
From germs and cells to species and trees of life... and beyond: Jon Hodge's articulation of Darwin's Generation Theorizing into its wider frames

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Abstract

Synthetic and overloaded with interpretative nuances and erudite details as it is, M.J.S. Hodge's epochal paper "Darwin as a Lifelong Generation Theorist" (1985) remains to this day a landmark in many ways. Confronting in the same move what he calls the "Franciscan view" (for Francis Darwin) and some 1970's "modified Lovejoyian" views of Charles Darwin theoretical developments, Hodge managed in this paper to provide us with a rich exemplar of how to avoid both "vertigos" (to use Pereda's expression). In this presentation I will connect Hodge's skillful highlighting of the Grantian "Generation Program" Darwin adopted as a young man (and it's well known achievement: Pangenesis) with its broader historiographical frameworks, with special attention to the cultural emergence of the modern concept of Heredity. I will show how Hodge's Darwin (that carefully connects Darwin's physiology of organismic reproduction with his origin of species) has been instrumental for many achievements in the history of biology, and that many lingering interpretative misunderstandings stemming from both the "Franciscan" and the "modified Lovejoyian" should be definitely put to rest.

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