

points Andina discusses Frege's distinction between meaning and sense and Russell's distinction of knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description; the philosophical difficulty for Nietzsche is to find the relation between the two.

Without reducing philosophy to physicalism, Nietzsche nevertheless favors a weak version of physicalism. Reality is fragmented, hence we must caution against the danger of a nihilistic view of things and subjects (336).

The understanding stabilizes human thought even though the scientific outlook tells us that "matter does not exist, that time is not linear but instead cyclical, that space is finite, that causality is never real but always and only inferred" (341). Nietzsche avoids the physicalist reductionism, but he remains entangled between an impoverished scientific view and his genealogical, critical philosophy. In other words: "things become what *we* have made them become." (my italics, 342). His physiological aesthetics does not thematize explicitly the distinction between ontology and metaphysics, but he could have written "Everything belonging to the domain of phenomena exists." Thus Andina describes Nietzsche's philosophy as being a revisionist metaphysics. He was a skeptic and relativist concerning science, yet — I think — his robust style indicates that at times he stopped to have doubts.

On the whole, Andina's book is most informative, precise in the choice of the texts she has selected; a small criticism could be that there is little mention of the French philosophers and interpreters of Nietzsche in the first two chapters (for instance Condillac on the five senses), but hers is an understandable choice since she mainly selects the German authors Nietzsche knew. Another remark is that the quotations from the secondary sources tend to be unnecessarily long, although the readers can well realize that they clarify specific points.

The third chapter of Andina's book is, philosophically speaking, the most arduous but also more interesting in guiding the readers to evaluate Nietzsche's philosophy and direct them to discover the intrinsic potential of his thought. Her aim is to use Nietzsche's philosophy and ideas as a heuristic device; her recurrent use of the adjective "problematic" indicates that Nietzsche opens the way to fruitful, additional philosophical excursions.

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Dirk R. Johnson, *Nietzsche's Anti-Darwinism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. 240.

This book is timely and very welcome. It is timely because there is a flood of new interest in Nietzsche among the Analytic philosophers, who read Nietzsche

as a precursor of their project to naturalize morality. They assume that, like them, Nietzsche is a Darwinist — cranky, yes, but basically an evolutionist, especially about morality. Obviously what Nietzsche does in *On the Genealogy of Morality* is basically what Darwin does in chapter four of *The Descent of Man* and what Dennett is still doing in *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, where he refers to *Genealogy of Morality* as “one of the first and still subtlest of the Darwinian investigations of the evolution of ethics.”<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche seldom placed himself in another's shadow. If he was a Darwinist, he hid it well. There are important passages criticizing Darwin, even an entire text entitled *Anti-Darwin* in *Twilight of the Idols*. How Darwinian can his investigations be?

Some take the *Anti-Darwin* text to demonstrate Nietzsche's misunderstanding of Darwin, which is then chalked up to his reliance on popular accounts. It is probably true that Nietzsche never read either *Origin of Species* or *Descent of Man*. Long books hurt his eyes, and he did not read English easily. But he was a scholar, and knew how to find out about things. He followed scientific debate in learned periodicals, and discussed with experts and colleagues at Basle. He also read the popular literature, which is apparently not as horrible as critics imagine, nor is it epitomized by Haeckel.<sup>2</sup> Johnson is probably right to think that Nietzsche understood Darwin's theories early and well. More than that, he thinks Darwin is really *the* major figure in Nietzsche's theoretical imagination, especially in the last years, despite Darwin not having remotely the presence in Nietzsche's work of other antagonists, like Schopenhauer or Wagner. Why did Darwin matter so much?

According to Johnson, Nietzsche places Darwin at the center of a knot of interesting problems, including modernity, nihilism, and decadence, but mostly he is drawn to Darwin's effort to give a natural-scientific explanation of morality. He attacks this project and writes *On the Genealogy of Morality* to

1. Daniel C. Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 182. John Richardson, *Nietzsche's New Darwinism* (New York: Oxford, 2004), takes Nietzsche's supposed commitment to naturalized morality the furthest. He thinks Nietzsche takes on all of Darwin's central ideas and tries to go beyond them. Natural selection and evolution of species do not get us as far as morality, which requires his sort of story (Lamarckian group selection), and not Darwin's.
2. Johnson cites Alfred Kelly, *The Descent of Darwin: The Popularization of Darwin in Germany, 1860-1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981): “When Darwinism evolved into a new *Weltanschauung* in Germany, it usually did so on a sound factual basis” (19).

discredit the Darwinist approach. He wanted to make readers lose interest in the very idea of a "genealogy of morals," and to pursue new and different questions about morality. Nietzsche is not a heretic Darwinist with his own cranky theory on the evolution of morality. He argues that morality is not the sort of thing *that has* an evolution or about which to give a scientific account. There are no moral facts. How can there be a naturalistic explanation of something that does not have natural existence? Morality needs to be discredited, not reinforced, as "genealogy" tends to do, by treating morality as a scientific field of natural fact. *On the Genealogy of Morality* "was meant to rip away the pretense" (212) that there could be a naturalistic explanation of morality. This is one of Johnson's most important arguments. "The fact that the text was intended as a polemic *against* the 'genealogists' (and *not* as a furtherance of their cause) escapes commentators" (88).

Nietzsche agrees with Darwin that morality has a natural origin. It is not supernatural or eternal. But consider how differently this agreement plays out. For Darwin, morality is natural in the sense that basic moral emotions, like sympathy, loyalty, and altruism, gradually evolved into a species-specific inheritance by a process of individual and group natural selection operating over geological time on proto-human ancestors. As a result, these moral tendencies are natural, evolved, grafted right into a human being's species-specific evolutionary nature. For Nietzsche, morality is "natural" in a completely different way, as a flood or climate change is natural. Morality is a kind of catastrophe that happened to our ancestors, and not way back in the geological past, but more recently, in the founding of the first states, some 5000 years ago. Morality is not as old as the hills. It is not a species-specific adaptation. It is not human nature. To understand its emergence requires an account of a completely different sort than Darwinian evolution. It begins as a self-defensive practice among an enslaved population, whose festering resentment endangered their survival. "Morality," the moral law, the same for all, emerges historically and gradually from this early experience of slavery. The outcome, however, is not a common human adaptation, and involves no true altruism. Nietzsche's time-scale is that of a historian or pre-historian, not an evolutionary biologist. His "blond beasts" roamed the land probably no more than 6000 years ago. The enslavement of peoples by states is no more than about 5000 years old. Whatever happens in such a time-frame cannot be evolution in the sense of evolutionary biology.

Nietzsche is not interested in the idea that human beings evolved from more primitive species. He mocks someone who "covers himself with the shaggy cloak

of our ape-genealogists and praises Darwin.”<sup>3</sup> For Nietzsche, Darwin is first and foremost the author of a materialist-genealogical explanation of morality. He reads Darwin with the English psychologists alluded to at the beginning of *Genealogy of Morality*, including Hume, Smith, and their French and German emulators. He is impressed by these authors’ psychological sensibility, eschewing metaphysics and concentrating on the passions. Darwin adds an explanation of the emergence of moral qualities like sympathy and altruism from their opposites. Altruism and selfishness are not pure opposites; socially esteemed values are relative and blur into antitheses. Sometimes these psychologists squander their insights in resentful exposés of all too human weakness and hypocrisy. Invariably though, they locate what is decisive for human beings “in the least noble, most banal aspects of [life], or in a single passive, impersonal, mechanical, or causal force, operating seemingly beyond human control or influence” (91).

Nietzsche is also struck by the pessimism of these authors. It is a choice, a mood, and not a speculative insight. He psychologizes its attraction for them. He supposes that they only feel good about themselves when they find their own passions everywhere, and can depersonalize their internal conflicts by depicting the whole world in the image of *their* instinctual economy. Darwin supposedly does this too. From Nietzsche’s perspective, Darwin concedes too much to Christians about morality as a common human nature. The Christian innovation in the historical, non-evolutionary, unnatural genesis of “morality,” is to have universalized the Law, and made morality appeal to everybody. There is one law, meant for all, good for all. Now Darwin proposes to explain this law’s claim on us “mechanically.” It is not part of God’s plan for us all to be moral. But we are. We are moral by nature, as the outcome of a random process without finality. Darwin “never implicitly challenges, questions, or desires to overthrow morality”; instead, he “only wishes to establish an *alternative* basis from which to project the *same* denatured (i.e. ascetic) will to power” (197). Johnson has Nietzsche dismiss Darwinism as one of the “*resentiment*-driven master-narratives of existence” (211). This is Darwin’s nihilism. “Nihilism reflect[s] the weak wills’ need to believe in master-narratives of existence in response to internalized cruelty and suffering” (107).

Without, I think, meaning to make a point of it, Johnson’s study accentuates Nietzsche’s presumption in scientific matters. He is skeptical of science that today almost nobody except Creationists doubt. Evolution, as Creationists like to say, is not a fact. For Nietzsche, says Johnson, it “is just one of the many

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3. Nietzsche, “David Strauss: Confessor and Writer,” 1873; cited, 22.

interpretations of nature symptomatic of a distinct type impressing *its* will onto natural phenomena" (63). In other words, a matter of taste. Darwinism has no timeless, purely scientific credibility. The "theoretical dominance and evaluative standards" that endow Darwinism with its prestige "are contingent on the momentary constellation of individual wills" (175). Nietzsche's position should probably be seen as skeptical rather than irrationalist. He is not rejecting this science because he prefers irrationality. He is skeptical of its credibility as science. In any case, there are swaths of science that we have to sweep aside if we take Nietzsche fully seriously, for instance, in repudiating the concept of species.<sup>4</sup> It is not just that he is a nominalist, as Darwin was, and considers "species" to be "merely artificial combinations made for convenience."<sup>5</sup> He more radically argues that there simply is no least common denominator, species-level description in terms of which we are all the same, merely human, *Homo sapiens*. This unity does not exist, and we are not special in this regard; it is the same for everything alive. Since there are no species, there is no origin of species, and Nietzsche brackets the whole idea of life being an evolutionary process as we understand it. Of course, with no species and no evolution, there is no genealogy of morality in the sense that Darwinists understand. Morality too is not a natural unity of which there could be a scientific explanation. The advent of morality has a material explanation, but it is the explanation of a catastrophe, an event in history (fairly recent history), and not the evolution of an adaptation by natural selection or any other putative origin of so-called species.

Something else that comes out clearly in Johnson's account is Nietzsche's supposed commitment to an idea of physiological types. The more Johnson says about this topic the more mysterious he makes it. There are two types, variously described as strong and weak, master and slave, last men and *Übermensch*, higher men and the herd. The strong are outer-directed, affirmative, in all things maximizing their power. The weak are oppositional, resentful, and exhaust themselves fending off active will. What is it that makes the "strong" strong? In the *Anti-Darwin* text Nietzsche explains how this strength has nothing to do with what Darwinists call fitness or adaptation, and may even be deleterious from the point of view of survival. The strong *are not* well adapted, they *do not*

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4. "There is no such thing as a species, only numerous different individual types! . . . Nature does not wish to 'preserve the species!'" *KSA IX*, 508; cited: 62.

5. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, in *The Origin of Species and The Descent of Man* (New York: Modern Library, 1936), 371.

tend to survive, they tend to be destroyed by the weak. What then makes them strong?

Johnson's answer is that it comes down to an exquisite coordination of drives, an internal economy, "perfectly structured and balanced instinctual life" (65). The quality does not come naturally. Almost every writer on instincts from before Darwin to after Freud divides them into the great dichotomy exemplified by hunger and love. Nietzsche never did. He emphasizes the multiplicity, heterogeneity, even chaos of instincts; makes no effort to systematize them; and specifically argues against a self-preserving instinct. (BGE §13) That chaos of instincts is the material of which the strong are masters. They are artists of their own great health. They no longer have to react to others, and have forgotten about the difference between "it was" and "I willed."

Johnson says that for Nietzsche "an enhancement of the human type does not occur on the level of the 'species,' but only within the confines of the individual biological will" (97-8). I feel compelled to notice the language in which Johnson describes these "types." He refers to "the intrinsic nature of distinct physiological types" (142); the strong (and the weak) are "a fundamental, ineradicable essence"; "a constant physiological essence" without history (125); "a physiological constant, regardless of survival or annihilation" (138). It sounds like a physiological thing in itself. Indeed, this thing in itself is identified with the will to power. A will to power is a "self-contained biological type" (68). The polarity of strong and weak and the drive to maximize power are not limited to human beings (there are no human beings as such, no species). The duality applies to everything alive; the will to power is the will of life. Organic individuals are "self-contained physiological examples of unique and unhistorical wills to power" (173). "According to his final views, each biological entity does not seek stability, stasis, adaptation, or balance of power . . . but the maximum projection of 'power'" (68).

The claim can be taken seriously only by those who are happy to forget about contemporary science. We have to abandon natural-selection explanations. There is no adaptation, no fitness, and so on. The question of the origin of species is a pseudo-problem. The very idea of life as an evolution is merely an interpretation, a matter of taste, appealing to the resentful Christian in us all. However, the reading of Nietzsche's supposed physiological thing in itself mystifies more than it illuminates. Johnson explains that "each biological type projects power according to the instinctual requirements of its own will" (69). Where it got that will, those instincts, is as mysterious as it was before Darwin or among the Creationists today. "The drives and instincts in no way work in service of the species, its preservation" (62). That is, they are not adaptations, not explained by natural selection acting over geological time.

Where did they come from? Johnson's answer seems to be that they are just *there*, things in themselves, as eternal and inscrutable as Schopenhauer's Will.

The insouciance toward science becomes more difficult when Nietzsche cheerfully invokes physiology and medicine and seems to take their conclusions seriously, as confirming facts. Johnson thinks it was important to Nietzsche that his "conjectures about physiological wills seemed to be substantiated by the 'experts' in the field of physiology and medicine, which vindicated his independent line of inquiry" (100). He supposedly wanted to be scientific in his diagnosis of strong and weak types, and was happy to invoke the experts when their ideas seemed to confirm what he knew by his own methods. "The 'scientific' terms simply added a richer explanatory dimension to his ongoing independent study of the weak, degenerate will" (101). When those same experts suggest that life divides into species, that these species evolve in geological time, or that a tendency to sympathy, loyalty, and altruism is a mechanically evolved natural human endowment, he says all of that is only interpretation and not fact.

It is hard to agree that Nietzsche believed in a physiological thing in itself. A purely internal harmony of the instincts is as ideal (that is, false) as the pure self-identity of a thing in itself. I think the argument would have benefitted from more consideration of Nietzsche's debt to Spinoza, and the latter's thought on active and passive affection. Whether an organism is strong or weak is not a purely internal matter. There are no pure insides. To be active is to be acting, doing what you can do, and that depends just as much on the environment as on any instincts. And how could Nietzsche seriously care whether the scientists confirmed his thought about types? His invocation of them (both the scientists and the types) must be a mask. On the one hand Johnson says that Nietzsche is not prepared to take science seriously as "truth." Then he says that with Nietzsche "the scientific will, too, was dissected dispassionately [!], in an effort to reveal the nature of the instincts embodied in the natural scientists' 'will to truth'" (206). A dis-passionate dissection of dispassionate dissection? Discovering the nature of the instincts that motivate one to think one discovers nature and is not merely projecting instincts? The notion of an eternal type seems as indifferent to potentially important differences as the notion of species. If "man" is dismissed as a psycho-physiological construct (173), why not "higher man" or "strong type"? And what is really "the same" in two strong types? The answer is supposed to be a harmonious internal instinctual economy. But that is like saying a work of art has to be beautiful, and then adding that every work is beautiful in a new, singular way. "Harmonious instincts" is not a sameness, not a concept, and does not define a repeatable type.

Someone might wonder, How can Nietzsche not be an evolutionist, and in that sense, if no other, a Darwinist, and still believe in the *Übermensch*? A good question! What was the Overman supposed to be? Is it a far-future possibility, a trans-human evolution, a new species? Zarathustra begins as a teacher of the Overman, but that did not work out so well. He ends as a teacher of eternal return. There is something defective about the idea of Overman that is corrected in the thought of eternal return. Zarathustra's fiasco in the marketplace, when he tries to teach the people about the *Übermensch*, shows that the vision is not for everyone. But then it turns out that if you teach it only to a select rare few, that doesn't work either. You just become a guru. Trans-human future is what is wrong with the first idea of an Overman. "Man" cannot be transcended, and evolution is just an interpretation and an unattractive "moral" one at that. The herd will always be there and always be a herd. Overman means nothing but a higher type, always rare, although unthinkable, immoral institutions might enhance the conditions under which higher types flourish.

I very much liked Richardson's book *Nietzsche's New Darwinism* when I first read it. I had struggled with Nietzsche's relation to Darwin, and thought Richardson smartly resolved many problems. Johnson's book robs me of that comfort. He takes the question of Darwin back into Nietzsche's work with a lot of nuance, and explodes the notion of Nietzsche as a Darwinist, an evolutionist, or even a genealogist of morality.

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Robert B. Pippin. *Nietzsche, Psychology, and First Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. Pp. xvii; 139.

I was much looking forward to reading Robert Pippin's new book: The clear and well-designed appearance of the work and its surprising brevity — the volume comprises just 139 pages — suggest graceful elegance combined with explicit restraint. The mild anxiety that should overcome any reader who is somewhat familiar with contemporary Nietzsche studies quickly turns into zealous interest by the first impressions the book evokes. By giving the book its descriptive title, Pippin promises to offer helpful orientation for readers attempting to navigate the complex relationship between "Nietzsche, psychology and first philosophy," while the lack of any limitation or subtitle that would define a thematic focus, of course, means that Pippin is setting himself a formidable task. Not only does he have to face several crucial questions in the Nietzschean *oeuvre*, but he also needs to introduce his readers to an issue that is crucial for Nietzsche studies, or, if one prefers a simplistic