

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

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This article traces the role of teleological reasoning in biology throughout the 19th century and aims, in doing so, to explain the (absentee) role physiology has played in evolutionary biological theorizing. The article is extremely well written and offers a lot of source materials to fortify the authors claims. Yet, I have three comments/suggestions:

1. in some parts of the article, quotations follow each other swiftly, with little breathing space in-between. For the flow of the paper, I believe it might be better (particularly for readers not used to read history of philosophy/history of biology texts) to paraphrase some of the quotations instead of directly quoting, or provide some more contextualization/situating in-between.
2. the question why physiology has not been included in the modern synthesis is an interesting one, and the author offers much food for thought why this might have been so. However, the paper would profit from engagement with literature in the history of biology addressing such disciplinary divides (e.g. physiological chemistry vs. genetics), and probably also giving more context to the England vs. continental Europe (and particularly Germany) debates - and how the reversed order of the physiological-chemical revolution and the reception of Origin might have led to the role physiology has played in evolutionary theorizing
3. the author acknowledges the gendered language of the metaphors in use, but doesn't engage with feminist scholarship on that topic as well as harms deriving from the use of such language. This is particularly urgent if, as they show in one of the final quotes, gendered metaphors are alive and kicking in contemporary biology. Also, it would be good to point out that the metaphors also suggest strong heteronormative, binary categories as well as positionality regarding social class and race - that is power structures within societies in general and not only between men* and women*. Thus, while it is necessary to point out more directly the harms resulting from such metaphors (particularly for readers who might not have been exposed to feminist scholarship and might not be able to situate and criticize such practices by themselves) but also what could be strategies to leave such problematic metaphors behind, what epistemic benefits this might have, and where one could start doing so.