

the origin of a living body out of lifeless matter, is so utterly inconceivable and beyond all experience. In one word, let us examine the question of *spontaneous generation*, or *archigony*. In so doing, it is above all things necessary to form a clear idea of the principal properties of the two chief groups of natural bodies, the so-called inanimate or inorganic, and the animate or organic bodies, and then establish what is common to, and what are the differences between, the two groups. It is desirable to go somewhat carefully into the *comparison of organisms and anorgana*, since it is commonly very much neglected, although it is necessary for a right understanding of nature from the monistic point of view. It will be most advantageous here to look separately at the three fundamental properties of every natural body; these are matter, form, and force. Let us begin with *matter*.

By chemistry we have succeeded in analyzing all bodies known to us into a small number of elements or simple substances, which cannot be further divided—for example, carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, sulphur, and the different metals: potassium, sodium, iron, gold, etc. At present we know about seventy such elements or simple substances. The majority of them are unimportant and rare; the minority only are widely distributed, and compose not only most of the anorgana, but also all organisms. If we compare those elements which constitute the body of organisms with those which are met with in anorgana, we have first to note the highly important fact that in animal and vegetable bodies no element occurs but what can be found outside of them in inanimate nature. There are no special organic elements or simple organic substances.