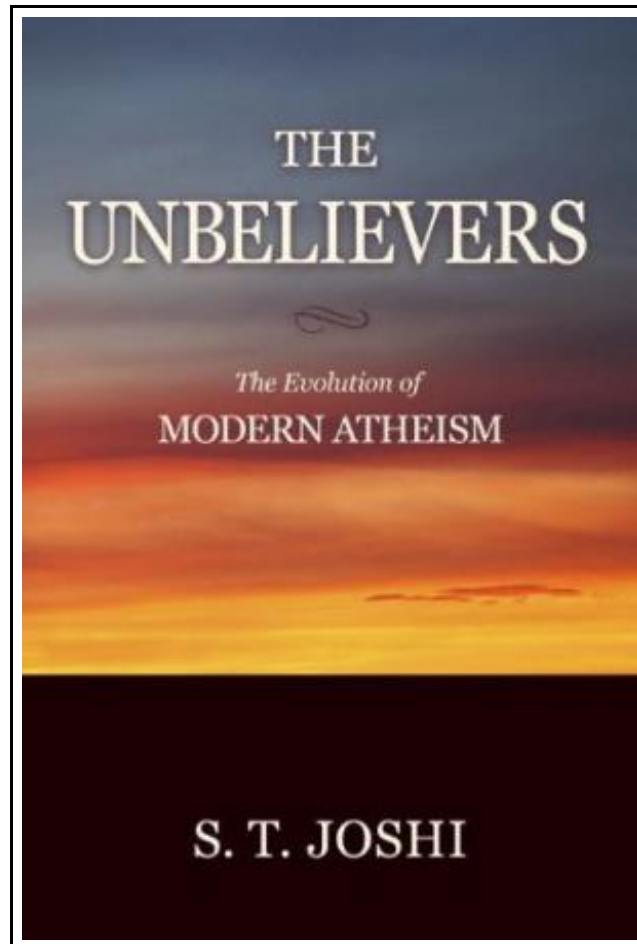


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Prometheus Books, United States, 2011. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 221 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Atheism, once a minority view, is now openly embraced by an increasing number of scientists, philosophers, politicians, and celebrities. How did this formerly closeted secular perspective gain its current prominence as a philosophically viable and challenging worldview? In this succinct history of modern atheism, a prolific author, editor, and scholar traces the development of atheist, agnostic, and secularist thought over the past century and a half. Beginning in the nineteenth century, when intellectuals first openly voiced skepticism about long-standing Christian beliefs, Joshi considers the impact of several leading thinkers: Thomas Henry Huxley ( Darwin s Bulldog ), Leslie Stephen, John Stuart Mill, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Mark Twain. Each of these writers, in different ways, made searing criticisms of such religious conceptions as the immortality of the soul, the doctrine of biblical inerrancy, and the existence of God, at a time when such notions were largely taken for granted. Next, the author examines prominent atheist thinkers of the early twentieth century: attorney Clarence Darrow, journalist H. L. Mencken, philosopher Bertrand Russell, and horror writer H. P. Lovecraft. Around the same time as Darrow and Mencken were involved in the celebrated Scopes trial in America, which resulted in a triumph for the theory of evolution, Bertrand Russell in England was becoming well known as a forthright atheist. And Lovecraft was championing atheism in his novels and tales. Turning to recent decades, the author considers the uproar caused by outspoken atheist Madalyn Murray O Hair and the controversial 1962 school prayer Supreme Court decision. Finally, he evaluates the work of best-selling authors Gore Vidal, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens. In each case, he carefully dissects the views of the writers in question...

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