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NCSE's executive director Eugenie C. Scott was invited to debate Ray Comfort, a creationist in the news recently for his plans to distribute copies of the *Origin of Species* with his own introduction, on the God & Country blog of *U.S. News & World Report*. Comfort [began](#) [4] the debate on October 29, 2009; Scott [replied](#) [5] on October 30, 2009; Comfort [responded](#) [6] on November 2, 2009; and Scott [replied](#) [7] on November 3, 2009. The debate, [according](#) [8] to Dan Gilgoff, who maintains the blog, elicited "more feedback than any other issue on this blog has received over any similar stretch in its not-quite-one-year of existence."

In her first post, Scott urged students to accept the free copy of the *Origin* that Comfort is offering, but not to waste time reading Comfort's introduction — especially the middle section. "[It's] a hopeless mess of long-ago-refuted creationist arguments," she observed, "teeming with misinformation about the science of evolution, populated by legions of strawmen, and exhibiting what can be charitably described as muddled thinking." After giving a number of examples of scientific errors in Comfort's introduction, she added, "I have faith that college students are sharp enough to realize that Comfort's take on Darwin and evolution is simply bananas."

Scott also noted that the copy of Comfort's version of the *Origin* she was sent by the publisher was missing four chapters as well as Darwin's introduction. In his response, Comfort claimed that the next edition includes the missing material: "Not one word will be omitted." Scott observed, "It's still missing a crucial diagram from Chapter 4 as well as the epigraphs from Bacon and Whewell, which Darwin chose with care," and also wondered about the unexplained change of heart: "Elsewhere he wrote that it was 'abridged because it was too many pages (too expensive) for a giveaway.' But now he's going to try to give away even more copies of this more complete version?"

"I stick by my advice," Scott wrote in her second post. "Students who are interested in learning about science can skip Comfort's introduction, which, despite a few cosmetic revisions, remains a hopeless mess of long-ago-refuted creationist arguments." And she concluded, "Anyone who honestly examines the data supporting evolution — even a young-earth creationist [such as Bryan College's Todd C. Wood, whom Scott quoted as acknowledging, "Evolution is **not** a theory in crisis"] — concludes that the science is strong. If you reject evolution, you are doing it for religious reasons. You're entitled to your religious opinions — but not to your own scientific facts."

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