
Contents

Foreword	vii
Acknowledgements	xi
Chapter 1: Five Arguments for a New Theory of Biological Individuation	1
1.1 Ontophylogenesis	4
1.2 Random man	6
1.3 The same kind of laws govern biology and physics	8
1.4 The first principle of biology	10
1.5 Man lost in the Amazonian forest	11
Chapter 2: What is a Probabilistic Process?	15
Summary of the chapter	15
2.1 There is no qualitative difference between determinism and probabilism	16
2.2 Errors related to using probability	18
2.2.1 Probability does not deny causality	18
2.2.2 Probability is not incompatible with reproducibility	19
2.2.3 Probability, accident and contingency are not synonymous	21
2.2.4 Probability is not noise	24

Chapter 3: The Determinism of Molecular Biology	33
Summary of the chapter	33
3.1 Order from order	34
3.2 Stereospecific self-assembly	37
3.3 Genetic programming and signalling	43
Chapter 4: The Contradiction in Genetic Determinism	47
Summary of the chapter	47
4.1 The non-specificity of biological molecules	48
4.1.1 Non-specificity in metabolism	48
4.1.2 Non-specificity in the immune reaction	49
4.1.3 Non-specificity in cell signalling	50
4.1.4 Non-specificity in the control of gene expression	51
4.1.5 Overall non-specificity of protein networks	52
4.2 The causes of molecular non-specificity	54
4.2.1 The multiplicity of interaction domains	54
4.2.2 The plasticity of interaction sites	55
4.2.3 Molecular disorder	56
4.2.4 Specificity is not an experimental concept	58
4.3 The consequence of molecular non-specificity: Return to holism	59
4.3.1 The network won't work	59
4.3.2 Negating the principle of order from order	63
Chapter 5: Self-Organisation Does Not Resolve the Contradiction in Genetic Determinism	67
Summary of the chapter	67
5.1 The scientific principles	68

5.2 Philosophical holism	72
5.3 Biological holism	81
5.3.1 The neo-vitalistic holism of Hans Driesch	81
5.3.2 The neo-vitalistic holism of Walter Elsasser	83
5.3.3 Self-organisation according to Prigogine	85
5.3.4 Self-organisation according to Stuart Kauffman	89
5.3.5 Self-organisation according to Atlan	91
5.3.6 Self-organisation according to Weiss	94
5.3.7 Self-organisation according to Kirschner, Gerhardt and Mitchison	98
5.4 Self-organisation does not exist	100
Chapter 6: Hetero-organisation	103
Summary of the chapter	103
6.1. Ontogenesis and phylogenesis are but one process	107
6.1.1 The model of the heap of cells and the origin of multicellularity	111
6.1.2 The organism interiorises its environment	118
6.1.3 The organism functions for the cells, not the reverse	123
6.2 The deterministic theory of cell differentiation	127
6.2.1 Embryonic induction	128
6.2.2 The instructive model	128
6.2.3 The instructive model trips up against the contradiction in genetic determinism	130

6.2.4	The instructive model does not account for variability in cell differentiation	131
6.2.5	The instructive model does not account for stochastic gene expression	132
6.3	The Darwinian theory of cell differentiation	134
6.3.1	From differentiation to cell identification	134
6.3.2	From metabolic selection to stabilisation by the 'signal-food'	137
6.3.3	Role of signals in the Darwinian model	139
6.3.4	Mode of action of a signal (selector, signal-food)	140
6.3.5	Experimental data relating to cell selection and stabilisation	142
6.3.6	Testable predictions of the Darwinian model	144
6.4	Simulation of the Darwinian model	146
6.4.1	Interstabilisation and autostabilisation produce different effects	147
6.4.2	Cell selection creates organised structures	150
6.4.3	Spontaneous growth arrest is the result of equilibrium between cell selection and phenotype autostabilisation	154
6.4.4	A new conception of cancer	155
6.4.5	The role of morphogenetic gradients in the Darwinian model	159
6.4.6	Does the Darwinian model lead to the emergence of new properties?	159
6.4.7	Is the body a cell ecosystem?	161

6.5 Models of gene expression	162
6.5.1 Networks with noise	163
6.5.2 Self-organisation model of chromatin	164
6.5.3 The stochastic expression of genes subject to natural selection	167
Chapter 7: Biology's Blind Spot	175
Summary of the chapter	175
7.1 Generation according to Hippocrates	177
7.2 Generation according to Aristotle	181
7.3 The pangenetic theory	186
7.4 The return of Form	192
7.5 The contradiction in genetic determinism is a consequence of genetic essentialism	195
7.6 Beyond the species	201
Conclusion: A Research Programme and Ethical Principle based on Ontophylogenesis	205
Glossary	211
List of Abbreviations	221
List of Figures	223
Bibliography	225
Author Index	243
Subject Index	245