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Int. Symposium *Philosophy of Nature*, Univ. of Vienna

International Symposium

Philosophy of Nature

- In Regard on Neo-Aristotelism in All-Encompassing System of Knowledge

11. International Symposium on Biocosmology

Given at the University of Vienna, on 19.- 21. May 2016

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A-1010 Wien, Universitätsstr. 7, „NIG“, **2nd Floor, HS 2 i :**

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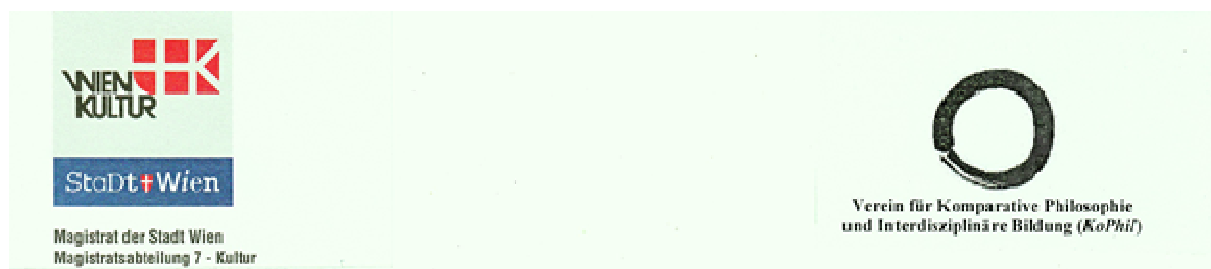
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HANS DRIESCH

THE PHYSICAL PARAMETER OF NATURE

ABSTRACT

Driesch's course of research and analytical considerations clearly indicates that he treated the implicit *E* factor as a kind of natural parameter, specific for objects and phenomena of organic nature, analogous to physical parameters – though he did not specify this in a literal manner. Under this symbol the concept of entelechy in parametric sense should be implied.

In the course of Driesch's morphogenetic research itself, the *E* factor was not at all events a "name" supposedly signifying metaphysical "being" allegedly expressing the "essence" of life. Such sense could have been investigated in Driesch's further, purely metaphysical speculations. Unfortunately, the main weakness of Driesch's overall theoretical efforts considering the objective justification of the concept of entelechy supported strictly by scientific experimental research on morphogenesis and its whole-organizing and phenomenologically teleological specificity must be indicated. Driesch, in fact, did not manage to work out a "measurement theory" specific for entelechy as a natural parameter, its potential specific quantitative values, so that the functional formula $B(X) = f(S, l, E)^1$ presented by him could be an effective basis for predictions, observation and experimental measurements. Entelechy as life-specific natural parameter remained in the realm of a sort of "regulative ideas" conditionally useful in certain living nature observations, not some constitutive rules" of its scientific, objective research of explanative and theoretical nature. If, however, Driesch had managed to do that, then the "*E*" symbol would not have occurred in the famous physical formula: $E=mc^2$

Regardless of that, it is still worth investigating the further course of Driesch's research and argumentation leading to scientific and objective consolidation of the concept of entelechy in its discussed here "parametric sense" based on experiments and morphogenetic observations, because it played a great heuristic role. Not to be underestimated is also the role of vitalism-inspired research and reflection of Driesch in purely methodological realm in the course of challenging the

¹ *B* – prospective meaning, *f*- function, *S* – the absolute size of the system in any case of morphogenesis, *l* – real position, *S* and *l* are variables, *E* – new important constant element of nature.

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narrow mechanistic position.

Quite on the sidelines: it probably should also be remembered that the search of “philosopher’s stone”, somehow doomed to failure in advance, resulted, in fact, in something inventive, like the invention of... porcelain. Nevertheless, the deep cognitive drama of further presented Driesch’s efforts fully deserves the attention and respect.

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