
Falls and rises of evolutionary theories during Franco's regime (1939-1975)

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Abstract

When Franco arrived to power in 1939 soon relied greatly upon Catholic sectors of Spanish society. This meant creationism back to schools and universities. Evolutionism disappeared from the public sphere until the mid 20th century. At that moment, a group of Spanish paleontologists presented an evolutionism that fitted well with Francoist catholic ideology and was allowed to appear in the press, to be taught in seminars, schools and even to future journalists. This was a finalistic-theistic evolutionism and its supporters argued that it had nothing at odds with Catholic dogma. They used scientific arguments and paleontological evidence to prove it. In the 60's, a will of openness and modernity of the regime coincided with some crucial discoveries in genetics which involved Spanish scientists. Then, Neo-Darwinian evolutionism was reintroduced in the media with a new appearance provided by the new vocabulary of genetics. It reappeared clean of old controversies. In this talk I would like to present the theories of evolution that where discussed during Franco regime in the public sphere. To contextualize I will rely on the few existing research done on the period about evolutionism in education and scientific work. Then I will present my own research on the theories of evolution in the public sphere to show how the rise and fall of certain evolutionary theories followed political changes during Franco's regime.

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