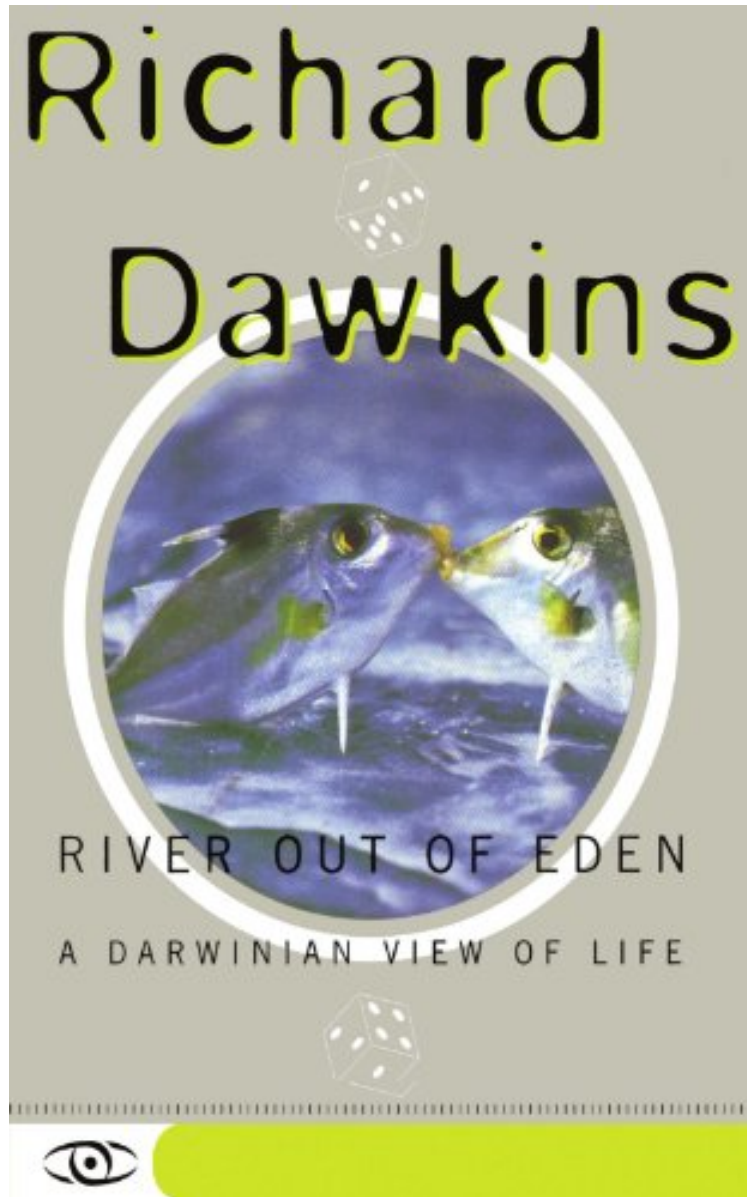


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River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (Science Masters Series)

Richard Dawkins

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Richard Dawkins : River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (Science Masters Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life (Science Masters Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The best short book on biology that you can buyBy double_HThis is a short little book that really explains how DNA and evolution work. It is aimed at a general audience, and it succeeds very well, in my opinion. I bought this book for my son in 1995, to help him in biology, and I was very pleased with it. It was my introduction to the works of Dawkins, and since then I have read "the Selfish Gene" and many others. So many people have borrowed my tattered old copy that I decided to buy this one for a loaner! It would make a nice gift to any high school student who has a lousy biology teacher!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Thoughtful and InterestingBy K. Witten-hannahRichard Dawkins presents clear and insightful arguments supported by examples to show that we do not need a god to explain the development of life on earth. Some speculation about where to from here.An enjoyable read. I would have liked it to be longer.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. AN INFINITE RIVER OF LIFEBy Robert WilliamsI have read two of Dawkin's other books, "The God Delusion and "The greatest show On Earth". Thus, I was somewhat familiar with his work. "River Out of Eden" is a rather small and brief work dedicated to the nature of DNA. Our DNA has been with us since the beginnings of life on earth. It is composed of 4 units or bases containing the compounds of adenine, thymine, cytosine and guanine, rferred to as A, C, T and G. Through the infinite variation of these molecules, we see all the variations of life on our planet.Our DNA has no specific purpose other than to replicate itself. Meaningless is good or bad fortune, or the concepts of good or evil. There is no purpose, no design. As Dawkins puts it, just a "blind pitiless indifference" to life's existence. Theologians will take exception to Dawkin's assertions. They always seek meaning and a higher power that controls all life.Some reviewers have said that material in this book is perhaps seen in his other works. I did not see that, however, I have not read everything he has written. He uses many examples to illustrate his points. Sometimes it becomes a little boring, but the message is clear. That our DNA is like a river, wherein our 30 million species of life continually branches off in infinite variety with no purpose other than to just exist.

How did the replication bomb we call life begin and where in the world, or rather, in the universe, is it heading? Writing with characteristic wit and an ability to clarify complex phenomena (the New York Times described his style as the sort of science writing that makes the reader feel like a genius), Richard Dawkins confronts this ancient mystery.

.com Nearly a century and a half after Charles Darwin formulated it, the theory of evolution is still the subject of considerable debate. Oxford scientist Richard Dawkins is among Darwin's chief defenders, and an able one indeed-- witty, literate, capable of turning a beautiful phrase. In River Out of Eden he introduces general readers to some fairly abstract problems in evolutionary biology, gently guiding us through the tangles of mitochondrial DNA and the survival-of-the-fittest ethos. (Superheroes need not apply: Dawkins writes, "The genes that survive . . . will be the ones that are good at surviving in the average environment of the species.") Dawkins argues for the essential unity of humanity, noting that "we are much closer cousins of one another than we normally realize, and we have many fewer ancestors than simple calculations suggest."From Publishers WeeklyDawkins (The Selfish Gene) pictures evolution as a vast river of DNA-coded information flowing over millennia and splitting into three billion branches, of which 30 million branches?today's extant species?survive. Emphasizing that the genetic code is uncannily computer-like, comprising long strings of digital information, the eminent Oxford evolutionary biologist surmises that we are "survival machines" programmed to propagate the database we carry. From his perspective, nature is not cruel?only indifferent?and the goal of a presumed Divine Engineer is maximizing DNA survival. Dawkins cautiously endorses the controversial "African Eve" theory, according to which the most recent common ancestor of all modern humans probably lived in Africa fewer than 250,000 years ago. The author's narrative masterfully deals with controversies in evolutionary biology. Natural Science Book Club dual main selection; Library of Science alternate. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalDawkins continues discussion of the evolutionary themes introduced in his previous popular works, The Selfish Gene (LJ 12/1/76) and The Blind Watchmaker (LJ 2/1/87). Using the concept of a digital river of DNA, he explores the evolution of humans from a single ancestor; evolutions of specific organs (e.g., eyes) and coadaptation of species (e.g., wasps and orchids); nature's physical and behavioral mechanisms to maximize survival of DNA; and, finally, the ultimate results when our DNA reaches out into space. His arguments and examples are clear, compelling, and often amusing. Offering alternative and potentially controversial views of nature and its evolutionary processes, Dawkins's book is an enjoyable read, written in terms understandable to nonspecialists but with nuances appealing to more specialized readers. Recommended for academic and larger public science collections.?Jeanne Davidson, Oregon State Univ., CorvallisCopyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.