

how much we still need to think about and discuss these issues, which are of relevance to our understanding of self and influence the ways in which we (scientifically) engage with animate nature.

MARIANNE SOMMER

Thomas Junker. *Die zweite Darwinsche Revolution: Geschichte des Synthetischen Darwinismus in Deutschland 1924 bis 1950.* 635 pp., illus., CD-ROM. Marburg: Basilisken-Presse, 2004.

The history of evolutionary biology in Germany has recently become the focus of attention of a small group of German historians of biology. The question of how and to what extent German biologists contributed to what came to be known in the Anglo-American context as the Modern Synthesis has been a prime concern of this group. The short answer is that several developments in different areas of German biology bear a striking resemblance to tenets of the Modern Synthesis, while others represent a more idiosyncratic *Sonderweg*. Thomas Junker's latest volume, *Die zweite Darwinsche Revolution*, aims at a synthesis of this literature. Junker has collected much interesting material; for example, he discusses the life and work of a group of some thirty biologists, whom he identifies as Darwinians or as otherwise connected to evolutionary biology in Germany. Many of these figures are not well known to historians of biology, even though their interests represent an impressive selection of research agendas that deserve a more detailed study, something that Junker's antiquarian approach unfortunately does not provide.

It would, for instance, be important to explore in more detail what different research traditions are represented by this illustrious group of scientists and how this internal diversity is reflected in the German debates about evolution. Similarly, the question of how the complicated institutional landscape of German biology, so well described by both Lynn Nyhart and Jonathan Harwood, shaped the scientific and political debates requires a more careful analysis. But even without an explicit analytical focus, this book serves as a useful collection of interesting material.

All would be fine, were it not for Junker's revisionist agenda. On the one hand, he picks up on recent discussions about the *post factum* construction of the Modern Synthesis by its main proponents, especially Ernst Mayr. This leads Junker to argue for a more careful labeling

of periods in the history of evolutionary biology and, ultimately, to his notion of "synthetic Darwinism"—with an emphasis on its selectionist orientation—as the proper description of the period between 1930 and 1950. Such claims are highly problematic. They presuppose the historical continuity of an entity called Darwinism that seems to undergo, more or less independently, a similar transformation in at least four different countries. Such a claim is possible only if one interprets Darwinism as an abstract entity completely independent of its embeddedness in different scientific, institutional, cultural, political, and historical contexts—an independence that is difficult to maintain in light of the last decades of scholarship in the history of science.

In addition, Junker has another agenda. He is campaigning for what he calls a more historical and less moralistic view of the history of twentieth-century German science and, especially, of German biology. He claims that the current practice of viewing the history of mid-twentieth-century German science in the context of its political history does not pay sufficient attention to scientific issues and therefore also misses several crucial questions that could be raised about the relationship between science and politics in that period. Instead, he laments—and here I paraphrase—that because of "the popularity of uncovering NS crimes, real as well as imagined," studies that deal with the "history of science of this period" are rather rare (pp. 9–10). To anyone familiar with German history, these arguments bring back the memory of the *Historikerstreit* of the 1980s and the question of the extent to which German history can be normalized. This debate has not been settled, and no straightforward answer has yet emerged. It has, however, become clear that only a detailed contextual account of history will move us beyond the various moralistic positions that Junker find so objectionable. But such a contextual narrative is exactly what is missing in this volume.

MANFRED D. LAUBICHLER

Horace Winchell Magoun. *American Neuroscience in the Twentieth Century: Confluence of the Neural, Behavioral, and Communicative Streams.* Edited and annotated by **Louise H. Marshall.** xviii + 481 pp., illus., bibl., index. Lisse, Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger, 2003. €125, \$139 (cloth).

I am certainly not the first historian to have scrambled for a tape recorder and notepad as