

Fourth Discussion Class

Do I belong to anyone here?

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Is a function of the human nose to support eye glasses?

- A. Yes, it does that job very well
- B. No, it was not selected for that activity
- C. Yes, even though it was not selected for that activity, in doing it helps many humans maintain themselves
- D. Other

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Discussion Question

Does evolution by natural selection itself have a purpose or goal?

- A. Yes, it seeks to produce better organisms
- B. Yes, it seeks to produce organisms that are at this moment better fit to their environment
- C. No, it is just a process of winnowing different life forms, killing off many and leaving a few
- D. Other

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Discussion Question

Ruiz-Mirazo et al. define an autonomous system as “a far-from-equilibrium system that constitutes and maintains itself establishing an organizational identity of its own, a functionally integrated (homeostatic and active) unit based on a set of endergonic-exergonic couplings between internal self-constructing processes, as well as with other processes of interaction with its environment”

Would you recognize an autonomous system if you ran into it?

- A. Yes
- B. Maybe if I could if ____
- C. No

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Discussion Question

Assume an adaptationist about architecture seeks to understand the features of buildings in terms of the architect's intent. How should he/she respond when you point out the Spandrels of a Cathedral?

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Discussion Question

We have covered a number of biologists in this course. By our standards, many of them were wrong about important things.

1. Give examples of things we judge them to have been wrong about
2. Evaluate how that should affect our judgment of their importance

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Discussion Question

This was found in 1901 in examining a shipwreck from around 100-50 BCE and named the *Antikythera mechanism*



Had you discovered it, what questions would you have?



Discussion Question

What animated the disagreements between the Biometricians and the Mendelians?

- A. Deep commitment to processes like natural selection or mutation
- B. Intellectual ambition
- C. A failure to see how their positions could be reconciled
- D. Other
