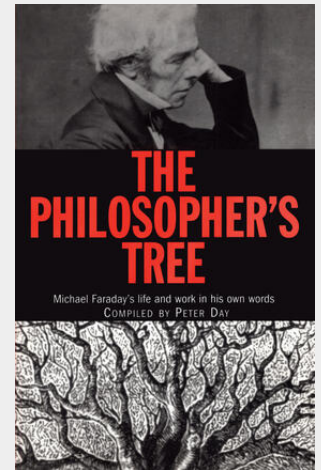


Day

The Philosopher's Tree

Michael Faraday's social origins, his thought processes, his methods of experimentation, and his religion have all been subjects of exhaustive analysis by historians and philosophers of science. One aspect of his work, which provides unique insight into his career path and the way in which his mind worked, has not received much emphasis outside the realm of academic professionals: namely, his writing. The Philosopher's Tree: Michael Faraday's Life and Work in His Own Words is an illustrated anthology of Faraday's writings compiled with commentary by Professor Peter Day, the director of the Royal Institution of Great Britain. From when he was a teenage apprentice bookbinder until his final resignation from the Royal Institution due to failing memory, Faraday wrote voluminously and his output took many forms. Apart from letters, Faraday kept journals (both scientific and personal); as a practicing scientist, he wrote articles in learned journals; as an adviser to the government and to many other agencies, he wrote reports; and as a supremely successful communicator (especially to young people), he left lecture notes and transcripts. All of these writings add life, color, and depth of focus to the stereotypical scientific colossus. Although Faraday's life was largely lived within what might appear to be very narrow geographical confines (just a few miles around 21 Albemarle Street in London's West End), his professional, social, and family relationships were extensive and diverse, and his responses to them equally complex. Through all the forms of expression that his multifaceted career required of him, one fact shines clearly: not only is Faraday one of the world's greatest scientists, he showed enviable quality as a writer.



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