

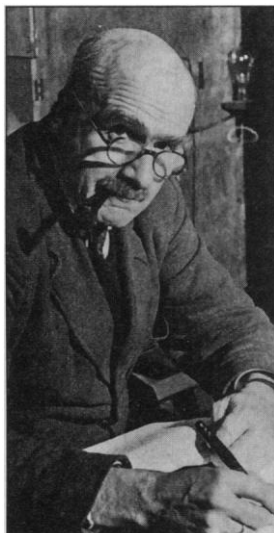
ment, and present state of the search to understand what makes the sun and similar stars behave the way they do.

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Other Books of Interest

Haldane's *Daedalus Revisited*. KRISHNA R. DRONAMRAJU, Ed. Oxford University Press, New York, 1995. xvi, 147 pp. \$29.95 or £19.95.

Early in 1923 J. B. S. Haldane, age 31, recently arrived in Cambridge to take up a readership in biochemistry, read to The Heretics club a paper that was then slightly expanded and published as the first of many slim volumes in the publisher Kegan Paul's new series To-day and To-morrow. Within two years *Daedalus, or Science and the Future* had been followed by Bertrand Russell's *Icarus, or the Future of Science*, F. C. S. Schiller's *Tantalus, or the Future of Man*, Mrs. Bertrand Russell's *Hypatia, or Woman and Knowledge*, and some ten other volumes, including Haldane's own *Calinicus, a Defense of Chemical Warfare*. Haldane was a physically large man (he dwarfs his chief, Frederick Gowland Hopkins, next to whom he sits in the 1930 photograph of the Cambridge Biochemistry Department that forms the frontispiece to this volume), one who had distinguished himself also by exceptional bravery in the Great War, and he delighted in holding unconventional opinions and in expounding them loudly and publicly. But *Daedalus* was the first of the many occasions on which he would do so formally—before a formal audience and in print. This, and the distress it caused Jack's "Liberal" father, the professor of physiology at Oxford—and the evident delight it caused his mother—we learn from the editor's introduction to this reprinting of the work. A student of Haldane's in the late 1950s when Jack—now "J.B.S."—went to live in India, the editor has subsequently made continuing efforts to memorialize him. And indeed the man and the Oxbridge-Bloomsbury intellectual milieu in which he moved were remarkable. Julian Huxley was one of his closest



J. B. S. Haldane. [From the dust jacket of *Haldane's Daedalus Revisited*]

friends, and *Daedalus's* central prognostication—that within a century world civilization would be dramatically transformed by a eugenic program based upon a technology of in vitro fertilization and fetal development—became the premise of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932). A republication of *Daedalus* draws its appeal from the present justice of one-half of Haldane's 1923 thesis, namely, that the era of physical technology was at its end and that of biological technology just beginning. This volume includes brief essays by M. F. Perutz, Freeman Dyson, Yaron Ezrahi, Ernst Mayr, E. A. Carlson, D. J. Weatherall, and N. A. Mitchison, focusing chiefly on the ill repute into which eugenics fell, and in which it remains. In this respect the most substantial essay is Weatherall's, which considers the present biomedical situation, while in respect of acuity, originality, and an empathetic sense for

J.B.S.'s stance on technology and society. Dyson's ten pages stand out.

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Vignettes: Technological Advance

Back in the days when science fiction was unsophisticated, a standard way to make people uneasy was to introduce the subject of carnivorous plants. The idea of a vegetable preying on animals has an eerie flavor, like the conceptions of cartoonist Charles Addams. When the plant has spiked jaws that grab hold of attractive human blonds, a reader or viewer is—or was, in the old, naïve days—reliably stirred.

... Today the thought of plants eating people is a little less disturbing. Science fiction and special movie effects have exposed us to such shattering concepts that a maiden being eaten by anything is taken pretty much in stride by even the prepubescent public.

—Archie Carr, in *A Naturalist in Florida: A Celebration of Eden* (Yale University Press)

A recent spate of stories announces that guns will soon kill more people than do cars, the present number-one cause of injury-related deaths. The two graphs are projected to cross each other in the mid-1990s when, it's to be imagined, some safety-engineered car will function just long enough to participate in a drive-by shooting.

—John Allen Paulos, in *A Mathematician Reads the Newspaper* (BasicBooks)

The Physicists. The History of a Scientific Community in Modern America. DANIEL J. KEVLES. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1995. xlix, 489 pp. Paper, \$17.95 or £14.25. Reprint, 1978 edition.

Since its first publication in 1978 Daniel Kevles's *The Physicists* has maintained its preeminence as a historical account of physics in the United States from the 19th century to the 1970s, notable particularly, in the words of *Science's* reviewer at the time, for its "forthright presentation of the public posture of the [physics] community" (*Science* 199, 525 [1978]). The book was reissued in 1987 by Harvard University Press with a new preface in which the author reflected both on the position physics enjoyed as essential to the national (principally defense) interest and the growing public distrust of science following on the Vietnam war. Now the book has been reprinted a second time. The preface to the earlier reprint was written just after President Reagan had endorsed the Superconducting Supercollider; the preface to the new one is a 34-page essay on the death of that venture. In it Kevles briefly recapitulates the circumstances that led to the special prestige of high-energy physics and sets forth the scientific considerations underlying the proposal to build the huge accelerator, then provides a narrative account of its fortunes, summarizing the activities of