

## The Sociology Of Herbert Spencer Uzh

The Study of Sociology Herbert Spencer Critical Assessments Taylor & Francis

Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) is remembered today only as an alleged 'Social Darwinist' who applied the theory of the survival of the fittest to society. Yet he was among the most influential and widely-read philosophers of the nineteenth century. There were few Victorian thinkers and scientists who did not know his work, and who did not formulate their own positions partly in reaction to his. Michael Taylor's book provides the only detailed and reliable modern survey of the whole corpus of Spencer's thought. Taylor introduces a Spencer very different to his posthumous reputation: not primarily a political philosopher, but the architect of a comprehensive philosophical system that aimed to demonstrate the inevitability of human perfection through universal natural laws. He also locates the Synthetic Philosophy firmly in its place and time by showing how it developed out of the concerns of a group of like-minded British writers and thinkers during the 1850s. This book will be of interest to historians of philosophy and of science, to social scientists, to scholars and students of nineteenth century literature, and to anyone who wishes to understand one of most important figures in Victorian intellectual life.

This book analyzes Spencer's work, emphasizing his important contribution to social science theory. The author separates Spencer's scientific works from his famous 'survival of the fittest' defense of laissez faire. He writes 'I am not asserting that his sociology was not influenced by his ideology. I am only pointing to the fact that there are far fewer ideological tracks in his work than in Durkheim's, Weber's, and Marx's works...the unknowing rediscovery of Spencer over the last one hundred years represents an enormous waste of our intellectual energies.'

This early work by Herbert Spencer was originally published in 1897 and we are now republishing it with a brand new introductory biography. 'The Principles of Sociology - Volume 2. Part 2.' is a comprehensive work on the key concepts of the subject, including information on military systems, laws, ecclesiastical institutions, and much more. Herbert Spencer was born on 27th April 1820, in Derby, England. In 1851 he published 'Social Statics' to great acclaim and his quietly influential 'Principles of Psychology' in 1955. These were followed by numerous works of sociology, psychology, and philosophy, which led him to become a prominent intellectual of his day. He also wrote 'The Developmental Hypothesis' (1852) which described the theory of evolution seven years before Charles Darwin's 'Origin of Species'. He even popularised the term "Evolution" and coined the phrase "Survival of the fittest," but his works did not contain the comprehensive theoretical system that Darwin's did, which is why his theory was not taken seriously at the time. Spencer's most famous idea was that of "Social Darwinism." He saw the process of organic evolution as being analogous to that of society, an idea influenced many intellectuals of the day.

Herbert Spencer (27 April 1820 - 8 December 1903) was an English philosopher, biologist, anthropologist, sociologist, and prominent classical liberal political theorist of the Victorian era. Spencer developed an all-embracing conception of evolution as the progressive development of the physical world, biological organisms, the human mind, and human culture and societies. As a polymath, he contributed to a wide range of subjects, including ethics, religion, anthropology, economics, political theory, philosophy, literature, astronomy, biology, sociology,

and psychology. During his lifetime he achieved tremendous authority, mainly in English-speaking academia. "The only other English philosopher to have achieved anything like such widespread popularity was Bertrand Russell, and that was in the 20th century." Spencer was "the single most famous European intellectual in the closing decades of the nineteenth century" but his influence declined sharply after 1900: "Who now reads Spencer?" asked Talcott Parsons in 1937.[4] Spencer is best known for the expression "survival of the fittest," which he coined in *Principles of Biology* (1864), after reading Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. This term strongly suggests natural selection, yet as Spencer extended evolution into realms of sociology and ethics, he also made use of Lamarckism. Spencer was born in Derby, England, on 27 April 1820, the son of William George Spencer (generally called George). Spencer's father was a religious dissenter who drifted from Methodism to Quakerism, and who seems to have transmitted to his son an opposition to all forms of authority. He ran a school founded on the progressive teaching methods of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and also served as Secretary of the Derby Philosophical Society, a scientific society which had been founded in 1783 by Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of Charles Darwin. Spencer was educated in empirical science by his father, while the members of the Derby Philosophical Society introduced him to pre-Darwinian concepts of biological evolution, particularly those of Erasmus Darwin and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck. His uncle, the Reverend Thomas Spencer vicar of Hinton Charterhouse near Bath, completed Spencer's limited formal education by teaching him some mathematics and physics, and enough Latin to enable him to translate some easy texts. Thomas Spencer also imprinted on his nephew his own firm free-trade and anti-statist political views. Otherwise, Spencer was an autodidact who acquired most of his knowledge from narrowly focused readings and conversations with his friends and acquaintances. Both as an adolescent and as a young man, Spencer found it difficult to settle to any intellectual or professional discipline. He worked as a civil engineer during the railway boom of the late 1830s, while also devoting much of his time to writing for provincial journals that were nonconformist in their religion and radical in their politics. From 1848 to 1853 he served as sub-editor on the free-trade journal *The Economist*, during which time he published his first book, *Social Statics* (1851), which predicted that humanity would eventually become completely adapted to the requirements of living in society with the consequential withering away of the state. Its publisher, John Chapman, introduced Spencer to his salon which was attended by many of the leading radical and progressive thinkers of the capital, including John Stuart Mill, Harriet Martineau, George Henry Lewes and Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot), with whom he was briefly romantically linked. Spencer himself introduced the biologist Thomas Henry Huxley, who would later win fame as 'Darwin's Bulldog' and who remained his lifelong friend. However it was the friendship of Evans and Lewes that acquainted him with John Stuart Mill's *A System of Logic* and with Auguste Comte's positivism and which set him on the

road to his life's work. He strongly disagreed with Comte....

The republication of this book is eminently fitting at this time. It is a valuable, and most readable contribution to a subject meriting renewed reflection. Jay Rumney's *Herbert Spencer's Sociology* first appeared in 1937. In that year Talcott Parsons, citing Crane Brinton, declared: "Spencer is dead. But who killed him and how?" It was the thesis of Parsons' famous *The Structure of Social Action* that the evolution of scientific theory had put an end to Spencer. For more than a generation the man whose name had been synonymous with sociology was, or so it seemed, repressed and forgotten. Of late there has been a notable revival of interest in Herbert Spencer. Summary rejection of his ideas has yielded to a more judicious appreciation of his contribution to sociological thought: To be sure, social evolutionism in its classic form has passed from the scene. No one today considers society a biological organism. No longer does anyone believe in an iron or cosmological law of evolution guaranteeing the nonlinear development of human society to perfection. But while it was fashionable at one time to dwell upon those aspects of Spencer's work that have since met an honorable demise, there is now undoubtedly a general agreement with Talcott Parsons' more recent statement that Spencer's thinking about society was informed with three main positive ideas: that of society as a self-regulating system, that of differentiation and function, and that of evolution--all of which remain as important today as they were when he wrote. Herbert Spencer's voluminous writings, espousing the theory of evolutionary change as a universal feature of all existence, have exerted pervasive influence on the social sciences of the last hundred years. This volume provides a comprehensive and illuminating summary of Spencer's sociological teachings and his principal conclusions--altogether the only full-scale critical assessment of Spencer's sociology available. The book includes a preface by Morris Ginsberg, and a forty-seven-page bibliography of works by and about Spencer. A foreword by Joseph Maier was written especially for this edition of this authoritative work, now reissued, appropriately, as a classic in the field. Jay Rumney (1905-1957) was professor of sociology and chairman of the Department at the College of Arts and Sciences of Rutgers University in Newark from 1940 until his death in 1957. He was the author of *Probation and Social Adjustment* and coauthor of *Sociology: The Science of Society*.

*Herbert Spencer: Legacies* explores and assesses the impact of the ideas and work of the great Victorian polymath Herbert Spencer across a wide range of disciplines. In the course of the essays a significant re-evaluation of his influence on Victorian and Edwardian thought is provided. Spencer's contribution to the fields of sociology, anthropology, psychology, biology and ecology are considered, alongside his influence on key figures in science and philosophy. The book brings together scholars from a wide range of disciplines to explore Spencer's nuanced and complex ideas and will be invaluable for historians of science and ideas, and all those interested in the intellectual culture of the late Victorian and Edwardian period.

Contributors: Peter J. Bowler, James Elwick, Mark Francis, Bernard Lightman, Chris Renwick, Vanessa L. Ryan, John Skorupski, Michael W. Taylor, Stephen Tomlinson, and Jonathan H. Turner

The English philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820 - 1903) was a colossus of the Victorian age. His works ranked alongside those of Darwin and Marx in the development of disciplines as wide ranging as sociology, anthropology, political theory, philosophy and psychology. In this acclaimed study of Spencer, the first for over thirty years and now available in paperback, Mark Francis provides an authoritative and meticulously researched intellectual biography of this remarkable man that dispels the plethora of misinformation surrounding Spencer and shines new light on the broader cultural history of the nineteenth century. In this major study of Spencer, the first for over thirty years, Mark Francis provides an authoritative and meticulously researched intellectual biography of this remarkable man. Using archival material and contemporary printed sources, Francis creates a fascinating portrait of a human being whose philosophical and scientific system was a unique attempt to explain modern life in all its biological, psychological and sociological forms. Herbert Spencer and the Invention of Modern Life fills what is perhaps the last big biographical gap in Victorian history. An exceptional work of scholarship it not only dispels the plethora of misinformation surrounding Spencer but shines new light on the broader cultural history of the nineteenth century. Elegantly written, provocative and rich in insight it will be required reading for all students of the period. This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important, and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it. This work was reproduced from the original artifact, and remains as true to the original work as possible. Therefore, you will see the original copyright references, library stamps (as most of these works have been housed in our most important libraries around the world), and other notations in the work. This work is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other nations. Within the United States, you may freely copy and distribute this work, as no entity (individual or corporate) has a copyright on the body of the work. As a reproduction of a historical artifact, this work may contain missing or blurred pages, poor pictures, errant marks, etc. Scholars believe, and we concur, that this work is important enough to be preserved, reproduced, and made generally available to the public. We appreciate your support of the preservation process, and thank you for being an important part of keeping this knowledge alive and relevant.

This set traces Herbert Spencer's influence, from his contemporaries to the present day. Contributions come from across the social science disciplines and are often taken from sources which are difficult to access.

Herbert Spencer remains a significant but poorly understood figure in 19th century intellectual life. His ideas on evolution ranged across the natural sciences and philosophy, and he pioneered new ideas in psychology and sociology. This book comprehensively examines his work and strips away common misconceptions about his sociology.

Based on his correspondence, a 1908 biography of one of the late nineteenth century's most influential and controversial thinkers.

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