:**

- The Well Read Laymen:** I consider myself in this category. I did read the book all the way through, but only to see if it would be a good recommendation for some creationists I know. You stand to learn virtually nothing from the depths of this book's pages, and it is not written well enough to warrant a read regardless of that fact. For you I recommend these books, if you have not read them:
- Your Inner Fish: A Journey into the 3.5-Billion-Year History of the Human Body** (Vintage) *This book contains many details about the historical legacies of the human body. It covers in-depth the transition from fish to land dweller, and in-brief many parts of your body that Natural Selection has recycled for new uses.*
- The Red Queen: Sex and the Evolution of Human Nature** *Why do you/we give up half of our genes to reproduce? This book answers*

that question splendidly, and also gives great examples of how sexual selection shaped human nature. *The Ancestor's Tale: A Pilgrimage to the Dawn of Evolution* – You know that we're related to Chimpanzees and other apes, but what else? Find out in this wonderfully lucid writing. *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design* – There's a good chance that you came to this link looking for arguments in favor of Evolution. This book is far more replete in that regard. If you have any questions, leave them in the comments!

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