

HUXLEY, JULIAN (1887-1975), English humanist scientist and philosopher. Julian Huxley was a major shaper of neo-Darwinism, but we will focus on his contributions in philosophy and religion. In 1946 he became the first director general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) but resigned when it became clear that most nations were not ready for his kind of scientific humanism (the United States played a central role in this rejection).

Thomas H. HUXLEY's grandfather, had been Charles DARWIN'S great defender, but focused on a view of nature as, in Tennyson's phrase, "red in tooth and claw." In his 1893 Romanes Lecture he had argued that human ethics must combat the "gladiatorial" life of prehuman animals. Julian's 1943 Romanes Lecture, however, saw human social evolution as producing the many kinds of human ethics, and saw modern science as helping choose among them.

In the 1920s he was already hailing a new religion "without revelation" (and of course without supernatural entities), and in his 1952 founding presidential address to the INTERNATIONAL HUMANIST AND ETHICAL UNION he reiterated his argument that once we humans understood evolutionary processes, both biological and social, we became responsible for them. He even argued there that we should study yoga and mystical belief systems scientifically, so that we could utilize any of their good features without relying upon improbable beliefs.

In his commemoration address at Chicago's 1959 Darwin celebration, broadcast internationally, the stress he laid upon human responsibilities in an evolving but designless universe shocked many hearers as he outlined "the Humanist view of the three great activities of man in which he transcends the material business of making a living—art, science and religion Art opens the doors of that other world in which matter and quantity are transcended by mind and quality [Science is] the process of discovering, establishing, and organizing knowledge."

As for religion—now was the time to "to replace the multiplicity of conflicting and incompatible religious systems" with a "scientific theology." We should view religion as "applied spiritual ecology" whereby men and women come to understand the world around them, themselves, and all other humans more effectively.

Huxley came down hard here on those positivist philosophers who regarded human values as subjective nonsense, and on those Marxists (see MARXISM) who absolutized Trofim Lysenko instead of subjecting his pseudoscience to normal verification.

Huxley chose to include this Chicago speech in his 1962 volume including essays by twenty-five distinguished scholars who were willing to allow him to label them as "humanist." They come from a wide range of disciplines; many had met during two post-UNESCO years in an Idea-Systems Group that he had assembled. The assumption was that "the knowledge-explosion of the last hundred years was providing man with a new

revelation, a new vision of his destiny." The first critical event in the past of evolution came when the process "transcended itself," passing from the inorganic to organic life; the second was the transition to the "psycho-social." We are now, he argued, at the threshold of "a consciously purposive phase." The best label for this is "evolutionary humanism."

Huxley is clearly the type of humanist who redefines concepts rather than rejecting them. His own scientific writings ranged from the very technical to the quite popular, and he stretched his own expertise with a lifelong commitment to birdwatching. He befriended the Jesuit and evolutionary paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (whose own church had forbidden him to publish), and wrote the preface for *The Phenomenon of Man*, one of Teilhard's posthumous publications. Huxley could appreciate Bishop John Robinson's radical rethinking of Christianity (in the best-seller *Honest to God*) but still say that this, like Paul Tillich's parallel efforts, was trying "to keep his cake and eat it" in retaining the ambiguous god concept.

"Today the god hypothesis has ceased to be scientifically tenable, has lost its explanatory value and is becoming an intellectual and moral burden to our thought," he declared. Nevertheless some "outer" events (hurricanes, death) and some "inner" events (inspiration, possession, insanity) are "awe-inspiring" and "divinity-suggesting," and can seem "transnatural" (although, of course, not supernatural): "The new religion of evolutionary humanism will explore these, but always within the new centrality: promote further evolutionary improvement and to realize new possibilities; and this means greater fulfilment by more human individuals and fuller achievement by more human societies."

Huxley retained many traditional terminologies to make contact with his readers (divinity, theology, religion, inspiration) and also used descriptive terms from anthropology such as *possession*. But these were continually recast into his radical evolutionism. That basically naturalistic framework, coupled with his high visibility, made him one of the paramount unbelievers of the twentieth century. The need of the world is, as he put it, "not merely a rationalist denial of the old but a religious affirmation of something new."

Understandably, speculation continues about the possible role of genetics in this very accomplished family, which also produced his brother Aldous and his sons Francis (prolific anthropologist) and Anthony (prolific biologist). Gavin de Beer, in his preface to Ronald Clark's *The Huxleys*, said, "There can be few men more religious, in the proper sense of the word, than T. H., Julian, and Aldous, devoting all their energies and gifts to improving the sorry lot of men, without mummery, petitionary prayer, or superstition."

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HUXLEY, THOMAS HENRY (1825-1895), English naturalist and essayist. Thomas Huxley was born on May 4, 1825, in the country village of Ealing, the youngest of seven children of George and Rachel Withers Huxley. His schooling was irregular, but even as a young boy he was interested in a staggering array of subjects. From James Hutton he learned about geology. From Sir William Hamilton's "The Philosophy of the Unconditioned" he embraced the skepticism that typified his mature thought. From Thomas Carlyle he developed sympathy for the poor that was later reinforced by his exposure to the squalor and poverty he saw in the East End of London. He taught himself German to read Goethe and Kant in the original. This would serve him well in later years, allowing him to become acquainted with the tremendous biological advances being made in Germany that few English men of science were able to follow. He began studying medicine at quite a young age and received a scholarship to the medical school attached to Charing Cross Hospital. Except for physiology, most of the medical curriculum bored him although he did extremely well. Between 1846 and 1850 Huxley traveled around the world as assistant surgeon on the HMS *Rattlesnake*, resulting in some of his most important scientific work. He met his future wife, Henrietta Anne Heathorn, while visiting Australia. They married in 1855 and had a long and happy marriage and seven children.

Huxley's life was one of incessant activity. He lectured at the School of Mines and was also a professor at the Royal College of Surgeons. Evenings were often spent speaking before working men or learned societies. He was president of numerous societies, including the British Association for Advancement of Science (BAAS), the Geological Society, and the Ethnological Society. He authored nearly a hundred scientific monographs as well as countless popular essays. Huxley's early work from the *Rattlesnake* voyage established his reputation within the scientific community, but it was his defense of DARWINISM that brought him into the public

spotlight. His famous encounter with Bishop Samuel Wilberforce at the 1860 meeting of the BAAS was an important milestone in his career (see EVOLUTION AND UNBELIEF; DRAPER, JOHN WILLIAM). Not only did it ensure that Charles DARWIN'S theory received a fair hearing, but it let the public know that that he was a force to be reckoned with in the world of science and religion.

Huxley's interests were not confined to science. He loved music, art, and literature, and was a member of two famous London clubs: the X Club and the Metaphysical Society. The X Club was founded in 1864 at his suggestion in order for his scientific friends to keep in touch with one another. The Metaphysical Society's members represented the intellectual elite of London society. It provided the perfect forum for Huxley to present his views on theological and metaphysical questions, religion, and the nature of knowledge.

It was Huxley's membership in the Metaphysical Society that caused him to coin the word *AGNOSTIC* to describe his own belief system and to distinguish it from other -isms, such as POSITIVISM, MATERIALISM, THEISM, and even empiricism. It was meant to be antithetic to the "gnostics" of church history, who claimed to know so much about the very things of which he was ignorant. Typically agnosticism is thought to be concerned with religious belief. However, this was not Huxley's original meaning. Rather, agnosticism represented an epistemological claim about the limits to knowledge. Building on the Kantian principle that the human mind had inherent limitations and further elaborated by David HUME, Huxley maintained that our knowledge of reality was restricted to the world of phenomena as revealed by experience.

Huxley was often called a materialist, which he firmly denied. However, it is easy to understand why people labeled him one. On the tree of knowledge his idiosyncratic definition of materialism placed materialistic terminology on the branch of physics while materialist philosophy went on the twig of metaphysics. Materialist methodology had led to tremendous advances in physiology and psychology. However, for Huxley materialist philosophy involved "grave philosophical error," because we know the material world only by the forms of the ideal world. The fundamental doctrines of philosophical materialism, like those of spiritualism, lay outside the limits of philosophical inquiry.

Agnosticism is perceived as having an antireligious bias, in part because Huxley was well known for his polemics against theology. While agnosticism certainly challenged orthodox Christianity, it also placed limits on the kinds of phenomena science could explain as well. Theological and metaphysical questions interested Huxley, but he regarded science and philosophy as occupying distinct domains. On questions that were not amenable to the scientific method, those that went beyond the cognizance of the five senses, he declared himself an agnostic. He had no reason for believing in