

## *Exegi-monumentum Syndrome* of a Modern Scholar and Crisis of Postmodern Scholarship

Review on “Aristotle Revenge” by Edward Feser.

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Postmodernity is the sad manifestation of human decline, crisis of values with civilization at the dead end, degradation of culture, science and exhausted mind. It is at this moment of human despair the most enlightened representatives of humanity have turned to Aristotle for wisdom therapy. After over two millennia of confusion, misrepresentation of Aristotle and overall oblivion of his scholarly contribution, the current pendulum of scholarly inquiry has switched back to the great ancient sage, magnificent polymath in the history of civilized humanity. It made even the least informed about Aristotle to proclaim him “a victor” who has overthrown the fundamental predominant paradigms. Now, when it became acceptable and even fashionable to be an Aristotelian, every mediocre mind strives to enter the heroic pantheon with the help of Aristotle. So does Edward Feser, this postmodern author of “Aristotle’s Revenge”, promising to establish the connections between antiquity and modernity via the “*Metaphysical Foundations of Physical and Biological Science*” (the subtitle of his book) and Aristotle. The author is not so much concerned about establishing the true course of history in scientific inquiry but about building a monument to himself with the help of recourse to Aristotle and his teaching, of which he has a rather vague idea.

To the surprise of the reader, the book that proclaims Aristotle “a victor” in the history of science and has noble intention of rehabilitating Aristotle, as well as fighting those who had overthrown him and tried unfairly forget, the same book does not quote Aristotle even a single time!!! The bibliography lists his “Physics” as a sole tribute to the ancient polymath while Feser’s sixteen (16!) entries parade in the bibliography. Not only Aristotle is surprisingly mentioned just once but he is never quoted!! Feser speaks about Aristotle through the voices of Thomas Aquinas, Bernard Russell or even through the unknown such as Burge Tyler, Andy Clark, Jerry Coyne, Paul Davis, Jabbr Ferris, Alva Noe et als...

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Edward Feser provocatively mentions Aristotle next to Newton, Aquinas, Darwin, Einstein but the onomastic tactics ends with naming, leaving the juxtapositions without analysis. Feser fails to prove what is the actual role of Aristotle in the history of science and human thought. Having noble ambitions of promoting and rehabilitating Aristotle, as well as joining the modern club of neo-Aristotelians, Feser still upholds the outdated notion about the alleged Aristotle's conception of the origins of the universe, the divine creation or the primary cause which had been destroyed centuries ago. It is obvious that Aristotle's philosophy of nature and metaphysics came to him via Thomas Aquinas and is on the strong religious dogmatic base. Feser is sympathetic to Descartes and Newton who "took the final cause to exist in God" [2019:47]. He argues "if there is no God and no substantive forms either, now we can make sense of the operations of the laws of nature" [2019:59]. He repeatedly forces the wrong argument and notion upon Aristotle whom he censored and did not allow to speak, stating wrongly that "it is true that Aristotle believed in a divine Unmoved Mover" [2019:59]. Feser's mode of discourse is steeped in theology that for centuries had been adjusting Aristotle's philosophy to the religious dogma. His denunciation of modern science, be it quantum mechanics, computer algorithm, genetics in favor of Aristotelianism reveals peculiar stand and traditional mimics theological discourse – one has to believe him, with the only difference that now it is not god but Aristotle who allegedly believed in the divine power. And because now Aristotle is new deity, Feser who believes in him, does not feel he needs to share his sacred wisdom. He chooses not to quote Aristotle when he speaks about Time, Space, Change, and when none of the modern scholars provided a more successful definition than Aristotle. The scholar is a victim of intentional centuries-old neglect of Aristotle in global educational curriculum and theological control of scholarship. Aristotle's thought is expunged from the book.

Feser is right that Aristotle is a "magnanimous victor" in human philosophy, superb polymath whose system superseded modern scholars, none whom could add anything new to the fundamental categories and paradigms, just rephrasing the same concepts. Unable to invent new metaphysics, modernity simply discarded the ancient axioms of Being and Becoming. The efforts of the modern mind went into new dead end directions. The Aristotelian "why" has been abandoned for the sake of modern playfulness and new deliberately confusing language. Regrettably, the book failed to give the word to Aristotle himself and prove that he is a "magnanimous victor indeed."

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