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EVOLUTION AND ARCHAEOLOGY

I. *Introduction*

The view that Evolution is one of the most important facts, that will increasingly influence all thoughts and actions, slowly begins to gain ground with many research scientists¹. Even philosophers are beginning to see that they can learn much from the way their own sensory and intellectual apparatus has developed. The leading political party groups and general executives and managers of great business corporations are, unfortunately, not so far advanced. They are not yet completely aware of the fact that evolution is a continuous process which is not at this moment complete and that their daily actions influence this process strongly: they do not know what the results of their acts will be for the future evolution of their industries, nations, blocks of states and cultures. They are not conscious of the fact that by far the greatest masses of populations, species of plants, animals and prehistoric men, have died out in the course of evolution, that only extremely few groups have developed further into those existing today and that only the smallest part of living creatures have reached the peak of development—Homo Sapiens. They do not know that in the future some similar process will take place again².

It is my intention with this article to introduce a series of articles that will firstly make clear the meaning of pre- and protohistory in connection with evolution.

Evolution has, until now, mainly been studied by biologists, palaeontologists and physical anthropologists. The social and cultural evolution of man, which has lasted more than a million years, is, however, in the first place the field of pre- and protohistory. Until now it has been seldom considered systematically and, moreover, its relation to the physical evolution of animals and mankind has also only rarely been

¹ J. S. Huxley, *Life of the past*, 1953, p. 87.

‘All reality is in a perfectly proper sense evolution, and its essential features are to be sought not in the analysis of static structures or reversible changes but through the study of the irrevocable patterns of evolutionary transformation.’

² J. S. Huxley, *Evolution*, 1944, p. 578.

‘Progress is a major fact of past evolution; but it is limited to a few selected stocks. It may continue in the future, but it is not inevitable; man, by now become the trustee of evolution, must work and plan if he is to achieve further progress for himself and so for live.’

studied. We have not yet generally understood how much this cultural evolution of man is, particularly for us, the most important part of the whole evolution.

Secondly, we shall try to consider as exactly and objectively as possible, the main fundamental laws that govern evolution, particularly human evolution. Only with these in mind can we start with the task of penetrating the character of archaeology which has, until now, always been analytical; and with the help of the knowledge of past trends of development, try to forecast future evolution.

We can thus base ourselves on the very great substance of facts that more than a million years of mankind's history and more than four thousand million years of life history, has produced. Perhaps it will be possible, after having set up general basic laws in these matters, to find out which lines to follow when planning a new evolution in the future.

Thirdly, in this series it will be attempted to discover if it is possible, with the help of these fundamental principles based on factual substance, to find more exact and, in the first place, more objective methods of evaluation.

We can learn at least as much about our part of the universe with the help of the life history and evolution of mankind, as from the study of pure science or the analysis of the behaviour of atoms and molecules.