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# The ontophylogenetics of J.-J. Kupiec. In between historicism and determinism of the surroundings.

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## Abstract

Epigenetic phenomena constitute an interesting field of current biological research, since it forces us to reconsider the nature of certain mechanisms of life and to reformulate a biological philosophy. Precisely because this research postulates hereditary mechanisms independent of the genetic model (the transmission of a coded instruction), it rekindles the debate on biological determinism, the extension of Darwinism to microscopic phenomena, and, even more broadly, it allows us to consider the conceptual ground in which the division amongst a functional and evolutionist biology –following Michel Morange's distinction- could be overturned.

In this presentation, I will focus on discussing J.-J. Kupiec's ontophylogenetic theory which seeks to be both a new explanation of biological order and a new philosophical approach on the living thing. Kupiec puts forth an ontology in which the "being does not carry internal determination and is not active in itself. It constructs it 'here and now', in its confrontation of the world". In opposition to interpretations which claim that order is imposed either "from above" (emergentism) or "from below" (genetics), he suggests an order that is historically constructed from the continuous confrontation with its surroundings.

My presentation will ask in which sense a being in confrontation with the world, can also be inactive in itself. In other words, can the historicism of the living thing be reduced to the history of the restrictions imposed by its surroundings? Furthermore, do we then risk postulating a new form of determinism?

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