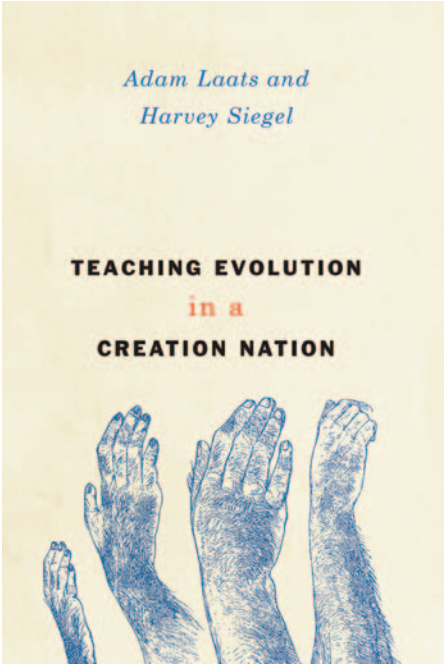
science classes at the college and high school levels. Some middle school students who are interested in frogs would enjoy the pictures and the interesting descriptions of individual species.

Although this engaging volume is fascinating to read, it is "heavy" reading. Weighing in at 4.9 lb (2.2 kg), it could weigh down a tote bag or backpack and might not be a first choice for taking on an airplane or going to the beach. However, a Kindle edition is available.

Richard Lord
Presque Isle High School
Presque Isle, ME 04769
rnlord@aol.com



EVOLUTION

Teaching Evolution in a Creation Nation. By Adam Laats and Harvey Siegel. 2016. University of Chicago Press. (ISBN 022633130X). 138 pp. Kindle Edition. $20.00 (Amazon).

I am an enthusiast of books about evolution and creationism. From Ed Larson's Pulitzer Prize–winning *Summer for the Gods* to Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion*, I snap these volumes up whenever they become available. While the topic fascinates me, the unfortunate result of reading many books about the contention between creationism and evolution is that after some time there is substantial repetition. In every book on the topic, there is invariably a discussion of the Scopes trial, an explanation of the nature of science, an argument for how evolution meets the criteria for science but creationism does not. This book is no exception to that rule, but Laats and Siegel manage to make this oft-discussed topic feel new and interesting.

The book is split into approximate thirds, with the first dealing with the historical aspects of evolution education. The second concentrates on philosophical matters, and the final third deals with the sociocultural nature of the issue. It is a short volume, and a mostly easy read, that does a commendable job of providing a pithy overview of these primary topics. As such, the book serves as a good primer on the subject of evolution and creationism in the United States.

Laats and Siegel start by recounting the colorful history of evolution education in the United States, telling the story from the perspectives of exasperated evolution supporters – a minority in 1920s academia. Beginning with the famous Scopes trial and continuing through several landmark court decisions, however, the authors explain how the paradigm has shifted to the present, where evolution supporters now make up the decided majority and evolution opponents are the "new minority." Despite this shift, the opposition has remained vocal and determined in its cause.

One of the most interesting things that I learned from these historical chapters was about the early structure and purpose of our nation's universities, which initially served to teach young men about religion but, over time, became places where academics could safely pursue their research. Laats and Siegel describe the birth of the ivory tower, and the siloing effect of the separation between academia and the general public. The theory of evolution became mainstream in this protected sphere and simply didn't reach to those outside its influence. It is easy to imagine how the culture wars emerged from such a segregated environment.

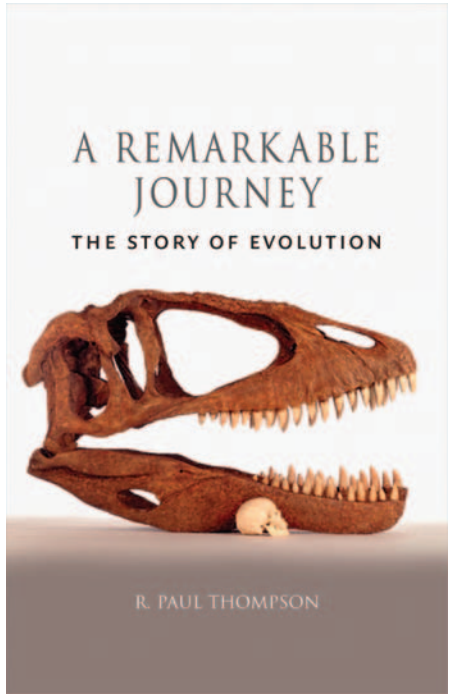
The authors next tackle the philosophy of science and explain quite clearly what makes evolution fall firmly in the realm of the scientific while creationism and its cousin, Intelligent Design, do not. Evolutionary theory, as an exemplar of the "standard view" of science, is testable/falsifiable, explanatory, and predictive. Creationism, by contrast, is not. The authors go so far as to say that "Creationism is either science or not true" (p. 57), and they spend a good amount of time arguing this case (convincingly so).

If you are looking for a detailed account of the science of evolution, be forewarned that you will not find it here. This is not a criticism of the book; it was simply not the goal of this volume, and there are many, many resources available that do a fine job of explaining how evolution works. Instead, the authors invest their energy in explaining why creationism and Intelligent Design cannot be considered science – and, by extension, cannot legitimately be taught as science in schools.

The last few chapters are what set this book apart from most on the subject. Laats and Siegel firmly situate the evolution/creationism debate in the realm of culture, rather than science. Many evolution opponents worry that learning about evolution in school will challenge or insult their children's faiths. The authors point out that this is not necessarily true; while belief is often assumed to follow understanding, this is not always the case. Indeed, they argue, it is not the responsibility of science educators to make sure that students *believe* that evolution is true, but only to ensure that they understand how the process works. Belief, if it comes at all, will follow on its own. The authors acknowledge the new minority position of evolution opponents and explain that while they value multiculturalism and the protection of cultural minorities, "that doesn't mean that their culturally specific beliefs should supplant the findings of mainstream science" (p. 95).

I recommend this book to those who are new to the evolution/creation controversy in the United States and to those who, like me, try to keep up with the latest developments and perspectives from those in the field.

Amy Lark
Michigan Technological University
Houghton, MI 49931
amlark@mtu.edu



A Remarkable Journey: The Story of Evolution. By R. Paul Thompson. 2015. University of Chicago Press. (ISBN 9781780234465). 160 pp. Hardcover. $35.00.