

ALFRED RUSSEL
WALLACE

A REDISCOVERED LIFE

MICHAEL A. FLANNERY

Description

Alfred Russel Wallace: A Rediscovered Life is a new biography of the co-discoverer of the theory of evolution by natural selection and one of the nineteenth century's most intriguing scientists. Its provocative thesis is that Wallace, in developing his unique brand of evolution, presaged modern intelligent design theory. Wallace's devotion to discovering the truths of nature brought him through a lifetime of research to see genuine design in the natural world. This was Wallace's ultimate heresy, a heresy that exposed the metaphysical underpinnings of the emerging Darwinian paradigm. Biographer Michael A. Flannery is Professor and Associate Director for Historical Collections at the Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences, University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and editor of *Alfred Russel Wallace's Theory of Intelligent Evolution* (2008).

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Praise for Alfred Russel Wallace: A Rediscovered Life

FLANNERY'S RIVETING TALE OF REDISCOVERY PROVIDES CONVINCING new evidence that Alfred Russel Wallace—the acknowledged co-discoverer of evolutionary theory—supported an argument from design for all forms of life which, in many ways, anticipated modern intelligent design thinking. This fascinating work of intellectual history recasts a new, more complete and lasting image of the once all too elusive Wallace.

*Philip K. Wilson, MA, Ph.D., Historian of Medicine and Science
Professor of Humanities and Science, Technology & Society
Director, The Doctors Kienle Center for Humanistic Medicine
Penn State College of Medicine*

MICHAEL FLANNERY HAS WRITTEN A SUPERB BOOK THAT IN ITS PASSION and subjective honesty offers a cogent and articulate defense of Alfred Wallace's theory of intelligent design, with all its moral and ethical implications, as a counterpoint to the materialistic worldview that came to be known as Darwinism.

*John S. Haller, Ph.D.
Emeritus Prof. of History and Medical Humanities
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale*

THIS BIOGRAPHY OF ALFRED WALLACE BY MICHAEL FLANNERY IS THE most important new book I have read in years. The immense attention focused on Charles Darwin by evolution historians has unfortunately overshadowed Wallace, whose life was arguably more fascinating and insightful. Unfortunately views that are offered on Wallace today are often from Darwinist perspectives. Flannery remedies this imbalance with his story of Alfred Wallace that brings an entirely new light to the theory of evolution. In this corrective against the familiar but erroneous casting of Wallace as a miniature Darwin, Flannery artfully brings out the stark contrast—even down to their final works—between the evolution co-founders. But this volume is not merely a look back. Like any good history, Flannery's tells us where we are, and how we got here.

From their early years onward, Wallace and Darwin existed in different worlds. Their paths intersected at evolution, but they approached and departed that intersection with many different perspectives. Flannery provides a broader context than is usually found in such histories and in convincing detail demonstrates the influences and connections to today's discussion. Neither idolizing Wallace nor minimizing Darwin, Flannery provides a much needed balanced view that leaves us with a richer understanding of our ideas on origins.

Cornelius Hunter, Ph.D.

Author of the books Darwin's God, Darwin's Proof, and Science's Blind Spot

IN THIS LUCIDLY WRITTEN BOOK MICHAEL FLANNERY SHOWS THAT Alfred Russel Wallace, the co-discoverer of the theory of evolution by natural selection, thought the theory was incomplete—the guidance of a higher power was needed to explain nature. Wallace's ideas show strongly that the godless view of evolution taken by so many modern evolutionists is not forced on them by the evidence; rather they assume it in spite of the evidence.

Michael Behe, Ph.D., Professor of Biochemistry, Lehigh University

Author, Darwin's Black Box and The Edge of Evolution

FOR TOO LONG, ALFRED WALLACE'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SCIENCE of evolution have been ignored or grossly mischaracterized. Why? Largely because he provided both a coherent criticism of Darwin and Darwinism and a theist-friendly alternative account of evolution. The secular intelligentsia sided with Darwin because Darwinism provided them with a view of evolution that handily eliminated God. They succeeded in making Darwinism the default view of evolution, both in history books and biology textbooks. As a result, our understanding of the history of evolutionary theory and our understanding of evolution itself have suffered. Wallace's account of evolution, if it had received a fair hearing, would have (I believe) won the day, and our understanding of the history of evolutionary theory and evolution itself would be much different today. But it is not too late. Wallace may yet become

the beginning point of intellectual renewal, and Michael Flannery's fine biography of Alfred Russel Wallace will go a long way in bringing that much-needed revolution about.

Benjamin Wiker, Ph.D.
*Author of *The Darwin Myth**

HISTORIAN MICHAEL FLANNERY'S ACCOUNT OF ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE'S life work is a lucid sketch of the scientific and philosophical controversies over evolution in the mid-nineteenth century... Wallace observed, to Darwin's chagrin, that man's intellect—his reason, his artistic and musical ability, his wit, his talent, and most of all man's moral sense—must be caused by an "Overruling Intelligence" that guided evolution. Wallace insisted that man's mind was created by a Mind. Flannery's book is a concise and eloquent exploration of Wallace's genius and of his rejection of Darwin's implicit materialism and atheism. These differences persist in our modern debate about origins, and today Wallace's views may well be advancing. Flannery's superb book provides the reader with indispensable insight into the earliest squalls in the modern tempest over Darwin's theory and intelligent design.

Michael Egnor, M.D., Professor and Vice-Chairman
Department of Neurological Surgery
Stony Brook University Medical Center

FLANNERY'S BOOK IS A WELCOME ADDITION TO ANY BOOKSHELF THAT offers a window into evolution. It comes down to this: Darwin was following evidence that supported a materialist theory he already espoused; Wallace was following evidence that shed light on the nature of nature. Popular culture chose Darwin, and the rest is the stale Darwin worship promoted in popular culture and academy alike, as an alternative to engagement with the facts.

Denyse O'Leary
*Co-author of *The Spiritual Brain**

INTRODUCTION

FOR YEARS ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE WAS LITTLE MORE THAN AN obscure adjunct to Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Remembered only for prompting Darwin to write *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 by sending Darwin his own letter proposing a theory of natural selection, Wallace was rightly dubbed by one biographer "the forgotten naturalist."¹ In 1998 Sahotra Sarkar bemoaned Wallace's "lapse into obscurity," noting, "At least in the 19th century literature, the theory of evolution was usually referred to as 'the Darwin and Wallace theory'." In the 20th century, the theory of evolution has become virtually synonymous with Darwinism or neo-Darwinism."² While the complaint still has a ring of truth, a decade of recent interest in Wallace has done much to bring him back from history's crypt of forgotten figures. This shouldn't suggest unanimity of opinion, however. Some regard him as a heretic, others as merely a misguided scientist-turned-spiritualist, still others as a prescient figure anticipating the modern Gaia hypothesis.³ Perhaps Martin Fichman's phrase hits closest and most persistently to the truth—"the elusive Victorian."

Can the *real* Wallace be found? If so, what might we learn in that rediscovery? It is worth stating the thesis here at the outset: Wallace, in developing his unique brand of evolution, presaged modern [intelligent design](#) theory. Certainly no Christian creationist, Wallace's devotion to discovering the truths of nature brought him through a lifetime of research to see genuine design in the natural world. And this indeed became Wallace's heresy, a heresy that exposes the metaphysical underpinnings of the triumphant Darwinian paradigm more than it does Wallace's commitments to spiritualism or science. The image of Darwinism reflected in the image of natural selection's co-discoverer is indeed an interesting one. But it all began oddly enough in an obscure village far from the seats of learning or science.