



SFB 680

Molecular Basis of Evolutionary Innovations

Molekulare Grundlagen evolutionärer Innovationen

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Networks Approach to Evolutionary Dynamics of Genomes and Languages

Genome evolution and language evolution have a lot in common. Both processes entail evolving elements - genes or words - that are inherited from ancestors to their descendents. The parallels between biological and linguistic evolution were evident both to Charles Darwin, who briefly addressed the topic of language evolution in *The Origin of species*, and to the linguist August Schleicher, who in an open letter to Ernst Haeckel discussed the similarities between language classification and species evolution. Charles Darwin pictured the history of life as a tree. However, genes can be acquired also laterally (not by inheritance), while words can be borrowed between different languages. Phylogenetic trees cannot be used to model such lateral transfers. Networks may offer an alternative model.

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6:00 p. m.

Institute for Genetics, Zülpicher Str. 47a, Seminar Room, 4th floor

Host: Thomas Wiehe

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