Professor Richards can remonstrate as much as he likes about my remarks, but as long as he fails to acknowledge the total content of the Bahr interview, it would be impossible to take seriously what he says. Contrary to what he would have his readers believe, the interview reveals Haeckel not as a philo-Semite but rather someone expressing hostility to the Jews as is apparent in the lengthy diatribe that he launches against them over the course of the interview. I am referring not only to the passages left out about Russian Jews, but the very important statements about the role of anti-Semitism throughout history where Haeckel revealed intensely negative opinions of the Jews and where he vented his support of the international anti-Semitic movement. Philo-Semites do not consider anti-Semitism to be an admirable and justifiable movement, as Haeckel did in his remarks, nor plead for the disappearance of the Jews as a separate group of people and the elimination of their unique identity. Nor do philo-Semites consider Jews to be completely at fault for their own persecution, as Haeckel insisted when he exonerated the non-Jewish world for any actions against the Jews. For Haeckel, and this he explicitly stated, the Jews have received what they deserved throughout history. As long as Professor Richards obscures the greater part of the content of Bahr’s interview with Haeckel, all his clarifications about the subject carry no conviction. If any idée-fixe is involved, it is not my reference to
Haeckel’s anti-Semitism, but Richards’ unsubstantiated obsession with
Haeckel’s ostensible philo-Semitism despite prevailing evidence to the contrary.

Furthermore, if Richards wishes to maintain that Haeckel did not
identify the Jews in derogatory racial terms, as he writes in his article and
repeats now in another place that ‘there is simply no reason to believe
Haeckel to be racially anti-Semitic, as Gasman [does],’ [David L. Hull,
Michael Ruse, (eds.), *Cambridge Companion to the Philosophy of
Biology*, 2007; Robert J. Richards, ‘The Moral Grammar of Narratives in
the History of Biology: The Case of Haeckel and Nazi Biology,’ 451], he
has to explain why Haeckel, in the Bahr interview, said precisely the
opposite, that the Jewish question was above all a ‘racial’ problem. If
Richards feels free to disregard the content of the sources he cites, then
one must discount whatever it is he is arguing about.

Lastly, one should point out that Richards’ reliance on statements
made by Haeckel’s colleague, Ludwig Plate, and his mistress Frida von
Uslar-Gleichen, is not convincing and tells us next to nothing about
Haeckel and the Jews. Nor is the evidence of Haeckel’s friendship with
Magnus Hirschfeld much of a vindication of Richards’ desire to
demonstrate Haeckel’s philo-Semitism. Ludwig Plate had a falling out
with Haeckel and his animosity was expressed by using invective that
accused Haeckel of being friendly to the Jews. In an anti-Semitic society
this was to accuse Haeckel of a very serious shortcoming – true or not –
but hardly a reliable guide to Haeckel’s convictions regarding the Jews. In the same way, Uslar-Gleichen’s comments have only very limited applicability as evidence of a pro-Jewish bias for Haeckel. Magnus Hirschfeld was a highly assimilated German Jew and Haeckel did not in any way befriend him to demonstrate his solidarity with the Jewish people. Richards is simply grasping at straws when he arbitrarily magnifies the significance of such friendships or the discovery of a handful of random statements referring to Haeckel and the Jews. At best, they provide only generalized indications of everyday contact with or discourse about Jews in German life and society.

Richards’ reference to Haeckel as a ‘freethinker and a materialist’ is outdated and erroneous and does not reflect the findings of the prevailing scholarship in this area of research. Haeckel himself preferred the term Monism, rather than materialism, to describe his scientific philosophy, meaning that the substance of the world was both material and spiritual. During the final decades of Haeckel’s life, his belief in the reality of the spiritual world and in pan-psychism and other ideas akin to theosophy, took precedence in his thinking over materialism, a development that is generally recognized by most contemporary scholars, but either overlooked or not known by Richards. Professor Richards’ insistence that Haeckel was purely a materialist places him squarely in the tradition of the superficial and misleading scholarship on Haeckel that was characteristic of the erstwhile German Democratic Republic. In fact, there still exists a
school of thought emanating mainly from historians in the former GDR and for the most part situated at the Haeckel Archives in Jena, who atavistically hold to the same outdated ideas. Their publications run parallel to the work of Richards, but also, like the writings of Richards, lag well behind the insights of contemporary and mainstream Haeckel scholarship.

Professor Richards’ claim that his article did not aim to undermine my scholarship bends the truth 180 degrees. Rather, he clearly argued that my theories about Haeckel, anti-Semitism, and Nazism were mistaken and that he was presenting an alternative analysis, an assertion that was often framed in highly derogatory, rather arrogant language. Richards’ characterization of my second book as having ‘pumped’ up the content of my first book is language uncalled for. There can be no objection to anyone challenging my ideas and questioning the basis of my assumptions about Haeckel, but this, of course, cannot be carried out with doctored source material or language that is intended to demean.

Since Professor Richards concedes that his denial of any mention of Haeckel’s anti-Semitism in Heinz Brücher’s book was an error, would Richards now agree to have the error noted and corrected in the pages of *Biological Theory*. The journal is shy about publishing any of my remarks, so it is up to him to initiate the correction. While he is at it, he might want to have the journal publish the whole of the Bahr interview, so that his
readers can judge for themselves if the interview taken as a whole truly reflects what Richards has been reporting.

Professor Richards seems to have some difficulty following an intellectual argument. I did not argue, as he suggests, that the *Archiv fur Rassen-und Gesellschaftsbiologie* was an example of Haeckel’s proto-Nazi influence. Rather, I maintained just the opposite that the journal’s early history included articles that were not committed to Germanic Aryanism in the way in which Haeckel conceived it, and I took a stand against Richards’ assertion that Haeckel and the early twentieth century could not have known about the implications of Haeckel’s racial and eugenic ideas. Richards’ account of my comments about the *Archiv* is a complete inversion of the content of my remarks.

That some scientists and thinkers who eventually turned to Nazism and anti-Semitism, were friendly to the Jews early in the twentieth century does not support Richards’ arguments, as he believes, but facts such as these are an illustration of the point that I made in my article about the content of Nazi ideology, and that are misunderstood by Richards. It is Richards who is incorrect to totally equate anti-Semitism and Nazism. The history of Nazism is complex and there were Nazis who resisted or were not initially convinced of the need for anti-Semitism.

In paragraph five, Richards demonstrates the difficulty he has in deciphering the anti-Semitic content of *The Riddle of the Universe*. Richards writes that Haeckel devoted only a few brief passages to the Jews
in this book and much more space to the denigration of Christianity. All true. What Richards doesn’t grasp, however, is that the *Riddle of the Universe* advanced a theory of history that was very common in monist circles. The decline of the West stems, they believed, from the time of the invention of the monotheistic religions and this placed particular responsibility on the shoulders of the Jews. Such ideas provided the framework for an understanding of world history that was adopted later on by the Nazis. The theme of the danger imposed by dualistic religion runs throughout *The Riddle of the Universe*, and this is lost on Richards as he literally concentrates only on summarizing disjointed details of Haeckel’s analysis. Richards’ faux mockery that he is left ‘breathless’ when I quote a sentence from *The Riddle of the Universe* that to any ordinary man in the street would clearly be perceived as anti-Semitic is a passage that he recasts by way of fantastical spin. If one is rendered ‘breathless’ it is not because of the content of the sentence I quote but rather is the effect of the effrontery of Richards’ denial of the sentence’s obvious meaning and by his eagerness to nourish obscurity by introducing discussion of material that has no bearing on the matter at hand. Richards’ comments are a good example of the school of Haeckel studies he is associated with that runs rings around the material in order to obfuscate any links between Haeckel and National Socialism.

Richards repeated assertions that because some Nazi writers rejected Haeckel, this meant that Haeckel had nothing to do with Nazism. He
apparently knows very little and has limited insight into the operation of totalitarian societies. Leon Trotsky became a non-person and enjoyed very bad press in the Soviet Union under Stalin. Following the logic of Richards, we would on that basis know for a certainty that Trotsky was of no importance for the history of Bolshevism or played only an insignificant role in the Russian Revolution.

Richards excludes mention of the other points of criticism of his writing that I make in my essay and he is especially negligent when it comes to the history of the völkisch movement. Haeckel was of critical importance in providing the underpinnings of that movement and inspired via that medium many connections to the ideological foundations of Nazism. Likewise, Richards says not a word about his erroneous remarks concerning Adolf Stöcker nor his lack of knowledge of the development of scientific anti-Semitism.

Richards, in paragraph six, accuses me of disingenuousness in regard to my criticism of his theory of history that accords only some individuals the privilege of exercising historical influence after their deaths. Why disingenuous? Am I accused of being familiar with Professor Richards’ writings? To this I plead guilty. I indicated in my comments that this theory has appeared in Richards’ publications before and in fact I have criticized the theory in writing in my introduction to a new edition of The Scientific Origins published in 2004. [pp. xxx-xxxi] Nothing that Richards adds to further explain the theory about individuals exercising historical
influence in his essay in the recently published *Cambridge Companion*
does anything to mitigate its problematical content when measured against
the historical realities of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is a
theory that is destined to run into trouble in my opinion because it
overlooks too much of the historical record and confuses the problem of
the content of Haeckel’s thought with Haeckel’s possible intentions. It
might be the case, although I personally don’t believe so, that if Haeckel
had remained alive into the Nazi period he would have rejected the
regime. But the impact of his ideas would have been the same. In Italy
some of the modernists who had an influence on the rise of Fascism, like
Giovanni Papini and Giuseppe Prezzolini, regretted their youthful beliefs
and political and intellectual efforts that had aided the rise of Mussolini.
But what they had undertaken could not be undone. By falling victim to
the contradictions of intentional fallacy, Richards is correct to apply the
word jejune to his theoretical speculations.

Richards makes reference at the end of his statement to my comments
concerning the actions taken by the editorial board of *Biological Theory*
that he describes as a ‘severely distorted description of [Gasman’s]
interactions with the editor and board of the journal’ – a description of my
objections to the way in which the journal conducted itself as ‘egregious
mischaracterizations.’ But how does Richards know this? If he had only
been provided with a copy of my article, which was all that he was entitled
to receive, then he would not have known anything further about what
transpired between the journal and myself. Has he been briefed by the editorial board of the journal about my correspondence and the reviews that they offered of my article? Did he receive copies of any of my letters so that he could make such a claim? His remarks certainly suggest as much and it does raise the possibility of some intriguing speculations given Richards’ inadvertent admission that he is in possession of information that he was not entitled to. It would of course be of interest to know what actually transpired between Richards and the editors of the journal. Did Professor Richards play any role in advising the board to limit or suppress my article? Did the board keep Richards au courant about my correspondence and the content of the reviews of my article? And did Richards possibly use this material to edit in any way the text of his article now appearing in the *Cambridge Companion to the Philosophy of Biology*? I suspect, although I have no proof, that generally speaking this was indeed the case in all these instances and that infractions in any of these areas would have been a violation of every professional and ethical norm. Perhaps one of the two editors of the *Cambridge Companion*, the Tallahassee historian Michael Ruse, who works closely with Richards and writes frequently about religion, ethics, and evolution, [and identifies me in writing as a New York (Jewish?) historian], might wish to provide us with information in this regard. My correspondence was privileged matter and *Biological Theory* was obligated to have kept it confidential. Since Richards seems to suggest that he was being kept informed by the editorial
board of their deliberations would he care to let us know whether it was
the editor of the journal Werner Callebaut, or others who had briefed him
and whether this was done under official sanction. Since I would not have
been privy to comparable information about Richards or his intentions it
might [and this continues to be speculation] appear that the editorial board
was more interested in safeguarding the interests of Professor Richards
than at arriving at an understanding of the accuracy of the subject matter
under consideration.

In conclusion, the rejoinder by Richards shows the same pattern of
error that also characterizes the content of his original article. For all those
who have placed their faith in Richards for having discredited the
relationship between Haeckel and Nazism, they would do well to hedge
their bets. The corker is that Richards now reveals that he is not sure about
the validity of his arguments and might be changing his mind about
Haeckel’s responsibility for Nazism. As he writes in his recently published
essay in the *Cambridge Companion*: ‘I will confess, though, that I have
not yet made up my own mind about the historical responsibility of
Haeckel [for Nazism].’ [p.451] Then again, Richards would be in a good
position to know about the limitations of his analysis.