



## Lynn Margulis: The Life and Legacy of a Scientific Rebel (Sciencewriters)

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Tireless, controversial, and hugely inspirational to those who knew her or encountered her work, Lynn Margulis was a scientist whose intellectual energy and interests knew no bounds. Best known for her work on the origins of eukaryotic cells, the Gaia hypothesis, and symbiogenesis as a driving force in evolution, her work has forever changed the way we understand life on Earth.

When Margulis passed away in 2011, she left behind a groundbreaking scientific legacy that spanned decades. In this collection, Dorion Sagan, Margulis's son and longtime collaborator, gathers together the voices of friends and colleagues to remark on her life and legacy, in essays that cover her early collaboration with James Lovelock, her fearless face-off with Richard Dawkins during the so-called "Battle of Balliol" at Oxford, the intrepid application of her scientific mind to the insistence that 9/11 was a false-flag operation, her affinity for Emily Dickinson, and more.

Margulis was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1983, received the prestigious National Medal of Science in 1999, and her papers are permanently archived at the Library of Congress. Less than a month before her untimely death, Margulis was named one of the twenty most influential scientists alive - one of only two women on this list, which include such scientists as Stephen Hawking, James Watson, and Jane Goodall.

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**Lynn Margulis: The Life and Legacy of a Scientific Rebel (Sciencewriters) From Chelsea Green Publishing Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #942434 in Books
- Published on: 2012-10-19
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .80" w x 5.50" l, .90 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 216 pages



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## Editorial Review

Review

### *ForeWord Reviews-*

Best known for her work on the origins of eukaryotic cells, symbiogenesis as a force in evolution, and the Gaia hypothesis, Lynn Margulis was a scientist whose lively spirit and frank opinions left behind an enduring legacy that's well worth remembering. When she died after a stroke in 2011, obituaries emphasized her ability to turn complicated scientific concepts into mainstream discussions, and even after she married famous cosmologist Carl Sagan, her own star was just as bright. In this thoughtful and expertly curated collection, Margulis's son and long-time collaborator, Dorion Sagan, calls her "indomitable Lynn." A fearless and zealous advocate of her theories who could also display a loving heart, he writes, "[H]er threat was not to people but to the evil done to the spirit by the entrenchment of unsupported views." In other essays, Margulis's complex personality beguiles, frustrates, charms, and elevates various writers, resulting in a stunning portrait that no single remembrance could have captured.

Luminaries throughout the scientific world share their memories of her bulldog attitude and scientific contributions, showing that although she's gone, her work definitely still resonates and informs evolutionary biology and other fields. Jorge Wagensberg, a physicist and professor from the University of Barcelona, calls Margulis "biology's greatest heroine," while astrobiologist Penny Boston recalls the scientist's ability to be like an "earth mother" who was encouraging and friendly. Other contributors share stories about traipsing with her through marshes on Cape Cod talking about biology, or calling Margulis in the middle of the night with sudden scientific insight (only to have her gently say, "Okay. Now go back to sleep"). There are several of her students who recall her tenacity and ferocious curiosity, two attributes that drove them toward deepening their own research.

The collection is organized chronologically, grouping together essays about her early days as a scientist and following with her establishment in the scientific community, her work as a "modern-day Copernicus," and her role as a teacher, neighbor, and friend. The photographs included in the volume are also perfectly chosen, with every image showing her forceful personality, relentless focus, and often-captivating smile. Taken as a whole, Sagan's collection is a fitting tribute to a woman whose life and legacy have touched so many others. As he notes, her indomitable spirit lives on through her children, grandchildren, colleagues, and students?and most of all, through the work that she championed so well.

***Publishers Weekly-***

There are two kinds of great scientists, writes former American Society of Microbiology president Moselio Schaechter in this eclectic, sometimes electrifying, book about biologist Lynn Margulis. There are those making "impressive experiments" and those making "groundbreaking theoretical syntheses." Margulis was the latter, notes Schaechter. Margulis fiercely championed evolutionary symbiogenesis, the merging of distinct organisms to form new organisms in swift, un-Darwinian leaps. Margulis was eventually proven right in some life forms. But her insistence that most evolution involves symbiogenesis led to a lifetime of debate. It also leads to some inspired writing in this book of essays, edited by Sagan, her son and cowriter (*Dazzle Gradually: Reflections on the nature of Nature*). "A dangerous liaison" is what Margulis felt drove species creation, writes Oxford paleobiologist Martin Brasier in one of the best essays. "A symbiosis between two distantly related organisms that wantonly swapped their genetic information to form completely new genetic strains." Some writing here reflects the idea that life is not a hierarchical tree, but a web, and embraces aspects of the controversial "Gaia" earth model which may put [off] Traditional Darwinian scientists. But this is a captivating read for anyone interested in what powers great scientists.

"I hope that in due time she will be recognized as one of the greatest scientific thinkers of our time." --**Ernest Callenbach, author of *Ecotopia***

"Although she could be a bulldog, her heart was soft and her spirit loving beneath the scientific realpolitik of her conversation and the insistent tough-mindedness of her sometimes strident and blunt, withering and refreshingly unadorned opinions." --**Dorion Sagan, from the introduction**

"It's the ideas that really matter?and Lynn certainly had hers. They were novel and profound, and she simply wanted all the rest of the world to adjust their thinking to accommodate and embrace what she saw were the simple, beautiful truths that she had uncovered." --**Dr. Niles Eldredge, contributor, and author of *Darwin: Discovering the Tree of Life***

"I can't imagine what the world of biological science in the twentieth century would have been had Lynn Margulis not come along. In this volume, we can read about some of the vast range of intellect she influenced." --**Wes Jackson, president, The Land Institute**

"Lynn and I often argued, as good collaborators should, and we wrangled over the intricate finer points of self-regulation, but always remained good friends, perhaps because we were confident that we were right." --**Dr. James Lovelock, contributor, and author of *The Vanishing Face of Gaia***

“It was life?profligate, teeming *life* in all its weirdness?that held the magic for her, not this featherless biped with its confused aspirations. Lynn intuited and doggedly gathered evidence to show that most anything we two-leggeds take special pride in?our capacities for cogitation, conviviality, and culture?had been invented, eons before, by the microbial entities that compose us.”--**David Abram, contributor, and author of *Spell of the Sensus***

## About the Author

Dorion Sagan is author of numerous articles and twenty-three books translated into eleven languages, including *Notes from the Holocene: A Brief History of the Future* and *Into the Cool*, coauthored with Eric D. Schneider. His writings have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *Wired*, *The Skeptical Inquirer*, *Pabular*, *Smithsonian*, *The Ecologist*, *Co-Evolution Quarterly*, *The Times Higher Education*, *Omni*, *Natural History*, *The Sciences*, *Cabinet*, and *Tricycle*. He edited *Lynn Margulis: The Life and Legacy of a Scientific Rebel*, a 2012 collection of writings addressing Margulis's life and work.

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This *Lynn Margulis: The Life and Legacy of a Scientific Rebel* (Sciencewriters) is completely new way for

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