



# **Fitness Landscapes and the Origin of Species (MPB-41) (Monographs in Population Biology)**

*Sergey Gavrilets*

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The origin of species has fascinated both biologists and the general public since the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. Significant progress in understanding the process was achieved in the "modern synthesis," when Theodosius Dobzhansky, Ernst Mayr, and others reconciled Mendelian genetics with Darwin's natural selection. Although evolutionary biologists have developed significant new theory and data about speciation in the years since the modern synthesis, this book represents the first systematic attempt to summarize and generalize what mathematical models tell us about the dynamics of speciation.

*Fitness Landscapes and the Origin of Species* presents both an overview of the forty years of previous theoretical research and the author's new results. Sergey Gavrilets uses a unified framework based on the notion of fitness landscapes introduced by Sewall Wright in 1932, generalizing this notion to explore the consequences of the huge dimensionality of fitness landscapes that correspond to biological systems.

In contrast to previous theoretical work, which was based largely on numerical simulations, Gavrilets develops simple mathematical models that allow for analytical investigation and clear interpretation in biological terms. Covering controversial topics, including sympatric speciation and the effects of sexual conflict on speciation, this book builds for the first time a general, quantitative theory for the origin of species.

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