

Daide Vecchi (University of Lisbon): “Evolution and its Three Explananda”

Abstract. A satisfactory theory of evolution should explain at least three striking features of life: adaptedness, diversity and complexity. Darwinism (e.g., Darwin’s evolutionism, the neo-darwinian interpretation of evolution or Modern Synthesis) arguably offers the most successful explanation of adaptedness and diversity available. I shall first review some of the central epistemological features of Darwinian explanations of adaptedness and diversity. I shall then explain why it is sometimes argued that the scope of Darwinism is not limited to “organic evolution” but that it encompasses the evolution of culture. I shall then conclude by pointing at some alleged limits of Darwinism, particularly concerning the explanation of complexity and the emergence of new levels of biological organisation.