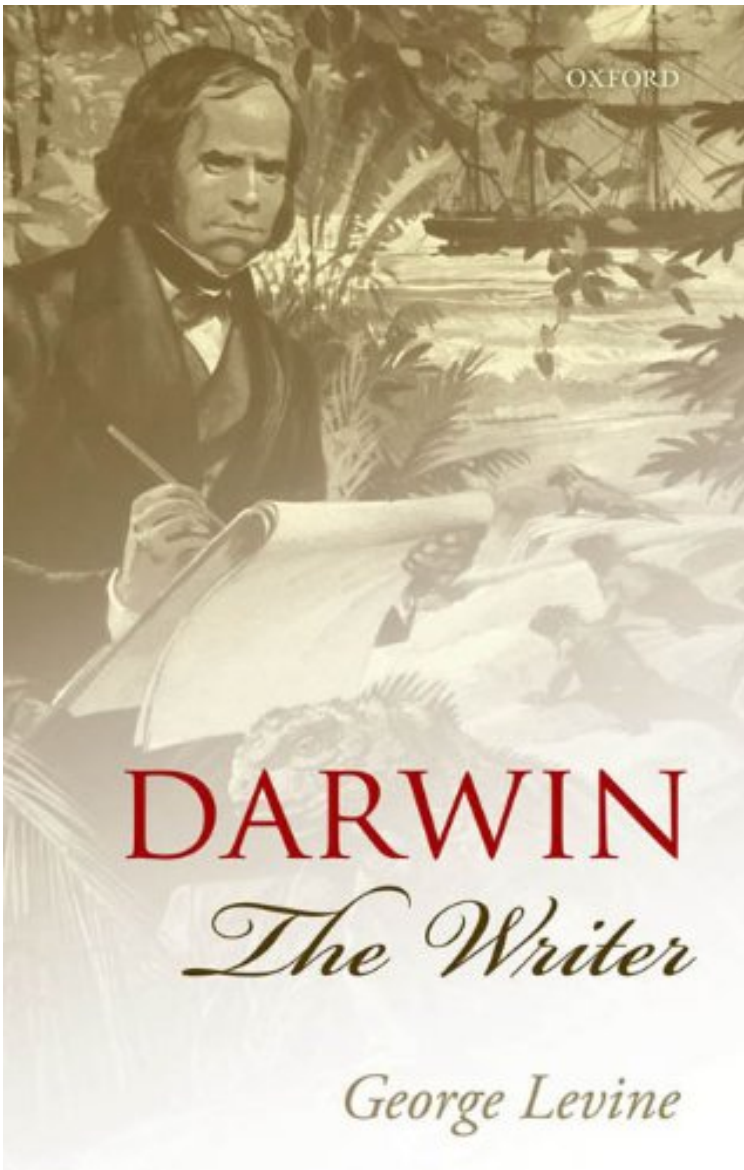


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Darwin the Writer



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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurCharles Darwin's On the Origin of Species, arguably the most important book written in English in the nineteenth century, transformed the way we looked at the world. It is usually assumed that this is because the idea of evolution was so staggeringly powerful. Prize-winning author George Levine suggests that much of its influence was due, in fact, to its artistry; to the way it was written. Alive with metaphor, vivid descriptions, twists, hesitations, personal exclamations, and humour, the prose is imbued with the sorts of tensions, ambivalences, and feelings characteristic of great literature. Although it is certainly a work of "science," the Origin is equally a work of "literature," at home in the company of celebrated Victorian novels such as Middlemarch andBleak House, books that give us a unique yet

recognisable sense of what the world is really like, while not being literally 'true'. Darwin's enormous cultural success, Levine contends, depended as much on the construction of his argument and the nature of his language, as it did on the power of his ideas and his evidence. By challenging the dominant reading of his work, this impassioned and energetic book gives us a Darwin who is comic rather than tragic, ebullient rather than austere, and who takes delight in the wild and fluid entanglement of things. *Revue de presse* The passion with which he writes is engaging and, while enthusiastic, never excessive ... through his analysis of key elements of Darwin's writing and showing how they impacted on other literary authors, Levine is able to demonstrate a new way to read Darwin's works - as literature ... Levine's approach enables Darwin to be examined for his prose alone and demonstrates why the way in which Darwin's ideas were presented was, and remains, so significant ... Through this passionate and tireless work, he puts forward an excellent case for simply reading Darwin. (Katherine Ford, British Society for Literature and Science) This marvellous, attentive study not only paints Darwin in the round: it reminds us of the importance of language in shaping modern science, and gets us asking again what makes great literature. (Angelique Richardson, Times Literary Supplement) Its success springs from the form of its argument and the nature of its language as well as from the power of its ideas. (Jonathan Smith, 19) Triumphantly, George Levine's latest Darwinian study shows why both men should be read, and enjoyed - by those who deny evolution, and those who take it for granted. Rarely is textual analysis so exhilarating. (Christopher Hawtree, The Independent) Levine is most provocative when he contrasts Darwin's articulation of natural selection with accounts that have followed (New Scientist) Recommended (J.S. Schwartz, Choice) *Présentation de l'auteur* Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, arguably the most important book written in English in the nineteenth century, transformed the way we looked at the world. It is usually assumed that this is because the idea of evolution was so staggeringly powerful. Prize-winning author George Levine suggests that much of its influence was due, in fact, to its artistry; to the way it was written. Alive with metaphor, vivid descriptions, twists, hesitations, personal exclamations, and humour, the prose is imbued with the sorts of tensions, ambivalences, and feelings characteristic of great literature. Although it is certainly a work of "science," the *Origin* is equally a work of "literature," at home in the company of celebrated Victorian novels such as *Middlemarch* and *Bleak House*, books that give us a unique yet recognisable sense of what the world is really like, while not being literally 'true'. Darwin's enormous cultural success, Levine contends, depended as much on the construction of his argument and the nature of his language, as it did on the power of his ideas and his evidence. By challenging the dominant reading of his work, this impassioned and energetic book gives us a Darwin who is comic rather than tragic, ebullient rather than austere, and who takes delight in the wild and fluid entanglement of things.