

RE: ESSAYS ON SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

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- *From:* "John Edser" <edser@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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"whitesickle@xxxxxxx" whitesickle@xxxxxxx wrote:–

ESSAYS ON SCIENCE AND SOCIETY:
Frankenstein in the Land of Dichter and Denker
Manfred D. Laubichler*

Manfred D. Laubichler is a theoretical biologist and historian of science. He holds a Ph.D. in biology. His work is on conceptual issues in evolutionary and developmental biology, and he is currently also writing a book entitled *Between Philosophy and Experiment: A History of Theoretical Biology, 1900 to World War II*.
CREDIT: ALLAN BURCH

Social scientists [in Germany] tend to associate 'selection' with Auschwitz, whereas natural scientists think foremost of Darwin's book." This quotation from developmental biologist and Nobel Laureate Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard captures in a nutshell the problems one faces when discussing questions of biology and biotechnology in Germany.* What most distinguishes the "two cultures" in Germany is their different understanding of certain key concepts of science and history. Here, more than in other countries, the past is a continuous presence that shapes intellectual debates. And the close association of Nazi ideology with the language of biology still hangs like a shadow over any discussion of the implications of modern biology and biotechnology.

JE:–

Herbert Spencer's reduction of Darwin's–idea–of–genius "natural selection" into the pathetic tautology "survival of the fittest" provided the National Socialist legacy of "Social Darwinism". It lives on to this day and remains based on the NON Darwinian premise that just because I can kill you I must be fitter than you are. Nobody should doubt the amazing destructiveness of Spencer's tautology which can be construed to mean just about anything you wish it to mean. The same applies to any other tautology incorrectly offered as a valid theory of science in its own right.

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Regards,

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