Descriptive Sociology is "... a pile of clippings made to order ...." (Frederic Harrison, "Agnostic Metaphysics," The Nineteenth Century, Vol. 16, pp. 353-378, 1884. P. 364)

Gibson said of the seven tables in Descriptive Sociology, No. 1, "... they are of no use for any purpose whatever." (Alexander Gibson, Review of Descriptive Sociology, No. 1, The Academy, Vol. 5, pp. 27-29, 1875. P. 28)


"... Descriptive Sociology, perhaps the least successful of all Mr. Spencer's works. That work is a huge file of cuttings from various travellers of all classes, extracted by three gentlemen whom Mr. Spencer employed. Of course these intelligent gentlemen had little difficulty in clipping from hundreds of books about foreign races sentences which seem to support Mr. Spencer's doctrines. The whole proceeding is too much like that of a famous lawyer who wrote a law-book, and then gave it to his pupils / to find the 'cases' which supported his law." (Frederic Harrison, "Agnostic Metaphysics," The Nineteenth Century, Vol. 16, pp. 353-378, 1884. Pp. 363-364)

"The late nineteenth century saw a ferment of "social thought" penned by men who were intelligent and broadly educated but not yet ready to submit their ideas to objective and systematic testing. We think, for example, of the wealthy, strait-laced Englishman, Herbert Spencer, who had a corps of secretaries collecting unrelated facts from all corners of the earth while he independently / thought out what he believed were the laws of history." (Arnold M. Rose, Sociology; The Study of Human Relations, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1956. Pp. 13-14)

"Aristotle was not satisfied to describe the constitution of Athens as it existed in his day; he introduced that description with an account of the development of the Athenian government down to that time; we must know the past evolution of an organism in order to appreciate clearly its present condition. He did in the second half of the fourth century B.C. what Herbert Spencer undertook in the second half of the nineteenth century, and Spencer's Descriptive Sociology, in spite of a more elaborate and systematic analysis, is not superior, as a synthesis, to Aristotle's Constitution of Athens." (George Sarton, A History of Science; Ancient Science through the Golden Age of Greece, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1952. P. 570)
One of Harrison's remarks in this Pall Mall article reminds me of a little incident in my experience which may be worth preserving. In a preceding article he had alluded to Spencer's Descriptive Sociology "as a pile of clippings made to order." He now went on to say: "I have certainly cast no insinuations whatever on the three conscientious gentlemen who carried out Mr. Spencer's directions to tabulate 'all classes of facts'; but it is too much to ask me to believe either that they knew nothing of Mr. Spencer's theories, or that they did not tabulate such facts as they judged would be most useful to him. One would as easily believe that when Mr. Gladstone's secretary is directed to tabulate electoral facts he has not the least idea whether the Premier is about to use them in favour of reform or against it." His remarks recall to me what happened one evening about twenty years ago, when I was dining at 37 Queen's Gardens with Spencer and his assistant, Dr. Richard Scheppig, a pleasant and accomplished German scholar, who compiled some parts of the Descriptive Sociology (among others the Mexican part, in which, by the way, are some grave errors). I happened to ask Dr. Scheppig for his opinion on some point involved in the doctrine of evolution, and I shall never forget his delicious reply, or think of it without laughing: "I do not know anything whatever about evolution; I am a historian!" (John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. Pp. 388-389)

"This limitation upon his time, added to his earlier dislike for consecutive task reading, prevented him from having at his disposal a mass of concrete data and of statistical materials which would have done much to correct the a priori character of his thinking. In the later works on social subjects this deficiency was in some measure met by the large collection of data which his assistants gathered for him and which constituted the subject matter of the Descriptive Sociology. But all of this material was second hand to him in a double sense. It represented, in the first instance, the impressions of other men who often had preconceptions which warped their observational powers. Also it was selected by other men from the original sources for his own personal use and could not therefore represent his own critical choice." (L. L. Bernard, "Herbert Spencer's Work in the Light of His Life," The Monist, Vol. 31, pp. 1-35, 1921. P. 20)

"The feasibility of applying normal inductive methods to data scattered in space and time naturally varies with the scope desired by the author and the availability of reliable data. Durkheim was able to compare differences and trends in suicide rates because suicide is properly recorded. At the other extreme, one could have foreseen the lack of realism in Herbert Spencer's project for "making tabulated arrangements of historical data, showing the co-existence and succession of social phenomena of all order," which was to culminate in his proposed but never achieved Descriptive Sociology." (John Madge, The Origins of Scientific Sociology, The Free Press of Glencoe, Macmillan, New York, 1962. Pp. 537-538)

"I have made some use of these works [Descriptive Sociology], and it is my impression that they are much less known than they deserve to be." (Charles Horton Cooley, "Reflections upon the Sociology of Herbert Spencer." American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 26, pp. 129-145, 1920. p. 144)

"No words are needed to indicate the immense labour here bestowed, or the great sociological benefit which such a mass of tabulated matter done under such competent direction will confer. The work will constitute an epoch in the science of comparative sociology." (Anonymous, Review of Descriptive Sociology, Vol. 1, The English, The British Quarterly Review, Vol. 5, p. 306, 1873. P. 306)

Youmans on his objectives in Germany: "... third, to get Spencer republished in German; fourth, to get a German student for Spencer to assist in carrying out his great sociological project, ..." (Letter from Edward L. Youmans to his sister, Eliza A. Youmans, dated October 21, 1871. Quoted in John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. Pp. 284-285)


"Among our common friends I can tell you of Mr. Herbert Spencer as altogether prosperous in mind and body. You know how finely the Americans have behaved in providing him with a German amanuensis (over and above the English one) to help him in his historical inquiries? (The English compiler of the Descriptive Sociology, James Collier, was dealing with existing civilized races. E. L. Youmans, Spencer's American friend, offered to find funds to pay for the compiling and printing of it. Spencer declares that he secured the services of Dr. Richard Scheppig, a teacher at the Hofwyl School, through an advertisement (Autobiography, II, 266), but David Duncan says that it was through OHL. (Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer, 1908, p. 148.) And the plan is answering to his satisfaction." (Letter from George Eliot to Sara Sophia Hennell dated November 19, 1872. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, editor. The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1955. Vol. 5, p. 328, 328n.)

"Charles Peirce (of the Logic, you know) was so pleased with the article on Trophies that he bought the whole set of Descriptive Sociologies." (Letter from Edward L. Youmans to Herbert Spencer dated March 8, 1878. Quoted in John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. P. 344)
"... the arrangement and superintendence of the Descriptive Sociology, which during the earlier stages occupied much time."

"... Mr. Spencer's own atlases of "Descriptive Sociology" the largest and most systematic collection of sociological material that has been made ...." (Franklin H. Giddings, The Principles of Sociology, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1911. P. 62)

(For a good discussion of the plan and purpose of Descriptive Sociology, as well as the division of labor between Duncan, Schep-pig, and Collier, see Youmans Preface to the American edition of The Study of Sociology.)

"So much information, encumbered with so little rubbish, has never been brought to bear on the development of English institutions." (E. B. Tylor, "Spencer's Descriptive Sociology." Nature, Vol. 8, pp. 544-547, 1873. P. 546.)

"Le peu d'usage qui a été fait de cette immense collection de faits bien établis et convenablement arrangés [Spencer's Descriptive Sociology] est un grave reproche à notre science." (p. 43n.) Elsewhere Steinmetz calls Spencer the "... grand initiateur de la sociologie ...." (p. 91) (S. R. Steinmetz, "Classification des Types Sociaux," L'Année Sociologique, Vol. 3, pp. 43-147, 1898-99)

As early as 1898, S. R. Steinmetz observed about Spencer's Descriptive Sociology: "Le peu d'usage qui a été fait de cette immense collection de faits bien établis et convenablement arrangés est un grave reproche à notre science." (S. R. Steinmetz, "Classification des types sociaux et catalogue des peuples," L'Année Sociologique, Vol. 3, pp. 43-147, 1898-99. P. 43n.)

"It (Volume I of Spencer's Descriptive Sociology) presents history as a social evolution, in which no factor is contemptible, because the social outcome of a nation's life is the resultant of a vast number of forces, each of which must be estimated for what it was in its day, not for what it would be now." (William Graham Sumner, Review of Volume I of Spencer's Descriptive Sociology, The Independent (New York), Vol. 26, No. 1328, p. 9, May 14, 1874. P. 9)

"In spite of disagreements with the technique and translations, however, I consider this enormous encyclopaedia [E. Torday's 1930 edition of Vol. 4 of Descriptive Sociology] of much value." (J. D. Unwin, Sex and Culture, Oxford University Press, London, 1934. P. 525)
"The work [Descriptive Sociology] is a gigantic one; its value, when complete, will be immeasurable; and its actual influence on the study of sociology, and help to that study, greater perhaps than any book yet published. It is a cyclopaedia of Social Science, but a cyclopaedia edited by the greatest of sociologists." (George W. Smalley, blurb appearing, without any bibliographic reference, at the back of Rudolph Eucken's The Fundamental Concepts of Modern Philosophic Thought, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1880. P. 306. Undoubtedly in other Appleton books too.)

"Spencer died in 1903 in his eighty-third year. By his will he constituted a trust [of 3 members] to continue the compilation and publication of his huge monographs on Descriptive Sociology. To carry out this trust he left the income of his investments (£13,000) and the income derived from the sale of his works. Thus the trustees had at their disposal an annual income of about £500." (Sir Arthur Keith, An Autobiography, Watts & Co., London, 1950. Pp. 427-428)

"But there remains a great deal in human history, which cannot be fitted into one or another of the columns of a folio of "Descriptive Sociology." If we analyse the elements of a people's life and separate them off in this way, we are apt to miss just what is most significant about them." (David G. Ritchie, The Principles of State Interference, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London, 1891. P. 76)

"This [Descriptive Sociology, Vol. 1] is the first installment of a work which, although mechanical enough in form, is yet likely to prove practically so useful to sociologists, as to be not unworthy of the immense labour bestowed upon it by a man like Herbert Spencer." (Anonymous, Review of Descriptive Sociology, Vol. 1, The English, The British Quarterly Review, Vol. 58, p. 306, 1873. P. 306)

"... he [Spencer] and his colleagues deserve great praise (too seldom accorded) for the great collections of facts as to barbaric and modern life in the monumental "Descriptive Sociology" ...." (John Mackinnon Robertson, Buckle and His Critics, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London, 1895. P. 383)

"No words are needed to indicate the immense labour here [in Descriptive Sociology, Vol. 1] bestowed, or the great sociological benefit which such a mass of tabulated matter done under such competent direction will confer. The work will constitute an epoch in the science of comparative sociology." (Anonymous, Review of Descriptive Sociology, Vol. 1, The English, The British Quarterly Review, Vol. 58, p. 306, 1873. P. 306)
"Though it is currently fashionable to discount his Principles of Sociology, this work contributed substantially to the definition of the subject matter of anthropology and provided the first outline of what has come to be known as the universal culture pattern, in addition to adding permanent though modest increments to our knowledge of particular aspects of culture, such as religion. Perhaps even more important in the long run has been the influence of his Descriptive Sociology. This work, so little known among sociologists that the author has encountered few who have even heard of it, inaugurated a commendable effort to organize and classify systematically the cultural data on all the peoples of the world for the advancement of cross-cultural research, and thus clearly foreshadowed the development of the present Human Relations Area Files." (George Peter Murdock, "Sociology and Anthropology," in For a Science of Social Man, edited by John Gillin, pp. 14-31. The Macmillan Company. New York, 1954. Pp. 15-16.)

"It is a pity, by the way, that the frame of these descriptions is so rigid and their size so awkward, but as they are, the published volumes contain an enormous amount of material and deserve greater recognition than they have ever received." (George Sarton, "Herbert Spencer, 1820-1920," Scribner's Magazine, Vol. 67, pp. 695-701, 1920. P. 698)

"Prices here are frightful. I told Spencer his frolic would turn out expensive. He replied, "It would merely make so much less to be left and spent on the Descriptive Sociology"—with which he is evidently getting tired." (Letter from Edward L. Youmans to his sister, Eliza A. Youmans, dated January 2, 1879. Quoted in John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. P. 357)

"But the task of compiling Descriptive Sociology is one eminently fitted to be dealt with by Mr. Herbert Spencer's faculty of scientific organizing, and whatever criticisms may suggest themselves on particular points, there is at least a strong presumption that, on the whole, it could not be done better." (Anonymous, "Spencer's Descriptive Sociology," The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art, Vol. 36, pp. 217-218, 1873. P. 217)

"His stupendous collection of materials known as the Descriptive Sociology, which he personally financed, and which is still much used, affords a strong testimonial to his devotion to inductive generalization. The fact that the inductive method, especially as based on anthropological materials, was applied so much earlier to sociology than to economics, or political science, is largely, if not mainly, due to the influence of Herbert Spencer." (L. L. Bernard, "Herbert Spencer: The Man and His Age," The South Atlantic Quarterly, Vol. 21, pp. 241-251, 1922. P. 250)
"... and the importance of the connexion between sociology and biology, which Mr. Herbert Spencer, both in his philosophical works and in the elaborate tabular statement of Social Facts which he had supervised, and which I earnestly recommend to your notice, is now expounding and illustrating [Descriptive Sociology, Vol. 1]. But the human element with which even Mr. Spencer has to deal is no such "eternally" as that in which suns rest and planets move, or even as that terrestrial atmosphere whose composition we can analyse, and whose very storms we are learning to subject to law." (Lord Houghton, address to the British Social Science Congress, The London Times, October 2, 1873. P. 7)

"In his very suggestive little book on Education [p. 32], Mr. Spencer says, "The only history that is of practical value is what may be called Descriptive Sociology." I fear that if the dreary folios, which a British public, capable of consuming five editions of First Principles, has yet been unable to swallow, are a fair sample of this descriptive sociology, this branch of science can never have a very practical value in education. History with the human life taken out of it, dead, dried, and sliced up into columns, not even written in construable English, might indeed be "crammed up" for an examination, but with somewhat disastrous results on the intellect of the patient." (David G. Ritchie, The Principles of State Interference, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London, 1891. Pp. 76-77)

"The President [Sir Francis Galton] felt sure that no one would have appreciated Dr. Tylor's memoir more justly, or would have welcomed it more warmly, than Mr. Herbert Spencer, whose efforts to erect a science of sociology upon an inductive basis were well known. Mr. Spencer, as we all remember, went to great cost, and much exerted himself to obtain a collection of the customs of all available nations, savage and civilised, arranged in an uniform and orderly manner for purposes of intercomparison. The result was the publication of an amount of material that filled four very large folio volumes. Unfortunately he had been obliged to delegate to others the task of compilation, and the work was not carried out as accurately as was desirable, or even as completely, notwithstanding its bulk." (Discussion following the presentation of E. B. Tylor's "On a Method of Investigating the Development of Institutions; Applied to Laws of Marriage and Descent," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 18, pp. 242-289, 1889. Discussion on pp. 270-272. P. 270)

"... his [Spencer's] "Descriptive Sociology," wherein the chronological sequence of events is faithfully abided by; yet what one might call his historical blindness was appalling." (George Sarton, "Herbert Spencer, 1820-1920," Scribner's Magazine, Vol. 67, pp. 695-701, 1920. P. 699)
"Having, for the proper execution of the later volumes of my series [Principles of Sociology], to obtain information from multitudinous books, I was compelled [because a nervous breakdown left him "unable to read more than a very small amount daily"] to read by proxy, and employed assistants to extract and classify for me the materials I needed; the ultimate result being the publication of the eight folio volumes of "Descriptive Sociology," in which the classified compilations of facts are now available for others." (Herbert Spencer, Letter sent to Le Figaro, reprinted in Pall Mall Gazette, Vol. 55, No. 8606, p. 6, October 20, 1892. P. 5)

But the influence of Spencer in American anthropology hung on. As late as 1912, we find Wilson D. Wallis complaining that "... in more than one of the larger American universities, courses based on Spencer's Descriptive Sociology still flourish, and facile deductions of universal import out-Spencering Spencer himself still evolve, ...." (Wilson D. Wallis, "The Methods of English Ethnologists," American Anthropologist, Vol. 14, pp. 178-186, 1912. P. 181)

"The rigid distinction Spencer maintained between structure and function is nowhere more clearly seen than in the folio volumes of the Descriptive Sociology, where the structures and the functions of each society are detailed in columns on pages opposite one another." (J. D. Y. Peel, Herbert Spencer; The Evolution of a Sociologist, Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1971. P. 182)

"In 1867 Herbert Spence conceived the idea of 'making tabulated arrangements of historical data, showing the co-existence and succession of social phenomena of all orders.' This resulted in the Descriptive Sociology of which the last volume was published in 1934. It may be doubted whether the general appreciation of the strenuous co-operative labour involved in the compilation of this work has been at all commensurate with the hopes of its originator. The method of tabulation has often been criticized and it probably appeals to few anthropologists to-day. Unfortunately it fails to satisfy some requirements which were better appreciated by the next notable English contributor to this problem of systematic inquiry. [E. B. Tylor] .... The method [employed by Tylor in "On a Method ..."] consisted in tabulating and classifying "the evidence found among between three and four hundred peoples, ranging from insignificant savage hordes to great cultured nations." It differed from Herbert Spencer's in making possible statistical reduction of the material collected. Diagrams illustrating the distribution and association of various customs were given, but the original data were not published then, or since, and without them it is impossible either to verify or extend the results reached." (G. M. Morant, "Cultural Anthropology and Statistics; a one-sided review of 'Sex and Culture' [by J. D. Unwin]", Man, Vol. 35, pp. 34-39, 1935. P. 34)

"The Descriptive Sociology had been for seven years [1867-1874] in progress; making me gradually acquainted with more numerous and varied groups of social phenomena, disclosing truths of unexpected kinds, and occasionally obliging me to abandon some of my pre-conceptions." (Auto. II, 274-5)

The Trust which was established in accordance with Spencer's will, came to an end in 1934. In that year was also published the last (?) volume of the Descriptive Sociology, Vol. 15, on the Ancient Romans. The series, except for Vol. 15, consists entirely of extracts from published works. It remains an unknown and untapped lode of cultural information.

"... exhibiting sociological phenomena in such wise that comparisons of them in their coexistences and sequences, as occurring among various peoples in different stages, were made easy, would immensely facilitate the discovery of sociological truths. (Auto. II, 264-5)

Spencer's will provided that the bulk of his assets be placed in trust for the continued publication of volumes of the Descriptive Sociology. All volumes of this series were published after Spencer's death with these funds. During his life, the Descriptive Sociology represented a net financial loss to Spencer of almost 3,000 pounds (check this.)

Spencer was the first man to undertake an extensive cataloguing of world cultures abstracting information from available sources. This information appeared in 8 parts, all in royal folio, between 1873 and 1881. Thus he was the founder of systematic inductive comparative sociology.

"That for which he valued [Spencer's] works most is described in a review of the "Descriptive Sociology," which he [Sumner] wrote for the Independent of May 14, 1874. "It presents history," he says, "as a social evolution in which no factor is contemptible, because the social outcome of a nation's life is a resultant of a vast number of forces, each of which must be estimated for what it was in its day, not for what it would be now." (Harris E. Starr, William Graham Sumner. Henry Holt and Company. New York, 1925. P. 345.)
The tables in Volume 1 of Spencer's Descriptive Sociology on the English "... are a sufficient answer to all disbelievers in the possibility of a science of history. Where the chronicle of individual lives often perplexes and mystifies the scholar, the generalisation of social principles from the chronicler's materials shows an order of human affairs where cause and effect take their inevitable course, as in Physics or Biology." (E. B. Tylor, "Spencer's Descriptive Sociology." Nature, Vol. 8, pp. 544-547, 1873. P. 546.)

Spencer wrote "I had long been conscious that when I came to treat of Sociology [In the writing of Synthetic Philosophy], ... there would be required an immense accumulation of facts so classified and arranged as to facilitate generalization." (Auto. II, 171) To do this he obtained the services of David Duncan, a young Scotsman.

"These evidences [derived from ethnographic data] were tabulated in the monumental Descriptive Sociology, which, so far as I know, nobody has since used for comparative purposes or would find it profitable to do so, on account both of its curious system of classification and the poverty of the ethnographic information at that period." (E. E. Evans-Pritchard, The Comparative Method in Social Anthropology, L. T. Hobhouse Memorial Trust Lecture No. 33, University of London, The Athlone Press, London, 1963. P. 7)
DETERMINISM


"You will see by the 'Fortnightly,' which you have not read, that Mr Spencer is very anxious to vindicate himself from neglect of the logical necessity that the evolution of the abstraction "society" is dependent on the modified action of the units; indeed he is very sensitive on the point of being supposed to teach an enervating fatalism." (Letter from George Eliot to Hon. Mrs. Ponsonby, February 11, 1875. Quoted in J. W. Cross, George Eliot's Life, 3 Vols., William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1885. Vol. 3, p. 256)

"The men whose attention is directed chiefly to historical data will be inclined more and more to doubt the possibility of rapid social changes. They deal with series of phenomena which unfold themselves from century to century, from age to age, from epoch to epoch. These men are under powerful temptation to regard society as a mill of the gods, which grinds so exceeding slow that men cannot accelerate its motion. The principles of social economy which most impress them urge the conclusion that effort contemplating immediate social modification is an attempt to reverse the order of nature. They are likely to think of social forces as factors which, in some hundreds or thousands of years, will work out beneficent results. It will be hard for them to exercise saving faith in any programme of immediate social amelioration. Of this type of sociologists, Mr. Herbert Spencer is the most conspicuous living example." (Albion W. Small and George E. Vincent, An Introduction to the Study of Society, American Book Company, New York, 1894. Pp. 73-74)

In 1851 Spencer attended a course of lectures given by Professor Owen on comparative osteology, as the subject matter of the lectures bore on the subject of the development hypothesis, in which he was already deeply interested. (Auto. I, 368)

"He [Charles Kingsley] said amongst other things that he believed that man, as we know him, is by no means the highest creature that will be evolved. I took this as an admission of the development hypothesis; but am not sure that he meant it as such." (Herbert Spencer, journal entry for September 10, 1852. Quoted in An Autobiography, 2 Vols., Watts & Co., London, 1926. Vol. 1, p. 408)
In 1852 Spencer published his brief but well-known article, "The Development Hypothesis," in The Leader. In it Spencer rejected special creation and espoused the process of organic evolution through successive modifications. (Auto. I, 387)

"Years before the appearance of the Darwin-Wallace essay, and of the Origin, Herbert Spencer wrote on The Development Hypothesis. Although of course wanting the great motive power to evolution supplied by Natural Selection, this essay is a powerful and convincing argument for evolution as against special creation. It is astonishing that it did not produce more effect." (Edward Bagnall Poulton, "What Is a Species?", President's Address read at the Annual Meeting of the Entomological Society of London, January 20, 1904, and printed in the Proceedings of the Society, 1903, p. lxxvii; in Essays on Evolution 1889-1907, pp. 46-94, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1908. P. [The above-quoted passage is immediately preceded by: "In leaving the dogma of 'special creation', and the assumption of 'fixity of species' with which it is bound up, it is only right to point out how completely the logical foundations of both were undermined by the great thinker who has just passed away." (p. 58)

Differential Evolution

Spencer did not see a steady, uniform progression of culture: "Nor do we find that the diminution of incestuous connexions, preserves a constant ratio to social evolution" (Vol. I, p. 638, 1st ed.). "The evidence, then, does not allow us to infer, as we should naturally have done, that advance in the forms of the sexual relations and advance in social evolution, are constantly and uniformly connected" (Vol. I, p. 640, 1st ed.)
In 1851 G. H. Lewes "had brought with him a volume by Milne-Edwards, and in it for the first time I met with the expression—"the physiological division of labour." Though the conception was not new to me... yet the mode of formulating it was; and the phrase thereafter played a part in my course of thought." (Auto. I, 377)
"At this time /while he was working on the Pittsburgh Dispatch/ I had the fortune to discover Huxley and Tyndall and Herbert Spencer, whose introductory volume to his Synthetic Philosophy (First Principles) quite blew me, intellectually, to bits. Hitherto, until I had read Huxley, I had some lingering filaments of Catholicism trailing about me, faith in the existence of Christ, the soundness of his moral and sociologic deductions, the brotherhood of man. But on reading Science and Hebrew Tradition and Science and Christian Tradition, and finding both the Old and New Testaments to be not compendiums of revealed truth but mere records of religious experiences, and very erroneous ones at that, and then taking up First Principles and discovering that all I deemed substantial--man's place in nature, his importance in the universe, this too, too solid earth, man's very identity save as an infinitesimal speck of energy or a "suspended equation" drawn or blown here and there by larger forces in which he moved quite unconsciously as an atom--all questioned and dissolved into other and less understandable things, I was completely thrown down in my conceptions or non-conceptions of life." (Theodore Dreiser, A Book About Myself, Boni and Liveright, New York, 1922. Pp. 457-458)

"When I read Spencer I could only sigh. All I could think of was that nature would not or could not do anything for man, he must, if he could, do something for himself; and of this I saw no prospect, he being a product of these self-same accidental, indifferent, and bitterly cruel forces." (Theodore Dreiser, A Book About Myself, Boni and Liveright, New York, 1922. P. 459)


Frank Harris quotes Theodore Dreiser as saying to him: "About this time I read the 'Data of Ethics' and 'First Principles' of Herbert Spencer. They nearly killed me, took every shred of belief away from me; showed me that I was a chemical atom in a whirl of unknown forces; the realization clouded my mind. I felt the rhythm of life, but the central fact to me was that the whole thing was unknowable—incomprehensible. I went into the depths and I am not sure that I have ever got entirely out of them. I have not much of a creed—certainly no happy or inspiring belief to this day." (Frank Harris, Contemporary Portraits, Second Series, Published by the Author, New York, 1919. P. 91)
"For all the liberal analysis of Spencer and our modern naturalistic philosophers, we have but an infantile perception of morals. There is more in the subject than mere conformity to a low of evolution. It is yet deeper than conformity to things of earth alone. It is more involved than we, as yet, perceive. Answer, first, why the heart thrills; explain wherefore some plaintive note goes wandering about the world, undying; make clear the rose's subtle alchemy evolving its ruddy lamp in light and rain. In the essence of these facts lies the first principles of morals." (Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, Dell Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1959. P. 105)


"In an editorial written a couple of years after this first reading, he would [Theodore Dreiser] would recommend Spencer on the ground that he could marshal "the whole universe in review before you ... showing you how certain beautiful laws exist, and how, by these laws, all animate things have / developed and arranged themselves."" (F. O. Matthiessen, *Theodore Dreiser*, William Sloane Associates. New York, 1951. Pp. 40-41.)
"The process known as living, like the process known as not-living, should be capable of a mechanical explanation. If, as Spencer admits, there is a dynamic element in life, and if that element cannot be conceived in terms of matter and motion, cannot be interpreted by physical or chemical methods, the conclusion is inevitable that in presence of living processes the Spencerian formula of evolution is defective. The effect of Spencer's admissions is to make his system of philosophy dualistic instead of monistic." (Anonymous, "The Philosophy of Herbert Spencer," The Edinburgh Review, Vol. 199, pp. 352-373, 1904. P. 362)
"The practical philosophy of Spencer [that of individualism] is of such moral poverty that it now has scarcely any supporters." (Émile Durkheim, "Individualism and the Intellectuals," Revue Bleue, 4e série, 10(1898), pp. 7-13, reprinted in Steven Lukes, "Durkheim's 'Individualism and the Intellectuals,'" Political Studies, Vol. 17, pp. 14-30, 1969. P. 20)

"Whenever certain elements combine and thereby produce, by the fact of their combination, new phenomena [], it is plain that these new phenomena reside not in the original elements but in the totality formed by their union." (Émile Durkheim, The Rules of Sociological Method, The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1938. P. xlvii)

"It was this formula [Spencer's formula of evolution from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, etc.], that, I believe, underlay Durkheim's classic study of the division of labour, his account of the segmentary principle of organization in primitive societies, and the development of functional specialization and interdependence in advanced industrial communities." (Donald G. MacRae, "Darwinism and the Social Sciences," in S. A. Barnett, editor, A Century of Darwin, pp. 296-312, Heinemann, London, 1958. P. 307)

"If the hypotheses of Darwin have a moral use, it is with more reserve and measure than in other sciences. They overlook the essential elements of moral life, that is, the moderating influence that society exercises over its members, which tempers and neutralizes the brutal action of the struggle for existence and selection. Wherever there are societies, there is altruism, because there is solidarity." (Émile Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society, translated by George Simpson, The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1933. P. 197)

"Spencer has said that a society in the scientific sense of the word exists only when to the juxtaposition of individuals co-operation is added. We have just seen that this so-called axiom is contrary to the truth. Rather it is evident, as Auguste Comte points out, "that cooperation, far from having produced society, necessarily supposes, as preamble, its spontaneous existence." What bring men together are mechanical causes and impulsive forces, such as affinity of blood, attachment to the same soil, ancestral worship, community of habits, etc. It is only when the group has been formed on these bases that co-operation is organized there." (Émile Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society, translated by George Simpson, The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1933. P. 278)
"The investigations of Tylor and Bachofen, Morgan and Spencer, fixed the attention upon the data of anthropology as illustrating the gradual development and rise of civilization. The development of this side of anthropology was stimulated by the work of Darwin and his successors, and its fundamental ideas can be understood only as an application of the theory of biological evolution to mental phenomena." (Franz Boas, The Mind of Primitive Man, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1911. P. 175)

"'From Spencer to Durkheim to British and British-influenced functional anthropology to structural-functional sociology in the United States' consequently may not be a drastic distortion of the actual 'who to whom' sequence." This is stated after having said: "Whether those British anthropologists who later explicitly called themselves functionalists were directly influenced by Spencer is doubtful; ...." (Howard Backer, "Anthropology and Sociology," in For a Science of Social Man, edited by John Gillin, pp. 102-159. The Macmillan Company. New York, 1954. P. 132.)


At the end of a pamphlet entitled "Anthropology: As a Science and as a Branch of University Education in the United States," Daniel G. Brinton presents a "General Scheme for Instruction in Anthropology." In the brief bibliography he gives "as among the best works for the student" are listed E. B. Tylor's Anthropology and Charles Letourneau's Elements de Sociologie, among others, but nothing by Spencer. Then in a list of other "distinguished foreign living writers on various departments of Anthropology" he cites, among English writers, Buckland, Flower, Galton, and M. Müller, but not Spencer. Nor is Spencer's name listed in the index of Brinton's The Basis of Social Relations, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1902. 204 pp.

"It [anthropology] borrowed some of its early concepts, such as that of evolution ... directly from phylogenetic concepts of biology ...." (Ruth Benedict, "Anthropology and the Humanities," American Anthropologist, Vol. 50, pp. 585-593, 1948. P. 585)
Spencer's work is at the root of two of the great movements in contemporary anthropology—evolutionism and functionalism. Evolutionists are willing to acknowledge a general indebtedness to Spencer, although they are not familiar with the details of his evolutionary writings. Functionalists of today have forgotten—if they ever knew—the seminal contributions made by Spencer to their brand of anthropology. Durkheim's indebtedness to Spencer is evident from his work, especially The Division of Labor, although he does not freely acknowledge it. Radcliffe-Brown now and then indicated that he was influenced by Spencer; his goal of a "comparative science of society" can be traced back directly to Spencer.
"Having ventured to find fault with Spencer, I may be allowed to add that I have perhaps learned as much from him as from any other writer. If only his system did not appear at first quite so complete and final, one might more easily remain loyal to it in spite of its deficiencies. But when these latter began to appear its very completeness makes it seem a sort of a prison-wall which one must break down to get out." (Charles Horton Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order, revised edition, Charles Scrlbner's Sons, New York, 1909. P. 127n.)

"During my senior year at the University of Southern California, probably 1890-91, I took a course in philosophy. I was assigned the task of writing a review of Borden P. Bowne's Review of The Philosophy of Herbert Spencer. This forced me to read a good deal of Herbert Spencer as well as Bowne's review. Dr. W. S. Matthew, under whom I was studying and for whom I wrote the review of Bowne, liked my paper and asked if he might not submit it for publication in The Pacific Monthly, a magazine recently started in Los Angeles. Of course I consented and it was published. Thus I first broke into print." (Thomas Nixon Carver, Recollections of an Unplanned Life, The Ward Ritchie Press, Los Angeles, 1949. Pp. 87-88)

Franklin H. Giddings: "My interest in sociology, as I have on various occasions told, began while I was yet a youth when accidentally a copy of the first number of the Popular Science Monthly fell into my hands a few days after its publication in 1872, and I read the first chapter of Spencer's The Study of Sociology. Before I entered college I had read a lot of Darwin, Tyndall, and Huxley, and nearly half of what Spencer had then written." (Quoted by Albion W. Small in "Fifty Years of Sociology in the United States," The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 21, pp. 721-864, 1916. P. 762)

"Spencer was the man who opened up the subject of sociology to Cooley, but he was not wholly satisfied with him at the time and became progressively more critical of him as he matured. He felt that Spencer was too wont to let his system, once conceived, ride roughshod over the field of facts; and this was the more serious in the sociological parts of his work because he did not see that the relations among men are mediated through the mind,—that society is not mainly a biological organization but a psychological one." (Robert Cooley Angell, Introduction to The Two Major Works of Charles H. Cooley: Social Organization, Human Nature and the Social Order, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1956. P. xi)

"... it is not alone in the title /Principles of Sociology, by F. H. Giddings/ that it imitates the great work of Mr. Spencer. The classification of topics is, it is true, very different, and there is some effort to avoid a similarity of method, but in the two most important respects the two treatises are in harmony. These are, first, in confining sociology chiefly to anthropology, and second, in adhering strictly to the "natural history method" of looking upon society as something absolutely passive to be analyzed and dissected like the carcass of a dead animal." (Lester F. Ward, Review of Franklin H. Giddings' Principles of Sociology, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 8, pp. 1-31, 1896. P. 5)

"In my studies of American sociology teaching before 1912 I have found Spencer the single most widely recommended author." (Donald Macrae, "Introduction" to Herbert Spencer, The Man versus the State, pp. 7-54, Pelican Classic, Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1969. P. 8)

"Our texts /at Stanford University/ are Small and Vincent /An Introduction to the Study of Society/ and /Ward/ Dynamic Sociology. I have finally cut loose from Spencer for he has become so unsatisfactory it is no pleasure to put him in the hands of students. We shall work on descriptive and statical sociology till about March or April and then devote the rest of the year to progress and amelioration." (Letter from Edward A. Ross to Lester F. Ward dated November 25, 1894. Quoted in Bernhard J. Stern, editor, "The Ward-Ross Correspondence," American Sociological Review, Vol. 3. Pp. 362-401, 1938. P. 386)


"Modern sociology begins with the earliest writings of Mr. Herbert Spencer." (p. 536) "... modern sociology must be said to begin with Mr. Spencer's work." (p. 543) (Franklin H. Giddings, "Modern Sociology," *The International Monthly*, Vol. 2, pp. 536-554, 1900)

"To Spencer I owe the same debt which a subsequent surveyor owes to a preliminary explorer of pathless ground. To what I like to think of as my share of triumphant common sense, I owe my abomination of the laissez faire social doctrines which Spencer first glorifies, then abandons." (Albion W. Small, *Origins of Sociology*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1924, P. 316)

"But "biology," like "sociology," had no vogue until Mr. Spencer took it up. All but the youngest of our scientific men can remember when it began to creep into college and university catalogues. Neither the word nor the idea obtained recognition without a struggle." (Franklin H. Giddings, *The Principles of Sociology*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1911. P. 32)

"After returning as President to Colby College, following the Sabbatical year spent at Johns Hopkins, I offered to the Seniors in the spring term of 1890, / as I then supposed, the first course in sociology ever given in the United States." (pp. 760-761) Although Small had read Sumner's *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other* shortly after it appeared in 1883, he was repelled by its social Darwinism, and was still able to write in 1907: "At that time (1907) he was not within my field of vision as even nominally a sociologist." (p. 733n.) But Small's attitude toward Sumner seems to have changed after reading *Folkways*, published in 1907. "On the other hand, his book *Folkways* is on a scientific level even higher above the *Social Classes* than Spencer's *Descriptive Sociology* is above the plane of *Man vs. The State.*" (p. 733n.) (Albion W. Small, "Fifty Years of Sociology in the United States," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 21, pp. 721-864, 1916)
"Long before his death the world of social science had left him in its wake..." (L. L. Bernard, "Herbert Spencer's Work in the Light of His Life," The Monist. Vol. 31, pp. 1-35, 1921, P. 6)

"The oblivion which has now overtaken the main treatises of his Synthetic Philosophy will perhaps prove perpetual." (p. 5) (R. C. K. Ensor--Some Reflections on Herbert Spencer's Doctrine that Progress is Differentiation. The Herbert Spencer Lecture, 1946. Oxford University Press. London, 1946)

"Although its influence far outstripped its merits, the Spencerian system serves students of the American mind as a fossil specimen from which the intellectual body of the period may be reconstructed." (Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought, revised edition, The Beacon Press, Boston, 1955. P. 32)


Lyman Bryson: "In a half century or a little more, a man goes from being almost a worldwide symbol of omniscience into being an almost forgotten trace of something in people's minds." (Justus Buchler, Mason Gross, and Lyman Bryson, discussion of Herbert Spencer's First Principles, Invitation to Learning, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 402-409, 1951-52. P. 402)

Gradually, sociologists paid less and less attention to the writings of Spencer. For example, Emory S. Bogardus, in the revised edition of his textbook, Sociology. (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1941) refers to Spencer only once, and that reference is only a brief citation of Spencer's "surplus energy" theory of play among children (p. 278):

"Who now reads Spencer?" (p. 226) "The Synthetic Philosophy penetrated to many a bookshelf which held nothing else quite so heavy... And now it is a drug on the second-hand market..." (pp. 226-227) (Crane Brinton--English Political Thought in the Nineteenth Century. Ernest Benn Limited. London, 1933)

"The Synthetic Philosophy penetrated to many a bookshelf which held nothing else quite to heavy. It lay beside the works of Buckle and Mill on the shelf of every Englishman of a radical turn of mind. It was read, discussed, fought over. And now it is a drug on the second-hand market, and hardly stirs the interest of the German or American aspirant to the doctorate in philosophy. We are more indifferent to this modern summa than to the summa of Thomas Aquinas! (Cranz Erinton, English Political Thought in the Nineteenth Century. Ernest Benn, Ltd., London, 1933. Pp. 226-227)

"In the Herbert Spencer Lecture of 1946, R. C. K. Ensor went so far as to suggest! that "the oblivion which has now overtaken the main treatises of his Synthetic Philosophy will perhaps prove perpetual." (Some Reflections on Herbert Spencer's Doctrine that Progress is Differentiation. The Herbert Spencer Lecture for 1946. Oxford University Press. London, 1946. P. 5.) And Charles Singer could not resist kicking the corpse, remarking: "That the evolutionary system of Spencer is an object of derision is one of the few points on which all philosophers seem now to agree." (A Short History of Science. The Clarendon Press. Oxford, 1946. P. 385.)

"The younger generation's intellectual desertion of Spencer is very remarkable; it is apparent even in America, where twenty-five years ago Spencer dominated sociological theorizing. Students no longer take pleasure in reading even his Study of Sociology, in spite of its instructive and stimulating nature. And yet the serious study of Spencer would be of the utmost value to many contemporary sociologists--not that they should accept his teaching en bloc; they should analyze critically and utilize what they can of the work of this wholly unromantic and sober writer." (Leopold von Wiese, Systematic Sociology on the Basis of the Beziehungslehre and Gebildelehre, adapted and amplified by Howard Becker, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1932. P. 688)

Those few social scientists who have taken the trouble to read Spencer have themselves been partisans of a social philosophy opposed to Spencer's, that they have been too concerned in refuting Spencer's philosophy of politics, than in separating from it and evaluating independently, his social science. Thus partisanship on the opposite side has been responsible for much of Spencer's contemporary oblivion. (RLC)

"Nobody now reads the works of Comte or Spencer. It is hard to believe that they were ever found readable. They scarcely even appear in modern bibliographies. In short, they are dead. Yet 60 years ago Spencer's books were read all over the world in many languages by thousands of devoted disciples." (Arthur David Ritchie, Studies in the History and Methods of the Sciences, The Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1958. P. 159)
The analyses of Athenian society, the rise of democracy in it, appears on pp. 222-224; see also text pp. 93, 238.

"Practically, therefore, it was the growing industrial power which then produced, and thereafter preserved, the democratic organization of Ancient Athens." (Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Sociology, Vol. 2, pp. 424-425, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1899. Pp. 424-425)

Spencer has some brilliant historical analyses, e.g., of the role of commerce and industry in widening the base of Athenian oligarchy and paving the way for Greek democracy. (Vol. II, pp. 391-393).

Spencer had a keen appreciation of the importance of economic factors. Again and again he cites their importance in the origin and development of this or that practice or institution. For example, he argues that the origin of representative bodies is based upon the development of an increasing town population, and the rise of artisan and merchant classes.

Spencer's explanation of the origin of the democratic state, with representative government as being the result of the increase in economic production and commerce (Vol. II, pp. 421-423) seems to me perfectly sound, and yet completely ignored by political historians and theorists who are quick to criticize him for his personal political philosophy of individualism and laissex faire.

"In proclaiming the doctrine that science is the most important subject to be taught in school with ample illustration, ingenious argument, and forcible reiteration, Spencer was a true educational pioneer; ..." (Charles W. Eliot, "Introduction," Essays on Education, Etc., by Herbert Spencer, Everyman’s Library, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1911. P. viii)

"This doctrine that science was the most important thing to be taught in school was extremely repulsive to the established profession of education in England, where Latin, Greek, and mathematics had been the staples of education for many generations, and were believed to afford the only suitable preparation for the learned professions, public life, and cultivated society." (Charles W. Eliot, "Introduction," Essays on Education, Etc., by Herbert Spencer, Everyman’s Library, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1911. Pp. vii-vii)

"Accordingly, the ideas on education which he put forth more than fifty years ago have penetrated educational practice very slowly—particularly in England; but they are now coming to prevail in most civilised countries, and they will prevail more and more. Through him, the thoughts on education of Comenius, Montaigne, Locke, Milton, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and other noted writers on this neglected subject are at last winning their way into practice, with the modifications or adaptations which the immense gains of the human race in knowledge and power since the nineteenth century opened have shown to be wise." (Charles W. Eliot, "Introduction" to Essays on Education, Etc., by Herbert Spencer, Everyman’s Library, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1911. P. xiv)

"The essay on "What Knowledge is of Most Worth?" contains a hot denunciation of that kind of information which in most schools used to usurp the name of history. It is enough to say of this part of Spencer’s educational doctrine that all the best historical writers since the middle of the nineteenth century seem to have adopted the principles which he declared should govern the writing of history. As a result, the teaching of history in schools and colleges has undergone a profound change. It now deals with the nature and action of government, central, local, and ecclesiastical, with social observances, industrial systems, and the customs which regulate popular life, out-of-doors and indoors. It depicts also the intellectual condition of the nation and the progress it has made in applied science, the fine arts, and legislation, and includes descriptions of the peoples’ food, shelters, and amusements. To this result many authors and teachers have contributed; but Spencer’s violent denunciation of history as it was taught in his time has greatly promoted this important reform." (Charles W. Eliot, "Introduction" to Essays on Education, Etc., by Herbert Spencer, Everyman’s Library, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1911. P. xiv)
From the Journal of Lady Katherine Amberley, mother of Bertrand Russell: "Friday 31 May [1867]. It was very hot I stayed in all day. Mr. Herbert Spencer came to see me at 4 and stayed an hour / giving me quite a discourse on Education—I showed Baby [an elder sibling of Bertrand Russell, not here identified but probably John] to him and told him I was following his plan of no unnecessary trammels." (Quoted in Bertrand and Patricia Russell, The Amberley Papers, The Letters and Diaries of Bertrand Russell's Parents, 2 Vols., W. W. Norton & Company Inc., New York, 1937. Vol. 2, pp. 39-40)


"You will not, I fear, gain much from my counsels on questions of Education. It should be borne in mind that no quite satisfactory results are at present attainable. A developed method is fully applicable to, and by, a fully-developed humanity. At present, partial benefits can / alone be looked for; and there must always be more or less of compromise between what is desirable and what is practicable." (Letter from Herbert Spencer to Lady Katherine Amberley, dated March 30, 1869. Quoted in Bertrand and Patricia Russell, The Amberley Papers, The Letters and Diaries of Bertrand Russell's Parents, 2 Vols., W. W. Norton & Company Inc., New York, 1937. Vol. 2, pp. 306-307)

"... Low gowns bring me naturally to Herbert Spencer, whose book "Education"—she had previously said she had read it / I shd much like to read, tho' there will of course be more pain than pleasure in becoming more convinced than ever of the number of wrong things I have done & right ones left undone towards my children—Pray send it ...." (Letter from Lady Katherine Amberley to her son John, dated April 7, 1869. Quoted in Bertrand and Patricia Russell, The Amberley Papers, The Letters and Diaries of Bertrand Russell's Parents, 2 Vols., W. W. Norton & Company Inc., New York, 1937. Vol. 2, p. 264)

"I have read Herbert Spencer's book on "Education" and like it much. A great many nails he hits with wonderful accuracy square on the head." (Letter from Gail Hamilton /Mary Abigail Dodge/ to George Wood /"Peter Schlemihl"/ dated May 6, 1864. Quoted in Gail Hamilton's Life in Letters, edited by H. Augusta Dodge, 2 Vols., Lee and Shepard, Boston, 1901. Vol. 1, p. 402)

"Spencer's neglected science of education has become one of the most pretentious of sciences." (Crane Brinton, English Political Thought in the Nineteenth Century, Ernest Benn, Ltd., London, 1933. P. 236)
Of Spencer’s Education: “There is scarcely a book in which a keen scent for details comes more agreeably to animate a fund of solid arguments, and from which it is more useful to extract the substance.” (Gabriel Compayré, The History of Pedagogy, translated by W. H. Payne, D. C. Heath & Company, Boston, 1901. Pp. 555-556)

Of Spencer’s Education: "... if it does not yet contain a perfect and fully worked out theory of education, ... [it] is at least a vigorous effort, and a notable step towards a rational pedagogy, towards a science of education ...." (Gabriel Compayré, The History of Pedagogy, translated by W. H. Payne, D. C. Heath & Company, Boston, 1901. P. 539)

"Every flush of life and flash of light that reinvigorates the university of today is due to the rays that purpled the dawn when Herbert Spencer said: "Let there be light in every nook and corner of the educational world."" (A. E. Winship, "Herbert Spencer as an Education Force," Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty-Third Annual Meeting of the National Education Association, pp. 230-231, P. 231. Winship editor of Journal of Education)

"What Bushnell, Beecher, and Brooks were in theology and in ecclesiastical courage, Spencer was in education. His was the fascination of personality in phrasing, of relish in thinking. In whatever he thought or said there was a nervous impulse that set the schoolmen of the world aglow with interest in proportion to the spasms created among the philosophies before which he did not bow. What Darwin and Huxley were in science, Spencer was in education." (A. E. Winship, "Herbert Spencer as an Educational Force," Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty-Third Annual Meeting of the National Education Association, pp. 230-231, 1904. P. 230)

"Herbert Spencer was the greatest educational force of the latter half of the nineteenth century. As an individual opinion this would have no significance but it is as near an official utterance as is possible for the United States government to deliver on such a question. In the Congressional Library in Washington, our noble shrine, the government has placed the name of ten educational leaders selected from the world’s history. Only one of these was chosen from the latter half of the nineteenth century, only one was alive when his name was blazoned on the roll of honor. That was Herbert Spencer." (A. E. Winship, "Herbert Spencer as an Education Force," Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty-Third Annual Meeting of the National Education Association, pp. 230-231, 1904. P. 230) (Winship was Editor of the Journal of Education)

"My mother read his little work on education, and was much taken with it, though thinking it was too highly pitched for practical purposes. She told me it was the best book ever written for bachelor's children." (Letter from Joseph D. Hooker to Inglis Palgrave dated December 23, 1903. Quoted in Leonard Huxley, Life and Letters of Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, 2 Vols., D. Appleton & Company, New York, 1918. Vol. 2, p. 454)
"No competent person can look over the history of education in the United States during the past twenty years and not see that Mr. Spencer's ideas have been among the principal forces in bringing about the great and happy changes which have taken place." (Letter from Andrew D. White to W. J. Youmans dated November 8, 1882. Quoted in Edward L. Youmans, editing Herbert Spencer on The Americans and the Americans on Herbert Spencer, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1883. P. 85)

At a meeting of the National Education Association on February 23, 1904 there was a "Symposium on the Educational Theories and Work of Herbert Spencer." This meeting was held in Atlanta. The symposium was evidently in commemoration of Spencer, who had died the previous December.

"... nowhere, perhaps, has his influence been more pronounced than in educational thought and practice. This influence has come not so much from his Essay on Education as from his system of thought as a whole. Here again it is the genetic method and the larger synthetic view that have been effective." (W. Rose, "Herbert Spencer as a Philosopher," Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the National Education Association, 1904, pp. 231-235. P. 234. Rose was Professor of the History and Philosophy of Education at the University of Tennessee.)


"... whenever I have read Herbert Spencer I have been surprised at my interest in him, and gratified to find that I could understand a good deal. His essay on "Education" was almost a white stone in my reading career, his "Facts and Comments" was a cheerful companion for a week ...." (C. Lewis Hind, More Authors and I, Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1922. P. 270)


"Spencer's treatise, Education, was a best seller, both in the United States and in England. It became a favorite text for teacher training institutions." (Frederick Mayer, A History of Educational Thought, second edition, Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., Columbus, Ohio, 1966. P. 325)

Spencer's Education was translated into French, German, Italian, Russian, Hungarian, Dutch, Danish, Spanish, Swedish, Bohemian, Greek, Japanese, Chinese, and "several of the languages of India." (Alfred W. Tillett, Spencer's Synthetic Philosophy: What It Is All About, P. S. King & Son, London, 1914. P. ix) This book of Spencer's was also translated into Arabic and Mohawk.

"... Messers Watts & Co. have just issued the third edition (completing 60,000 copies) of his [Spencer's] 'Education: Intellectual, Moral, Physical,' at sixpence, and inform us that the book has been translated into sixteen languages." ("W.", "Herbert Spencer," The Athenaeum, No. 3972, pp. 794-795, December 12, 1903. P. 794)
"... we cannot but admire these brilliant pages of Spencer's *Education*, where a profound and humorous thinker has defined with extraordinary distinctness, and animated by a breath of intense life, some of the fundamental principles of the new education. If he restates theories known before, it is in order to develop them broadly and forcibly; also, it is to give to them a personal accent, the full warmth of his philosophic faith, a spirit of liberty, a sentiment of sweetness and humanity, and, finally, what may surprise us, a very noble religious tone."


"Mr. A. Bertrand, the translator of *Herbert Spencer’s Education*, and the most authentic disciple of its educational theory, has attempted to plan such a programme in his "Four Years' Lycee Course."" (Gabriel Compayre, *Herbert Spencer and Scientific Education*, translated from the French by Maria E. Findlayson, Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., New York, 1907. P. 58)

"Under the banner of Spencerian pedagogy will be henceforth enlisted the people who prefer ... the substantial nourishment of science to the trivialities and elegancies of verbal instruction; who would open the mind to the real world, who wish to form positive and practical men, associated ... by the general knowledge they possess to the universal life of Nature and of human societies." (Gabriel Compayre, *Herbert Spencer and Scientific Education*, translated from the French by Maria E. Findlayson, Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., New York, 1907. Pp. 109-110)

"... in a work claiming to be new *Education*, there is a certain lack of originality, which is concealed by a brilliant style and a lively imagination in details. Mr. Spencer is a clever stage manager. Thanks to an amazing gift of expression, he clothes the ideas of others magnificently; but as to education it is possibly just to say that the book contains very few really new ideas." (Gabriel Compayre, *Herbert Spencer and Scientific Education*, translated from the French by Maria E. Findlayson, Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., New York, 1907. P. 108)

Spencer "... borrows the greater part of his ideas on education from Pestalozzi, and from further back than Pestalozzi, from Rousseau." (Gabriel Compayre, *Herbert Spencer and Scientific Education*, translated from the French by Maria E. Findlayson, Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., New York, 1907. P. 51)

"In short, this book on Education shows no trace of the heaviness characteristic of didactic treatises; it has all the charm of an agreeable conversation, lively wit, and what one writer has even called "rough good humour."" (Gabriel Compayre, *Herbert Spencer and Scientific Education*, translated from the French by Maria E. Findlayson, Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., New York, 1907. P. 18)
"... out of all that Spencer thought and wrote, this short sketch of a theory of rational education has contributed the most, at least in foreign lands, to render his name well known and illustrious. Its success has been remarkable in every country, and especially in France, where several translations have run into ten editions: the first was published in 1878, when a reform of our scholastic institutions was just beginning. Of all the author's works it is, perhaps, this which has the greatest chance of surviving ...." (Gabriel Compayre, Herbert Spencer and Scientific Education, translated from the French by Maria E. Findlayson, Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., New York, 1907. P. 5)

"No one has stronger claim to the title of scientific and philosophic educationist." (Gabriel Compayre, Herbert Spencer and Scientific Education, translated from the French by Maria E. Findlayson, Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., New York, 1907. P. 108)

"But of all his writings, the book on education has apparently been most widely influential. It has appeared in --among other tongues-- modern Greek, Sanskrit, and Arabic; and education in Mexico and the South American States has been greatly moulded by it. In 1901 Spencer wrote me that he had learned some time before this from the Chinese Ambassador that two translations of his writings were in progress in China--one into the Northern and the other into the Southern dialect." (William Henry Hudson, An Introduction to the Philosophy of Herbert Spencer, revised edition, Watts & Co., London, 1906. P. 24n.)

"The idea that the child should in learning repeat the experience of the race that is, go from the particular and concrete to the general and the abstract, generally attributed to Spencer, was in fact put forward almost a hundred years earlier, by Condillac, the founder of Sensationalism, friend of Rousseau and Diderot and tutor to a grandson of Louis XIV. He wrote: "The method which I have followed does not resemble the usual manner of teaching; but it is the very way in which men were led to create the arts and the sciences."


"As late as the 1920s and 1930s, when Spencer's social philosophy was indeed discarded, his educational ideals were promoted afresh by Dewey ...." (J. D. Y. Peel, Herbert Spencer on Social Evolution, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1972. P. x1)

"If the revolution leading to progressive education had a beginning, it was surely with the work of Herbert Spencer." (Lawrence A. Cremin, The Transformation of the School, Alfred A. Knopfe, New York, 1961. P. 91)
"It seems likely that the influence of Marcel, himself a disciple of Rousseau, accounts for the similarity between many of Spencer's ideas and those of the Émile, which Spencer had never read." (Norma T. Walker, "The Sources of Herbert Spencer's Educational Ideas," Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 22, pp. 299-308, 1930. (Shows convincing, with quotations, that Spencer borrowed a number of his educational ideas from the Frenchman Claude Marcel (1793-1876).)

"Even his Spencer's education theories have been repeatedly traced back to Rousseau's Émile, though, as he himself informed me, he had never even heard of that work at the time his own book Education on education was written ...." (William Henry Hudson, An Introduction to the Philosophy of Herbert Spencer, revised edition, Watts & Co., London, 1906. P. 36n.)


"It has also been suggested that the publication in 1858 of Herbert Spencer's famous essay on the place of natural reactions in education acted as a stimulus to Meredith's satirization of Sir Austin Feverel's despotic parental system. (If this was so, I must confess that it is a bit of enlightenment which I could have done without.)" (Siegfried Sassoon, Meredith, The Viking Press, New York, 1948. P. 25)

Spencer's Education " ... obviously owes a lot to Rousseau. When this was mentioned, he protested, in angry good faith, that he had never read Rousseau. He had, however, read Pestalozzi, on whom Rousseau's influence had been powerful." (Raymond Mortimer, "Books in General," The New Statesman and Nation, Vol. 24, pp. 411-412, 1942. P. 411)

" ... his [Spencer's] book on education--the only one of his books that still allows itself to be read ...." (Raymond Mortimer, "Books in General," The New Statesman and Nation, Vol. 24, pp. 411-412, 1942. P. 411)

"Mr. Spencer sacrifices here, as always, the education of the emotions to positive instruction. His citizen would be able to analyze the institutions of his country; but will he learn to love it? Will he not lack the one thing that can make all knowledge, even the fullest, of use,--a reverent loyalty to the constitution, a love of humanity and patriotic enthusiasm?" (Gabriel Compayré, Herbert Spencer and Scientific Education, translated from the French by Maria E. Findlayson, Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., New York, 1907. P. 39)
Spencer's contributions have been absorbed into the bloodstream of modern thought. It was with much of Spencer's scientific writing as it was with the theories he expounded in his book, *Education* (1861), about which Helen Keller wrote: "It is the highest praise that can be bestowed upon this treatise, that it seems now a book of obvious if not of commonplace philosophy, whereas, when it was published, it was recognized as revolutionary in the extreme." (Helen Rex Keller, *The Reader's Digest of Books*. New and greatly enlarged edition. The Macmillan Company. New York, 1945. P. 250)

"It is the highest praise that can be bestowed upon this treatise /Education/, that it seems now a book of obvious if not of commonplace philosophy, whereas, when it was published, it was recognized as revolutionary in the extreme. So rapidly has its wisdom become incarnated in methods if not in systems." (Helen Rex Keller, *The Reader's Digest of Books*. New and greatly enlarged edition. The Macmillan Company. New York, 1945.)
"Now, the French have very little trouble with Spencer's treat­
ment of religious subjects, but his irreverence for the ancient 
classics greatly troubles them.... And so the Minister of Public 
Instruction in France has arranged to prepare an edition of Spen­
cer's "Education" which the Government may approve, and in which 
the part dealing with science and classics is omitted." (Edward L. 
Youmans, "Sociology and Theology at Yale College," The Popular Sci­
ence Monthly, Vol. 17, pp. 265-269, 1880. P. 269)
"Your letter to the Examiner is much milder than I expected, and hardly makes apparent the severe objections you mentioned to me. But I am not sorry that there should be a little boiling of the peas shot at poor Mr. Spencer just now, for he is running the gauntlet in rather a fatiguing way between Cambridge men who are criticizing his physics and psychology, and historians who are criticizing the 'Sociological Tables' on which he has already spent £500, in the hope that he is doing the world a service. Perhaps you do not see 'the Academy,' which has been regenerated and has started on its new life with great vigour; it is in this periodical that the 'Tables' have been discussed. Then there is John Fletcher Moulton, a Cambridge mathematician, who is carrying on a venomous as well as harassing attack in the British Quarterly; and there are various bitings and snappings of metaphysicians in other directions. Such are the delights of philosophical celebrity ...." (Letter from George Eliot to Sara Sophia Hennell dated February 10, 1874. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, editor, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1954. Vol. 6, p. 15)

George Eliot wrote in April, 1852: "I went to the opera on Saturday—[I Martiri at Covent Garden—with my 'excellent friend, Herbert Spencer,' as Lewes calls him. We have agreed that we are not in love with each other and that there is no reason why we should not have as much of each other's society as we like. He is a good, delightful creature and I always feel better for being with him." (Anna Theresa Kitchel, George Lewes and George Eliot, The John Day Company, New York, 1933. P. 143)

"This sarcasm reflects the coolness between Spencer and GE over his betraying to Chapman her authorship of Adam Bede. GHL wrote in his Journal, 24 March 1859: "Spencer came to spend the day with us. But his coming was only pain and disappointment to Polly, on account of his coolness. He used to be one of our friends on whom we most relied; but jealousy, too patent, and too unequivocal, of our success, acting on his own bitterness at non-success, has of late cooled him visibly. He always tells us the disagreeable things he hears or reads of us and never the agreeable things. His jealousy of me has been growing these last two years; and it is more excusable than his jealousy of her. --His visit was one we were glad to see the end of." (Gordon S. Haight, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1954. Vol. 3, p. 49n.)


"Miss Beedy's account of the way Mr. Spencer arrived at his present point of view' ('Three ladies—Miss Eliza Sturgis, Mrs. Ashford, and Miss Beedy—were visiting Coventry in behalf of Woman's Suffrage. Miss Beedy, an American whom Miss Sara Sophia Hennell found very congenial, told her that Spencer's defection from their cause was owing to his friend E. L. Youmans, who had frightened him about the American women.) is not quite correct, I think. His opinions, I should say, do not take date from his acquaintance with Mr. Youmans, or with any facts about American women." (Letter from George Eliot to Sara Sophia Hennell dated April 23, 1874. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1955. Vol. 6, p. 40, 40n.)

"We were pleased to hear that you had seen Mr. Spencer. We always feel him particularly welcome when he comes back to town: there is no one like him for talking to about certain things. But I am sorry to find that he gave you a poor impression about his health. To me those future unabsorbable volumes of the Synthetic Philosophy would be misery and madness; but I think they brighten the prospect of life to him." (Letter from George Eliot to Sara Sophia Hennell dated September 12, 1862. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, editor, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1955. Vol. 4, p. 57)

"If you should see Mr. Herbert Spencer in his way from the North, pray do not allow a word to escape you that would imply your knowledge of our having been wounded by his change of manner towards us. There has been a little explanatory correspondence between him and Mr. Lewes, and I am anxious that the subject should now be left alone. He is unconscious of the change, and it is folly for people who differ widely in their susceptibilities, to raise questions concerning mutual feeling." (Letter from George Eliot to Charles Elay dated September 18, 1859. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, editor, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1954. Vol. 3, p. 154)

"Herbert Spencer writes me word that he has had an attack of palpitation of the heart—but is quite recovered. I am going to quote to him a passage I found in Sainte-Beuve which just fits him. 'Quand j'ai dit qu'il n'avait jamais eu de passion et d'excès, je me suis trop avancé; il a eu un excès de raison.'" (Letter from George Eliot to Sara Sophia Hennell dated November 25, 1853. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1954. Vol. 2, p. 128)

"Herbert Spencer means to quit his position as sub-editor of the Economist and trust to writing. This is entre nous. I rather tremble for him—with his nature, article-writing for bread will be worse than he has just now persuaded himself to think. Still this editorship is a horrid gêne and tethers him to London all the year, with the exception of a few days' holiday now and then." (Letter from George Eliot to Mrs. Charles Bray dated April 16, 1853. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1954. Vol. 2, p. 98)

"You have never told me what impression Mr. Spencer's book [First Principles] make on you as it proceeds. I am anxious to know whether the elaborate proof of generalities which are accepted as soon as stated will not cause some of the later numbers to be wearisome for the majority of readers. I hope not, for it is touching to see how his whole life and soul are being poured into his book and into keeping himself well that he may write it. The very watching against disease is becoming a disease in itself. He has had his father in London lately, and the old gentleman, seated upright on a small chair, looks almost the younger of the two." (Letter from George Eliot to Sara Sophia Hennell dated January 14, 1862. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, editor, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1954. Vol. 4, p. 9)

"... I cannot help regarding it a serious mistake to suppose that her [George Eliot's] novels were largely determined by Mr. Spencer's theory of evolution, as I find asserted by a recent critic who ends an article with the declaration that "the writings of George Eliot must be regarded, I think, as one of the earliest triumphs of the Spencerian method of studying personal character and the laws of social life." This seems to me so far from being true that many of George Eliot's characters appear like living objections to the theory of evolution." (Sidney Lanier, The English Novel: A Study in the Development of Personality, revised edition, (first edition, 1883) Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1897. P. 299)

"Mr. Spencer is coming to lodge in Harewood Square close by us, but as we exclude visitors except on a Saturday we shall not, I dare say, see the more of him. He is very delightful when we don't get on art and classical literature—subjects on which there is a great gulf fixed between us. I don't mind it when we are alone, but I am always uneasy for him when I see he is boring other people. For, to my thinking, it is more pitiable to bore than to be bored." (Letter from George Eliot to Sara Sophia Hennell dated November 22, 1861. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, editor, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1954. Vol. 3, p. 469)

"My brightest spot next to my love of old friends, is the deliciously calm new friendship that Herbert Spencer gives me. We see each other every day and have a delightful camaraderie in everything. But for him, my life would be desolate enough now with poor Mr. C. [Chapman] so occupied and so sad—but he runs away with a great deal of my time." (Letter from George Eliot to Mrs. Charles Bray dated May 27, 1852. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1954. Vol. 2, p. 29)
"I never saw such a woman. There is nothing a bit masculine about her; she is thoroughly feminine and looks and acts as if she were made for nothing but to mother babies. But she has a power of stating an argument equal to any man; equal to any man do I say? I have never seen any man, except Herbert Spencer, who could state a case equal to her.... Spencer thinks she is the greatest woman that has lived on the earth—the female Shakespeare, so to speak; and I imagine she is not far from right." (Letter from John Fiske to Mrs. John Fiske dated November 23, 1873. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, editor, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1955. Vol. 5, pp. 464, 465)

"After GE's death Spencer refused to let Cross use her letters in the Life, and, when invited to contribute a sketch of her, replied that he had already written one but was saving it for his own Autobiography. When he learned from newspaper gossip of a generally believed rumor that he had been engaged to GE only to be jilted when GHL came upon the scene, he was greatly perturbed and sent Cross a note of contradiction to be inserted in the Life: "The intimacy naturally led to rumours. It was said that Mr. Spencer was in love with her. This however was not true. I have the best possible warrant for saying that his feeling did not pass the limits of friendship." The sensitive widower, finding this "jarring," suggested a version of his own. "Much better no note at all than the one you propose," Spencer replied. Cross took him at his word ...." (Gordon S. Haight, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1954. Vol. 1, p. lxxv)

"Except for a brief coolness caused by his [Spencer's] unintentional betrayal of the secret that GE was the author of Adam Bede and a later dispute over GHL's suggestions that his system owed something to Comte's, they remained good friends to the end. As his Synthetic Philosophy took form, the difference between their minds grew more apparent. He was always seeking a simple formula to explain the multiform complexity of human life; GE, no less critical, more powerful in intellect, tempered her judgment with deep human sympathy, finding in the dullest and most perverse an individual spirit to be respected." (Gordon S. Haight, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1954. Vol. 1, p. lxxvi)

"Herbert Spencer's article on the Genesis of Science is a good one. He will stand in the Biographical Dictionaries of 1954 as "Spencer, Herbert, an original and profound philosophical writer, especially known by his great work, ... which gave a new impulse to psychology, and has mainly contributed to the present advanced position of that science, compared with that which it had attained in the middle of the last century. The life of this philosopher, like that of the great Kant, offers little material for the narrator. Born in the year 1820," &c." (Letter from George Eliot to Miss Sara Hennell, July 10, 1854. Quoted in J. W. Cross, George Eliot's Life, 3 Vols., William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1885. Vol. 1, p. 325)
"My brightest spot, next to my love of old friends, is the deliciously calm new friendship that Herbert Spencer gives me. We see each other every day, and have a delightful camaraderie in everything. But for him my life would be desolate enough." (George Eliot, letter to Miss Sara Hennell, May 27, 1852. Quoted in J. W. Cross, George Eliot's Life, 3 Vols., William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1885. Vol. 1, p. 281)

"But I want to tell you that you must not interpret H. S.'s indifference to your ideas and authorship as any special negation towards you because you are a woman. He has, whenever it was possible, shown just the same blank towards Mr. Lewes, who certainly has more claims on him as an older friend very generous to him in the days of his obscurity. With regard to not reading books or listening to ideas, I must again plead for him, as I have done before, that he is not a reader, and that his mind both "spontaneously and systematiquement" rejects everything that cannot be wrought into the web of his own production. He has this in common with many productive minds. And you must not regard him in the light of a person who will be moved by sympathies. We have long given up vain expectations from him and can therefore enjoy our regard for him without disturbance by his negations. He comes and consults us about his own affairs, and that is his way of showing friendship. We never dream of telling him our affairs, which would certainly not interest him." (Letter from George Eliot to Sara Sophia Hennell dated November 23, 1877. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, editor, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1955. Vol. 6, p. 426)

"That evening conversing with Spencer showed me that George Eliot was to be congratulated on her escape from Spencer; his companionship developed the rationalistic side of her nature and so harmed her as an artist beyond all telling. If anyone cares to compare "The Scenes from Clerical Life," 1858, or even "Adam Bede," 1859, or "The Mill on the Floss," 1860, with "Daniel Deronda," 7 Vols., 1874-76, he will realize the full extent of the artistic injury done her by long close association with Spencer. She ought to have been brought to feel more and think less; whereas she was encouraged to think and reason and debate instead of living and loving." (Frank Harris, Contemporary Portraits, Second Series, Published by the Author, New York, 1919. P. 238)

"She [George Eliot] had been re-reading [at the time of her death], with Mr. Cross, the Data of Ethics and the Study of Sociology (the last, indeed, for the third time) ..." (Herbert Spencer, letter to Edward L. Youmans written probably early in 1881. Quoted in Herbert Spencer, An Autobiography, 2 Vols., Watts & Co., London, 1926. Vol. 2, p. 364)
"I regard George Eliot not only as the greatest woman novelist, but as the greatest woman that ever lived. A woman of masculine understanding and intelligence, a woman who makes one hope that in time women may come to be the equals of men." (Herbert Spencer, as quoted by Frank Harris in Contemporary Portraits, Second Series. Published by the Author, New York, 1919. P. 229)

George Eliot "was something very unlike the typical Victorian novelists, she was an 'intellectual' writer. Her mind was always active; experience set in immediately and instinctively analysing and generalising, to discovering why and how things happened. And when she turned her attention to the world around her it was this analysis that started her creative imagination working." (David Cecil, Early Victorian Novelists, Pelican Books, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1948. P. 215)

"I must tell you a characteristic trait of Herbert Spencer. I happened to say in reference to a criticism I had given of a passage in his article on the Universal Postulate, which passage he expunged in consequence, that the better form for the axiom which is the basis of the syllogism as explained by Mill would be—"Things which have the same fixed relation to the same thing have the same fixed relation to each other." Mill gives "Things which co-exist with the same thing" etc. The next day he came to tell me in intense delight how important the suggestion was to him in his work on Psychology—how it had given him just the bridges he wanted etc. and that he should put a long note in his book explaining how he came by the idea. Is he not a dear bit of conscientiousness and scrupulosity?" "Spencer was as good as his word. Principles of Psychology, 1855, P. 162 ...." (Letter from George Eliot to Sara Sophia Hennell dated March 9, 1854. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1954. Vol. 2, p. 145, 145n.)

"... what am I to say about Adam Bede? That I have read it with laughter and tears and without criticism. Knowing as you do how constitutionally I am given to fault finding, you will know what this means... After praising it enthusiastically as a work of art, he continues... and then let me not forget the moral effect, I feel greatly the better for having read it, etc." (Letter from Herbert Spencer to George Eliot dated ca. September 29, 1859. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New York, 1954. Vol. 3, P. 170n.)

"Mr. Spencer is gone to Derby for a month or two to give some companionship to his father, who has been much out of health lately. He has bought a microscope, and is going to work at it, which I hope will be an agreeable variety in his brain labour." (Letter from George Eliot to Sara Sophia Hennell dated April 13, 1861. Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, editor, The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols., Yale University Press, New Haven, 1954. Vol. 3, p. 404)
"Of Mr. Herbert Spencer's friendship I have had the honour and advantage for twenty years, but I believe that every main bias of my mind had been taken before I knew him. Like the rest of his readers, I am of course indebted to him for much enlargement and clarifying of thought."

Perhaps it will amuse you to know that our friend Mr. Spencer, who used to despise biography as the least profitable occupation of brain, is now busily collecting the materials of his own family and personal history!"

"This morning I have had quite an enthusiastic letter from Herbert/Spencer about 'Adam Bede.' Forgive him his trespasses! He says he has not changed towards us, and what a man is not conscious of he must not answer for.""

"Mr. Lewes is writing to Mr. Spencer to ask him to come and dine with you here on Wednesday. We give the latest day, because being a great diner-out, he may have engagements.""

"Was it Grant Duff or someone else who told me a story of "George Eliot" and Herbert Spencer; that, walking with her one day on the terrace of Somerset House, he felt he might have proposed to her if, "having a face like a horse's head," she had not been so ugly?"

"It is on record that "to obtain emotional relaxation after writing 'Adam Bede' she read through Spencer's Psychology the second time.""

"And just try to imagine what would have happened if Herbert Spencer and George Eliot had been man and wife!"


"... Herbert Spencer, the most intimate and helpful of her [George Eliot's] London friends, had from his first acquaintance with her urged her to venture into this field [writing novels]." (Laura Johnson Wylie, Introduction to Adam Bede, by George Eliot, pp. ix-xxiv. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1917. P. x)

"... about three weeks later [after the publication of George Eliot's first really successful novel, Adam Bede] she entered in her journal the news, brought by Herbert Spencer, that a member of Parliament had in the House of Commons quoted Mrs. Foyser's [a character in Adam Bede] "It wants to be hatched over again and hatched different."" (Laura Johnson Wylie, Introduction to Adam Bede, by George Eliot, pp. ix-xxiv. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1917. P. ix)

In his Introduction, the editor of the Penguin edition of Middlemarch refers to Casaubon as "... the pedantic and sterile Casaubon." (p. 8) Later he says, "Above all, there is Casaubon: chill, impotent, a creature of shadows who walks an interior labyrinth and says of himself, with unconscious irony: 'I feed too much on the inward sources; I live too much with the dead.'" (p. 14) And elsewhere he says, "But while it may be academically amusing to debate whether Casaubon was based on Mark Pattison, Dr Brabant, or some other actual person, ...." (pp. 16-17). (W. J. Harvey, Introduction to George Eliot, Middlemarch, ed. by W. J. Harvey, pp. 7-22. Penguin Books. Harmondsworth, 1976)

Casaubon says: "The task, not withstanding the assistance of my amanuensis, has been a somewhat laborious one, but your [Dorothea's, his wife's] society has happily prevented me from that too continuous prosecution of thought beyond the hours of study which has been the snare of my solitary life." (George Eliot, Middlemarch, edited by W. J. Harvey. Penguin Books. Harmondsworth, 1976. P. 231)
'How was it that in the weeks since their marriage, Dorothea had not distinctly observed but felt with a stifling depression, that the large vistas and wide fresh air which she had dreamed of finding in her husband's [Casaubon's] mind were replaced by ante-rooms and winding passages which seemed to lead nowhither?' (George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, edited by W. J. Harvey. Penguin Books. Harmondsworth, 1976. Pp. 227-228)

"He about the age of 187 was being deeply impressed by Spencer's *Study of Sociology.*" (p. 99) (Houston Peterson, *Havelock Ellis*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1928.)

"My religious views have during the last three years been very unsettled and my task has been to bring them into harmony. Reading and thinking constantly to this end, I believe I have now finally left all doubt behind. The writers whose works have influenced me most are perhaps Carlyle, Goethe, Herbert Spencer, James Hinton." (Letter from Havelock Ellis to his cousin John dated July 7, 1878. Quoted in Houston Peterson, *Havelock Ellis*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1928. P. 102)

"Two weeks later Henry wrote *circa* July 21, 1878 in his diary: 'And so I am converted,' with a brief explanation that this new mental state was immediately preceded by the reading of Hinton's *Life in Nature* and Spencer's *Study of Sociology* along with the reflections aroused by the clergyman's coming letter. ... In the later accounts of the experience Spencer and the clergyman's letter are not mentioned, and to-day Ellis cannot remember being definitely influenced by *The Study of Sociology*; but he does recall being helped at this period by Spencer's *First Principles.*" (Houston Peterson, *Havelock Ellis*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1928. Pp. 102-103, 103n.)
John Stuart Mill, in his *System of Logic*, Vol. 1, Bk. III, ch. vi, had called attention to the fact that there are some causes in which the joint effect of several causes is the algebraic sum of their separate effects—for example, the composition of forces in dynamics. "But in the other description of cases the agencies which are brought together cease entirely, and a totally different set of phenomena arise." Here "a concurrence of causes takes place which calls into action new laws bearing no analogy to any that we can trace in the separate operation of the causes." These laws he proposed to call "heteropathic laws." Writing along the same lines, Spencer's long-time friend, George H. Lewes, in his *Problems of Life and Mind*, Series II, 1875(?), p. 212 (or 412) drew the distinction between resultant effects and emergent effects. (This is apparently the first use of the term 'emergent' in this sense.) (See C. Lloyd Morgan, "The Case for Emergent Evolution," *Journal of Philosophical Studies*, January, 1929, p. 23) "The resultants are the effects which we are able to deduce from the causes; as when we say that the weight of salt is the sum of the weights of sodium and the chlorine that combine to produce it. The emergents are the unpredictable effects, which, so to speak, supervene together with the resultants; as the taste of the salt, its crystalline form and color, which lacking all resemblance to the properties of either sodium or chlorine seem to be something quite new and additional to the situation. Such emergent qualities appear to depend upon the way of arrangement or composition of the ingredients." (W. E. Hocking, *Types of Philosophy*, Revised edition, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1939, p. 57) But although Spencer was presumably familiar with this work of Lewes, he never made use of the distinction himself, and never adopted the term emergent.
... a letter which Mortimer wrote from Waterville, Me., May 16, 1878. Mortimer (probably the Alfred L. Mortimer, civil engineer, ... introduced himself as a reader of Emerson's own works for over twenty-years. Only one sentence in all this reading had aroused in him any painful dissent "& that one was y'r reply to an interviewer regarding 'Herbert Spencer,' in wh. you said he was 'a Hock-writer who writes equally / well upon all subjects.'" Mortimer now wished to hear that Emerson had since discovered abundant reason to reverse the criticism and to yield to Spencer the "immense honor" that he deserved." (Ralph L. Rusk, editor, The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 6 Vols., Columbia University Press, New York, 1939. Vol. 6, pp. 312n.-313n.)

In an interview with a reporter from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, Ralph Waldo Emerson was quoted as saying that Herbert Spencer was nothing better than a "stock-writer, who writes equally well upon all subjects." This statement rankled Spencer's loyal disciple, Edward L. Youmans, with the utmost scorn he could muster: "And what shall we say ... when the Seer himself snubs the author of First Principles as a "stock-writer," and says to the author of that unclean imposture, "Leaves of Grass," "I greet you at the beginning of a great career?" (Edward L. Youmans,"Herbert Spencer and the Doctrine of Evolution," Appendix to M. E. Cazelles, Outline of the Evolution-Philosophy, Translated from the French by Rev. O. B. Frothingham. D. Appleton & Company, New York, 1875. p.158)

"On Nov. 7, 1881, George S. Cottman wrote from Ingallston Post Office, Ind., telling of his great interest in Spencer and of his searching of Emerson's works "for the least hint implying your estimate" of that philosopher. Cottman asked whether Emerson would not now send him such an estimate." (Ralph L. Rusk, editor, The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 6 Vols., Columbia University Press, New York, 1939. Vol. 6, p. 313n.)

"Dear Sir, On my return from a long absence I find among my letters yours asking my opinion of Herbert Spenser's /sic/ writings. I regret / that I am entirely ignorant /sic/ of them, & I do not reccall /sic/ any writing of mine such as you quote. I remember that some friend sent me long ago what was probably /sic/ Mr /sic/ Spencers /sic/ first book, and that I looked into it but was not drawn to it, very likely my ignorance of the subject. And now that we have many writers on the same subjects I am still drawn to my old studies. I can hardly believe that I can have said any disrespecting word of Mr /sic/ Spenser as I have no recollection of the book /no ." (Letter from Ralph Waldo Emerson to A. L. Mortimer? Concord, c. June? 1878? Quoted in Ralph Rusk, editor, The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 6 Vols., Columbia University Press, New York, 1939. Vol. 6, pp. 312-313)
"At Derby about this time (December 7, 1847, when he apparently lectured there, and again December 9, when he visited there), Emerson seems to have met Herbert Spencer. In a letter written from London, Apr. 12, 1851, Spencer recalled the pleasure he had in their short time together at Derby during Emerson's last visit to England. He had long been an admirer of Emerson's writings, he declared, and now sent something of his own containing sentiments similar to those he had found in one of the essays after his own work was written." (Ralph L. Rusk, editor, The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 6 Vols., Columbia University Press, New York, 1939. Vol. 3, p. 447n.)

"Spencer also saw in Emerson, who had read Lamarck, a herald of the evolutionist point of view. During his visit to America, in 1882, he made a pilgrimage to Emerson's house in Concord. This is said to have been the only occasion on which Spencer paid tribute to another thinker." (Van Wyck Brooks, New England: Indian Summer, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1965. P. 110n.)

"Had Herbert Spencer succeeded in his efforts to attract the attention of Emerson and to establish satisfactory relations with him, as he wished to do, there might have been a significant story to tell here of the intercommunity of American and English thought in the second half of the nineteenth century. But we have only the evidence of what might have been, and nothing further need be said either of Spencer or of any of his contemporaries." (Ralph L. Rusk, editor, The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 6 Vols., Columbia University Press, New York, 1939. Introduction to Vol. 1, p. lix)

"To E. A. Silsbee, Concord? May? c. 21? 1860? (Silsbee, Salem, Mass., May 28 (endorsed 1860), thanks Emerson for "the very elegant letter which you did me the honor to send me." Silsbee quotes a letter he had from Spencer the preceding February, in which the English philosopher asked about Emerson's attitude and hoped that, if favorable, it would be made known and so help Spencer. Spencer's letter had apparently accompanied a copy of the circular announcement of his projected work on synthetic philosophy." (All by Rusk) (Ralph L. Rusk, editor, The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 6 Vols., Columbia University Press, New York, 1939. Vol. 5, p. 219)

"I have turned up a new thing with regard to Spencer. He has heard that Emerson characterized him as a "stock writer," which means a "job writer." His disgust is unspeakable; he has been for the past week gathering up the proofs that he has had one method from the beginning, that he has never written a single article proposed by anybody else; that he had the law of evolution worked out as the basis of a philosophy before Darwin or Wallace ever published a line about it." (Letter from Edward L. Youmans to his sister, Eliza A. Youmans, dated September 13, 1871. Quoted in John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. P. 283)
EMPIRICISM

Spencer's intellectual ancestry goes back, not to speculative philosophy, but to empirical science.

- Philipp Frank, in his Modern Science and Its Philosophy (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1949, p. 302), refers to Spencer as "the leader of nineteenth-century British empiricism."

ENERGY

"I was much gratified the other day on reading your article in the Philosophical Magazine. I was the more gratified because I found in it verification of a view for which I have myself contended. When preparing the last edition of First Principles, I had a prolonged discussion with my friends Tyndall and Hurst, who wished me to modify certain views I had expressed,--views which, in consequence of our discussion, I elaborated more fully. They failed to convince me that I was wrong, and I failed to show them that I was right. Now I am glad to find that I do not stand alone in the view I took, that the conception of potential energy, as scientific men at present hold it, is not a legitimate conception, and that in fact a force cannot be transformed into a relation of positions in space." (Letter from Herbert Spencer to James Croll dated October 13, 1876. Quoted in Autobiographical Sketch of James Croll by James Campbell Irons, Edward Stanford, London, 1896. P. 311)
"... Spencer came to the study of biology in the spirit and with the equipment of the engineer..." (D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, On Aristotle As A Biologist with A Prooemion on Herbert Spencer, Herbert Spencer, for 1913, 31pp., The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1913. P. 11)

"These [the years he spent as an engineer] were the years that he spoke of afterwards as 'the futile part of his life'; but it is as plain as an open book that they were years in which his mind was moulded and his mechanical outlook on phenomena developed and confirmed." (D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, On Aristotle as a Biologist with a Prooemion on Herbert Spencer, Herbert Spencer Lecture for 1913, 31pp., The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1913. P. 4)

"Again, in certain chapters [of Principles of Biology] he shows, after the fashion of the engineer, and from the experience of the bridge-builder, how the principles of stress and strain are concerned in the fabric, and in the physiology, of the organism; how physical and mechanical relations alter in the organism with increasing bulk; and how incident forces of gravity, growth, and pressure control or determine the shape of leaf and bone and single cell. Under the guidance of a wholesome restraint, a whole school of morphologists, Roux's school of Entwickelungsmechanik, are now investigating these self-same problems, and so bringing to the help of morphology some of those physical concepts which began to be the stock-in-trade of the physiologists when Majendie wrote his Leçons sur les phénomènes physiques de la Vie (1830)." (D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, On Aristotle as a Biologist: With a Prooemion on Herbert Spencer, The Herbert Spencer Lecture for 1913, 31 pp., The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1913. P. 8)

"... in common with every other creature, Man is modifiable ... [and] his modifications, like those of every other creature, are ultimately determined by surrounding conditions ...." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 336)

Spencer is aware of environmental factors in social evolution. He ascribes to the mountainous valleys of Greece a leading role in creating the warring petty states or chiefdoms of the Hellenes, and in maintaining their respective independence. (Vol. II, p. 373, 395).
"Where pasture is abundant and covers large area, the keeping of flocks and herds does not necessitate separation of their owners into very small clusters: instance the Comanches, who, with their hunting, join the keeping of cattle, which the members of the tribe combine to guard. But where pastures is not abundant, or is distributed in patches, many cattle cannot be kept together; and their owners consequently have to part." (Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, Vol. 1, 3rd revised edition, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1890. P. 692)

"These phenomena of social evolution have, of course, to be explained with due reference to the conditions each society is exposed to—the conditions furnished by its locality and by its relations to neighbouring societies." (Herbert Spencer, *The Study of Sociology*, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. P. 53)

"As already pointed out, we have, in pre-pastoral stages, as among the Bushmen, cases where scarcity of wild food necessitates parting into very small groups, usually single families; and clearly when, instead of game and vermin to be caught, cattle have to be fed, the distribution of pasturage, here in larger cases and there in smaller ones, will determine the numbers of animals, and consequently of human beings, which can keep together." (Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, Vol. 1, 3rd revised edition, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1890. Pp. 692-693)

"While spreading over the Earth mankind have found environments of various characters, and in each case the social life fallen into, partly determined by the social life previously led, has been partly determined by the influences of the new environment ...." (Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, Vol. 3, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1897. P. 331)


Spencer was aware of the effect of environment upon social organization. He pointed out that those regions were the inhabited and was much broken up by mountains or bodies of water tended to foster independent political units in a confederacy if threatened from the outside. (Vol. II, Ch. 7).

Spencer employed ecological explanations, although of course he did not call them that. For example, in accounting for compound (as opposed to single) political heads, he pointed out that mountainous terrain, with numerous isolated valleys, favored their formation.
ENVIRONMENT

"While the society as a whole has the character of its sustaining system determined by the general character of its environment, inorganic and organic, the respective parts of this system differentiate in adaptation to the circumstances of the localities ...." (Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Sociology, Vol. 1, first edition, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1878. P. 615)

"Though, in regions where circumstances permit, the tribes descended from some original tribe migrate in all directions, and become far removed and quite separate; yet, where the territory presents barriers to distant migration, this does not happen: the small kindred communities are held in closer contact, and eventually become more or less united into a nation." (Herbert Spencer, "The Social Organism," In Essays: Scientific, Political, & Speculative, Vol. 1, pp. 265-307, Williams and Norgate, London, 1891. Vol. 1, pp. 281-282)


EQUILIBRIUM

"Evolution under all its aspects, general and special, is an advance towards equilibrium. We have seen that the theoretical limit towards which the integration and differentiation of every aggregate advances, is a state of balance between all the forces to which its parts are subject, and the forces which its parts oppose to them (First Prin. § 170). And we have seen that organic evolution is a progress towards a moving equilibrium completely adjusted to environing actions." (Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Biology, revised edition, 2 Vols., D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1899. Vol. 2, p. 537)

"For example, so far is it from being true, as he [Prof. J. E. Cairnes] supposes, that the existence of stationery societies is at variance with the doctrine of social evolution, it is, contrariwise, a part of the doctrine that a stationery state, earlier or later reached, is one towards which all evolutorial changes, social or other, inevitably lead." (Herbert Spencer, "A Note on the Preceding Article," The Fortnightly Review, Vol. 23, pp. 214-216, 1875. P. 214)
(James Thompson Bixby, The Ethics of Evolution, Small, Maynard and Company, Boston, 1900. (Most of the book seems to be a thoughtful, constructive criticism of Spencer's views on the evolution of ethics.))

(William Ritchie Sorley, The Ethics of Naturalism, 1904. Most of the book is on evolution and ethics; Spencer discussed extensively. W. H. Hudson said it contained much valuable criticism of Spencer.)

"Spencer wished to find a scientific basis for morality. An enemy of utilitarianism, he preferred to believe that there is a divinely implanted moral sense." (Terry M. Perlin, Review of Herbert Spencer: The Evolution of a Sociologist by J. D. Y. Peel, Society [formerly Transaction], Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 119-122, Nov.-Dec., 1972. P. 120)

"Spencer's ethics is, in the large, an attempt to impart to Utilitarian hedonism a scientific and deductive character, and to rescue it from mere empiricism." (Arthur Kenyon Rogers, English and American Philosophy Since 1800, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1922. P. 154)

"It is interesting to note, as we have seen, that neither Locke nor Spencer saw any necessary connexion between the diversity of moral judgements but thought on the contrary that a science of ethics was possible." (Morris Ginsberg, Essays in Sociology and Social Philosophy, A Pregrine Book, Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1968. P. 256)

"Obviously, indeed, Prof. Huxley cannot avoid admitting that the ethical process, and by implication, the ethical man, are products of the cosmic process. For if the ethical man is not a product of the cosmic process, what is he a product of?" (Hbert Spencer, "Evolutionary Ethics," The Athenaeum, No. 3432, pp. 193-194, August 5, 1893. P. 193)

William James, speaking mockingly of the ultimate ethical state envisioned by Spencer, referred to: "... when the ultimate lady-like tea-table elysium of the data of ethics shall prevail, such questions as the breaking of eggs at the large or the small end will span the whole degree scope of possible human warfare ..." (William James, "The Importance of Individuals," The Open Court, Vol. 4, pp. 2437-2440, 1890-91. P. 2439)
"So far as ethical problems were concerned, I at first regarded Mr. Darwin's principles rather as providing a new armoury with which to encounter certain plausible objections of the so-called Intrusionists, than as implying any reconstruction of the utilitarian doctrine itself. Gradually, however, I came to think that a deeper change would be necessary, and I believe that this conviction came to me from a study of some of Mr. Herbert Spencer's works." (Leslie Stephen, The Science of Ethics, second edition, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1907. Pp. v-vi)

"It will now begin to be seen what "evolution" is for, and I find the main reason why he has jumped over to ethics is that people had got tired of waiting for some result, and the ethical writers—mainly Sidgwick, of Cambridge—have said, "After all, morality is found to have nothing to do with evolution."" (Letter from Edward L. Youmans to his sister, Eliza A. Youmans, dated December 27, 1878. Quoted in John Fiske, Edward Livingston Youmans, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1894. Pp. 353-354)

"The 'evolutionary' utilitarianism of Spencer likewise abandons us halfway without any answer, since, following Darwin, it tries to dissolve the concrete historical morality in the biological needs or in the 'social instincts' characteristic of a gregarious animal, and this at a time when the very understanding of morality arises only in an antagonistic milieu, that is, in a society torn by classes ...." (Leon Trotsky, The Basic Writings of Trotsky, edited by Irving Howe, Random House, New York, 1963. P. 377)

"In his famous letter to J. S. Mill, Spencer clearly defined the evolutionary view of ethics, according to which experiences of utility, organised and consolidated through all the past generations of the human race, have, by means of hereditary transmission, taken the form of moral intuitions, emotional responses to right and wrong conduct, which have no apparent basis in individual experiences of utility. According to Spencer, ethical development which is from the simple to the complex is conditioned by the social environment." (Anonymous, "The Philosophy of Herbert Spencer," The Edinburgh Review, Vol. 199, pp. 352-373, 1904. P. 371)
"Spencer's "Ethics" is a most vital and original piece of attitude-taking in the world of ideals. His politico-ethical activity in general breathes the purest English spirit of liberty, and his attacks on over-administration and criticisms on the inferiority of great centralized systems are worthy to be the textbooks of individualists the world over. I confess that it is with this part of his work, in spite of its harshness and inflexibility of tone, that I personally sympathize most." (William James, Memories and Studies, Longmans, Green, and Co., New York, 1911. pp. 140-141)

"This great generalization [that "human nature" has been transformed from cruel and brutal to kind and sympathetic as the conditions to which it had to adapt changed] is not only Mr. Spencer's chief contribution to sociology as to psychology, but it is probably destined in time to be regarded as the most important single contribution to the moral sciences since Aristotle. Strictly speaking, it is the only really new contribution to those sciences since the Greeks, the only modern ethical idea not found in Greek philosophical thought." (Franklin H. Giddings, "Modern Sociology," The International Monthly, Vol. 2, pp. 536-554, 1900. P. 540)

"All changes of social arrangements have to be made with a view to the least injustice. Every change involves inflicting evils somewhere, and while out changes must always be in the direction of an ideal equity, they have to be made with a view to the minimum of proximate evil." (Herbert Spencer, letter to the London Daily Chronicle, August 29, 1894. Reprinted in "Mr. Herbert Spencer and the Land Restoration League," Land Restoration Tract, No. 1, Office of the English Land Restoration League, London, December, 1894. P. 9)

In arguing that his approach to the problems of ethics was scientific rather than a priori, Spencer wrote: "... the method I contend for is that of deducing from the laws of life under given conditions, results which follow from them in the same necessary way as does the trajectory of a cannon-shot from the laws of motion and atmospheric resistance." (Herbert Spencer, "Replies to Criticisms on The Data of Ethics," Mind, Vol. 6, pp. 82-98, 1881. P. 86)

Writing of Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure" Lilly says: "And it must be confessed that if judged by the latest, and presumably the most perfect, system of Protestant morals, Isabella's virginal constancy is indefensible. 'Totality of life in self, in offspring, and in fellow-men,' is Mr. Herbert Spencer's criterion of most highly evolved conduct, of conduct superlatively ethical. Such totality Isabella would certainly have achieved by compliance with Angelo's desire; and therefore, I suppose, her non-compliance stands condemned by the Spencerian rule of right and wrong." (W. S. Lilly, Studies in Religion and Literature, Chapman & Hall, London, 1904. P. 22)
"The points, then, of resemblance in the philosophy of Paracelsus (in Browning's poem) and Herbert Spencer which we have traced here are: that conduct, love, happiness, are all subject to the laws of evolution, that is, our ideas of good conduct, true love, and real happiness are ever reaching out towards higher standards; that pleasure and happiness are legitimate as the ultimate aim of conduct, though a high moral sense will often prevent pleasure from being the immediate aim; that as our standards of pleasure become higher, our egoistic gratifications will depend on the most exalted altruistic actions; love and sympathy for our fellow-creatures will reign supreme; that, notwithstanding knowledge of absolute good comes by slow degrees, there exists in us a consciousness of the absolute, and to know consists in "opening out a way whence the imprisoned splendor may escape." (Helen A. Clarke, "Paracelsus" and "The Data of Ethics," Poet-Lore, Vol. 1, pp. 117-127, 1889. P. 125)

"Two sentences which have become classical may represent the best results accomplished, up to this time, by the science of ethics. One is the phrase of Matthew Arnold, that speaks of the Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness: the other is that of Spencer, that speaks of the experiences of utility, organized and consolidated through all past generations of the human race, as having become in us the source of the faculties of moral intuition. These sentences stand over against one another, expressing the fundamental principles of opposing schools. One speaks of a purpose in the universe; the other is designed to exclude all teleological conceptions. The one makes righteousness the end towards which and for which a Power not ourselves is working: the other represents righteousness as subordinate to other results which have come to pass through it." (C. C. Everett, "The Data of Ethics," The Unitarian Review and Religious Magazine, Vol. 13, pp. 43-59, 1880. P. 43)

"I can't / for the life of me understand how the professor can reconcile his distressingly clever discovery of "a metaphysical creed" and a "tea table elysium" on the Spencerian system with Spencer's own careful statements to the effect that there can be no such thing as a moral science but as drawn from the tangible progress of events, and measured from the point of view of a postulated ideal. The professor seems to be shrieking for the recognition of something like this as if it were his own discovery of the nebular hypothesis. He doesn't seem to see that Spencer's philosophy includes his own, for what it is worth, and that his self-elected position as metaphysical funny man is almost pathetically unimpressive." (Letter from E. A. Robinson to John Hays Gardiner dated November 2, 1898. Quoted in Selected Letters of Edwin Arlington Robinson, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1940. Pp. 15-16)
"In his Data of Ethics Herbert Spencer gives to the world the results of his investigation into the foundation of morality. These inquiries he conducted independently of the New Testament, with reference to the facts and laws of human nature. By his own peculiar processes of reasoning, he develops a practical rule of morality which is simply a restatement of the Christian law. How far he may have been unable to divest himself of New Testament ideas, and was unconsciously led by them in his investigations, can, of course, never be determined; but this distinguished living sociologist un­designedly bears his testimony to the rationale of moral principles inculcated by Jesus Christ. Nor can he resist the acknowledgment that the conclusion he has reached is "a rationalized version of the ethical principles of the current creed"--in short, a verifica­tion of Christ's teachings." (Daniel Dorchester, D.D., Christianity in the United States, revised edition, Hunt & Eaton, New York, 1895. P. 660)

"... Herbert Spencer into whose empiricism Darwin inculcated the idea of 'evolution' as a special vaccine, taught that in the moral sphere evolution proceeds from 'sensations' to ideas. Sensa­tions conform to the criterion of immediate pleasure, while ideas permit one to be guided by the criterion of future, lasting and higher pleasure. Thus the moral criterion here, too is that of 'pleasure' and happiness: But the content of this criterion ac­quires breadth and depth depending upon the level of 'evolution.' In this way Herbert Spencer too, though the methods of this own 'evolutionary' utilitarianism, showed that the principle, 'the end justifies the means' does not embrace anything immoral. It is naive however, to expect from this abstract 'principle' an answer to the practical question: what may we, and what may we not do? Moreover this principle 'the end justifies the means' naturally raises the question 'and what justifies the end?' In practical life as in the historical movement the end and the means constant­ly change places." (Leon Trotsky, The Basic Writings of Trotsky, edited by Irving Howe, Random House, New York, 1963. Pp. 376-377)

"This last remark may suggest some answer to the more special question, whether my book has not been made superfluous by the dis­cussion of the same topic upon the same / assumptions by the lead­ing exponent of the philosophy of evolution in Mr. Herbert Spencer's Data of Ethics. To this I reply that I differ from Mr. Herbert Spen­cer in various ways; and moreover, that we really stand at differ­ent points of view. Mr. Spencer has worked out an encyclopaedic sys­tem, of which his ethical system is the crown and completion. I, on the contrary, have started from the old ethical theories, and am trying to bring them into harmony with the scientific principles which I take for granted. My aim is more limited, though we ought to coincide in results so far as we cover the same ground. I have, as it were, surveyed the province from within, without attempting to pass the frontiers, whilst he reaches the provinces after sur­veying the whole empire of scientific thought; ...." (Leslie Ste­phen, The Science of Ethics, second edition, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1907. Pp. vii-viii)
"But so far from regarding these intellectual recognitions of utility as preceding and causing the moral sentiment, I regard the moral sentiment as preceding such recognitions of utility, and making them possible. The pleasures and pains directly resulting in experience from sympathetic and unsympathetic actions, had first to be slowly associated with such actions, and the resulting incentives and deterrents frequently obeyed, before there could arise the perceptions that sympathetic and unsympathetic actions are remotely beneficial or detrimental to the actor; and they had to be obeyed still longer and more generally before there could arise the perceptions that they are socially beneficial or detrimental. When, however, the remote effects, personal and social, have gained general recognition, are expressed in current maxims, and lead to in-junctions having the religious sanction, the sentiments that prompt sympathetic actions and check unsympathetic ones are immensely strengthened by their alliances." (Herbert Spencer, "Morals and Moral Sentiments," The Fortnightly Review, Vol. 15, pp. 419-432, 1871. P. 431)

"He, Herbert Spencer, too, like John Locke, is concerned to disprove the theory of a universal moral sense. In harmony with his evolutionary theory he concludes that each society develops the kind of morals needed for its survival. We must accordingly expect a general correlation between social type and moral sentiments—a correlation which will be close in respect of conditions essential for survival, but less complete in matters such as temperance and chastity which need not directly interfere with the fundamental needs of social cooperation. The correlations are, however, not defined with any precision and, in any case, they are not employed by him to justify any extreme forms of ethical relativity. On the contrary, he thinks it possible to reach an 'Absolute Ethics', concerned with ascertaining necessary relations between actions and their consequences, and 'deducing from fundamental principles what conduct be detrimental and what conduct must be beneficial' in an ideal society (Spencer 1892, I, p. 58). From these principles Relative Ethics can derive in a more empirical manner the code applicable to actual societies." (Morris Ginsberg, Essays in Sociology and Social Philosophy, A Peregrine Book, Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1968. Pp. 237-238)

Herbert Spencer "... made probably the most important scientific contributions to that field, yet made ...." (Henry Holt, Garrulities of an Octogenarian Editor, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1923. P. 333)
In referring to Spencer, Herskovits spoke of "... the determined ethnocentrism that marked his thinking." (Melville J. Herskovits, Man and His Works, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1948. P. 469)

"Instead of passing over as of no account, or else regarding as purely mischievous, the superstitions of the primitive man, we must inquire what part they play in / social evolution; and must be prepared, if need be, to recognize their usefullness." (Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Sociology, Vol. 2, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1899. Pp. 230-231)

"Thus, then, contemplating social structures and actions from the evolution point of view, we may preserve that calmness which is needful for scientific interpretation of them, without losing our powers of feeling moral reprobation or approbation." (Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Sociology, Vol. 2, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1899. P. 242)

"Characters are to be / found among rude peoples which compare well with those of the best among cultivated peoples. With little knowledge and but rudimentary arts, there in some cases go virtues which might shame those among ourselves whose education and polish are of the highest." (Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Sociology, Vol. 2, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1899. Pp. 233-234)

"Yet only by seeing things as the savage sees them can his ideas be understood, his / behaviour accounted for, and the resulting social phenomena explained." (Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1891. Pp. 115-116)

"While describing and illustrating the various forms / of bias which a student of Sociology must guard against, I became conscious [while writing The Study of Sociology] that I myself needed the warnings I was giving. The result was that, while retaining my social ideals, I gained a greater readiness to recognize the relative goodness of forms which have passed away, and a greater preparedness for looking at the various factors of social development in an unprejudiced manner. Without losing my aversion to certain barbaric institutions, sentiments, and beliefs, considered in the abstract, I became more impressed with the necessity of contemplating them calmly, as having been in their times and places the best that were possible, and as unavoidably to be passed through in the course of social evolution." (Herbert Spencer, An Autobiography, 2 Vols., Watts & Co., London, 1926. Vol. 2, pp. 253-254)
"Another trait which has been ascribed to primitive man is his inability of concentration when any demand is made upon the more complex faculties of the intellect. I will mention an example which seems to make clear the error committed in this assumption. In his description of the natives of the west coast of Vancouver Island, Sproat says: "The native mind, to an educated man, seems generally to be asleep .... On his attention being / fully aroused, he often shows much quickness in reply and ingenuity in argument. But a short conversation wearies him, particularly if questions are asked that require efforts of thought or memory on his part. The mind of the savage then appears to rock to and fro out of mere weakness." Spencer, who quotes this passage, adds a number of others corroborating this point. I happen to know the tribes mentioned by Sproat through personal contact. The questions put by the traveller seem mostly trivial to the Indian and he naturally soon tires of a conversation carried on in a foreign language and one in which he finds nothing to interest him. I can assure you that the interest of those natives can easily be raised to a high pitch and that I have often been the one who was wearied out first." (Franz Boas, "Human Faculty as Determined by Race," Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Vol. 43, pp. 301-327, 1894. Pp. 320-321)

"And thus prepared, we need feel no surprise on being told that the Zuni Indians require "much facial contortion and bodily gesticulation to make their sentences perfectly intelligible;" that the language of the Bushmen needs so many signs to eke out its meaning, that "they are unintelligible in the dark;" and that the Arapahos "can hardly converse with one another in the dark."" (Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Sociology, 1st edition, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1878. P. 149) (Spencer gave no sources for any of his quotations in the first edition of Principles of Sociology, but in the third edition, 1885, he added them. The Zuni reference is Popular Science Monthly, 1876, p. 580. Francis Klett, The Zuni Indians of New Mexico, Pop. Sci. Monthly 58:413-591, 1876.) The Bushmen and Arapaho references are Sir John Lubbock, The Origin of Civilization, 4th ed., 1882, p. 413. But the for the first edition of Principles of Sociology, Spencer must have used an earlier edition, such as the first edition, 1870. The Bushmen quote is from Lubbock himself, and he gives no source. The Arapaho quote is taken by Lubbock from Richard Burton, The City of the Saints, p. 151)

In Principles of Sociology, Vol. 1, first edition, p. 149, Spencer had quoted from Lubbock, and through him from Richard Burton, passages indicating that the Bushmen, Zuni, and Arapaho had such primitive languages they had great need of gestures, and so could hardly communicate at night. J. W. Powell corrected Spencer's error: "The Zuni and the Arapaho Indians have a language with a complex grammar and copious vocabulary well adapted to the expression of the thoughts incident to their customs and status of culture, and they have no more difficulty in conveying their thoughts with their language by night than Englishmen have in conversing without gaslight." (p. 86) Powell used this as one example "to illustrate the worthlessness of a vast body of anthropologic material to which even the best writers resort." (p. 86) (Elsewhere in this article Powell criticized Richard Burton's The City of the Saints in particular.) (J. W. Powell, "On Limitations to the Use of some Anthropologic Data," First Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology 1879-'80, pp. 71-86, Washington, D.C., 1881)
"Spencer mentions as a particular case of this impulsiveness the improvidence of primitive man. I believe it would be more proper to say instead of 'providence, optimism. 'Why should I not be as successful to-morrow as I was to-day?' is the guiding thought of primitive man." (Franz Boas, "Human Faculty as Determined by Race," Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Vol. 43, pp. 301-327, 1894. P. 320)

"In reaching such results (his general formulation of cultural evolution) Spencer made systematic use of materials from primitive life; and discriminating readers will readily discern that he would have attained to those results with great difficulty, if at all, and with much less surety, had he, after the order of his predecessors, rejected primitive materials or known nothing about them." (William Graham Sumner and Albert Galloway Keller, The Science of Society, Vol. 3. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1929. P. 219)

"... it is his (Comte's) analogies between politics and physics which are so illuminating in his work, as in that of his English compeer, Herbert Spencer, and it is the weakness of both in the direction of anthropology (Myres means their supposed lack of ethnographic knowledge) which mainly accounts for the shortness of their respective vogues." (John L. Myres, "The Influence of Anthropology on The Course of Political Science," University of California Publications in History, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1916, 81pp. P. 67)

"Approaching the subject from the standpoint of anthropology (the data on contemporary societies in his Descriptive Sociology were not collected until later and were then probably interpreted in the light of the previously collected data from primitive societies), he concerned himself primarily with the interpretation of primitive life and thought." (L. L. Bernard, "Herbert Spencer's Work in the Light of His Life," The Monist, Vol. 31, pp. 1-35, 1921. P. 7)

"It is difficult to understand why Mr. Spencer has ransacked travellers' accounts of all the savages in the world, and has barely opened the records of classical antiquity which, although they mostly belong to times of well-advanced civilization (sic), have preserved for us priceless evidences of archaic belief and usage. When we say mostly, we of course refer to the important exception of the Homeric poems. The result is that Mr. Spencer overlooks many interesting and difficult questions, and also misses opportunities for strengthening his illustrations." (Anonymous, "Spencer's Ceremonial Institutions," The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art, Vol. 49, pp. 21-22, 1880. P. 22)
"In forming an opinion of the mental capacities of people, an examination of their language is no doubt extremely useful. But such an examination requires considerable care and circumspection. Mr. H. Spencer says /The Principle of Sociology, Vol. 1, 1st edition, p. 149/, "When we read of an existing South American tribe, that the proposition, 'I am an Abipone,' is expressible only in the vague way, 'I Abipone,' we cannot but infer that by such undeveloped grammatical structures only the simplest thoughts can be rightly conveyed." Would not some of the most perfect languages in the world fall under the same condemnation?" (F. Max Müller, Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1879. P. 83)

"Volumes II. and III. of Principles of Sociology are exclusively devoted to Institutions—Ceremonial, Political, Ecclesiastical, Professional, Industrial—and even in such very modern institutions as Co-operation and Socialism we have the irrepressible Bushmen of South Africa, Red Indians, and Australian savages brought up as examples. Now it is not that we have the evolution of institutions in these 134 chapters—but the larger part of all of them is devoted to primitive types, often to mere 'sports' or abnormal accidents, incautible caprice, and curious survivals." (Frederic Harrison, "Sociology: Its Definitions and Its Limits," The Sociological Review, Vol. 3, pp. 97-104, 1910. P. 103)

"In informing ourselves ... about the growth and functions of society, we are almost entirely dependent on testimony of an exceedingly defective kind—the chronicles of credulous and hasty historians, and the narratives of ill-trained or unscrupulous travellers, or the incidental allusions of soldiers or geographers." (p. 289) "... an effort to base a science on literature must necessarily be tentative and unsatisfactory. This is no reason for not making it in the present case and Mr. Spencer is not answerable for the imperfections of his materials ...." (p. 289) (Anonymous (E. L. Godkin), "Spencer's Descriptive Sociology," The Nation, Vol. 19, pp. 288-289, 1874)

"Spencer's "Descriptive Sociology" is chiefly derived from the latter /"... books of travel of untrained observers which are written to sell."/, and all its statements have to be taken cum grano salis." (Lester F. Ward, Review of Principles of Sociology by Franklin H. Giddings, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 8, pp. 1-31, 1896. P. 28)

"For myself I get utterly weary of the barbarous mutilations and nasty tricks of savages with which Spencer deluged Sociology out of the notes of his "Descriptive/Sociology." Ninety-nine out of every hundred of his references regale us with these aqualid brutalities. We know now enough about the persistence of irrational customs in all races and in all ages. But I decline to regard the tattoo marks on a Fijian girl's back as a contribution to Sociology." (Frederic Harrison, "Sociology: Its Definition and Its Limits," The Sociological Review, Vol. 3, pp. 97-104, 1910. Pp. 103-104)
"Mr. Spencer's successors will probably not feel, as he now does, that the study of the habits of filthy savages is far better than that of the lives of illustrious Europeans...." (Anonymous [William James], "Herbert Spencer's Data of Ethics," The Nation, Vol. 28, pp. 178-179, 1879. P. 178)


"I could wish that the whole five volumes [of Native Races of the Pacific States] were already available," writes Herbert Spencer to me in February, 1875, "and had been so for some time past; for the tabular statements and extracts made for the Descriptive Sociology, by Professor Duncan would have been more complete than at present." (Hubert Howe Bancroft, Literary Industries; A Memoir, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1891. P. 189)

"Mr. Herbert Spencer writes me: "In less than a year I hope to send you the first volume of the Principles of Sociology, in which you will see that I have made frequent and important uses of your book [Native Races of the Pacific States];" and indeed nothing could be more flattering than the references therein made to the Native Races. "During my summer in Europe," says Mr. Gilman in a letter from Baltimore, "I have frequently heard your great work spoken of, but nowhere with more commendation than I heard from Herbert Spencer. I am sure you must be more than paid for your labor by the wide-spread satisfaction it has given." (Hubert Howe Bancroft, Literary Industries; A Memoir, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1891. P. 185)

Spencer obtained information not only from published sources, but also from several correspondents (India, Japan), and from the Japanese minister to England.

"Spencer's access to empirical data was limited, but there is no doubt that he was an original thinker." (Alexander Alland, Jr., Evolution and Human Behavior, The Natural History Press, Garden City, 1967. P. 173)

Then there is the matter of Spencer's "evidence" with which he supports many of his conclusions--arrived at a priori. The Bushmen and the Arapahos "can hardly converse with one another in the dark" (Ch. X, p. 149). And so on...
... a prime fallacy in Mr. Spencer's system of sociology is the assumption that we can find in the primitive man all the evidence which is needed to explain the social man in general." (Albion W. Small, General Sociology, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1905. P. 99)

"... his studies of the Abors, the Eolas, the Creeks, the Dhimals, the Egahs, and other queer people, to the end of the alphabet, of whom his later books are as full as those of the pedants of the last century were of classical quotations ...." (Henry George, A Perplexed Philosopher, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York, 1965. P. 169)

Spencer's evolution does not take us to the advent of civilization and then stop. He deals with historically known higher societies: Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Rome, England, France.

"The impact of Spencer's stupendous collection of ethnological data, with its obvious implications as to the non-theological origins of human institutions, was stunning to the mind trained in traditional ways of thinking. His ideas were regarded as even more dangerous than those of Comte." (L. L. Bernard and Jessie Bernard, Origins of American Sociology, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1943. P. 844)

Harry Elmer Barnes, quoting at length a passage from Spencer's Autobiography in which the latter explains the mechanics of how he organized his voluminous and disparate ethnographic notes, attempts to ridicule or invalidate Spencer's work thereby. But this attempt is itself invalid. It is for Barnes--or any other critic of Spencer--to cite particular propositions in Principles of Sociology and to show that they are incorrect.

"Professional anthropologists soon came to be disdainful of the travelers' yarns and other questionable sources on which Spencer, in his day and generation, had been compelled so heavily to rely, and eventually their attitude was conveyed to the sociologists. After World War I, to set the very latest date, data were seldom if ever openly drawn from Spencer's treatises or from the works to which they referred." (Howard Becker, "Anthropology and Sociology," in For a Science of Social Man, edited by John Gillin, pp. 102-159, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1954. Pp. 130-131)
"His [Spencer's] method was one—that of the classical anthropologists—which is abandoned by all scholarly and critical anthropologists at the present time. He would gather together illustrative material from his Descriptive Sociology bearing upon the evolution of any particular institution, absolutely regardless of the relation of the particular practice to the whole cultural complex of the particular localities from which the information was drawn, or of the different stages of culture which contributed evidence in support of his thesis. The Shoshonean Indians and the Italian cities at the time of the Renaissance might thus be offered as supporting evidence for any particular process or "stage" in social evolution." (Harry Elmer Barnes, "Some Typical Contributions of English Sociology to Political Theory," The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 27, pp. 289-324, 1921, P. 306)

"Spencer's interests were essentially sociological. While he recognised that social systems could only be perceived and formulated by abstraction from the actual manners and customs of particular groups of men, his treatment of cultural phenomena as an "accumulation of superorganic products" was symptomatic of his secondary and derived interest in the content of cultural behaviour and the conditions that shaped it. It did not focus attention on the needs and difficulties of objective and meticulous examination of cultural phenomena and too easily assumed that facts adequate for sociological inference were easily gained and that one observer was as good as another. In other words, Spencer was an indifferent ethnographer." (Daryll Forde, "The Integration of Anthropological Studies," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 78, pp. 1-10, 1948, P. 2)

"Of the wealth of illustration, the enormous array of facts which Mr. Spencer has brought together in these volumes, it is desirable to say that they have been made the subject of some unjust criticism. It is true that Mr. Spencer has depended upon the reports of travelers, explorers and missionaries for the greater part of his material; it is true that the observations so obtained have not always been made with critical discernment; but, on the other hand, it is to be remembered that comparatively little work has ever been done in sociological observation by trained observers. The test, therefore, that should be applied to Mr. Spencer's data is the question: "Has he on the whole made a discriminating and critical use of such material as was available?" When judged by this standard, Mr. Spencer's work in sociology will be found to be above the average level of treatises on anthropology and ethnology." (Franklin H. Giddings, "Review of Spencer's Principles of Sociology, Vol. 3," Science, Vol. 5, pp. 732-733, 1897)


"Ever since 1839, J. P. Nichol, the astronomer, had been writing and re-writing a whole series of book popularizing astronomy. Over and over again, basing his conclusions on the nebular observations of the younger Herschel, he had painted a picture of a universe in the process of creation and in 1855 had used the word "evolution" to describe it." (Morse Peckham, "Darwinism and Darwinisticism," Victorian Studies, Vol. 3, pp. 19-40, 1959. P. 25)

"When the philosopher Herbert Spencer popularized the term evolution to denote the natural development of life on earth, he certainly intended to convey the impression of a necessary progress toward higher states." (Peter J. Bowler, Evolution; The History of an Idea. 3rd edition. University of California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2003. P. 8)

"In reply to question from Professor A. S. Packard, of Brown University, Providence, Spenser wrote (15 August, 1902): 'I believe you are right in crediting me with the introduction of the word 'evolution.' I did not, however, introduce it in the place of 'epigenesis,' or any word of specially biological application, but as a word fit for expressing the process of evolution throughout its entire range, inorganic and organic. I believe the introduction of it was between 1857, when 'Progress: Its Law and Cause' (was issued), and the time when the scheme for the Synthetic Philosophy was drawn up; and the adoption of it arose from the perception that 'progress' has an anthropocentric meaning, and that there needed a word free from that." (Duncan, p. 551n.)

"Lyell also gave Darwin one thing more: the word evolution, which he was the first to use in the sense of transformation of species in considering Lamarck's theory. [Footnote quotes passage from Lyell I have quoted.] This was in the volume of his Principles of Geology which Darwin received on 26 October 1832. Herbert Spencer used it in his essay on 'The Development Hypothesis' in 1852, and Darwin himself in the 6th edition of the Origin of Species, published in 1872." [No evidence is presented of the contention that Darwin got the word "evolution" from Lyell.] (Sir Gavin de Beer, "Charles Darwin," Proceedings of the British Academy, Vol. 44, pp. 163-183, 1958)
The word "evolution" was used about a dozen times in "Progress: Its Law and Cause," but it was still subordinate to "progress" as the master term by which Spencer described the major transformation of social forms.

"... what we call the moral law—the law of equal freedom, is the law under which individuation becomes perfect; and that ability to recognise and act up to this law, is the final endowment of humanity—an endowment now in process of evolution." (p. 440) "Civilization is evolving a state of things and a kind of character, in which two apparently conflicting requirements are reconciled." (p. 441) (Herbert Spencer, Social Statics, John Chapman, London, 1851. These are the only usages of the word evolution or evolved that I have found in the first edition of Social Statics--RLC)

"It is not that the word "evolution" was not used before in natural history, although, curiously enough, Darwin did not use it once in his "Origin of Species"; for since the second half of the eighteenth century we find it used by Bonnet, and afterward by Laurillard, the assistant and right hand of George Cuvier, who recalled the observations of Bonnet on evolution. If Lamarck had used it in his "Philosophie Zoologique," his theory might have had another destiny during his lifetime. Darwin had the acuteness to see what a capital handle it would make for his theory, and as soon as he saw it in Spencer's work, he transferred the word into all his other works, speaking constantly of the "principles of evolution." His sympathizers took to evolution, and now evolution is everywhere. It has dethroned revolution completely. The word "evolution" a fait fortune according to a French proverb." (Jules Marcou, Life, Letters, and Works of Louis Agassiz, 2 Vols., Macmillan and Co., New York, 1896. Vol. 2, p. 116)

The idea of evolution as a pervading cosmical process we derive from Herbert Spencer alone. Even the word is Mr. Spencer's; before his time, it was never used, I believe, in that particular sense; and after him, it was seldom employed by Darwin, who used it (when he used it at all) in reference to Mr. Spencer's general concepts. So, too, the phrases, "survival of the fittest," "adaptation to the environment," and others, due entirely to Mr. Spencer, are regarded as a rule by the averagely well-read man as purely "Darwinian."" (Grant Allen, "Spencer and Darwin," Appleton's Popular Science Monthly, Vol. 50, pp. 815-828, 1896-97. P. 818. [reprinted from Fortnightly Review/]}
Now that biologists have shown that biological advance is neither inevitable nor unilinear, and that thinkers have been able to provide general definitions of evolution more satisfactory than those of earlier evolutionary philosophers like Herbert Spencer or Bergson ...." (Julian Huxley, Evolution The Modern Synthesis, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1964. Unpaginated Introduction to this edition, pp. 31-32 counting first page of type as 1)
"The proper application of the principle of natural selection to societies is to see a competition of societal forms for survival, but what Spencer sees is a competition for survival of the members of any society. Spencer sees society as properly a proving ground in which the "breed" is to be improved by the elimination of those members of society who fail in the competitive activities traditionalized in the society. "Social Darwinism," then, has nothing directly to do with societal evolution. It has to do with the continuing biological evolution of the human species, with "improving the breed," in which the proper function of society is to increase the selective pressure." (Georg Weisz, letter of May 4, 1966).

"Fostering the good-for-nothing at the expense of the good, is an extreme cruelty. It is a deliberate stirring-up of misery for future generations. There is no greater curse to posterity than that of bequeathing to them an increasing population of imbeciles and idlers and criminals." This aspect of Spencer's thought was to provide a basis for the most vigorous branch of applied sociology in Britain in the first twenty years of the next century—Eugenics." (Philip Abrams, The Origins of British Sociology: 1834-1914, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968. P. 74)

"... Eugenics, was foreshadowed by Spencer..." (Victor Branford, Interpretations and Forecasts, Mitchell Kennerley, New York, 1914. P. 3)