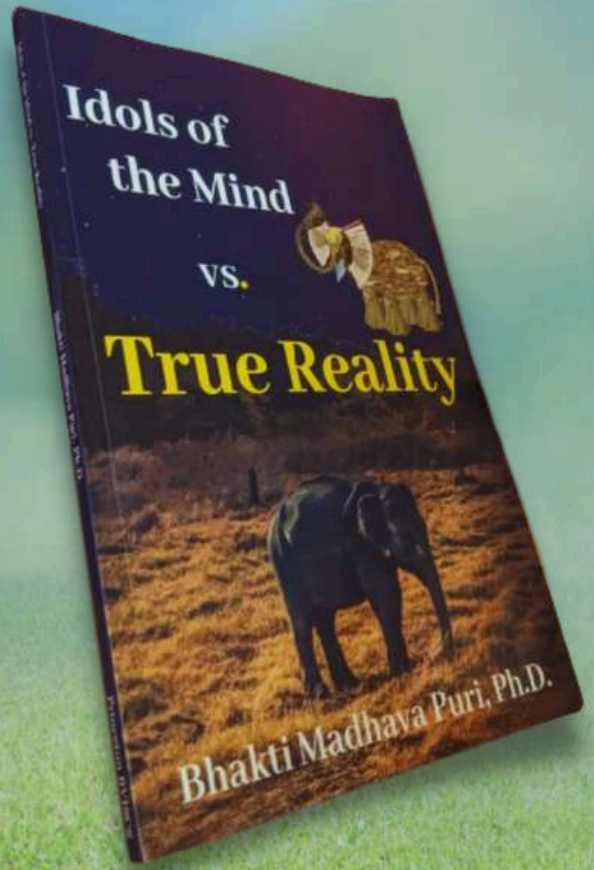
BHAKTI VEDANTA INSTITUTE
of Spiritual Culture and Science
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY, USA

SCIENCE OF LIFE CLUB
STOCKTON UNIVERSITY

OSPREYHUB
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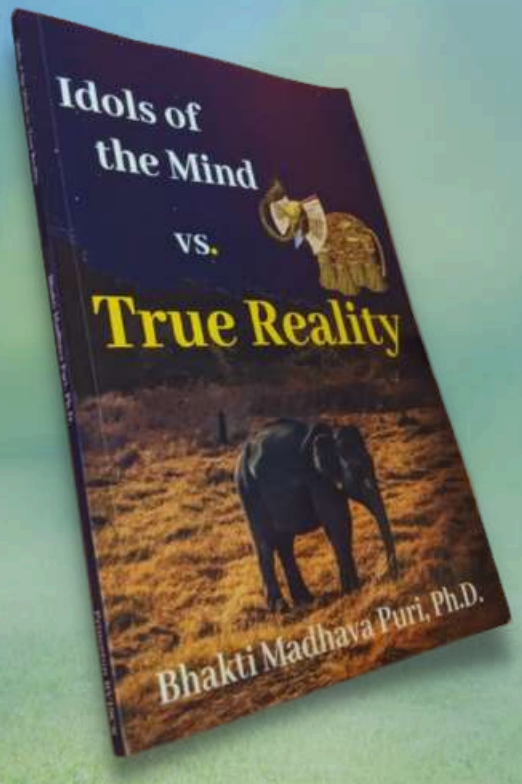


Idols of the Mind vs. True Reality

(by Dr. B Madhava Puri, Princeton Bhakti Vedanta Institute)

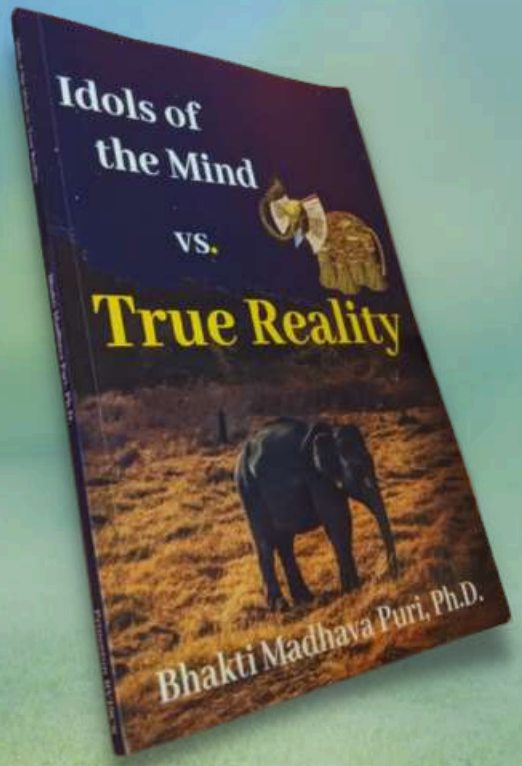
An Introduction to the Unity of Science, Philosophy, & Religion

Chapter 1: Logic of Life



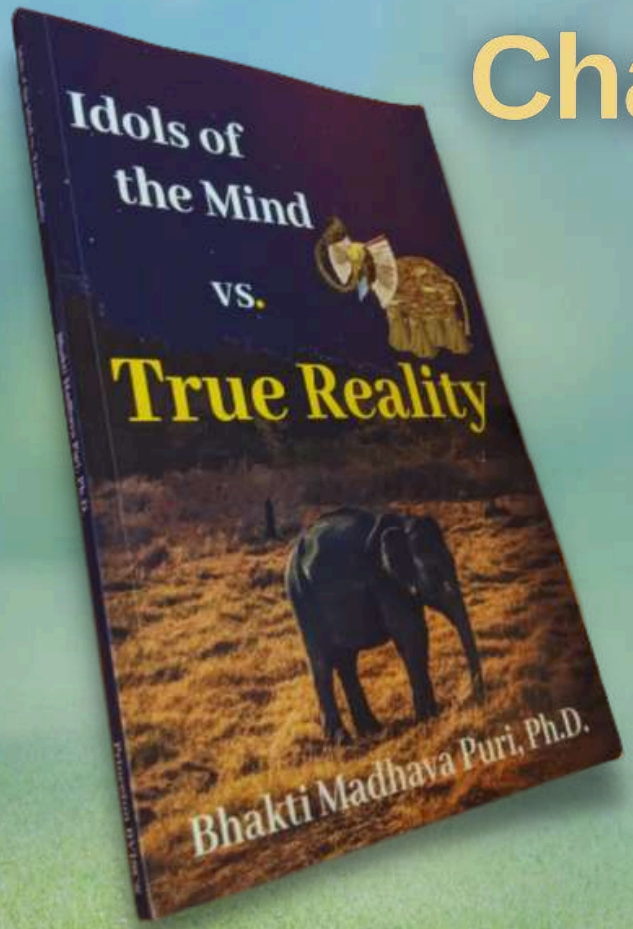
"The title of this book comes from Sir Francis Bacon (where human concepts are thought to be objectively true) and it synthesises a Vedantic approach with that of Hegel grounded in the primacy of the idea, Spirit and Consciousness. On the basis that there is no equivalence between organisms and machines, the author criticises the attribution of metaphysical qualities to inanimate robots as a serious category error: life and consciousness do not derive ultimately from matter. Interestingly, Nobel laureate and emeritus Honorary Member George Wald was persuaded by this approach on encountering Vedantic philosophy and switched his views accordingly to assert that mind had always been present in evolution. [...] This book makes a sophisticated and significant contribution to an emerging science of consciousness."

::David Lorimer
Programme Director of the Scientific and Medical Network
(Full book review published in Paradigm Explorer - 137 p 65)



"Readers looking for a bridge between ancient Hindu philosophy and its Western counterpart will appreciate the general nature of this text. [...] This book serves as a useful synopsis of the main arguments for looking beyond materialist science toward a more holistic worldview. Although some readers will find the pace and breadth of Dr. Puri's arguments disorienting, others will appreciate its comprehensiveness and straightforward presentation. In any case, the message is an important one, as materialist philosophy continues to wreak havoc on social relationships and the environment around the world."

::Jennifer Lyke, PhD
Professor of Psychology at Stockton University
Science of Life Club Faculty Advisor



Chapter 1: Logic of Life

Emphasizes the teleological view of nature and life through the philosophies of Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, and G.W.F. Hegel



Aristotle
384–322 BC



Kant
1724-1804



Hegel
1770-1831

Four aspects of Aristotelian causality

- **material** (an object's constitutive stuff)
- **efficient** (the active force shaping an object)
- **formal** (an object's conceptual blueprint or formative principle)
- **final** (that for the sake of which the object exists, its purpose)



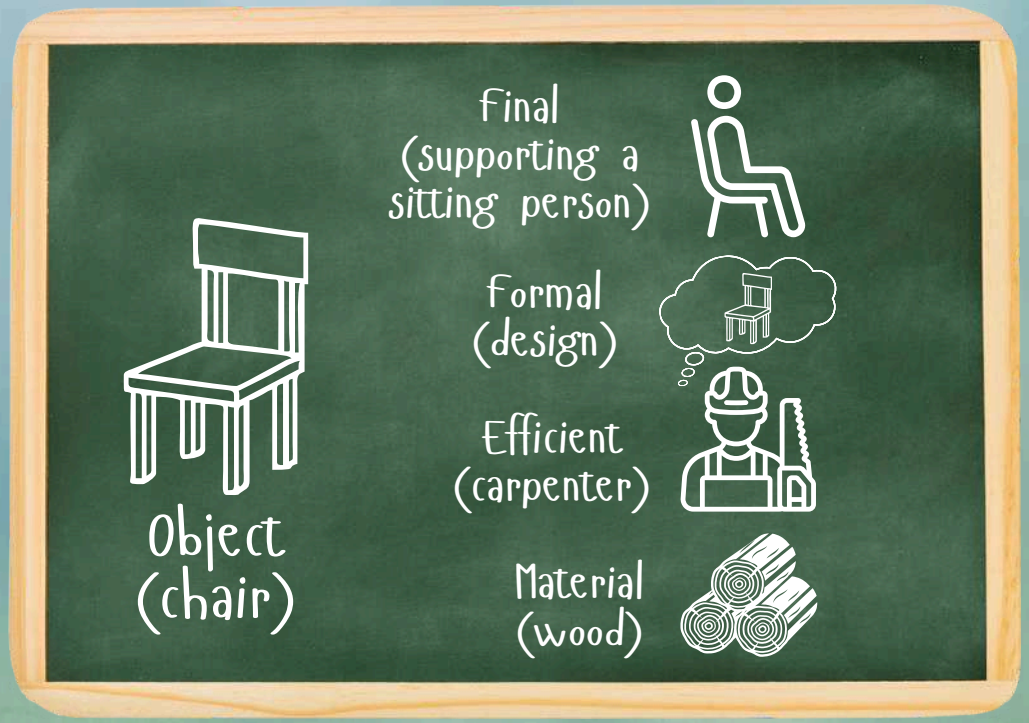
Aristotle
384–322 BC

Aristotelian ontology (the study of being)

- ***dunamis*** (potentiality)
- ***energia*** (actuality)
- ***entelechy*** (actualization)
    - (***en-telos***) inner teleology

Four aspects of Aristotelian causality

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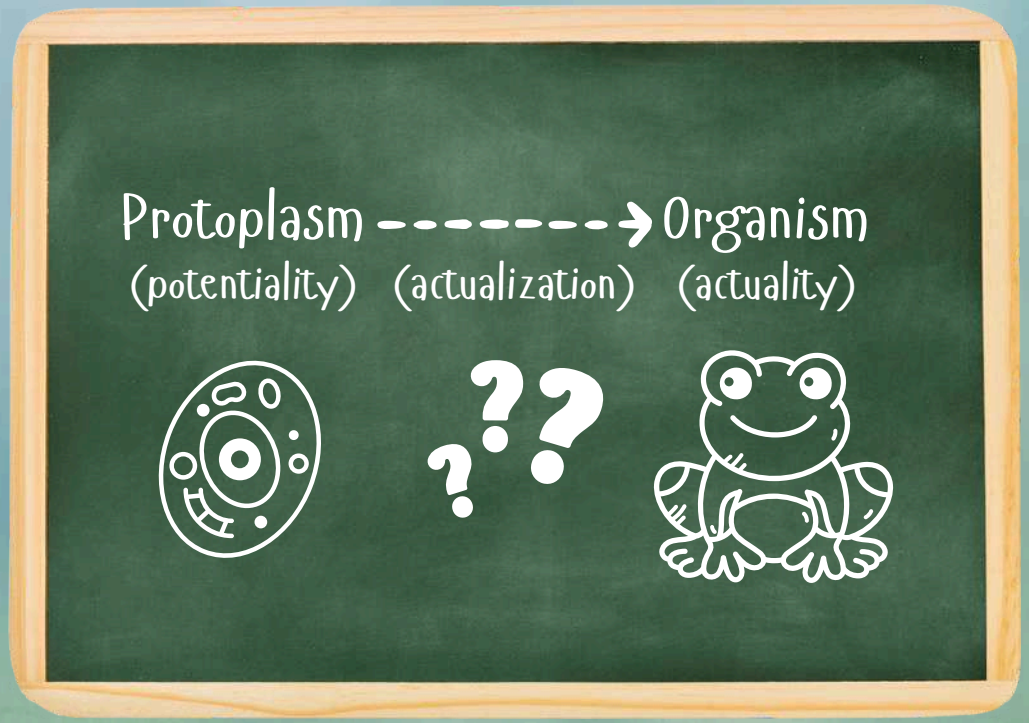


The purpose of nonliving objects is external to the object, but living objects have their purpose internal to them

Aristotelian ontology (the study of being)

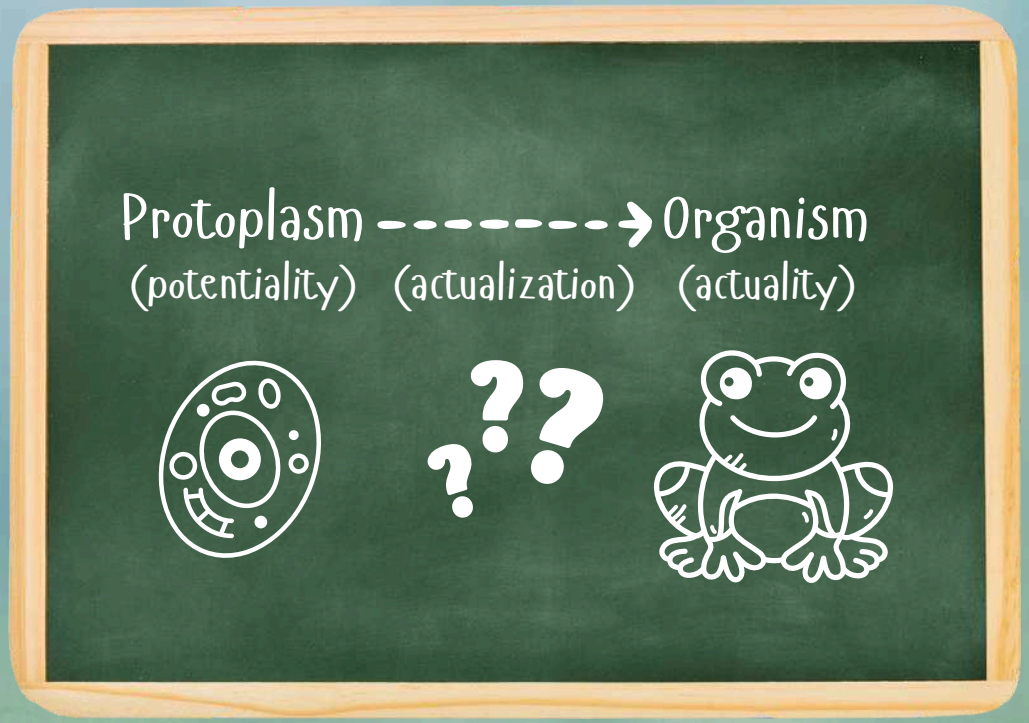
- ***dunamis*** (potentiality)
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- different kinds of being



More than cell division and specialization… how does development remain so consistent? Experiments have been done to disturb the trajectory of embryonic development (Driesch's sea urchins, Levin's Picasso tadpoles), but the maturing entity course corrects and achieves its original goal state

How can we explain this predisposition to develop in a particular way and not any other way?



"I think it will be very useful to look at the way Hegel organized the various types of objects that we observe in Nature, viz. the mechanical, chemical, and biological, according to what he called the Concept (*Begriff*). The Concept, for Hegel, is essentially a dynamic or organic unity of the different moments or parts that constitute its content." (Dr. B. M. Puri, IMvTR, p 15)

Hegel's ontological distinctions between natural objects

- Mechanical
- Chemical
- Biological
    - Kantian definition of organism

Concept of life (Concept in the Hegelian sense) as dialectic process

- Singular
- Particular
- Universal

- Self-maintained process
- Unity-in-diversity

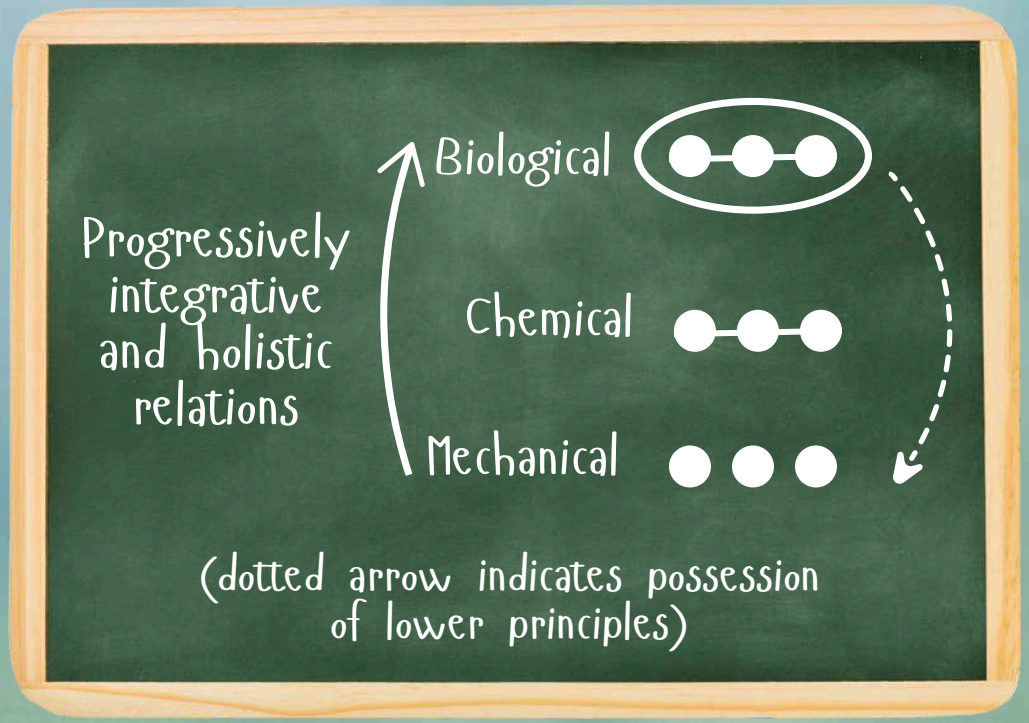


Kant
1724-1804



Hegel
1770-1831

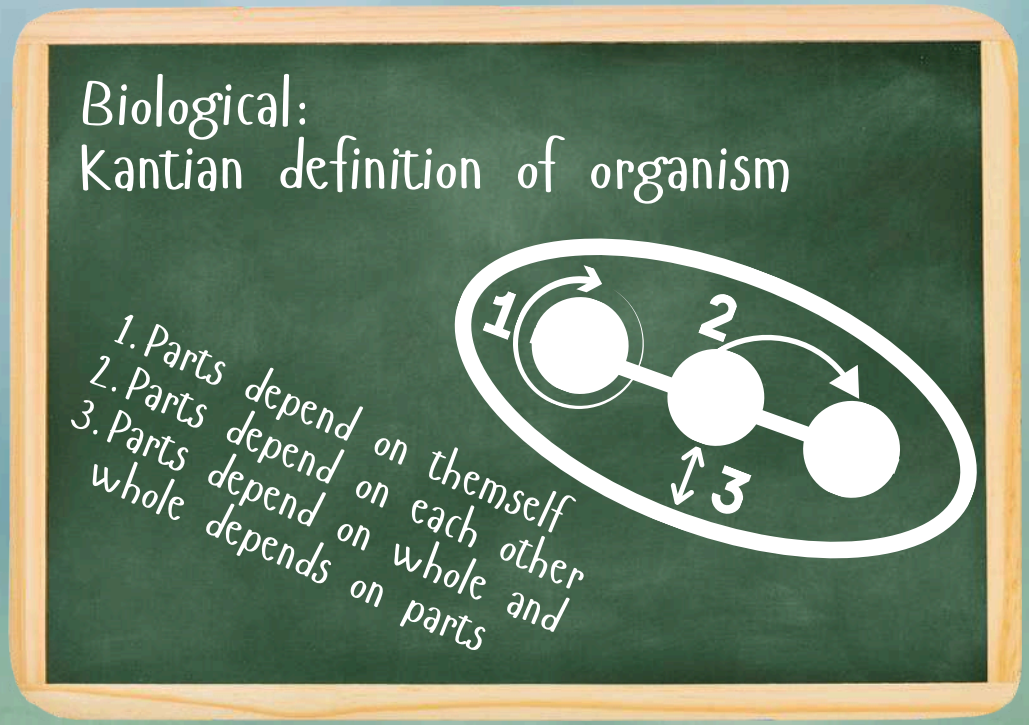
Hegel's ontological distinctions between natural objects



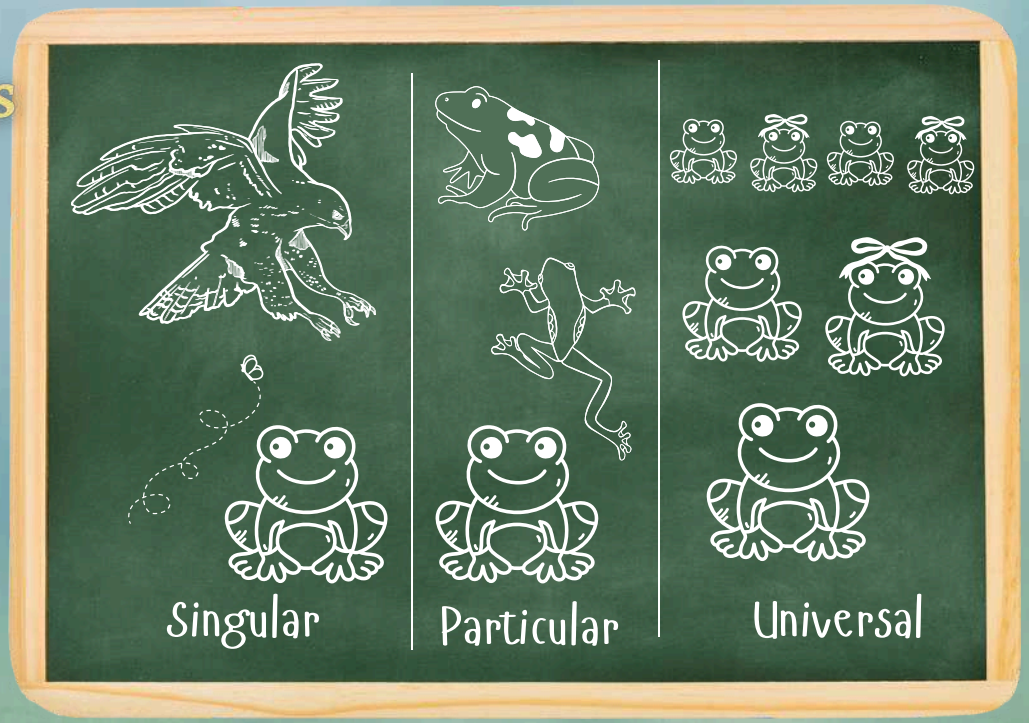
- Mechanical
  - mechanical systems are aggregate wholes unified by external agency
    - no inner necessity
  - their parts retain the same identity whether or not they're in the system, thus amenable to reductionism
- Chemical
  - chemical systems are relational wholes unified through an internal affinity for bonding (polarity)
  - their parts transform through bonding, as well as maintaining independent existence
- Biological
  - biological systems are processual organic wholes that internally develop as an integrated unified entity
    - for the embryo, that unity exists as the goal state for the
  - their parts have no independent existence; they exist solely for the purpose of the whole of which they're a part

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Concept of life (Concept in the Hegelian sense) as dialectic process



- **Singular / Specimen** (digestive activity)
  - maintains self-other dynamic
  - demarcates an individual from environment
- **Particular / Species** (metabolic activity)
  - maintains the particular kind of individual
  - conformity to species
- **Universal / Genus** (reproductive activity)
  - maintains the species concept to which the individual conforms
  - continuity of species

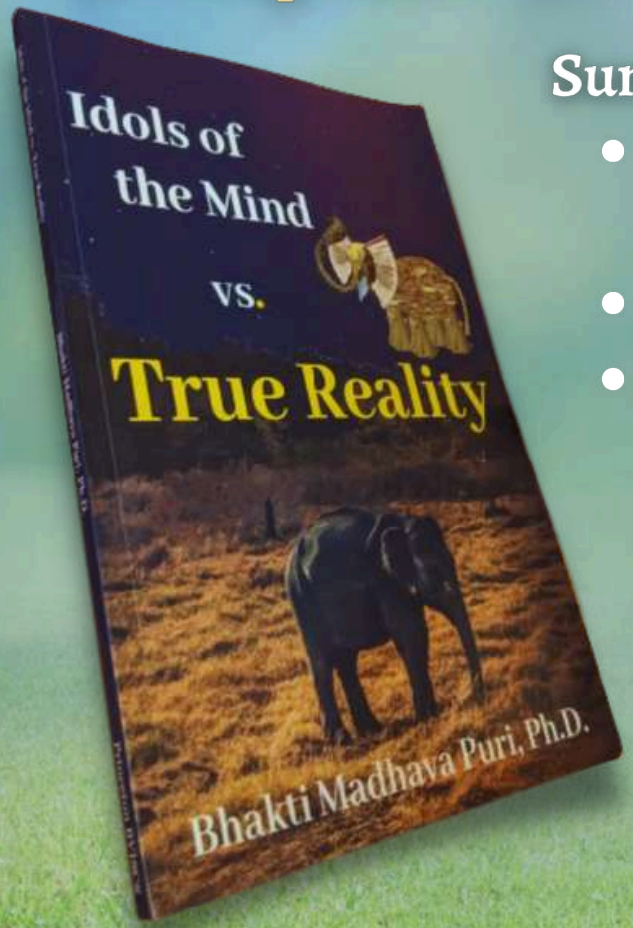
- Self-maintained process (rather than externally unified static aggregate)
- Unity-in-diversity

Concluding thoughts

- The Concept is a negative unity of its content
- The organism is a negative unity of its objective content (molecules, cells, organs, tissues) such that the individuality of its content becomes implicit in order to serve the explicit subjective purposes of the organism as a whole (survival, pleasure, education, self-realization)
    - This is a qualitative shift from objective to subjective as two moments of one processual organic whole

- Natural laws act as an external agency on natural objects, thus biological objects which possess internal purpose can resist such laws
    - Gravity — standing up or jumping is resistance to gravity
    - Thermodynamics / entropy (moving toward a state of disorganization or chaos) — negentropy (moving toward a state of order) is resistance to entropy
    - Emphasis on the significance of the inner teleology of biological entities rather than just external factors (progressing from reductionist/mechanistic to holistic/organic)

Chapter 1: Logic of Life



Summary of main topics:

- Aristotelian perspective of ontology and causality and their relevance to contemporary studies in embryonic development
- Emphasis on the (inner and outer) teleological view of nature
- Hegelian perspective on the ontological distinctions between mechanical, chemical, and biological objects
    - Kantian perspective of an organism
    - Hegel's Conceptual comprehension of life as a dialectic process
        - Threefold aspects of the concept of life
            - Universal (reproduction), Particular (metabolism), Singular (digestion/assimilation)