

# Philosophy Department Colloquium Series

**Friday, October 18, 2019**

**3:00 p.m.**

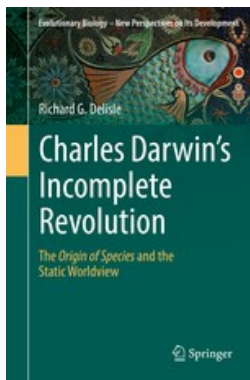
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**Everyone is welcome**



## **Charles Darwin: Why Natural Selection Could Not Be at the Explanatory Core of His Theory**

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**Abstract:** The notion of “natural selection” appears in the *Origin of Species* (1859), implicitly or explicitly, on nearly every page. This fact seems to convey definitive support for the received view that Charles Darwin placed it at the explanatory core of a theory of evolution. I will contest this assumption inherited from a “mechanism/causal-centered” view of science. As much as Darwin attributed a role to natural selection, he seriously constrained its explanatory function by enshrining it in a framework that channelled the evolutionary process along a pan-divergent view of evolution.

A more careful reading shows a theory designed to put evolution in a pan-divergent straitjacket, with the dual principle of divergence-gradation at its irrefutable explanatory core, one that is surrounded by a protective belt (Imre Lakatos) of flexible and auxiliary explanatory variables composed of geographical distance, geological time, taxonomic level, and amount of selective pressure.

Everyone is welcome.