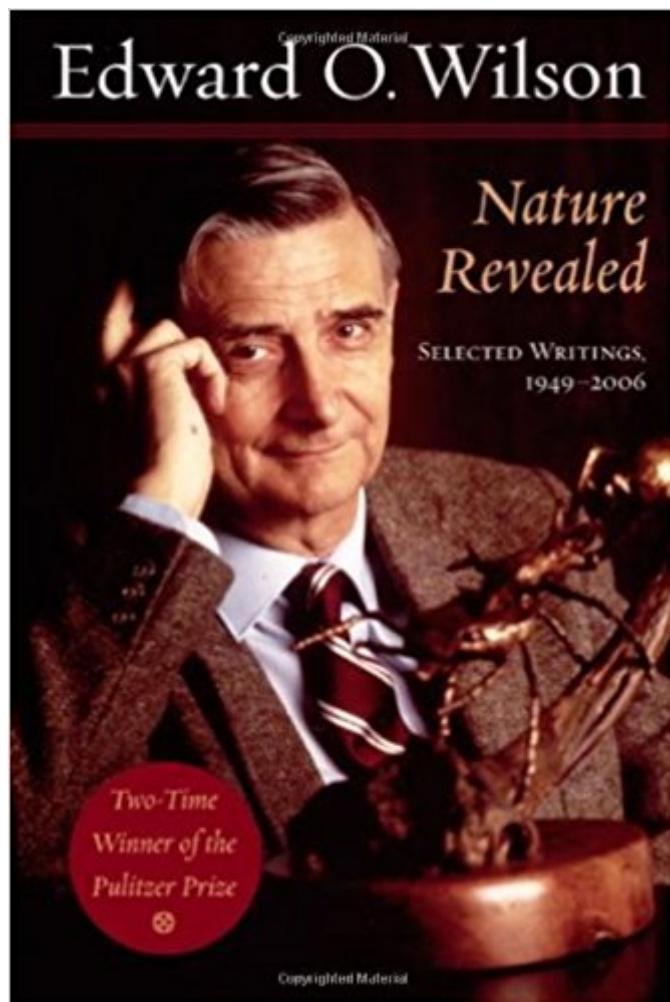


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Nature Revealed: Selected Writings, 1949-2006



Synopsis

Two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Edward O. Wilson is one of the leading biologists and philosophical thinkers of our time. In this compelling collection, Wilson's observations range from the tiny glands of ants to the nature of the living universe. Many of the pieces are considered landmarks in evolutionary biology, ecology, and behavioral biology. Wilson explores topics as diverse as slavery in ants, the genetic basis of societal structure, the discovery of the taxon cycle, the original formulation of the theory of island biogeography, a critique of subspecies as a unit of classification, and the conservation of life's diversity. Each article is presented in its original form, dating from Wilson's first published article in 1949 to his most recent exploration of the natural world. Preceding each piece is a brief essay by Wilson that explains the context in which the article was written and provides insights into the scientist himself and the debates of the time. This collection enables us to share Wilson's various vantage points and to view the complexities of nature through his eyes. Wilson aficionados, along with readers discovering his work for the first time, will find in this collection a world of beauty, complexity, and challenge.

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Customer Reviews

"Showcases the biologist's special talents for extrapolating global theories from arcane and detailed research... Enlightening and thought-provoking." (Library Journal)" Nature Revealed demonstrates, again and again, Wilson's endless capacity to put scientific findings into a broader context and to bridge gaps between disciplines. " (Nature)"E.O. Wilson's many contributions to science can hardly

be summarized in a newspaper column, but the highlights are well preserved in *Nature Revealed*. "(Whit Gibbons Aiken Standard)"This book captures the key elements in this gifted explorer's complex journey so far." (Choice)"A fascinating collection from one of the most influential thinkers of our time." (Steven Pinker, author of *How the Mind Works* and *The Blank Slate*)"A wonderful sample of the writings of one of our most distinguished evolutionists and a great champion of biodiversity. Wilson is also one of the broadest thinkers on the intellectual stage today. This is an especially important book for a time when science in the United States is under attack by forces seeking to reverse the enlightenment." (Paul R. Ehrlich, author of *Human Natures: Genes, Cultures, and the Human Prospect*)"Edward Wilson is among the great scientists, thinkers, and authors of my lifetime. In this book he gathers and places in context his own key writings from 1949 to the present. The result is both a moving book and a treasure for those interested in science and history." (Jared Diamond, author of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*)"This book is a treasure trove of ideas... It always rewards." (J. Stewart British Journal of Entomology and Natural History)"Lucid and eminently readable... a valuable primer for those interested in the history of science." (Quarterly Review of Biology)

"A fascinating collection from one of the most influential thinkers of our time."--Steven Pinker, author of *How the Mind Works* and *The Blank Slate*"A wonderful sample of the writings of one of our most distinguished evolutionists and a great champion of biodiversity. Wilson is also one of the broadest thinkers on the intellectual stage today. This is an especially important book for a time when science in the United States is under attack by forces seeking to reverse the enlightenment. "--Paul R. Ehrlich, author of *Human Natures: Genes, Cultures, and the Human Prospect*"Edward Wilson is among the great scientists, thinkers, and authors of my lifetime. In this book he gathers and places in context his own key writings from 1949 to the present. The result is both a moving book, and a treasure for those interested in science and history"--Jared Diamond, author of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*

If you enjoy scientific theory applied on both the microcytic and macrocytic scale, look no further than E.O. Wilson. His writings are both entertaining and philosophical while being grounded experimentation. He is one of the few hard scientists who dared (and succeeded) in crossing over to social science, which tends to be a far more vague area of study. This book makes a great gift to a biologist or other rational thinker. I do agree larger print and color would be more helpful, esp. for the crowd that needs bifocals or reading glasses. Not me yet, thank goodness!

Wilson is brilliant and this book contains a wonderful variety of his work in their original form. But why is it reproduced in teeny tiny print? Better buy a magnifying glass too if you want to read everything. Also some articles were originally printed in color so maps and graphs with color coding are lost in black white and gray. I only gave this book two stars for the presentation, not the content. excellent!

Reviewed by Dr. Andrea Diem-Lane

Edward O. Wilson compiled some of his classic work into this masterpiece. Highlighting the history of sociobiology, Wilson also spotlights a better integrated science known as "consilience." Both of these topics are indeed powerful tools to "reveal nature."

Let us look at sociobiology and consilience separately:

Sociobiology: Interestingly, Wilson's work began in 1949 with the study of fire ants. One question he asked was: Why is there a sterile caste in ants? He discovered that the unit of natural selection is the family unit and not the individual. Sterile ants work as helpers to serve reproductive interests of the family unit. Furthermore, his study of ants revealed that ants occupy the land for 100 million years. One form of social adaptation is slavery. Ants raid nests and make captives slaves. Moreover, Wilson's work on ants led him to study pheromones. When pheromones were discovered in animals, Wilson's study of ants invisible odor served as strong evidence of these hormones. In 1963 there is the first notion of these hormones in humans.

In 1975 Wilson completed *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*. While sociobiology was applied to animals in 1971, it was now applied to humans four years later. This new discipline eventually led to evolutionary psychology. Evolutionary psychology shows that human decency / altruism arises from genes favoring them. Moral philosophy or ethics, as well as religion, can be explained with biology. Furthermore, Wilson explores the link between genetic evolution and cultural evolution....from genes to neural, mental development to mind to culture. Wilson notes that there is a misunderstanding about sociobiology: it is not a belief that human behavior is genetically determined. But, according to Wilson, it is: "the study of the biological basis of all forms of social behavior in all organisms."

In 1980 Wilson focuses on global conservation movement and he becomes one of the fathers of this movement. One of his biggest fears is the loss of biological diversity as a result of humans. However, when discussing conservation ethics, he explains that biophilia is our natural affinity for life and our innately emotional affiliation with other organisms. Wilson points out that 99% of human history was hunter-gatherer bands and they were so intimately involved with life and organisms. Thus, the brain evolved, he argues, as

biocentric.Consilience:Wilson's work on consilience work began in 1998. It is an attempt to connect natural science with social science/humanities. The term means "jumping together" of different fields of study. He refers to it as an "integrated science," where various disciplines are interlocked and reducible to the same general laws of nature.The author dates the true origins of consilience with Thales of the 6th century BCE who appeared to be interested in a common network of explanations. With consilience, complex biological phenomena are reducible to the simple. For instance, biology can be explained in part by chemistry, which in part can be explained by physics and then by quantum physics.In today's age, there is now a connection between the natural science and the social sciences: neuroscience, psychology, philosophy are intertwined. Neural activity explains consciousness and consciousness explains culture. Thus, the mind has a "reducible material basis." Wilson argues that the social science will advance with consilience as it takes the reductionistic approach to human nature.Now it can be argued that genetic evolution is linked directly to cultural evolution. Epigenetic rules determined by neurology / brain states established cross cultural universals (such as taboos against incest, fear of snakes, etc.)Integrated science produces winners all around as it illustrates causally linked phenomena. There need not be distinct branches of learning but each is strengthened by assimilation. Overall, Wilson points out the obvious causal links between genes, mind and culture. As we are baffled by the meaning of our existence, an integrated understanding of the world is indeed necessary. Thanks to Wilson's seminal work, "nature is revealed" through this line of thinking.

I agree with above reviewer about the the good quality and quantity of ideas in this book, but because of the size of the letters used it would be much easier and pleasurable to read it in Kindle or a similar device to be able to enlarge the text.

This is a superb collection of over sixty original scientific papers, book extracts and other articles by Ed Wilson, one of the all-time great scientists. Each article is placed into historical context with a new introduction by Wilson. Organized by major theme area rather than chronologically, the book illustrates how Wilson's grander biological theories have been underpinned by a deep, relentless inquisitiveness. Wilson's fascination with the diversity of nature in general and ants in particular really shines through. The production quality of the book is excellent. Even at the full retail price the book is a bargain; the currently discounted price is astounding. This book is well worth buying even if you have most of the original papers.

E.O. Wilson is America's foremost writer on biology, biodiversity, and conservation. (He has two Pulitzer Prizes to prove it.) In "Nature Revealed," we get a look at his most significant writings, just as they appeared in the original journals. This selection gives us a look into the mind of one of today's most brilliant and influential scientists, but it also presents a moving clarification of some of the most important conservation issues facing us today. Everyone who cares about the fate of the earth should read this book.

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