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2.0 out of 5 stars More Aristotle than Darwin. Reviewed in Italy on 28 June 2016. Verified Purchase. Etienne Gilson is certainly a thinker and historian that knows philosophy well, in particular Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. Unfortunately this conditions heavily his book, which appears to be not so much a criticism of Darwin, but an exaltation of metaphysics. Read more. Helpful. Sending ...

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From Aristotle to Darwin and Back Again: A Journey in Final Causality, Species, and Evolution. Etienne Gilson. Ignatius Press, 2009 - Religion - 254 pages. 1 Review. Darwin's theory of evolution remains controversial, even though most scientists, philosophers, and even theologians accept it, in some form, as an explanation for the variety of organisms. The controversy erupts when the theory is ...

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Darwin's theory of evolution remains controversial, even though most scientists, philosophers, and even theologians accept it, in some form, as an explanation for the variety of organisms. The controversy erupts when the theory is used to try to explain everything, including every aspect of human life, and to deny the role of a Creator or a purpose to life. The overreaching of many scientists into matters beyond the self-imposed limits of scientific method is perhaps explained in part by the loss of two important ideas in modern thinking--final causality or purpose, and formal causality. Scientists understandably bracket the idea out of their scientific thinking because they seek explanations on the level of material and efficient causes only. Yet many of them wrongly conclude from their selective study of the world that final and formal causes do not exist at all and that they have no place in the rational study of life. Likewise, many erroneously assume that philosophy cannot draw upon scientific findings, in light of final and formal causality, to better understand the world and man. The great philosopher and historian of philosophy, Etienne Gilson, sets out to show that final causality or purposiveness and formal causality are principles for those who think hard and carefully about the world, including the world of biology. Gilson insists that a completely rational understanding of organisms and biological systems requires the philosophical notion of teleology, the idea that certain kinds of things exist and have ends or purposes the fulfillment of which are linked to their natures--in other words, formal and final causes. His approach relies on philosophical reflection on the facts of science, not upon theology or an appeal to religious authorities such as the Church or the Bible.

Foreword by Christoph Cardinal Schönborn Darwin's theory of evolution remains controversial, even though most scientists, philosophers, and even theologians accept it, in some form, as an explanation for the variety of organisms. The controversy erupts when the theory is used to try to explain everything, including every aspect of human life, and to deny the role of a Creator or a purpose to life. The overreaching of many scientists into matters beyond the self-imposed limits of scientific method is perhaps explained in part by the loss of two important ideas in modern thinking--final causality or purpose, and formal causality. Scientists understandably bracket the idea out of their scientific thinking because they seek explanations on the level of material and efficient causes only. Yet many of them wrongly conclude from their selective study of the world that final and formal causes do not exist at all and that they have no place in the rational study of life. Likewise, many erroneously assume that philosophy cannot draw upon scientific findings, in light of final and formal causality, to better understand the world and man. The great philosopher and historian of philosophy, Etienne Gilson, sets out to show that final causality or purposiveness and formal causality are principles for those who think hard and carefully about the world, including the world of biology. Gilson insists that a completely rational understanding of organisms and biological systems requires the philosophical notion of teleology, the idea that certain kinds of things exist and have ends or purposes the fulfillment of which are linked to their natures--in other words, formal and final causes. His approach relies on philosophical reflection on the facts of science, not upon theology or an appeal to religious authorities such as the Church or the Bible. "The object of the present essay is not to make of final causality a scientific notion, which it is not, but to show that it is a philosophical inevitability and, consequently, a constant of biophilosophy, or philosophy of life. It is not, then, a question of theology. If there is teleology in nature, the theologian has the right to rely on this fact in order to draw from it the consequences which, in his eyes, proceed from it concerning the existence of God. But the existence of teleology in the universe is the object of a properly philosophical reflection, which has no other goal than to confirm or invalidate the reality of it. The present work will be concerned with nothing else: reason interpreting sensible experience--does it or does it not conclude to the existence of teleology in nature?" Etienne Gilson

This text re-examines Durkheim's science of morality as it is illuminated by Aristotle's philosophy. The author demonstrates, by examining previously unappreciated aspects of the latter's moral sociology, that Durkheim's theory can be compatible with postmodernism.

The highly regarded French philosopher, Etienne Gilson, brilliantly plumbs the depths of Thomistic Realism, and false Thomisms as well, in this answer to Kantian modernism. The important work, exquisitely translated by Mark Wauck, brings the essential elements of philosophy into view as a cohesive, readily understandable, and erudite structure, and does so rigorously in the best tradition of St. Thomas. Written as the definitive answer to those philosophers who sought to reconcile critical philosophy with scholastic realism, Gilson saw himself as an historian of philosophy whose main task was one of restoration, and principally the restoration of the wisdom of the Common Doctor of the Church, St.

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Thomas Aquinas. Gilson's thesis was that realism was incompatible with the critical method and that realism, to the extent that it was reflective and aware of its guiding principles, was its own proper method. He gives a masterful account of the various forces that shaped the neo-scholastic revival, but Gilson is concerned with the past only as it sheds light on the present. In addition to his criticisms, Gilson presents a positive exposition of true Thomist realism, revealing the foundation of realism in the unity of the knowing subject.

This short book is a work of one of the 20th century's greatest philosophers and historians of philosophy, Etienne Gilson. The book's title, taken from the first chapter, may sound esoteric but it reflects a common-sense outlook on the world, applied in a methodical way. That approach, known as realism, consists in emphasizing the fact that what is real precedes our concepts about it. In contrast to realism stands idealism, which refers to the philosophical outlook that begins with ideas and tries to move from them to things. Gilson shows how the common-sense notion of realism, though denied by many thinkers, is indispensable for a correct understanding of things--of what is and how we know what is. He shows the flaws of idealism and he critiques efforts to introduce elements of idealism into realist philosophy (immediate realism). At the same time, the author criticizes failures of certain realist philosophers--including Aristotle--to be consistent in their own principles and to begin from sound starting points. To these problems, Gilson traces medieval philosophy's failure in the realm of science, which led early modern scientific thinkers of the 17th century unnecessarily to reject even the best of medieval scholastic philosophy. He concludes with *The Realist Beginner's Handbook*, a summary of key points for thinking clearly about reality and about the knowledge of it.

From Aristotle to Darwin, from ancient teleology to contemporary genealogies, this book offers an overview of the birth and then persistence of Aristotle's framework into modernity, until its radical overthrow by the evolutionary revolution.

This book provides a distinctive, radical way beyond the quarrels between evolutionary science and Christian belief. Leading scientists, philosophers, and theologians critically discuss the metaphysical assumptions of neo-Darwinism and offer concrete ways of broadening mainstream evolutionary theory. Their open exchange, moderated by veteran process theologian John B. Cobb, presents a holistic case for evolution that both theists and nontheists can accept. Contributors: Francisco J. Ayala Ian G. Barbour Charles Birch Philip Clayton John B. Cobb Jr. John Greene David Ray Griffin A. Y. Gunter John F. Haught Lynn Margulis Reg Morrison Dorion Sagan Jeffrey Schloss Robert J. Valenza Howard J. Van Till

Leading paleontologist J. David Archibald explores the rich history of visual metaphors for biological order from ancient times to the present and their influence on humans' perception of their place in nature, offering uncommon insight into how we went from standing on the top rung of the biological ladder to embodying just one tiny twig on the tree of life. He begins with the ancient but still misguided use of ladders to show biological order, moving then to the use of trees to represent seasonal life cycles and genealogies by the Romans. The early Christian Church then appropriated trees to represent biblical genealogies. The late eighteenth century saw the tree reclaimed to visualize relationships in the natural world, sometimes with a creationist view, but in other instances suggesting evolution. Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) exorcised the exclusively creationist view of the "tree of life," and his ideas sparked an explosion of trees, mostly by younger acolytes in Europe. Although Darwin's influence waned in the early twentieth century, by midcentury his ideas held sway once again in time for another and even greater explosion of tree building, generated by the development of new theories on how to assemble trees, the birth of powerful computing, and the emergence of molecular technology. Throughout Archibald's far-reaching study, and with the use of many figures, the evolution of "tree of life" iconography becomes entwined with our changing perception of the world and ourselves.

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