



The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World

Andrea Wulf

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The acclaimed author of *Founding Gardeners* reveals the forgotten life of Alexander von Humboldt, the visionary German naturalist whose ideas changed the way we see the natural world—and in the process created modern environmentalism.

NATIONAL BEST SELLER

One of the *New York Times* 10 Best Books of the Year

Winner of the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize, The James Wright Award for Nature Writing, the Costa Biography Award, the Royal Geographic Society's Ness Award, the Sigurd F. Olson Nature Writing Award

Finalist for the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction, the Royal Society Science Book Prize, the *Kirkus* Prize for Nonfiction, the Independent Bookshop Week Book Award

A Best Book of the Year: *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *The Economist*, *Nature*, *Jezebel*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Publishers Weekly*, *New Scientist*, *The Independent*, *The Telegraph*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Evening Standard*, *The Spectator*

Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) was the most famous scientist of his age, a visionary German naturalist and polymath whose discoveries forever changed the way we understand the natural world. Among his most revolutionary ideas was a radical conception of nature as a complex and interconnected global force that does not exist for the use of humankind alone. In North America, Humboldt's name still graces towns, counties, parks, bays, lakes, mountains, and a river. And yet the man has been all but forgotten.

In this illuminating biography, Andrea Wulf brings Humboldt's extraordinary life back into focus: his prediction of human-induced climate change; his daring expeditions to the highest peaks of South America and to the anthrax-infected steppes of Siberia; his relationships with iconic figures, including Simón Bolívar and Thomas Jefferson; and the lasting influence of his writings on Darwin, Wordsworth, Goethe, Muir, Thoreau, and many others. Brilliantly researched and stunningly written, *The Invention of Nature* reveals the myriad ways in which Humboldt's ideas form the foundation of modern environmentalism—and reminds us why they are as prescient and vital as ever.

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