

DEFINE OR NOT? THE MODERN CONTROVERSIES ABOUT THE NEED AND METHOD OF DEFINING LIFE

Summary

The aim of this paper is to provide a critical review of the modern approaches to defining life. The two most frequently cited definitions of life – Darwinian and autopoietic – are broadly discussed. Bernard's Korzeniewski cybernetic definition of life, the Andrzej Gecow's concept of purposeful information and Kepa Ruiz-Mirazo's and co-workers definition of life (life as autonomy and open-ended evolution) are also analyzed. Additionally, I analyze the methodological framework of discussion about life and

discuss the expectations of the formal aspects and the functions of definition of life. I suggest that the functional and dichotomous (metabolism plus evolution) approach to life definition seems to be the most successful one. I am also trying to deny the skeptical arguments as to the possibility and/or usefulness of definition of life, presented, in the first line of all, by Carol Cleland and her co-workers and by Edouard Machery.