

On the other side Spencer recognised, what Comte did not, the importance of the ideas of environment and adaptation put forward by some of Comte's contemporaries. Reference to these was to be found likewise in von Baer's writings.

In trying to solve the philosophical problem as he defined it, viz., the unification of knowledge, Spencer describes his special scheme of evolution in the following words: "The processes everywhere in antagonism, and everywhere gaining now a temporary and now a more or less permanent triumph the one over the other, we call Evolution and Dissolution. Evolution under its simplest and most general aspect is the integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; while Dissolution is the absorption of motion and concomitant disintegration of matter."

He had before established two principles which he termed respectively the "indestructibility of matter" and the "continuity of motion." To these he added two other principles: the "persistence of force" and the "rhythm of motion." He then goes on to explain that his use of the term Evolution is not identical with other accepted meanings of the term. "While," he says, "we shall by Dissolution everywhere mean the process tacitly implied by its ordinary meaning—the absorption of motion and disintegration of matter—we shall everywhere mean by Evolution the process which is always an integration of matter and dissipation of motion, but which . . . is in most cases much more than this."

From this definition of his highest principle we see that the biologist Spencer, in trying to find the ultimate