

# Review of: "Femmes finales: natural selection, physiology, and the return of the repressed"

Jonathan Silvertown<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Edinburgh

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

I can't pretend to expertise on this subject, but I'm an interested evolutionary biologist and popular science author. From both perspectives, I'm interested in how metaphor is used in biology. Firstly, the paper is an impressive work of scholarship that draws attention to a curious and recurring use of a metaphor in the discussion of teleology: the Femmes of the title. Two points occurred to me that the author may wish to reflect upon.

Firstly, the word 'adaptation' is curiously missing from most of the manuscript. Surely, it was through giving an evolutionary explanation for adaptation that Darwin was able to reconcile what were originally teleological concepts from natural theology with his materialist theory? I haven't reviewed the historical use of the term 'adaptation' and possibly I'm mistaken about how often it was used in the past, but the concept was certainly there.

The other theme the author might wish to develop further might be speculative, but I expect I won't be the only reader who wonders what consequences followed from the use of the femme metaphor? A feminist perspective on this would be really interesting to read - perhaps from a reviewer rather than from the author!

PS: reviewers have to give the paper a star rating before their review can be posted here. This is a shame. To see why, I recommend this podcast 'The Ratings Game' by [Tom Shakespeare on BBC Sounds](#).