http://geology.19thcenturyscience.org/books/1906-Merz-HistEurThot/README.htm

dynamics. And lastly, we have the theory of evolution *par excellence*, as set out in Herbert Spencer's synthetic philosophy, with its alternating processes of differentiation and integration, and its recurrent cycles similar to those elaborated by the Stoics in ancient times.

30. Want of philosophical interest attaching to mechanical theories.

But whilst it is interesting to learn what are the ultimate consequences to which any special and useful line of exact reasoning leads, it cannot be denied that little philosophical interest attaches to most of these mechanical theories. In order to be scientifically consistent they have to strip the fundamental notions they employ of those psychological attributes, of that subjective colouring which attaches to them, and which alone makes them suitable for describing the phenomena of life and consciousness, so as to draw them into the circle of exact scientific discussion. They alone are of supreme interest to philosophical thought. So far as nature herself is concerned, these her most interesting traits seem to be preserved and revealed only in a synoptic (poetical and artistic) as opposed to a purely analytic and synthetic (scientific or exact) contemplation of her phenomena and events.

In order to solve the problem of nature in the philosophical sense—*i.e.*, in the sense in which Schelling and the earlier philosophy of Nature understood it—it would be necessary to introduce into the system of purely mechanical ideas some term which specifically denotes, symbolises, or describes the essential character of the processes peculiar to the living and conscious world. And this term cannot itself again be reduced to purely mechanical conditions and attributes. Nor will it be