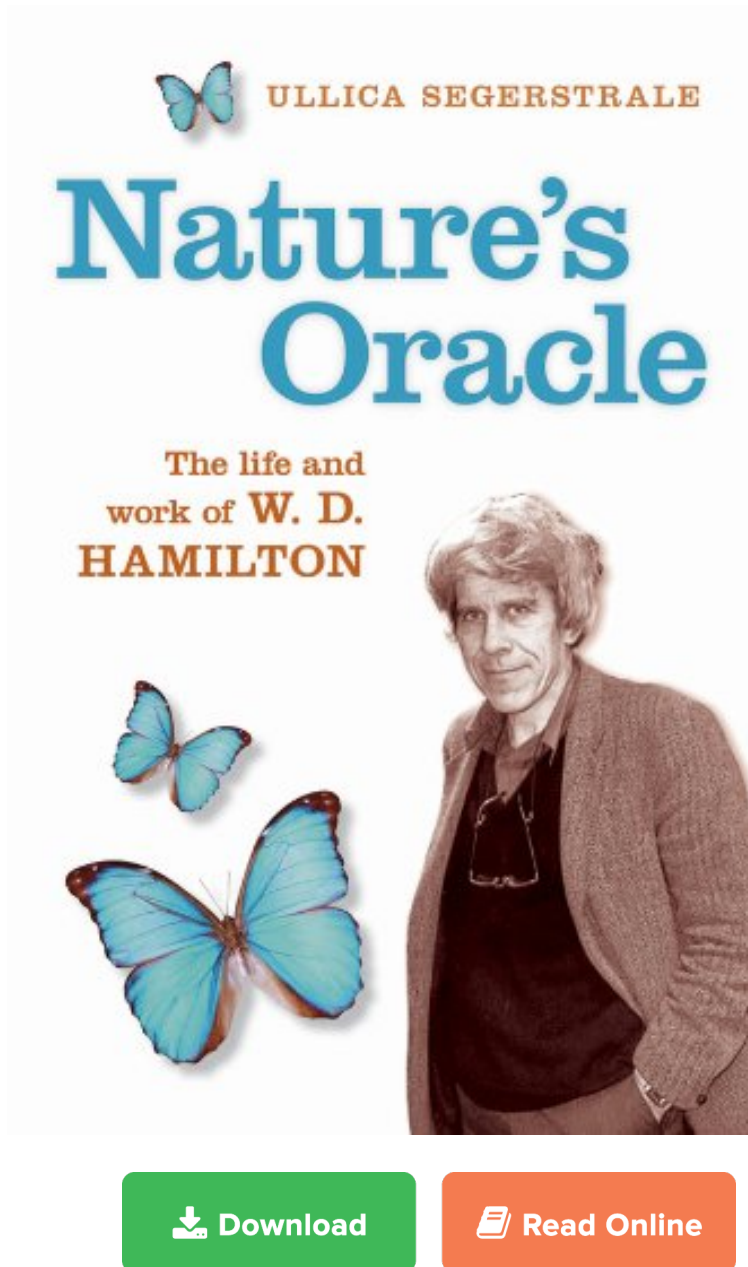


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Nature's Oracle: The Life and Work of W.D.Hamilton



Par Ullica Segerstrale
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurW.D.Hamilton (1936-2000) was responsible for a revolution in thinking about evolutionary biology - a revolution that changed our understanding of life itself.He played a central role in the realization that what matters in evolution is not the survival of the individual but of the survival of its genes. This provided the solution to the long standing problem of animal altruism that vexed even Darwin himself, and in due course resulted in terms like selfish genes, kin selection, and sociobiology becoming familiar to a wider public. Hamilton went on to solve many more major problems, and open up ever new fields - he shaped much of our currentunderstanding of central problems including the evolution of sexual

reproduction and ageing. He became world famous and garnered international prizes. But this is all in hindsight. In fact, Hamilton's recognition came late - his career is a classic case of misunderstood genius. In this illuminating and moving biography Ullica Segerstrale documents Hamilton's extraordinary life and work, revealing a man of immense intellectual curiosity, an uncompromising truth-seeker, a naturalist and jungle explorer, a risk-taker, an unconventional scientist with a poet's soul and a deep concern for life on earth and mankind's future. *Revue de presse* Ullica Segerstrale... has produced an interesting and readable biography based on Hamilton's letters, published work and the testimonies of friends and family. It is detailed and uncompromising. (A. M. Mannion, *The Biologist*) with its wealth of new information and anecdotes, *Natures Oracle* fills an important gap in our knowledge of recent history of evolutionary biology. Historians interested in this topic, or in Bill Hamilton's ideas, will find in the book a useful springboard for further research. (Guido Caniglia, *Journal of the History of Biology*) Segerstrale has done a terrific job. *Natures Oracle* is a biography truly worthy of a scientist of Hamilton's stature and it will be an invaluable source of insight for anyone interested in the life and science of one of the giants of twentieth-century biology. (J. Arvid Agren, *Journal of Genetics*) William Hamilton's name stands above all others in evolutionary biology since the Modern Synthesis of the 1930s and '40s. As John Maynard Smith, with whom he had a troubled relationship, said, "He's the only bloody genius we've got." As geniuses often are, he was a complex character and an exceptional challenge for any biographer. Ullica Segerstrale is ideally qualified to rise to that challenge. She achieves a genuinely affectionate yet warts-and-all portrait of her subject, combined with a good understanding of the deep subtleties of his thinking. Those who loved him, as I did, and those who wish to know more of the astonishing originality and versatility of his contributions to science, will treasure this book. (Richard Dawkins) This is an outstanding biography of a truly brilliant scientist. Segerstrale beautifully interweaves Hamilton's epic work with the details of his life. (Robert L. Trivers) Interesting and readable (*The Biologist*) Bill Hamilton's remarkable story has now been told: a truly great naturalist, who thought his way to the very heart of evolution by natural selection, completing and expanding the insights of Darwin as he discovered the disorienting and enlightening perspective of the gene itself. (Matt Ridley, author of *The Red Queen*) Presentation de l'auteur W.D. Hamilton (1936-2000) was responsible for a revolution in thinking about evolutionary biology - a revolution that changed our understanding of life itself. He played a central role in the realization that what matters in evolution is not the survival of the individual but of the survival of its genes. This provided the solution to the long standing problem of animal altruism that vexed even Darwin himself, and in due course resulted in terms like selfish genes, kin selection, and sociobiology becoming familiar to a wider public. Hamilton went on to solve many more major problems, and open up ever new fields - he shaped much of our current understanding of central problems including the evolution of sexual reproduction and ageing. He became world famous and garnered international prizes. But this is all in hindsight. In fact, Hamilton's recognition came late - his career is a classic case of misunderstood genius. In this illuminating and moving biography Ullica Segerstrale documents Hamilton's extraordinary life and work, revealing a man of immense intellectual curiosity, an uncompromising truth-seeker, a naturalist and jungle explorer, a risk-taker, an unconventional scientist with a poet's soul and a deep concern for life on earth and mankind's future.