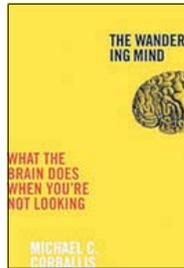


**BOOK REVIEW**

A rare blend of wit and wisdom

The Wandering Mind
By Michael Corballis
Published by Auckland
University Press
Retailing @ \$34.99.
Reviewed by Sally
Astridge.



He always was a clever kid, one of a family of four clever sons. My earliest memory of him was a boy some years my senior, who towered above me and impressed me, even then, by the long words he used. Such intellect!

Fortunately, Michael learnt over the years not to bewilder the less-erudite among us with the power of his vocabulary. He writes this absorbing book with

the blend of wit and wisdom we have come to expect.

The Wandering Mind is divided into easily digestible essays, *Meandering Brain*, *Wandering Mind*, *Time*, *Tigers in the Night*, etc. He looks into false memory, he

explains (to the infinite relief of at least one reader) that day-dreaming has a purpose, he points out the importance of story-telling.

To illustrate the accessibility of the text, let me précis from him an account of a nice little bit of rivalry dating back to Darwin, shortly after his *Origin of Species* had been published.

Richard Owen, a distinguished anatomist of the time and deeply scornful of Darwin's theory, pointed out that only humans possessed a small structure in the brain called the hippocampus minor.

As this structure was missing in the brains of apes, we could not possibly share a common ancestor. He was shot down by no less a supporter of Darwin than Thomas Henry Huxley. And Darwin himself, generally a mild-mannered man, described his rival as "spiteful, unfair, ungenerous, extremely malignant, false, rude, unjust, illiberal and disingenuous."

Our own, dear Members of Parliament could not improve on such vernacular.