

Book Review

***Tales from The Ant Word* by Edward O. Wilson [, with illustrations by Kristen Orr]. 2020. Liveright Publishing Corporation. A Division of W. W. Norton & Company. New York, NY, USA. 227 pp.**

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Recently, several master gardeners and master gardeners in training in York County (Pennsylvania, USA) zoomed to discuss Edward Osborne Wilson's *Tales from The Ant Word*. Wilson (Figure 1), a long-time Harvard University professor, recipient of numerous scholarly awards, and author of numerous publications put together a collection of readable, and often entertaining vignettes about the world of ants.

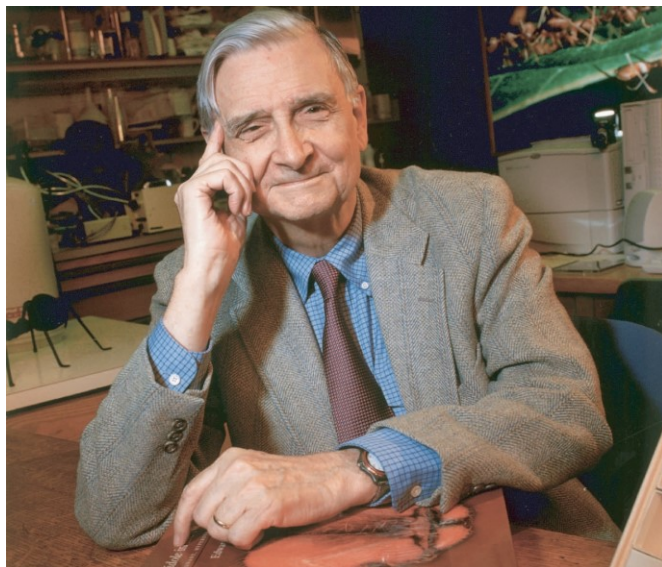


Figure 1. Edward O. Wilson. Source: PLoS. Author: Jim Harrison. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9d/Plos_wilson.jpg , https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plos_wilson.jpg .

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Wilson, one of the most influential biologists of the second half of the 20th century is not only remembered for his contributions to the study of ants, or myrmecology, but also by his contribution (along with Robert MacArthur) to the theory of island biogeography whose influence in conservation biology has been immense (e.g., if given a choice, everything else equal, which rarely is: should one preserve one larger area, SL, or several smaller areas, SS, abbreviated SSoSL?). Also, on the memorable (and, for some, infamous) side, were his contributions to human behavior by extending what happens in insect societies to the human realm, through one chapter in his 1975 book, *Sociobiology*. Through his career, natural history was a religion of sorts to Wilson. Later on, Wilson became increasingly interested in biodiversity and its conservation.

Wilson's *Tales* have examples of numerous topics within biology and, along with the ants (e.g., females rule along with the death and violence in ant societies), the stories are also about himself through time (e.g., persistence investigating a topic through time, older people who influenced him, his numerous professional collaborators, and his extraordinary capabilities to observe carefully). Many of the personal stories made us reflect on those who have influenced us.

Another interesting feature of *Tales* is the description of Wilson's simple experiments to try answering specific questions. This intrigued us because we have also performed simple experiments with organisms to try to get answers to our questions and experience the wonders of the natural world.

I wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone who wants to step into the wonderment by exploring the marvels of natural history.

Erratum

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