

HERMANN JOSEPH MULLER

"It is not easy to find an original thought in biological theory that has not, in some way, been anticipated here—whether the topic be the ultramicroscopic gene, the fate of mankind on earth, or the cosmic origins of life." These words, written by a Nobel Laureate about the published works of H. J. Muller, bear witness to the magnitude of his impact upon biology. Muller has indeed made major contributions to the foundation and rise of genetics, and to its attaining a central and leading position in the whole of biology, including human biology. No ivory tower scientist, he has effectively and unremittingly made the general public aware of the bearing of genetics, biology, and science in general on the present well-being and long-range future of mankind.

The achievements of this man are known and appreciated throughout the world as unsurpassed by any living biologist. The usual indices of academic accomplishment—honorary degrees, prizes, awards, offices in professional societies, election to learned societies—impressive though they be in Muller's case, are trivial in comparison with the works they recognize and honor.

Indiana University is justly proud that he has been on her faculty longer than on any other, that the Nobel Prize came to him while here, and that, largely as a result of his presence, genetics and biology at Indiana University attained widely recognized eminence. One must also realize the deep impression his nineteen years of teaching here have made. His students have been privileged to sense the workings of his keen mind and fertile imagination, to hear him marshal evidence and reasoning bearing on every aspect of a problem and reach a well-considered judgment on it, to glimpse his insights into the principles that have guided the evolution of the universe and of life, and to share his passionate concern for man's welfare and his noble vision of mankind, now and far into the future. Those who have had that privilege carry as a result reflections of the way his mind works and of his approach to problems of biology and human life. Many of his students have made excellent contributions of their own; one, himself a Nobel Laureate, has led the way to a vast new epoch in biology. The influence of Muller upon students and upon students' students, as well as upon those directly and indirectly inspired by his public lectures and writings, is the living, growing measure of a great teacher. Mankind will long continue to profit by this expanding influence which will doubtless continue to be augmented by his personal contacts, lectures and writings in the years ahead.

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