

DUALITIES IN BERGSON REVISITED:
TOWARDS A RECONCILIATION?

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GÜLİZAR KARAHAN

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Prof. Dr. Sencer Ayata
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Elif Çırakman
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Asist. Prof. Dr. Elif Çırakman	(METU,PHIL)	_____
Asist. Prof. Dr. Barış Parkan	(METU, PHIL)	_____
Asist. Prof. Dr. Demet Taşdelen	(ANADOLU U., PHIL)	_____

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Name, Last Name: Gülizar Karahan

Signature :

ABSTRACT

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Karahan, Gülizar

M.A., Department of Philosophy

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Elif Çırakman

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The aim of this study is to make an inquiry on the nature and the development of dualities in Bergson's philosophy. Since the nature of each duality differs from the others and the dualistic pattern inherent in Bergsonian philosophy is subject to change, we base our study on a chronological structure in order to comprehend better how this pattern changes. We claim that such an inquiry will yield relevant outcomes with regard to ontological and epistemological evolution of Bergson's thought. To state more precisely, we are of the idea that the modification in the dualistic pattern in Bergson's ontology is reflected in a parallel manner in his epistemology. The fundamental question that shows us the way to follow in our study is whether the elements of the dualities (whether they be ontological or epistemological) are reconciled by Bergson or they are left as absolutely distinct elements. At the end of the inquiry regarding that question, which we believe can be taken as an inspiring point in developing new approaches especially to epistemological problems, our conviction is that Bergson points out to a meeting point.

Keywords: Duality, Habits of the Understanding, Quality, Quantity, Homogeneous Reality, Heterogeneous Reality, Space, Duration (*Durée*), Intellect, Intuition, Science, Metaphysics, Endosmosis, Pure Intellectualism, True Empiricism.

ÖZ

BERGSON'UN FELSEFESİNDE İKİLİKLER: UZLAŞIYA DOĞRU?

Karahan, Gülizar

Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Elif Çırakman

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Bu çalışmadaki amacımız, Bergson'un felsefesinde yer alan ikiliklerin doğasına ve gelişimine ilişkin bir araştırma yapmaktır. Bergson'un felsefesindeki ikiliklerin her birinin doğası diğerlerinin doğasından farklı olduğundan ve ikiliklerin hâkim olduğu bu felsefî yapı zamanla değiştiğinden, farklılıkları ve değişimi daha iyi kavrayabilmek için çalışmamızı Bergson'un belli eserlerinin tarihsel sırayla incelenmesi biçiminde düzenledik. Bu araştırmanın Bergson'un düşüncesine ilişkin varlıkbilimsel ve bilgikuramsal sonuçları olacağı kanısındayız. Daha açık ifade etmek gerekirse, Bergson'un ikilikler içeren varlıkbilim anlayışındaki değişimin, aynı biçimde, felsefecinin bilgikuramı anlayışına da yansıdığı görüşündeyiz. Araştırmamızı yönlendiren temel soru şu oldu: söz konusu olan ister varlıkbilim ister bilgikuramı alanı olsun, ikiliklerin öğeleri belli bir noktada uzlaştırılabilir mi yoksa bunlar birbirinden tümüyle ayrı öğeler olarak kalmaya mı mahkûmdurlar? Özellikle bilgikuramsal sorunlara yeni yaklaşımlar bulunmasında ilham verebileceğini düşündüğümüz bu konunun soruşturulmasından sonra vardığımız nokta, bize Bergson'un ikiliklerin öğelerini uzlaştırabildiğini gösteriyor.

Anahtar Sözcükler: İkilik, Zihnin Alışkanlıkları, Nitelik, Nicelik, Homojen Gerçeklik, Heterojen Gerçeklik, Uzam, Süre (*Durée*), Anlık, Sezgi, Bilim, Metafizik, Endozmoz, Arı Anlıkçılık, Gerçek Deneycilik.

To My Family

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- CE* Bergson, Henri, *Creative Evolution* (transl. by Arthur Mitchell, Ph.D.), Dover Publications Inc., New York, 1998.
- CM* Bergson, Henri, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, (trans. by Mabelle L. Andison), Carol Publishing Group, New York, 1992.
- E* Bergson, Henri, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (trans. by F. L. Pogson), Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1960. (In some of the citations abbreviated as *TFW*, in compliance with the preference of the author cited)
- MM* Bergson, Henri, *Matter and Memory* (transl. by Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer), Zone Books, New York, 2005.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Henri Bergson is well known for his concept of *durée* in the history of philosophy and has led a lasting dispute in epistemology with his doctrine of intuition. The seeds of this new philosophy were sprinkled upon the soil of thought in the form of elements the most crucial of which were in absolute opposition with the doctrines of classical epistemology, for which the decomposing (analyzing) faculties of the mind were essential. Bergson's crucial elements keep appearing through all the works of the philosopher and sketch the outlines of his thought. Being not fully developed in Bergson's introductory book *Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness (E)*, they are obviously more and more elaborated throughout the thinking and writing process of the philosopher. Among all the remarkable elements of the Bergsonian philosophy, however it is impossible to ignore his position with regard to the role of the intellect. Indeed, the rigid nature of Bergson's opposition to the tradition that emphasized the role of the intellect not only caused him to resist rationalism but also later guided him in his criticism of psychological associationism.

Throughout our study we are going to handle basically that which we think is a fundamental characteristic inherent in Bergson's philosophy: duality. This, in fact, seems to be a pattern spread out in most of his works and has led us into hesitations whether it is an ontological attitude or only a structural preference. As we shall try to show, duality is not merely a formal structure, but also forms a key constituent of the Bergsonian philosophy. Nevertheless we cannot call it an absolute "dualism" since it is not introduced and developed by Bergson as the classical dualism of Descartes, according to which the two substances (the thinking substance mind and the extended substance matter) can only interact with each other via the involvement of God (there exists no causal relation between the two substances). On Bergson's side, although matter and mind are introduced as opposing realities, since his philosophy

is very much under the influence of *durée* (real duration, which is the ultimate reality) the opposition is determined in terms of *durée*. In Bergson's philosophy, the relation between matter and mind cannot be reduced to a relation of causality. But this is not because there exists a higher order substance like God. On the contrary, it is because this would mean disregarding the creative force of life, handing over it to determinism.

In investigating the status of duality we are going to handle three works by Bergson, which we think reflect the way duality emerges and evolves: *Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness (E)*, *The Creative Mind (CM)* and *Creative Evolution (CE)*. In other words, our first aim will be to give a framework relating to the nature of the duality revealed in the chronology of these three books. As the Bergson reader gets more and more familiar with the philosopher's works, he/she will classify the *Essay* on the one hand and *Creative Evolution* and *The Creative Mind* on the other under different headings depending on the development of duality. In fact, the positions of duality in these books make themselves easily recognized, but from our point of view they all need to be handled more thoroughly in order to attain a better understanding concerning the nature of duality. Having this conviction we are going to devote to the *Essay* and *Creative Evolution* each a chapter. As for *The Creative Mind*, since we think Bergson is closer there to *Creative Evolution* than he is to the *Essay*, we prefer to refer to particular essays from this book both in the chapter assigned to *Creative Evolution* and in our last chapter where an epistemological inquiry is carried out.

We should also note that in *Matter and Memory*, too, the reader has the chance to observe the appearance and development of duality. However we do not devote an independent chapter to that book. We prefer to include the chapter titled *The Delimiting and Fixing of Images* of it, which we think can contribute a lot to see the resolution of the absolute separation of the *Essay*. For if we were to give *Matter and Memory* a rank considering the development process of the duality, we would place it somewhere between the *Essay* and *Creative Evolution*. And since we intend to demonstrate how the status of duality changes and what different forms it assumes, we have decided to include the works of the philosopher which we think reflects

better this shift. That is, we regard the *Essay* and *Creative Evolution* as two extremes in Bergson's thought, the former handling duality as absolute and the latter more optimistic in offering a meeting point between the terms of duality. After having given an account of the evolution of duality, we are going to evaluate Bergson's philosophy (still taking into account the dualistic understanding and a possible reconciliation) for another investigation as to whether two ways of knowing, that is, intellect (science) and intuition (philosophy), can be brought together. In other words, we are going to examine whether the ontological evolution leads to any epistemological movement in Bergson's thought and then depending on our conviction regarding the relation of intellect and intuition, we are going to try to determine Bergson's attitude towards intellectualism.

Starting with his *Essay* Bergson problematizes two matters both of which are vital not only for a comprehensive understanding of his philosophy but also, in Bergson's thought, inevitable for the salvation of some so-called insoluble problems in the history of philosophy. These are namely time and the conception of space. The following quotation from a recent interpreter of Bergson is quite fitting to the *Essay*: "The difference between duration and space functions as a kind of *a priori* in Bergson's thinking" (Guerlac, 2006: 96). And dependent on the opposition between the two arise further issues such as the ones concerning the distinction between homogeneity and heterogeneity, qualitative and quantitative multiplicities, extended and unextended realities. As we mentioned above, the fact that all these issues are handled in pairs both by Bergson and by us is due to duality's being a distinguishing characteristic of his philosophizing. Moreover we hold not only that they are important for a thorough understanding of Bergson's philosophy but also that each and every pair originates from the philosopher's deep-seated dualistic insight. The importance of the *Essay* lays in the fact that it is an introductory work to Bergsonian dualities and to the elements of it, which in later works are better and, from a certain point of view, in a different way articulated. In the *Essay* Bergson asserts an insurmountable cleavage between material world (matter) and inner world (consciousness) and claims that there is no point of contact between them. This is obvious when he says "in a movement we may find the reason of another movement,

but not the reason of a conscious state” (*E*: 148). Now, we think this is the ground from where the opposition between intellect and intuition also arises. For the implication of these opposing realms will be a parallel opposition in the knowledge of them. In other words, we claim that the ontological discrepancy that Bergson introduces as fundamental leads to an epistemological disparity. Before the epistemological implications, however we are going to dwell more on duration.

Bergson’s most significant criticism regarding time is that time cannot be characterized by homogeneity. As Čapek writes, Bergson’s rejection of the homogeneity of time means indeed an elimination of the Newtonian understanding of time according to which time is an “empty and inert receptacle” (Čapek, 1971: 91). The Newtonian time is empty in the sense that it can exist without anything happening. Its existence is independent from all other existences. In this sense it is substantial; it is not determined by anything else, but determines them. On the other hand, according to the Bergsonian understanding, “real time”¹ is totally dependent on the movement/life itself. To state better, duration is movement/life itself. It is no other independent entity which can exist being devoid of all kind of content. In other words, duration and its content are one and the same.

However the development of Bergson’s philosophy, especially the development of the notion of “duration,” involves a drawback. Bergson introduces us the term “real time” (*durée réelle*) firstly in his *Essay*, proposing it as valid at and limited to the psychological level. That is, as the *Essay* is detailed, one comes to see that only the mental states can constitute real time, while in the physical realm it is not possible to find the traces of duration. This, we propose, is the origin of the absolute cleavage between the physical world and the psychical world that will last till Bergson develops a new understanding regarding the relation of matter and intellect together with *Matter and Memory*.

¹ Bergson applies the term “duration” (*durée*) in order to distinguish his own understanding of time, which for him is “real time,” from the traditional Newtonian time. So from this point onwards we are going to follow his terminology regarding this issue.

What Bergson tries to convey to his reader first of all is that the attempt to explain the psychological realm with such static notions as ideas, impressions, etc. is a method that is doubtless borrowed from physics. What happens in our psychological life is tried to be clarified by the arrangement of these static entities. Thus, in a certain sense, there is no difference whether they be ideas, sensations or something else. What is common to all is that they are *non-changing* entities that are employed in order to give an explanation to the *changes* (movements) in the psychological realm. What Bergson finds striking here is that change is tried to be explained via elementary units that do not change. Moreover they are fictitious elements which are abstracted from their temporal context and in this sense they are independent, thus empty. Yet Bergson claims that “[t]he dynamic continuity of duration must not be conceived as a succession of clearly defined and mutually external units” (Čapek, 1971: 90).

The domination of such fictitious elements is easily observed all through our reasoning, speaking, in a word, living. Bergson is aware of the spatializing habit that affects our language. He frequently mentions about how he is forced by the language to use clear-cut words in order to express his continuous flow of thought. In fact, Bergson admits that he has but to use language and asserts that this language belongs to the understanding when he says “we must adopt the language of the understanding, since only the understanding has a language” (CE: 258). What is more, it is due to this language that we characterize inner life either as unity or multiplicity or both as unity and multiplicity. Adopting the categories of the understanding what we can say at most is that I am “a unity that is multiple and a multiplicity that is one” (CE: 258). As of personality all these can be said of life:

While, in its contact with matter, life is comparable to an impulsion or an impetus, regarded in itself it is an immensity of potentiality, a mutual encroachment of thousands and thousands of tendencies which nevertheless are “thousands and thousands” only when once regarded as outside of each other, that is, when spatialized. (CE: 258)

Only when thought in compliance with the categories of the understanding (indeed we are but bound to do so, in a certain sense) can life be formulated as composing of

“thousands and thousands of tendencies.” In our study (especially in the last chapter) we are going to handle the issue whether Bergson can propose a rigorous solution to the problem of language, although it is not possible to find a systematical treatment of the matter in any of his works.

In order to come to a clear perception of our inner life, we should do away with the effects of our understanding on this perception:

Now just as, in order to ascertain the real relations of physical phenomena to one another, we abstract whatever obviously clashes with them in our way of perceiving and thinking, so, in order to view the self in its original purity, psychology ought to eliminate or correct certain forms which bear the obvious mark of the external world. (*E*: 223-4).

Bergson’s works following the *Essay* aim at reaching an understanding of not only the psychic world (the self) but also the whole life purified of the imprints of the habits of mind. As we have mentioned above, through the chronological development, the form that duality assumes also changes. We are also going to deal with this shift throughout the whole study.

We hold the view that Bergson’s philosophy is a bold attempt to overcome the domination of the habits of human understanding. In order to do this, Bergson first of all exerts his efforts to prove this diffusion in the *Essay*. However even this introductory book is written in the form of a very strong declaration. In a certain reading of the *Essay* one can even get the impression that Bergson leaves no place for the intellectual knowledge. That is to say, the philosopher places very strict dividing lines between the contrasting elements of the book. The lines are drawn so precisely that one considers them as absolute.

As for *Creative Evolution*, we think that Bergson looks for an answer to the question as to whether the elements of the duality inherent in the *Essay* can be brought together. So the rest of our study is shaped as an investigation of whether the long-lasting duality is in essence an ever-lasting one or not. What makes us optimistic about a possible reconciliation is that in *Creative Evolution* Bergson offers duration

as a common attribute of matter and life. That is, Bergson asserts that each is an indivisible flux. This is the light under which we read *Creative Evolution* and *The Creative Mind* and ask whether intellect (science) and intuition (philosophy) can meet at a point. Bergson never writes very clearly on this issue, but often he gives clues about it. Moreover the apparent contrast between the first and later books also helps the reader to derive implications concerning the issue.

Nevertheless it is not easy to decide where Bergson's philosophy finally rests. From a particular point of view it might be thought that Bergson's is a naive philosophy of acknowledgements. That is, Bergson insists on the point that we should acknowledge the assimilation of the unextended into the extended by the intellect, the evolution of the intellect, the origin of matter (and also reintegrating matter to its origin) and finally the boundaries of the domain of science. In this sense, his aim seems to grant a status to the realm of inner life and the knowledge that we can attain from this realm. So we hold with Guerlac that "[t]he principal task of his argument, however is to focus our attention on the side of experience that tends to get neglected and that risks being obliterated by mechanistic psychologies: inner experience" (Guerlac, 2006: 59-60). However we are going to try to demonstrate that Bergson's effort that is directed to bestow inner experience with a firm position is of great importance, because it corresponds to an ontological and epistemological revolt.

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION TO THE DUALITIES IN BERGSON'S PHILOSOPHY: AN ESSAY ON THE IMMEDIATE DATA OF CONSCIOUSNESS

One can find the fundamental elements that characterize Bergson's philosophy very clearly in his *Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (*E*). The apparent use of contrasts that forms the basic pattern of many of the philosopher's works is firstly introduced in this one. The *Essay* comes also at the first range with regard to Bergson's clear and systematic attack on certain elements and aspects of the intellect and science. Throughout this chapter of our work we are going to try to give a thorough account of these aspects. Being aware of the fact that writing on the *Essay* would be dry without frequent reference to the contrasting elements intertwined in the book, we are going to handle our subject matter in harmony with this Bergsonian pattern. Indeed, we do not regard the appearance of contrasts merely as a formal frame of Bergson's philosophizing, but interpret each as very essential cornerstones of his philosophy (in the *Essay*). In other words, we believe that each and every pair of those contrasting elements originates from the deep-seated dualistic understanding of the philosopher and deserves much interest. In this chapter, taking into consideration some of the manifest contrasts in the book, we are going to shed light to what forms this underlying duality assumes in the *Essay*. Accordingly, each pair of the contrasting elements is going to be taken as a step in treating the focus of our study as a whole, which can be formulated as Bergson's criticism of intellectualism and separation of his intuitive philosophy from the intellectual understanding.

Bergson bases this separation of his philosophy from the intellectual approach on the understanding concerning "the conception of space" (*E*: 96). For him "the conception of space" is the basic component of "human" way of interpreting the world. So, from the beginning of the book on, he tries to distinguish the "very human" conception of space, which can be applied to the external world, from the non-spatial nature of the

inner world. Later, on this ground he insists on how essential it is to differentiate the two spheres and the characterizations of each from one another. In a word, he declares his aim as giving back to inner world its long-forgotten clarity and purifying its phenomena off *spatiality*. Therefore we find it quite crucial to bear in mind that at every point of the *Essay* Bergson takes into consideration and tries to cope with our obsession with “the conception of space”.

At the very beginning, in his preface to the book, Bergson talks about the so practical and necessary but also troublesome assimilation, or in his words about the “illegitimate translation of the unextended into the extended, of quality into quantity” (*E*: ix). Sensations and feelings, for instance, are expressed in terms of magnitudes, compared to each other and even tried to be measured somehow in science, as if, like what happens in the external world, they take place in *space*. Even when we want to express nothing but the very basic ontological characteristic of them (that they occur, that they be), we make use of the phrase “take place.” Using no other characterization but this spatial one, we emphasize the domain of space, thus exemplifying what Bergson is after. In language too, will Bergson say, we are obsessed by space.

So far, it has been clear that with this introductory work Bergson aims at demonstrating to the reader the diffusion of spatiality to the way we think, we speak (as illustrated above), we live. Whether his aim is to completely dispel this diffusion off the scene or to delimit it is one of the basic concerns of our study and we are going to try to give an account of it throughout. We are going to see that the status of the spreading of space is closely related to, so to say, the long-lasting duality in Bergson’s philosophy.

At the beginning, Bergson can only be said to think that surrender of thought to space is necessary in ordinary life and in order to make science; however, as the source of some so-called undefeatable problems of philosophy, we should address

this surrender, this invasion, shortly this illegitimacy.² At the moment we are about to build the necessary ground to confront this illegitimacy by going deep in several core concepts which Bergson makes use of.

The diffusion of “the conception of space” is at the same time what brings about the contrasts. As Bergson himself mentions in the conclusion of the book, “[i]ntensity, duration, voluntary determination, these are the three ideas which had to be clarified by ridding them of all that they owe to the intrusion of the sensible world and, in a word, to the obsession with the idea of space” (*E*: 224). Treating the idea given in the conclusion as a torch in reading the main text, it can be figured out that all Bergson’s efforts are directed to bring in front of us the neglected, falsely interpreted inner world with its *pure-in-itself but confused-for-us* elements. As we mentioned before, the source of the confusion is exactly the ill translation of what is unextended (inner world) to what is extended (external world). Though the terms the perceptions of which should be purified are determined as three by Bergson (intensity, duration and voluntary determination), in this chapter we are going to handle two of them (intensity and duration).

2.1 First Contrast: Intensities and Magnitudes

In the first chapter of the *Essay*, in a non-scientific way, Bergson deals with how we apply to our inner states (states of consciousness) the habit of spatializing, a method that we employ when external objects are concerned. Concerning the inner life, this habit can be defined as the tendency to objectify our states of consciousness, which in essence are subjective, in other words, which do not allow themselves to be solidified like external objects.

How do we assess the elements in the external world and our inner states? In what way do we talk about them? In assessing inner world do we really have sufficient reason to apply the same method with the ones used in assessing the external world? If the ways we consider the two worlds differ drastically, is it nevertheless possible

² One of these problems that Bergson specifically deals with in the *Essay* is the problem of free will, but he mentions that the paradoxes of Eleatics can also be traced down to the same source. However we will not be dealing with these issues, since this requires a swerve from our basic concern.

that they intersect somewhere? Or are they totally and eternally distinct spheres? If so, in what sense? And if not, how do they relate to one another? What are the ontological or epistemological statuses of the one according to the other? Such are the questions that Bergson will address in order to drag us with himself in the *Essay*.

At the very beginning of the book Bergson draws our attention to an “absolute” distinction between living conscious beings on the one hand and things on the other. Given that the *Essay*, where Bergson introduces his dualistic understanding, being one of Bergson’s basic works, this chapter of our study will be shaped as an investigation of the essential nature of the above mentioned distinction leading to duality. In our attempt to do this, for the sake of clarity, we are going to make use often of the analogies that Bergson also goes through and sometimes new ones inspired in our imagination through the words of the philosopher.

First of all, we should introduce two core concepts of the *Essay* that Bergson uses very often to address external and inner worlds. These are “quality” and “quantity,” and Bergson handles the issue by making quite a productive use of the terms “quantitative” and “qualitative”. Through the first pages of the book he deals with how the intensities of several kinds of sensations are interpreted as magnitudes. It is the natural habit of our intellect to “associate the idea of a certain quantity of cause with a certain quality of effect” (*E*: 42) In order to convey a clear understanding of what he puts forward, he makes an illustration of the case: we take a pin in the right hand and prick our left hand with it deeper and deeper (*E*: 42). Now, what we feel at first is a single tickling on our left hand; following this, a harder touch transforms into a pain felt at a certain point, and at the end we feel the pain spreading over the neighborhood. The rest of what happens is described by Bergson as following:

And the more we reflect on it, the more clearly shall we see that we are here dealing with so many qualitatively distinct sensations, so many varieties of a single species. But yet we spoke at first of one and the same sensation which spread further and further, of one prick which increased in intensity. The reason is that, without noticing it, we localized in the sensation of the left hand, which is pricked, the progressive effort of the right hand, which pricks. We thus introduced the cause into the effect,

and unconsciously interpreted quality as quantity, intensity as magnitude.
(*E*: 42-3)

What Bergson is trying to show with this illustration is that we melt down the diversity within us into such molds that we, in fact, distort the reality of the original feeling. In this specific case, we reduce the “many qualitatively distinct sensations,” which emerge gradually at the neighborhood, to one single sensation related with that initial prick. This is just what causes the qualitative diversity to be taken as a quantitative increase in the pain we feel at that specific point of our left hand. When carefully observed, it is seen that the reduction here is due to the habit of man, who is used to think in terms of space and words. That is to say, we use the word “prick” to denote a feeling, but it implies, in fact, the external cause of the feeling. The hand which is exposed to being pricked being kept stable, home to no change, the only domain that can exhibit change is then rendered to be *space*. Thus the relevant change is imagined as the pin “going deeper and deeper” *in space* (this is the meaning of “introducing the cause into the effect”). In other words, the realm of change is manipulated; although it should be attributed to its real owner (that is, to the left hand, which is pricked), it is attributed to a false domain (that is, to space). Consequently, it can be said that the word “prick” is only a part of the reality and further that if reality is to be grasped in its wholeness, it is not to be grasped through that word alone.

But Bergson always warns us in those pages that the difference between the physical cause of a sensation and how we feel it is a fundamental one. “A more intense sensation” (*E*: 2) does not imply an increase in the sensation, but is a sensation of increase. Namely, a more intense sensation is a new sensation. When we regard it as “an increase of sensation” we make the sensation itself a quantity like the external source of it and when it is regarded as “a sensation of increase” the sensation is a quality that represents the magnitude of its cause, says Bergson (*E*: 48). However the difference between the sensation and its physical cause is difference in kind. One is quality, while the other is quantity. And between them is only an interpretation, a translation, but no real, living, organic interaction.

Bergson makes use of another illustration where quality is illegitimately translated as quantity, this time because of the effort that our body makes (*E*: 48-50). Suppose that it is told to you that you are going to lift a basket full of iron, but in fact there is nothing in the basket. You will observe that your body has made itself ready beforehand to lift a basket of iron, only when you nearly lose your balance as you catch hold of the basket. Bergson adds that the case is as if your muscles are suddenly disappointed and “it is chiefly by the number and nature of these sympathetic efforts, which take place at different points of the organism, that you measure the sensation of weight at a given point; and this sensation would be nothing more than a quality if you did not thus introduce into it the idea of a magnitude” (*E*: 49). Bergson’s illustration is clever in the sense that it demonstrates that the preparation made by our body and the sensation of weight do not always match each other. Hence is the disappointment. However if they did match one another, we would see no inconvenience in referring to the states of our muscles (e.g. how much stretched they become) or blood pressure (e.g. how it increased) in order to talk about our sensation of weight. That is, we would materialize the sensation in our muscles, blood pressure, etc. But the same procedure is not applicable in Bergson’s illustration; it is not possible to materialize the sensation in the preparation that the body made. This time the sensation does not find its expression in the muscles, for the preparation in them was in vain. Or should we subtract the magnitude of the disappointment from that of the preparation in order to measure our sensation of weight? Would it be legitimate? Adopting the materializing point of view, one cannot help herself/himself thinking this false way.

To “translate quality into quantity,” for Bergson, is just a small instance of the fatal mistake that man has to make. Because man is bound with the habit of spatializing. Later we are going to see that this habit is not common for all beings, but peculiar to man. There are many instances of the habit of spatialization like “introducing the cause into the effect,” as happens in the pin illustration. Although pain gets more and more spread and evolves into qualitatively different states, we take it as getting deeper and deeper. This qualitative spreading we interpret as quantitative deepening; that is to say, we imagine a linear progression of pain. In an analogous way, let us

imagine ourselves in a classical music concert where the whole orchestra does not fire up at once, but the instruments are being introduced one by one (or in groups). The first effect of this gradual change on us is to make us think that “the sound” is getting higher. We cannot help ourselves think that it is the one and the same sound that is getting higher and higher. And commonsense holds the conviction that it is the one and the same sound though there is change involved, a qualitative spread. At the very first moment we cannot (or do not) recognize that “the sound” has evolved and has become a new one. So we cannot be right in saying that “the sound is getting louder,” except for the excuse of our inability³ to acknowledge the qualitative shift there. Only “owing to” that inability can it be possible to neglect the qualitative multiplicity as a quantitative magnitude and to measure this shift.

So far, it seems that Bergson is a naive observer who makes remarks on average life, commonsense, etc. However his importance lies in the fact that what he claims to be the characteristics of commonsense can be extended into the domain of science. Moreover he blames philosophy too for agreeing with commonsense in having the same impressions concerning the extended and the unextended. That is to say, whether we think of a sensation or of an external object, we have the same idea (“of a container and a contained”; that is, one is included in the other and one can be placed in or displaced from the other at will) (*E*: 4). We mistakenly think that both are characterized by the Cartesian extension and just like we talk about the magnitudes of external objects, in the same way do we talk about the intensities of the inner states. So we find no inconvenience in comparing two sensations and making use of the same words as the ones we use in comparing external objects, like “greater,” “more,” or “less.” This is what happens in everyday life. But in philosophy too other versions of this situation has dominated for centuries.

Bergson thinks that the distorting reduction, or the ill translation, is common for commonsense and science. Just like what he does regarding commonsense, he criticizes science too for regarding the qualitative as quantitative. For example, psychophysics founds itself on the claim that it is able to measure the qualitative,

³ In fact, Bergson claims that this is not an inability but a natural tendency.

without assuming that there rests a physical quantity beneath it. In other words, it differentiates itself from bare physics by claiming that a physical phenomenon cannot be “presented under two distinct aspects, the one qualitative and the other quantitative” (E: 63). So unlike physics, which for Bergson functions “to calculate the external cause of our internal states, [and] takes the least possible interest in these states themselves,” psychophysics aims at addressing the sensation itself (E: 71). That is, instead of “measuring the sensation of heat by the degree of temperature” (this is what physics does), psychophysics, which rejects such convention, seeks how the sensation of heat changes when the temperature is changed (E: 63-4).

Appreciating the effort of psychophysics (and especially that of Fechner) on the one hand, on the other, Bergson thinks that psychophysics too makes the same mistake with the commonsense. To comprehend the argument of Bergson well, we should first have a basic understanding of how the procedure functions in psychophysics (E: 60-5). Let us proceed with the sensation of heat in the previous quotation. Bergson says that Fechner used as departing point “the fact that sensation varies by sudden jumps while the stimulus increases continuously” (E: 64) and he adds that Fechner saw no inconvenience in calling these changes by the same name (the “*minimum* differences” or *minima*), because “each corresponds to the smallest perceptible increase in the external stimulus” (E: 64). Adapting what is above said to our illustration, while the source of heat is being fired continuously more and more, we “perceive the increase after a certain time” (E: 65). And this smallest perceptible change in our sensation of heat we suppose to repeat itself equally throughout the process and call them each *minimum*. From this point arises the mathematical function which depends on the addition of the *minima*. For by the assistance of “symbolic interpretation of quality as quantity,” (E: 69) it is already assumed that between the two sensations there exists a certain *amount of minima*. The first sensation given being called S, then the second (S') is $S + \Delta S$, and every following sensation is thus formulated as an addition of multiple ΔS 's to the initial sensation S. Now, Bergson claims that

the transition from S to S' could only be called an arithmetical difference only if I were conscious, so to speak, of an *interval* between S and S',

and if my sensation were felt to rise from S to S' by the addition of something. By giving this *transition* a name, by calling it ΔS , you make it first a reality and then a *quantity*. (E: 66; italics belongs to us)

This is exactly what Bergson means with the tendency to objectify our states of consciousness, which in essence are subjective. The only realities in the case being the subjective sensations S and S', not only an interval is additionally assumed to exist between them, but also is this interval objectified. That is, this interval, which separates two sensations, is assumed to consist of *minima*, which binds them. But can *addition* really be a form of binding two sensations?

For Bergson, addition can be the right way only of representing states of consciousness. However if we want to grasp the true nature of S and S' and the relation of the one to the other, we are to stick to what consciousness provides us with. Thus we will "find a difference between S and S' like that between the shades of the rainbow, and not at all an interval of magnitude," that is, a qualitative difference (E: 66). So it will not be possible to assimilate these qualitatively different sensations into sums. They cannot form a sum, but only a rainbow, between the elements of which there exists a contrast and not an arithmetical difference. Is it possible to determine where a shade ends and another emerges in a rainbow given that we are not talking about the quantized rainbow, regarded as consisting of seven colors sequenced as red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet?

Now the question is if there is *no interval* between two sensations, then what is there? Bergson's answer, which appears at first glance far from being unconvincing, excludes *arithmetical difference* and consists in that there is just a *passing* from one sensation to the other. But does it signify that there exists nothing in between? And if so, is it possible to conceive such existences between which there exists nothing, not even an interval? What does Bergson suggest us when he says that there is simply a *passing*? What does this *passing* indicate?

As one reads Bergson more and more, one comes across such explanations, which consist in defining the case with a bare verb and avoiding the use of terms to denote

subject and object. This pattern reveals the philosopher's attempt to differentiate his philosophy as far as possible from the traditional epistemology, which relies on subject-object distinction.⁴ It can also be related to Bergson's suggestion to form new concepts for our language, which will be in harmony with the nature of the reality. For now we leave these issues aside, but they will be made clearer towards the end of our study.

An equally important problem emerges from the Bergsonian understanding which posits that there exists a clear contrast between the qualitative and the quantitative. That is the problem of interaction between the two. In other words, as we have said so far, it is problematic in Bergson's philosophy whether there is something in common between them more than just interpreting the one as the other, assimilating the one to the other. In fact, Bergson makes his attitude very clear concerning this issue when he says,

The fact is that there is no point of contact between the unextended and the extended, between quality and quantity. We can interpret the one by the other, set up the one as the equivalent of the other; but sooner or later, at the beginning or at the end, we shall have to recognize the conventional character of this assimilation. (*E*: 70)

However the problems do not end. On the contrary they are further multiplied depending on Bergson's claims. If quality has nothing to do with quantity (or extension) and there exists no "point of contact" between them, what does it mean that quality is *multiple*? What is the significance of the states of consciousness existing in their *concrete multiplicity*? Are we bound to make use of the notion of space in order to conceive even the multiplicity of the conscious states, which are purely qualitative? To be able to provide better answers to those questions and further more, we should try to clarify, in Bergson's own words, "what the

⁴ We are of the opinion that Bergson's philosophy can also be read as an attempt to overcome the subject-object distinction. The issue will be better understood when more and more is said on the notion of duration and intuition by Bergson. But as an early note we may say that duration is not a discreet multiplicity and that it is not possible to translate the nature of duration to the language we use. Indeed, it is only because of our language which we are compelled to assume that conscious life is considered as consisting of a discreet plurality of states. Later, however, we will see Bergson saying in his introduction to *Creative Evolution* that "the psychical life is neither unity nor multiplicity" (*CE*: xiv). For more on this issue see *Creative Evolution*, pp. 121-2.

multiplicity of our inner states becomes, what form duration assumes, when the space in which it unfolds is eliminated” (*E*: 73-4).

2.2 Second Contrast: Two Kinds Of Multiplicity

Having shown that sensations differ radically from their external causes, Bergson’s task in the second chapter of the *Essay*, as he pointed out at the end of the first chapter, is to get deeper into the characteristics of the inner states. And departing from the characteristics of the inner states he is going to introduce us the idea of duration, of which consciousness is the greatest, and here in the *Essay*, the only instance.

Bergson’s departure point is again introducing a difference in kind. Just like the difference in kind between sensations and external objects in the first chapter, this time it is between “quantitative multiplicity” and “qualitative multiplicity.” Then he points out to the source of this separation, namely to those spheres where each notion emerges from. So, again we are going to see that Bergson addresses the spatializing habit of man and attacks science on this ground. However whether he concludes in a duality between the elements of which there is no reconciliation will make itself clear as our writing proceeds.

In this chapter one observes that Bergson constantly deals with the inner life, in other words the conscious states of human life in their multiplicity in order to make clear the idea of duration. However in the first chapter he had made us consider them not in their multiplicity but in isolation. So what is new here is that inner states are in multiplicity and we are going to exert the greatest of our effort in order to come to an understanding of the essence of this multiplicity.

What Bergson deals with first is how we exactly form the idea of “numerical multiplicity” (*E*: 124). Then he proceeds with the investigation of whether it is possible to think of multiplicity without the concept of number. We are also going to follow the philosopher’s steps. We start with Bergson by contemplating on the multiplicity in the external world and consider his example of counting sheep (*E*: 76-

7). Now, in order for a shepherd to grasp the sheep as a flock and not as individual sheep, he/she should be able to ignore the individual properties of them and fix his/her attention only on their common characteristics. Taking into consideration their individual differences the shepherd could only “enumerate” (*E*: 76) them, but not form a flock of them. What is emphasized in enumeration and addition are different from each other. Then assuming that all the sheep in the flock are the same, Bergson says that in order for us to be able to make up a flock, one sheep must at least be different from the other by its location in space. Otherwise they become not only the same, but also the one sheep and we end up with no flock but just a single sheep at hand. Now, what hinders this (that we can attain not a flock of sheep but only one sheep) is space. Quite alike is the formation of the idea of number. Essentially every number is a unity, because we grasp them each with a “simple intuition” (*E*: 76). However this unity is the unity of a sum, an addition⁵ of unitary elements identical with yet distinct from each other. To give an illustration, when we are learning the basics of mathematics at primary school, regarding addition, was not each one of us told that only apples can be summed up with apples? And have not we there learned that an apple cannot be summed up with a pear? Only when we deal with identical units can we end up with a number. Now, that is the logic behind numbers. The elements that make up number, says Bergson, must be the same in order for us to gather them together under a unity. Still stranger is that they must be somehow separate from each other, because we must also be able to analyze any number down into its units; each unit must have its own existence. What is this medium that enables us to still impose distinction into units that are identical with one another?

Let us take a number for the sake of better illustration, say 3. Number 3, and all the other numbers alike, is formed just like the flock consisting of identical sheep. That is to say, we owe numbers too to “the conception of space”. To be able to attain number 3 one should count up to there starting from 1. But doing this one should not be fooled by the illusion that the number 3 gained at the end bears something to do with time. Expressed in Bergson’s words: “In order to imagine number 50, for

⁵ We use “addition” here in the same sense that we mentioned earlier regarding the way succession of sensations are interpreted in psychophysics.

example, we repeat all the number starting from unity, and when we have arrived at the fiftieth, we believe we have built up the number in duration and in duration only” (*E*: 78). Surely the counting process itself occurs in time, but the result of it is absolutely devoid of any imprint of time, adds Bergson. What really happens is that one has counted “points in space” (*E*: 78). Assuming that the units that compose number 3 (analogously each and every sheep) are identical, we have only placed them side by side in space. Hence Bergson’s conclusion that “[i]n order that the number should go on increasing in proportion as we advance, we must retain the successive images and set them alongside each of the new units which we picture to ourselves” (*E*: 77). He points out to the domination of space, and not duration in obtaining a sum. He means, when forming a sum by the addition of different elements, it is in no way that the addition takes place in time. Because in order to obtain a sum, it is essential that the former elements “remain” (we should retain them somehow/somewhere) and “wait” for the new ones to be added upon them. It is exactly this remaining/retaining relation that hints the presence of space and not duration in counting. For how can it be possible that something waits, “if we did not localize it in space” (*E*: 79)?

It is certainly possible to perceive in time, and in time only, a succession which is nothing but a succession, but not an addition, i.e. a succession which culminates in a sum. For though we reach a sum by taking into account a succession of different terms, yet it is necessary that each of these terms should remain when we pass to the following, and should wait, so to speak, to be added to the others. (*E*: 78-9)

So, we conclude that under the idea of number lies the idea of space, and although the counting process takes place in time, the elements that make up the number formed are nothing but points in space. A sum gained by addition, thus, implies a “discreet multiplicity,” (*E*: 79) the parts of which are separated from one another in space. In other words, it is a multiplicity the parts of which are perceived simultaneously and not successively.

Departing from the ground that the formation of numbers provides him with, Bergson points out to the fact that not all layers of reality, not all multiplicities in

reality accept being reduced to numbers and he introduces the lasting duality of the book, namely “two very different kinds of multiplicity.”

[N]o effort of the inventive faculty or of symbolical representation is necessary in order to count them [material objects]; we have only to think them, at first separately and then simultaneously, within the very medium in which they come under our observation. The case is no longer the same when we consider purely affective psychic states, or even mental images other than those built up by means of sight and touch. Here, the terms being no longer given in space, it seems, *a priori*, that we can hardly count them except by some process of symbolical representation. (*E*: 85-6)⁶

It is also important to note that Bergson draws our attention to the difference between the senses of sight-touch and the others. He regards sight as the sense *par excellence* and thinks that we treat the sensations provided by sight and touch, which necessarily imply localization in space, in such a way that we consider sensation itself also as localized in space. This is why while explicating the most crucial concepts of his philosophy (like duration, qualitative multiplicity, etc.) he avoids using analogies where sight is included and prefers very often to apply ones dealing with especially the sense of hearing. As Milič Čapek mentions,

the profound originality in Bergson was that he became clearly aware of all the risks involved in our conscious tendency to visualize the data which by their own nature are basically recalcitrant to any such attempt, and that he tried to be on guard against these tendencies vigilantly and consistently. (Čapek, 1971: 96)

Čapek also notes that the natural human tendency of spatialization and visualization was attacked by Bergson quite systematically. Alongside this view, we regard the *Essay* as encompassing the initial and the most rigorous efforts of this attack. Though the intensity of the criticism may diminish in later works of Bergson, it loses nothing of its systematic nature.

⁶ On another page Bergson extends the issue so as to present this duality more strongly as an ontological one: “What we must say is that we have to do with two different kinds of reality, the one heterogeneous, that of sensible qualities, the other homogeneous, namely space” (*E*: 97).

So, Bergson was quite conscious of the fact that the senses of sight and touch play a very important role in confusing and attributing the characteristics of the one to the other of the two different kinds of multiplicity: “the multiplicity of material objects” (the conception of number is applicable here, since material objects are in space) and “the multiplicity of the states of consciousness” (here, however, the conception of number is applicable only with the assistance of symbolical representation). From this point onwards Bergson will constantly emphasize that the multiplicity of inner states, which are in duration, is assimilated into the multiplicity of external objects through symbolical representation, of which space is the essential element. In fact, we hinted the way this assimilation takes place in certain parts of this chapter concerning the invasion of spatiality. And there Bergson even presented a very good instance of this assimilation through the conception of intensity and the interpretation of quality as quantity (the example of prick). Only through the help of symbolical representation can quality be interpreted as quantity. In other words, interpreting the intensity of a sensation as the magnitude of the external effort, or introducing the cause into the effect has nothing to do with grasping the multiplicity of the inner states but is a mere representation.

The multiplicity of conscious states is at first introduced by Bergson negatively with regard to that of material objects. In this negation Bergson states that the plurality of the conscious states is not the plurality of separate pieces. But if not in the numerical sense, then in what sense are the states of consciousness many? How can we assert that they are plural if they do not let themselves be counted? Are they distinct or not from one another?⁷ Is it possible that one grasps the multiplicity of conscious states in another way than placing them in space? “Now, externality is the distinguishing

⁷ Later in the *Essay* (and further again but in another way in *Creative Evolution*) Bergson will say, “the deep-seated conscious states have no relation to quantity, they are pure quality; they intermingle in such a way that we cannot tell whether they are one or several, nor even examine them from this point of view without at once altering their nature” making us from time to time hesitate whether it is correct to claim that conscious states are multiple (*E*: 137). However we are going to see that he tries to draw attention to the following: every word of our language is imprisoned to reflect the essence of the conscious states as if they are distinct from each other (and in this sense that they are several). This demonstrates that in order to be able to talk about them we are bound to isolate them and externalize the one from the other. There are even occasions where Bergson sounds quite desperate about language: “these terms are thus misleading from the very beginning, and the idea of a multiplicity without relation to number or space, although clear for pure reflective thought, cannot be translated to the language of commonsense” (*E*: 122).

mark of things which occupy space, while states of consciousness are not essentially external to one another, and become so only by being spread out in time, regarded as a homogenous medium” (*E*: 99). However in order to come to a better understanding of the multiplicity of inner states in a positive sense, we should first have a look at the essential elements of it and the other kind of multiplicity, with regard to which it is introduced. These elements are *space* and *duration* and will be explicated under the following title.

2.3 Homogeneous Time and Duration

The term “space” mentioned at the end of the last title seems to be missing in this one. However we are going to see in a while that it is there, already implied in the term “homogenous time.” For that we are going to try to give carefully the account of the contrast between space and duration (not time, but *real time*).

As we noted before, space is the medium through which we distinguish identical and simultaneous elements from one another. That is to say, it is not a means of conveying qualitative difference. On the contrary, what it conveys is only homogeneity, it is enough that there be a homogeneity in order to set two identical elements apart. However it is important to note that Bergson warns the reader about being careful not to confuse “the perception of extensity and the conception of space” (*E*: 96). He says that we human beings possess as a capability “the conception of space” and adds that space may not be so homogeneous for the animal as it is for us (*E*: 96). There are animals, which find direction (say, the way back to their home) through a series of perceptions which are purely qualitative and which have nothing to do with a geometrical conception of space. We, too, sometimes perceive space as heterogeneous, like in the case of distinguishing our left from our right (*E*: 97). This is quite a natural feeling, says Bergson, and though left and right refer to localization in space, they appear to us as qualities and bear no implication of geometry or quantity. We have individual feelings for each one of them; it is not possible to give a definition of the one depending on the other. So, we should be careful about the point that when Bergson criticizes the intrusion of space, he is referring to “the conception of space,” not to the heterogeneous perception of it.

Bergson further maintains that this “conception of space” is shared by commonsense and the Kantian philosophy. He points out that Kant endowed space with an independent existence. That means that in Kantian philosophy the existence of space does not depend on what fills space, in a word, that space can exist without being filled. That is why Bergson characterizes the Kantian conception of space as “an empty homogeneous medium” (*E*: 95). We later observe Bergson claiming that this conception of an empty homogeneous medium emerges as a reaction against the heterogeneity which is the base of our experience. For space conceived by intellect is what “enables us to use clean-cut distinctions, to count, to abstract, and perhaps also to speak” (*E*: 97). It is also the way to social life, the way that sensations become public property.

We have been making the mistake of securing time an independent existence and regarding it as a homogeneous medium, just like space. And having rendered time homogeneous, then the states of consciousness are bound to be perceived by us through nothing but juxtaposition (being set side by side) “in time”. However, as we mentioned earlier, it is not possible to consider something waiting in time in order for others to be added upon. Exactly because of this reason the domain where states of consciousness are perceived to be juxtaposed cannot be time, but space. Space being the realm of external objects, spatial thinking is the vital element of science investigating them. And handing over the search for all layers of reality to science only, we have sacrificed real time to the ghost of it. That is, we have sacrificed duration for measurable time. Leaning upon the algebraic equations of science, we have sacrificed *processes*, which do not let themselves be measured, for *things already done*, which are ghosts created for nothing but to be measured. That is why “algebra can represent the results gained at a certain moment of duration and the positions occupied by a certain moving body in space, but not of duration and motion themselves” (*E*: 119). Duration is not something apart from its content. Unlike space, duration is nothing but its content. So, when we force ourselves to think of duration, nothing but duration, we come up with the conclusion that it is impossible. Because duration isolated from a content cannot be thought; duration does not exist so. It is never empty in the sense that space is empty. On the contrary, duration is always

bound up with the specific content of itself, which makes a moment that specific moment. It cannot be accepted to regard it as an empty medium like space.

Material objects are external to each other and to *us* owing to the fact that the homogeneous space places between them (and also between *us* and them) intervals. Here is the point where states of consciousness differ radically from material objects. Between states of consciousness no intervals are inserted. On the contrary, they *interpenetrate*, they *infuse* each other. In other words, one does not cease to be when another one comes on the scene. In each and every one of them is reflected the whole of them. They are so tightly bound to one another that they do not accept analysis, breaking down into units (and especially into identical units, in no sense). So, it is not possible to isolate any one of them from their concrete multiplicity. Time, when imagined as a homogeneous medium, “is nothing but the ghost of space haunting the reflective consciousness” (*E*: 99). In the physical world, which is “[o]utside ourselves, we should find only space, and consequently nothing but simultaneities” (*E*: 116). Contrary to the states of consciousness, objects of the external world do neither *endure* nor *succeed* one another. “[T]heir multiplicity is real only for a consciousness... [T]hese distinct states of the external world give rise to states of consciousness which permeate one another, imperceptibly organize themselves into a whole, and bind the past to the present by this very process of this connexion” (*E*: 120-1).⁸ So, contrary to conscious states, the distinct states of the external world are imprisoned to remain distinct. There we can find no real multiplicity, no interpenetration of the past into the present. In the physical world there are only disconnected states, that is, there is only present. This is exactly the meaning of simultaneity: that which is devoid of prolongation of the past into the present, that which carries no imprint of the past. Such prolongation holds true only for consciousness, Bergson tells us. Only consciousness endures, only consciousness is (in) time. For it is the only reality where past time is registered and permeates, creates, shapes and itself re-created and re-shaped through the present.

⁸ Like this one, in several other parts of the *Essay* Bergson gets quite close to idealism. His restriction of duration only to the conscious states is indeed a point in the Bergsonian philosophy that is subject to change and will be handled in the following parts of our study (especially in Chapter II).

Since the states of consciousness are very tightly bound with each other it is not possible to predict a future action of consciousness from without. At this point Bergson illustrates the case with two personalities, Peter and Paul (*E*: 184-9). “The question is whether ...Paul ... would have been able, knowing *all* the conditions under which Peter acts, to foretell with certainty the choice which Peter made” (*E*: 184-5). Now, Bergson thinks that knowing all the circumstances of Peter’s act, that is all its antecedents, necessarily means having experienced them all, thus the whole history of Peter. For it is a conscious being that is involved, not an *object* whose essence consists in its location in space and can objectively be explicated. Knowing the antecedents of Peter’s future act means having a qualitative feeling about them, which is not possible even if Paul listens to the story from Peter himself. In order to be felt in its absolute quality, Peter’s history is to be experienced, to be lived. And when it is assumed that Paul can experience the history of Peter qualitatively, the case is reduced to absurdity, for “if Peter and Paul have experienced the same sentiments in the same order, if their two souls have the same history, how do you distinguish the one from the other” (*E*: 188)? In other words, only if they were the same person could Paul foretell the future action of Peter, which is absurd.

Now, such characterization of time is duration, namely the real time that characterizes our inner world. And in order to grasp this essence of the inner states we have only to “ask consciousness to isolate itself from the external world, and, by a vigorous effort of abstraction, to become itself again” (*E*: 90). Then we should further ask consciousness to investigate the multiplicity of conscious states and get an answer from it whether this multiplicity has any resemblance to numerical multiplicity, the elements of which are distinct, external from one another (contrary to the states of consciousness, the elements of numerical multiplicity are external to each other in the sense that one ceases to be when another emerges). If it is reflective consciousness that is involved in the inquiry, in other words, if we are retrospectively *thinking* on the process,⁹ we cannot help ourselves but analyze the conscious states to the greatest extent of our abstraction capability and consequently we end up only with symbolical representations. However it is the immediate consciousness that will

⁹ Indeed, the act of thinking always includes retrospection.

lead us to true duration, which is completely devoid of the intrusion of space. Only through surrendering ourselves to immediate consciousness can we succeed in attaining the reality of inner life, that is, duration. Only by getting rid of the obsession with space can it be possible to step into the realm of true time.

So, it is deduced from the *Essay* that real duration is confined to consciousness. This is one of the crucial implications of Bergson's dualistic understanding, through which material objects and psychic states are set apart from one another. Consciousness is the greatest, and here in the *Essay*, the only instance of duration and there or "in the human soul, there are only *processes*" (E: 131). Processes that do never stop (and in this sense cannot be compared to a *state*) and that do not let themselves be measured. For in order for a process to be measured it should be stopped and transformed into a *thing*, as happens in measuring the velocity of a moving body: when its velocity is measured it is no more moving, but has already stopped. So, trying to impose any measurement on psychic life would be the same: giving an illusory halt to this never-ceasing process and replacing it with things already done.¹⁰

2.4 An Alternative Epistemology: Immediacy

So far we have observed that what Bergson handles in the *Essay* is the qualifications of true time and the immediate data of inner life. However when one comes to the end and reads the conclusion of the book, one also observes that till there, Bergson makes, so to say, a preparation and builds the necessary ground required for an alternative epistemology. We will soon see that this alternative method of knowledge has much to do with the accentuated concepts of the *Essay*, especially with *immediacy* which is also presented in the title of the book.

¹⁰ The relation between "to stop" and "state" can be better understood when the issue is expressed in Turkish making use of the relation between the Turkish words "durmak" and "durum" which respectively refers to the English words mentioned above: bir hareketlinin *dur-umundan* bahsetmek çelişki içerir; çünkü hareketlinin belli bir *dur-umu* ele alındığında onun artık hareket etmediği, *durduğu* kabul edilir. Dolayısıyla bir hareketlinin hızının ölçüldüğü belli bir *dur-umda* hareketli aslında *dur-makta*, yani hareket etmemektedir; diğer bir deyişle, hızı, ölçülen değerde değil, sıfırdır. İşte bundan dolayı hareket ölçüm kabul etmez, çünkü herhangi bir ölçümün yapılabilmesi için hareketlinin hareketsiz kabul edilmesi gerekir.

It is useful to note that in his criticism Bergson will be addressing the tradition of the classical epistemology (may even be said for Kant). But of course he differentiates his philosophy through reconstructing the concepts of the tradition (such as spatiality and temporality) for the sake of developing a new understanding of both the external and internal realities. Here again we should remember that as a milestone of his philosophy Bergson constantly insists on the dividing line between those two layers of reality. He repeatedly warns the reader against the very common confusion of different layers of reality (and correspondingly the tools employed in grasping them). As an early note may be stated that the roots of his much emphasized and repeated distinction between intellect and intuition is also found here.¹¹

With Kant we have come to think that we perceive things outside of us with the inclusion of some structural elements within us and we can only know things as this structure, namely the mind, lets us do. Thus it is not possible to attain the knowledge of things without the intrusion of the mind. Whether things really exist in space and time or not, in either case we are bound to represent them in space and time in order to get external things “inside.” According to the interpretation of Milič Čapek Bergson’s epistemology depends on an understanding that he labels as “reversed Kantianism” (Čapek, 1971: 83). Namely Bergson investigates how the “forms borrowed from the external world” (*E*: 223) shape our perception of the inner world, the two worlds being completely apart and different from each other. In other words, contrary to the Kantian epistemology, which emphasizes the role of subjective elements in constituting the objectivity of the external world, Bergson stresses just the opposite: what are the effects of our sensory experience (of the external world) on grasping our internal reality? Bergson insists that the case seems to be that “using these forms [forms coming from the mind] to gain a knowledge of our own person we run the risk of mistaking for the coloring of the self the reflection of the frame which we place it, i.e. the external world” (*E*: 223). That is to say, our knowledge of our own person, that is, “our awareness of introspective data,” (Čapek, 1971: 84) is very much distorted by elements that we borrow from the material world. The guise that this distortion assumes is that of the space. According to Čapek, Bergson is quite

¹¹ The distinction between intellect and intuition is one of the subject matters of the second chapter of our study where it will be further detailed.

right and clever in suspecting this distortion, because “[t]he probability that sensory associations do interfere with our self-perception is certainly not negligible if we consider the fact that the knowledge of the external world comes up considerably earlier than awareness of our self. Sensory perception by far *precedes* introspection” (Čapek, 1971: 84).

Another interpreter of Bergson suggests that Bergson’s philosophy addresses one of the most central problems of the Kantian philosophy: the knowledge of the self, or “how the subject of knowledge can itself become an object of knowledge” (Landes, 1924: 456). According to Landes “Bergson takes up the epistemological problem at exactly the point where Kant lays it down” (Landes, 1924: 457). Viewed this way, Bergson’s attempt can be seen as making an epistemological inspection regarding the question whether it is possible that the subject of the knowing activity (we ourselves, namely our inner world) both be the object of the activity (Landes, 1924: 456) and, if this is possible, whether the ultimate knowledge attained regarding it is a *pure* one. Surely his investigation relies on a study of the qualification *pure* here. And we should, too, as Bergson does, try to express more clearly what *pure* in terms of our introspective knowledge means. In fact, the investigation of the term *pure* is very much related to a question we raised earlier in this chapter: whether Bergson’s aim is to exile “the conception of space” out of our understanding or to draw up the boundaries of it and delimit it. And now it is no more early to declare that *pure* refers to the term “immediate” in the title of the book. “Immediate” in the sense that being purified off all mediation; that is, no more intervention, no more illegitimacy. We are now back at the beginning of the chapter, and invited to reflect once again on the diffusion of space in our lives and the destiny of this diffusion.

In the *Essay* Bergson’s attitude seems to be against a reconciliation between “the conception of space” and duration, and he appears to be quite strict in his attitude.

“[W]hen you study external things ... you then leave aside the forces themselves, assuming that they exist, and consider only their measurable and extended effects. Why, then, do you keep this hybrid concept when you analyse in its turn the state of consciousness? If magnitude, outside

you, is never intensive, intensity, within you, is never magnitude” (*E*: 225).

This clear line which Bergson draws between the worlds outside us and within us is, indeed, drawn between science and philosophy. Science does not allow real time to enter into its calculations and keeps nothing of it in the scientific domain. Likewise, duration, which has ever been neglected by science, should be purified off all the intrusions of science. In addition, it should be restored to its crucial status concerning epistemology. This restoration is the task of philosophy. In the same manner with science, philosophy, too, should make the corresponding isolation (of the effects of the external world from our self perception), “but this time to the advantage of duration, when inner phenomena are studied” (*E*: 229). Only then will duration appear to us immediately, in its purity.

The role duration plays in the Bergsonian philosophy is an important one. Duration holds the key that opens the gate to the knowledge of the self, which was long driven to be impossible in the history of philosophy. And not only the introspective data are rendered possible but also they come in their purity, that is, immediately. From the scientific point of view duration slides from our hands when not translated into simultaneity. But, claims Bergson, scientific method does not rule alone in the domain of knowledge and not every way that it leads us provides us with true knowledge. Indeed, the translation by science of duration into simultaneities is just what destructs the reality of duration. In other words, “reality is constituted by heterogeneous strata and ... our mind is adapted only to *some* of them, but certainly not to the whole of reality; consequently... it is illegitimate to apply the intellectual forms fitting one of these strata to all others” (Čapek, 1971: 85-6). Therefore just like science, which eliminates the elements that does not comply with its principles (that resist to be rendered simultaneous), philosophy, too, should abolish the forms that manifestly carry the stain of the external world. This is doing away with all the mediums; this is immediacy.

CHAPTER III

FROM DUALITY TO UNITY: CREATIVE EVOLUTION

Bergson's philosophizing goes on in *Creative Evolution* (CE) on the one hand by giving a deeper account of the core terms that he introduced in the *Essay* (E) and on the other, by presenting new concepts that are equally indispensable for our study. Under the light of these we are going to direct our attention towards the inquiry concerning whether the duality inherent to the *Essay* is still apparent in *Creative Evolution*. In literature there is remarkable amount of interpretation regarding the idea that Bergson makes a shift from the *Essay* and to *Creative Evolution* and manages to leave here aside the duality of the *Essay*.¹² Our intention in this chapter is to investigate this would-be shift and determine our own position with reference to such interpretations.

In *Creative Evolution*, too, the Bergson reader witnesses a constant attack on scientific method and scientific knowledge. In this sense, *Creative Evolution* is an extension of the *Essay*. Again Bergson deals very often with the habit of spatializing, the domination (or rather invasion) of space in our thinking, speaking, namely living; again he identifies this habit as the most apparent and powerful tool of scientific inquiry; and again he posits duration as the alternative basis for absolute knowledge. However one observes that this time the attack is not as harsh as it was in the *Essay* and the position of scientific knowledge is driven, in a certain sense, legitimate. This

¹² Nann Clark Barr who wrote at the same periods with Bergson argues that "*Time and Free Will* leaves us with [the separation between inner and outer states] and gives us no hint of a possible reconciliation. *Matter and Memory* transcends those distinctions which in *Time and Free Will* are treated as ultimate. The attempt is made to show the connection between the inner and the outer worlds, to reconcile the opposition of the extended and unextended, quantity and quality, in a more comprehensive set of categories, those of mind and body... In *Creative Evolution* the final inclusive synthesis is reached" (Barr, 1913: 640). And John Mullarkey, a recent interpreter of Bergson, writes "It looks like Bergson has separated the realms of homogeneous space and heterogeneous time too far from each other [in the *Essay*] and ... Cartesian problems of dualistic interaction ... must follow, though it is endosmosis which plays the impossible role of the pineal gland in Bergson's thought" (Mullarkey, 1999: 21). We are going to see that, as Mullarkey reports, endosmosis, will be a core concept in reconciling the separate worlds of the *Essay*.

is not to say that Bergson gives up his intentions presented in the *Essay*. Still he tries hard for granting a status for duration and the immediate data of consciousness, but he somehow sounds more tolerant to positive science. This makes his reader question that whether the opposing realities of the *Essay*, which were driven absolutely apart from each other, can be considered to be reconciled here. If so, in what sense? Or to what extent? What is the ontological domain of this reconciliation? And what might be the implications of it with regard to the Bergsonian epistemology? Does Bergsonian philosophy no more require the banishment of scientific knowledge, thus the banishment of a certain type of intellectualism?

So in this chapter (together with the fourth) we will try to make it clear, whether Bergson made that shift from duality to, so to say, a unity, firstly in the ontological and secondly in the epistemological sense of the word. Our answer to this question will make itself more apparent as we proceed through Bergson's field of reasoning. However we believe it is not an early point to state that in our opinion the investigation of the issue in two aspects will not lead us to two distinct positions. In other words, the answer attained in one aspect will yield the answer that will be attained in the other. Indeed, we will see that ontology plays a determinative role in the Bergsonian epistemology. That is, it is the ontological aspect that we think triggers the shift in epistemology. Because of this reason, we will, first of all, shed a light to the ontology that Bergson reveals in *Creative Evolution*. Only then, we believe, will it be possible to make inferences concerning the reconciliation mentioned.

As we noted above, in *Creative Evolution* the reader observes a Bergson who puts emphasis on the outline sketched in the *Essay*. However here the range is widened, to express better, it is deepened. While in almost nowhere in the *Essay* can a satisfying ontological ground be found, the reader cannot help herself/himself but think that *Creative Evolution* presents itself as a justificatory base for what was defended in the *Essay*. Now, our first task in this chapter will be to introduce the fundamental elements of this ontology. In doing this we will pay considerable attention to going hand in hand with the core elements of the *Essay*. Thus we will have built the

ontological ground from where we are going to derive implications as to a possible epistemological reconciliation, which is the subject matter of our next chapter.

3.1 The Nature of the Dualities in Bergson's Philosophy

Bergson has told us in the *Essay* that there are two different kinds of multiplicity, qualitative and quantitative, and it is impossible that they contact at a point. He has also added that we could only interpret (assimilate) the one by the other, but would soon come to realize the illegitimacy of this assimilation. So, Bergson exerted the greatest effort in the *Essay* to show us in what way and how often (indeed the answer is “nearly always”) we employ such assimilation. Thus the psychical and material spheres were driven absolutely apart from each other and, as if a resistance against the scientific tradition was at dawn, the psychical one was granted a privileged status by Bergson in the sense that it was regarded as the way that would lead us to the reality and the absolute knowledge of the reality. In a word, the design of absolute reality was formulated as essentially vital and psychical. On the other hand, wholly devoid of psychical attributes, the quantitative sphere was consequently rendered to be secondary. So were the epistemological implications it will lead us to. However, as we mentioned in the first chapter, this ontology is not devoid of problems.

The most important of these is the problem of interaction between the extended (quantity) and the unextended (quality). Bergson has simply brushed away this problem by saying that “there is no point of contact” between the two (*E*: 70). Though as early as in the *Essay* he talks about the concept of “endosmosis”¹³ which Bergson introduces as taking place between the “succession without externality” of the conscious states and the mutual “externality without succession” of the space that is outside our consciousness (*E*: 109). However, although this process takes place between the two absolutely distinguished spheres, it does not yield an answer

¹³ In the conclusion of the *Essay* Bergson uses the word “compromise” to refer to the same process, but earlier in the book he likens this process to “what physicists call the phenomenon of endosmosis” (*E*: 109). What “endosmosis” denotes in physics is the interaction between two liquids which have different densities and are separated by a thin membrane. It is observed that the liquid that has lesser density passes more rapidly through the membrane. Bergson uses the term figuratively to convey us the interaction between the external world and our inner life, a process restricted to the consciousness and gives rise to such conceptions as the homogeneous space, as we will explicate in the following lines.

to the problem of interaction. For Bergson defines this process still within the boundaries of the consciousness. So the definition of “endosmosis” in the *Essay* is far away from refuting that the reality is strictly psychical in the *Essay*. Indeed, “endosmosis” is where the notion of “homogeneous time” emerges from. In this sense, it depends very much on the habits of our understanding. Now, in order to observe this, let us examine closer what Bergson says about the notion of “endosmosis.”

In order to be able to explicate the notion clearer, Bergson addresses the oscillations of a pendulum. Now, what Bergson observes is that although consciousness endures in such a way that no one state of it can be set apart from the others, “each moment [of our consciousness] ... can be brought into relation with a state of the external world [an oscillation of the pendulum] which is *contemporaneous* with it” (italics belongs to us). What is more, our understanding, surrendered to its habits, becomes able to separate the states from one another. Hence we consider our duration as a homogeneous succession. Likewise, the oscillations of the pendulum, which exist absolutely external to each other, “profit” from this process and are organized by the consciousness as a non-breaking thread.¹⁴ Thus is formed “the fourth dimension of space,” that is “homogeneous time” at the end of a “compromise” between our duration and pure space (*E*: 109-10). It is in this sense that Bergson maintains that external world leaves its imprint on our consciousness. But we think it is of great importance to once again note that this exchange does not “profit” Bergson himself to overcome the problem of interaction or to redeem consciousness from being the ultimate (way to) reality.

One question that one cannot keep him/herself from asking regarding this process is how a state of the external world can be “contemporaneous” with a moment of the consciousness before this process takes place (that is, before our understanding has created a “compromise” ground and formed the conception of homogeneous time). Is it before or after the formation of the conception of homogeneous time that one is

¹⁴ We will be mentioning about the same procedure when dealing with the way Bergson handles movement in the *Essay* and we will assert that, in the same way that the oscillations of the pendulum are organized, movement in the external world is rendered continuous by our consciousness.

able to speak of the moments of consciousness? In other words, if homogeneous time (or spatialization) is not taken for granted, how can it be possible to state that our consciousness *has* moments of it? That is, is it not again the notion of homogeneous space that we need in order for the notion of homogeneous space to arise? Bergson seems to reside in a vicious circle here as to the priority of homogenous time. To quote from Mullarkey:

It looks like Bergson has separated the realms of homogeneous space and heterogeneous time too far from each other [in the *Essay*] and that these are the Cartesian problems of dualistic interaction which must follow, though it is endosmosis which plays the impossible role of the pineal gland in Bergson's thought. His escape from circularity must await the more metaphysical analysis of the same issue found in *CE*. (Mullarkey, 1999: 21)¹⁵

As we mentioned before, *Creative Evolution* can also be read as a justificatory attempt in favor of the status given to the qualitative reality. In this sense it is an extension of the *Essay*. What we think is a big difference, however, reveals itself in the form of an ontological shift. After having written the *Essay*, where he has fiercely advocated the superiority of the qualitative and strictly limited the reality to the psychic realm, Bergson tries to build up the link between the qualitative and quantitative that he denied of existence. Since this would have been an impasse if he had remained loyal to the concepts of the *Essay*, he refines the opposing terms of it. To this effort of him we witness especially in *Matter and Memory* (*MM*), as Bergson himself clearly informs the reader. The opening of the book declares the purpose of its being written: "This book affirms the reality of spirit and the reality of matter, and tries to determine the relation of the one to the other" (*MM*: 9). And as Mullarkey expresses a common interpretation in literature, "*MM* wants to establish a connection between the enduring mind and an *enduring* world without getting caught up in the one-upmanship of trying to reduce the origins of either one to the other" (Mullarkey, 1999: 33; second italics belongs to us, in order to highlight the point that the idea of *the world enduring* is newly introduced). Once Bergson improves his philosophy in

¹⁵ At this moment we only want to attract attention to the way Mullarkey characterizes the ontology in the *Essay*. We will handle very soon (under the title of "Reintegration of Matter" in this chapter) the concept of "endosmosis" and see that is elaborated in *Creative Evolution* so that it becomes a core notion for comprehending how Bergson overcomes the dualistic understanding in the *Essay*.

Matter and Memory, better to say, once he elaborates the notions of qualitative (inner world) and quantitative (physical world) with the introduction of authentic notions such as image, perception, memory and matter he engages himself with the bigger picture. That is, he extends the concepts of qualitative and quantitative, along with the core concepts of *Matter and Memory*, to the universal context.¹⁶ So we hold with Barr that

“in *Creative Evolution* is developed the deeper insight that realities which oppose each other are yet interrelated. The effort formerly made to strip off the conventionalities of psychology and philosophy in order to reach the underlying reality of personality is in *Creative Evolution* extended to include the whole of nature, the development of life and the world” (Barr, 1913: 645).

What Bergson managed to do in the *Essay* was to posit the notion of duration as the absolute reality by introducing consciousness as the only instance of it. However, parallel with the prevailing interpretation in the literature, we believe that in *Creative Evolution* the perspective is shifted from the isolated domain of the consciousness to a more inclusive one, namely to that of the universe. As Pearson too writes, “In the first work [the *Essay*] he is clearly adhering to the view that the experience of

¹⁶ As we have mentioned earlier, we have limited the scope of this study to three works of Bergson, namely the *Essay*, *Creative Evolution* and *The Creative Mind*, since we are of the idea that those are the cornerstones of a basic understanding of his philosophy. They are important to see the characteristics of the ground (and from our point of view, immature) and the full-grown phases of Bergsonian understanding. It is true that we are confronted with the risk of failing to give a fully developed study of the evolution of Bergson’s philosophizing. But this would be the subject matter of a much broader work. So as an introduction to *Matter and Memory* we can say that the greatest achievement of this work is Bergson’s success in opening up a space between realism and idealism in terms of the explanation he gives regarding matter: “I call matter the aggregate of images, and perception of matter these same images referred to the eventual action of one particular image, my body” (MM: 22). For sure it is important to come to an understanding of what Bergson means with the concept of “image.” In this he is, as is not usual, in agreement with commonsense. He declares that when he distinguishes himself from the realist (Bergson sometimes refers to that as the materialist), who thinks that the object is independent and different from what we perceive, and when he distinguishes himself from the idealist, who thinks that the object exists only in our mind. Bergson says that he places the object in the halfway between the idealist’s *representation* and the realist’s *thing*: an object is an “image” but it exists in itself. And he adds “by ‘image’ we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a *representation*, but less than that which the realist calls a *thing*” (MM: 9-10). This re-definition of matter enables Bergson to give an unusual account for perception and thus to build a link between material and psychical worlds. We are going to give more detail on this where we deal with the “reintegration of matter” where we will see that our perception is simply a plan exerted on the undivided materiality and that it does not involve something added on the material, on the contrary something subtracted from it. For now we can quote Bergson saying that “there is for images merely a difference of degree, and not of kind, between *being* and *being consciously perceived*” (MM: 37).

duration requires an act of mental synthesis and thus time is a phenomenon of consciousness and something solely inner and psychological (external reality is simply space)” (Pearson, 2002: 35).¹⁷ But from here should not be understood that consciousness loses its importance in *Matter and Memory* and in *Creative Evolution*. In fact, the reality is far from being so. But we should add that consciousness is no more posited as the only domain where ultimate reality can be found out. Nevertheless it is still regarded crucial for the *grasp* of the ultimate reality. As Barr states, “to the universe as a whole belong the characters essential to personality – consciousness, duration, freedom” (Barr, 1913: 651).

3.2 Matter-Life: Still Duality?

When compared with the *Essay* one recognizes that Bergson makes use of quite a different type of language in *Creative Evolution*. He no more handles merely the mental sphere and the physical world opposing it. On the contrary, he speaks of *life* (analogous to the inner world of the *Essay*) and *matter* (analogous to the physical world of the *Essay*) and introduces the two firstly as opposite: “there is, in reality, only a current of existence and the opposing current; thence proceeds the whole evolution of life,” (CE: 185) but in the same book he introduces duration as a common attribute of the two. Then a question comes to mind: how far does Bergson really think the world of matter is from the world of life? Compared to the *Essay* can a different insight be found in *Matter and Memory* and *Creative Evolution* as to whether there exists a (closer) relation between the two worlds? In answering these questions we will try to shed light to the shift of perspective that Bergson makes after the *Essay*. In the fact that perspective is shifted to the whole of universe so as to include life and matter as mentioned above, Bergson’s redefinition of matter and consciousness plays a major role. In order to see better the move Bergson makes we are going to highlight a few points in *Matter and Memory*.

We have cited in an earlier footnote Bergson asserting that between “*being* and *being consciously perceived*” there is only a difference of degree. The meaning of this is

¹⁷ As a note to remind the attitude of the *Essay* may be presented the following quotation from the *Essay*: “If consciousness is aware of anything more than positions, the reason is that it keeps the successive positions in mind and synthesizes them” (E: 111).

full with implications regarding the position which Bergson manages to create between idealism and realism (sometimes mentioned as materialism). For in the history of philosophy the dominant attitudes adopted regarding the relation of being and conscious perception, however diverse the grounds they are based on may be, are based on the conviction that the two are radically different, that is, between being and conscious perception there exists a difference in kind. A fundamental dissociation such as the one between idealism and materialism can be formulated with regard to the relation between being and the representation of it. Each of these systems of thought prioritizes a different member of this pair (while the realist gives priority to the thing, for the idealist it is representation that is prior) and reduces the other to this prioritized one. The importance of Bergson lies, on the other hand, in his challenge to this reductionism. But at this point, as Bergson himself says, his “only refuge seems to be ordinary dualism” (*MM*: 227). Hence from here onwards what we witness is the attempt of the philosopher to overcome this criticism which even he directs upon himself. In other words, idealism and realism being “two poles between which this kind of dualism will always oscillate” (*MM*: 227), Bergson tries hard to reconcile the spheres of mind and body avoiding being dragged to either pole.

As Bergson gives the clues of his position, we agree with Barr in that in *Matter and Memory* Bergson disapproves ordinary dualism like idealism and realism. “For ordinary dualism contrasts perception with matter; while for Bergson perception and matter are but different forms of the same thing” (Barr, 1913: 643). It is crucial to bear in mind that Bergson also avoids *parallelism* according to which the two spheres are preserved intact but are still in harmony (however, the harmony is not due to a relation between the two). In fact, this can be likened to Bergson’s former attitude regarding the issue in the *Essay* where the two realms were denied of any reciprocal interaction. According to the Bergson of the *Essay* the inner (qualitative) and the outer (quantitative) realities are not related to each other through causality. For causality requires that the same acts be repeated. However this is exactly what Bergson refuted to be a characteristic of the inner world. Causality and mechanism, which both assume repetition, characterize the physical world, which is completely denuded of *durée*, but they do not characterize the heterogeneous continuity of our

conscious states. Such continuity does not accept being analyzed into *regular* successive states, which are then assumed to repeat themselves once more and more. There are no such exact borders between conscious states that some can be labeled as the cause while others are labeled as effects. We should again emphasize the fact that even the phrase “states of consciousness” which we use to refer to inner life is due to the spatializing habit of our intellect and is of necessity.

So, if they are not causally related to each other but still there is a harmony between them, what sort of a relation is there between the internal realm (mind) and the external realm (body)? Now, Bergson’s proposal is that the way we view this question changes considerably when we do not regard the basic mental activities (mind, perception and memory) as activities of knowledge. Indeed, he accuses both idealism and realism of being penetrated with this common postulate: “*perception has a wholly speculative interest; it is pure knowledge*” (MM: 28). It is also through departing from this point that Bergson claims there is only a difference of degree between being and representation and that he can offer his position between realism and idealism as an alternative. Let us reflect on this point more.

We have said that Bergson named physical objects as a whole as “the aggregate of images” and distinguished a specific image among them, referring to it as “my body.” Consequently the conscious perception of physical objects was defined to be “these same images referred to the eventual action” of my body (MM: 22). Now it is owing to this term “image” that Bergson manages to open up an intermediary position for himself. First of all “image” refers to the fact that “every reality has a kinship, an analogy – in short, a relation with consciousness” (this is what Bergson says that his thought shares with idealism) (MM: 229). What he criticizes and considers necessary to be transcended in idealism is the point where the idealist claims that perceptions are enough to cover the entire material world. A different formulation of the same idea is that “[b]y describing the objects of matter and of the world as images Bergson is suggesting that they have the potential to be perceived” (Pearson, 2002: 143). That is to say that the world is not composed of images that do vanish when they are not perceived. On the contrary, it consists of images that are

perceived and images that are potentially perceivable. As Bergson himself approves, “if we could assemble all the states of consciousness, past, present and possible, of all conscious beings, we should still only have gathered a very small part of material reality because *images* outrun perception on every side” (*MM*: 229; the word “image” is italicized by us with the aim to point out to that it is used in the Bergsonian meaning of the word). But idealism cannot ever succeed in attaining this entirety; it even fails to form a link between perception and the entirety of the world; because there the real function of perception is assumed to be speculation, whereas for Bergson perception is basically directed to action. To state otherwise, starting with the subjective perception idealism fails to move to an objective whole either of the same or a distinct nature. Thus the idealist’s perception of matter becomes a subjective, or at the best of it, a relative one. On the other hand, realism, says Bergson, starts with the whole of matter, but fails to move from that whole to our perception of it (the very opposite of idealism’s failure) (*MM*: 230). Because our sensations are taken to be unextended, homogeneous space emerges as a necessary condition in order for the idealist to create from the “sensuous manifold” the eventual knowledge. That is to say, whether space is taken as real or not (in the case of Kant it is regarded as an “ideal medium”), we need it to organize the multiple sensations (*MM*: 231).

Now, for Bergson these unsolved problems are defeated only when a different definition of perception is given. Hence is Bergson’s radical concept of perception: my perception presents to me a limited set of images derived from the aggregate of them so as to reflect my possible action on them. The individual body, which is a privileged image, “has the power to choose and decide a step of action among several that are materially possible... It is for this reason that it is capable of *virtual* action” (Pearson, 2002: 150). So, the individual body is nothing but a center of action and consciousness is “the measure of virtual action” (Pearson, 2002: 150). Thus is derived the conviction that perception is not a faculty of the mind the products of which are originally *unextended* and is colored with spatiality through our understanding, as is falsely put forward in the classical epistemology. On the contrary, “extensity is prior to space” (*MM*: 231) and our perception is by itself

extended. Hence “that which is real, is something intermediate between divided extension and pure inextension. It is what we have termed the *extensive*... Extensity is the most salient quality of perception” (*MM*: 245). That which is real being defined as “the extensive” rather than space, then

homogenous space concerns our action and only our action, being like an infinitely fine network which we stretch beneath material continuity in order to render ourselves masters of it [the material continuity], to decompose it according to the plan of our activities and our needs. (*MM*: 231)

In this sense, perception does not involve an addition but a subtraction from the aggregate of images. We eliminate that which is of no interest to us. This is how we “take in” the “external world.” In fact, the distinction between the “internal” and the “external” dissolves at this point, because Bergson goes so far as to declare that our perception is not within but outside of us: “we replace perception in things” (*MM*: 232). This is also what Bergson means when he says that there is no difference in kind between matter and our perception of it. The aggregate of images, that is to say, matter as a whole, has the same nature with our perception of matter. Consequently my perception “is not subjective, for it is in things rather than in me. It is not relative, because the relation between the ‘phenomenon’ and the ‘thing’ is not that of appearance to reality, but merely that of the part to the whole” (*MM*: 230).

A significant implication of Bergson’s argument that perceptions are in things rather than in us is that the absolute contrast between concepts such as exterior/internal, inner/outer vanish, as we said above. This is also a point where we witness that Bergson plays with traditional epistemological distinctions. Interiority and exteriority need no more to be taken as two radically distinct worlds (interiority as the world of perceptions, within the body and exteriority as the world of matter, outside the body) which are separated apart from one another by an insurmountable barrier. From this point onwards they can be regarded merely as “relations among images.” Furthermore “[t]o ask whether the universe exists only in our thought, or outside of our thought, is to put the problem in terms that are insoluble” (*MM*: 25).

To sum up, having dissociated the point of view of “action from that of knowledge” Bergson starts with an “extended *continuum*” and takes the individual body as

the center of real action” and then lets “everything... happen as if we allowed to filter through us that action of external things which is real, in order to arrest and retain that which is virtual: this virtual action of things upon our body and of our body upon things is our perception itself. (*MM*: 232)

Here the image which Bergson employs in order to liken the individual to a filter is striking. In another part of *Matter and Memory* he engages himself with the same analogy: “[Living beings] allow to pass through them, so to speak, those external influences which are indifferent to them; the others isolated become ‘perceptions’ by their very isolation” (*MM*: 36). This way perception is not defined as a one-sided operation, but as a reciprocal process by means of which both sides (the material world and the individual body which is a part of it) are modeled and remodeled.¹⁸

Matter “coincides, in essentials, with pure perception” (*MM*: 73). However the aggregate of images, that is material universe as a whole, is in no way encompassed by our perception (conscious perception),

since it [conscious perception] consists, in as far as it is conscious, in the separation, or the “discernment,” of that which, in matter, interests our various needs. But between this perception of matter and matter itself there is but a difference of degree and not of kind, pure perception standing toward matter in the relation of the part to the whole. (*MM*: 71)

Without this “discernment” which we think may also be called “abstraction” the world of the images is a closely knitted community the members of which are “bound up with all other images.” A certain member, that is, a certain image “is continued in those which follow it, just as it prolonged those which preceded it. To transform its existence into representation, it would be enough to suppress what follows it, what precedes it, and also all that fills it, and to retain only its external crust, its superficial skin” (*MM*: 35-6). So, concludes Bergson, the difference

¹⁸ We reflect more on this subject in our fourth chapter, under the title *Intellect and Space Revisited*, where we point out to the importance of this reciprocal process.

between “a present image, ... an objective reality” and “a represented image” is that the present image is obliged to act upon all the other present images with all the points of it included. In other words, a present image is but a “road by which pass, in every direction, the modifications propagated throughout the immensity of the universe” (*MM*: 36). Each and every image is absorbed by all the other images that constitute the universe. We are going to see that Bergson puts forward the same idea in *Creative Evolution* through the concept of “universal interaction.”

So we turn what is present into a representation only by isolating it, stripping it off the relations with which it is interwoven. And from Bergson’s point of view it seems to be impossible that we embrace those relations as a whole through our perception. For perception is an activity in which the whole is diminished in line with the interests of the living body. At this point Bergson forms a link between perception and free will and defines conscious beings as “centers of indetermination” (*MM*: 36). Conscious beings owe this characterization to the fact that they do not let every act of the images around them to pass through them. And in fact, this denotes the way we (the conscious ones) *choose*. In the world of unconscious beings not even one of them can act like a “center of indetermination.” For an unconscious being does not resist to any of the acts of the images in the universe; it has no means of choosing, but is bound to *transmit* everything that it receives.

Bergson tries to make his concept of perception clear via the help of an analogy where he compares the act of perception with the reflection of light (*MM*: 37). He wants the reader to pay attention to the difference between refraction and reflection of light. Sometimes, he tells us, the densities of the mediums through which the ray of light travels and the angle of the ray of light may be such that the ray of light cannot pass from one medium to the other (that is, it is not refracted, but is reflected). In such cases the image that is formed at the luminous point “symbolizes, so to speak, the fact that the luminous rays cannot pursue their way” (*MM*: 37). This is exactly what Bergson likens to conscious perception. The “center of indetermination” does not let the “rays which reach it” (that is, the acts of the images around them) to go further on their way and consequently the rays are reflected back

only to “indicate the outlines of the object which emits them” (*MM*: 37). Hence he concludes that the “objects merely abandon something of their real action in order to manifest their virtual influence of the living being upon them” (*MM*: 37). So from Bergson’s point of view, the way that the external objects appear to us, that is, our representation of them, is possible owing to our *conscious* reflection of the acts of these objects. Contrary to conscious beings, however, unconscious objects do not possess this ability of choice, the difference between consciousness and unconsciousness being the fact that

the perception of any unconscious point whatever ... is infinitely greater and more complete than ours, since this point gathers and transmits the influence of all the points of the material universe, whereas our consciousness only attains to certain parts and to certain aspects of those parts. (*MM*: 38)

The fact that Bergson goes so far as saying that an unconscious thing has perception¹⁹ (“the perception of any unconscious point”) depends on his idea that perception is indeed the reciprocal act of beings (whether they are conscious or unconscious). While some beings are able to reconstruct (refuse or accept) and reflect these actions, others accept them as they are. This also means that perception is already there, existent for Bergson.²⁰ In other words, Bergson does not agree with the assumptions of the classical, commonsensical and scientific understanding (he thinks that all these points of view comply with one another at this point), according to which perception is a special faculty of human beings which denotes a severe detachment from materiality (extensity). On the very contrary, perception *is* materiality, devoid of choice, and conscious perception “lies in just this choice” (*MM*: 38).

So “the external world” of the *Essay*, which resides in whole contrast to the inner life, becomes an “extended *continuum*” and in this sense gets closer to inner life with the elaborations introduced in *Matter and Memory*. It becomes a whole and “like life,

¹⁹ In fact, he calls this “external perception” (*MM*: 38).

²⁰ As is revealed through the photography analogy in *Matter and Memory*, p. 38: “But is it not obvious that the photograph, if photograph there be, is already taken, already developed in the very heart of things and at all the points of space?”

is an undivided flux, from which... our intellect, for the sake of action, has cut out objects” (Barr, 1913: 647). In fact, it becomes what Bergson calls “the extensive.” And “the extensive,” opposed to “the homogeneous space” of the *Essay*, “features properties which beforehand were the preserve of consciousness” (Mullarkey, 1999: 13). It is not an empty container that can be considered separate from the material objects that fill it (just like duration cannot be considered apart from its content). The fact is quite the opposite: What we call “material objects” are abstractions from “the extensive.”

On the other hand, Bergson gives us hints about the relation of life (“intensive virtual multiplicity of tendencies – the tendencies that characterize life in its impulsive form”) to matter (“actualization of materiality”) (Pearson, 2002: 15). He says that it is with the help of matter that life, which exists in the form of a virtual multiplicity, dissociates and actualizes itself. “Matter divides actually what was but potentially manifold; and, in this sense, individuation is in part the work of matter, in part the result of life’s own inclination”(CE: 258). So it cannot be said that matter and life form an absolute duality, on the contrary the relation between them is of interdependence. The actual life forms are due not only to the principle of life but also to matter. As Bergson states elsewhere, “[the way life breaks into individuals and species] depends, we think, on two series of causes: the resistance life meets from inert matter, and the explosive force... which life bears within itself” (CE: 98). As Barr summarizes “life and matter... are aspects of an organic whole, in which that which retains also guides” (Barr, 1913: 648).

3.2.1 Is Duration an Attribute of the Material World too?

The initial issue that Bergson addresses in *Creative Evolution* is whether it is possible to attribute the essential features of the consciousness, which were outlined in the *Essay*, to existence in general. Since being in duration (in other words, enduring) is what is most fundamental to the consciousness, the issue can be summarized in the form of a question as to whether duration exists also in the material world or not. Bergson’s answer here is not easy to adapt to the one that he gave formerly in the *Essay* (there he had told us that duration is peculiar to the

multiplicity of conscious states). First of all, he defines matter by the “tendency to constitute *isolable* systems, that can be treated geometrically” (CE: 10). But very shortly after, he adds that matter does never fully actualize this tendency, that is, there is never a complete isolation. Yes, from the scientific point of view there are absolutely isolated systems, but those are isolated by science only due to neglect or they are left aside in order to be dealt with at a later date (in a sense, there is a delay). So if science operates with isolated, closed systems, it is only for convenience. In reality, however, there is “the duration immanent to the whole of the universe” (CE: 11).

The universe is characterized by two movements: the ascending and the descending. These are life and matter, respectively. The activity of the descending movement is likened by Bergson to a roll being unwound. The ascending one, however, “endures essentially, and imposes its rhythm on the first, which is inseparable from it” (CE: 11). That means life is the active force in the universe, whereas matter is rendered to be passive, accepting what is imposed by life on it. The essence of the relation between the two is, however, of great importance for our investigation of the duality of matter and life. In what does life’s imposing its rhythm on matter consist? Bergson’s answer remains obscure at this point of *Creative Evolution*, but he hints about it when he talks about reintegration of matter. He says that the systems which science or our intellect isolates can be reintegrated into “the Whole” and also that only in this condition can those systems be considered to have a form of existence like that of our consciousness; only in that condition can duration be attributed to them.

3.2.2 Reintegration of Matter

It is important first of all to acknowledge that Bergson distinguishes matter, as the current which opposes life, from the material objects. He attributes to matter, like he attributes to life, an indivisible continuity when he says “the division of unorganized matter into separate bodies is relative to our senses and to our intellect, and ... matter, looked at as an undivided whole, must be a flux rather than a thing. In this we were preparing the way for a reconciliation between the inert and the living” (CE:

186). What we call material objects are cut out from the whole of this continuity, with the motivation to sketch a plan for our future action. But there waits the door of reintegration open to us. Reintegration will follow, as if by itself, when this motivation is suppressed and the individual outlines of the objects will melt down into “the Whole,” where they belong essentially. They will be absorbed in the ultimate reality which is the “universal interaction.” This is their home, from where they are carved out by our intellect and it is possible that they be sent back and grasped in their original, essential purity.²¹

Material objects are the products of our action plans and they are determined according to gradation. To take all material objects, that is to say, to take all space, as ready-made is due to “not having distinguished degrees in spatiality” (CE: 205). In other words, since we think of no gradation of space, we assume that matter is there for us, already developed into parts which are absolutely external to each other. Yes, matter has this tendency as we mentioned above; it lets itself be dug, broken into pieces and rearranged; but it never goes to the end. Expressed in Bergson’s own words, “although matter stretches itself out in the direction of space, it does not completely attain it” (CE: 207). These acts of digging, breaking into pieces and rearranging demonstrate, indeed, how matter and mind have adapted themselves to one another. Bergson says that neither the mind nor matter imposes its form on the other, neither is this adaptation is “a pre-established harmony” (CE: 206). On the contrary, it “*has ... been brought about quite naturally, because it is the same inversion of the same movement which creates at once the intellectuality of mind and the materiality of things*” (CE: 206).

Now, this is how the notion of “endosmosis” that is introduced in the *Essay* is elaborated in *Creative Evolution*. Whereas Bergson defended in the *Essay* that the material objects leave their imprint on our perception (understanding) of our inner life, in *Creative Evolution* he declares that the structures of our understanding and the material objects are created through one and the same process. His opinion in *Creative Evolution* can also be summarized as the following: it is through the same

²¹ We use the word “purity” here in the same sense that we used it in the first chapter, where we put forward purity as the explicatory term for the immediacy of the data attained by consciousness.

movement that the mind becomes intellectual and matter is divided into material objects. So, it can be said that it is not matter in its essence which is the source of absolute externality. There is not a material world the elements of which are absolutely and essentially external to each other. This illusion of absolute externality of things with reference to each other is due to our perception (conscious perception), whose task is to light up our actions. Our perception treats matter in such a manner directed towards action that matter is always very sharply defined, always with absolute boundaries. The more consciousness is prepared for action on matter, the clearer and sharper do the boundaries of things make themselves. In other words, our perception does not point out to the nature of things themselves, but to the possibility of how we can act on “unorganized matter.” What Bergson emphasizes is that this process denotes at the same time the intellectualization of the mind. Here Bergson’s differentiation between how space is perceived by the animal and how it is conceived by human beings can be remembered. In *Creative Evolution* he emphasizes again the same point through his doubt as to whether animals take in matter through the same articulations with man and through his conviction that the more the agent is engaged with acting, thus with dividing, the more homogeneous is space for the agent. In other words, “[t]he more consciousness is intellectualized, the more is matter spatialized” (*CE*: 189).

It is of great importance to understand what it means that matter is more than material objects in total. What does matter in its wholeness mean? We have said enough for this issue earlier in this chapter where we dealt with the contributions of *Matter and Memory* to Bergson’s development towards unity between internal and external worlds. But we can note here that in understanding the idea of matter in its wholeness, Bergson asks the reader to get rid of the spatializing habit of the intellect. Then one witnesses that the boundaries of the objects enter into each other. Only when they are viewed by us devoid of plans of action can this occur and the objects set side by side in homogeneous space melt down into one another. There are only few lines in *Creative Evolution* where Bergson suggests clues about this point and one of them is the part where he says “the materiality of a body does not stop at the point at which we touch it: a body is present wherever its influence is felt... The

more physics advances, the more it effaces the individuality of bodies... [B]odies and corpuscles tend to dissolve into *a universal interaction*" (CE: 188; italics belongs to us).

Having ended up with the conviction that matter does not coincide with space, then what Bergson asserts can be formulated as "matter, like life, is movement, though a movement contrary to that of life, tending towards further and further externality of parts in static space" (Barr, 1913: 647-8). One of the conclusions that Bergson derives from this argument is that spatiality of matter is over-accentuated by science whose formulae are all the time too precise. However the way to return material objects back to their "original materiality" is possible for Bergson and this is one of the tasks of philosophy. Philosophy, which has till now trodden the path that positive science has opened by "push[ing] matter in the direction of spatiality" (CE: 208), should swerve and adopt a new role as ascending [on] the incline that physics has descended, granting physical bodies their "original materiality."

As for the reintegration of isolated systems, we have stated that Bergson sees no reason "why a duration, and so an existence like our own, should not be attributed to the systems that science isolates, provided such systems are reintegrated to the Whole." (CE: 11). But it is not easy to conclude that the philosopher is resolute in the idea that duration is a common attribute for the organic (life) and the inorganic (matter): "duration may not be the fact of matter itself, but that of the life which reascends the course of matter; the two movements are none the less mutually dependent upon each other" (CE: 340). The only conviction which he can convey to the reader seems to be that the two movements are absolutely intermingled together, and that is why duration can be attributed to isolated systems, too. Earlier in this part we have said that what Bergson means by "the Whole" is the ultimate reality which is the "universal interaction." Now we add that each of the isolated systems of science forms part of this Whole and also that it is in virtue of "the Whole" that isolated systems can be reintegrated. In other words, it is not due to the fact that isolated systems endure that "the Whole" endures; on the contrary, only because "the Whole" (where matter and life are blended together) endures do the isolated systems

endure.²² “The systems marked off by science *endure* only because they are bound up inseparably with the rest of the universe” (CE: 11).

Bergson illustrates this with the help of the case of sugar melting in a glass of water, which he presents as a little fact but big in meaning (CE: 9-10). He questions the fact that *one has to wait until the sugar melts*. But why do we have to do so, while it is assumed that duration, thus succession, is not an essential feature of the material world? Why does the future of the sugar have to follow its past? Why are the past, present and the future of it not given instantaneously? Why does its history unfold itself gradually, just like the history of a conscious being does? How come can the two histories (history of the sugar and the history of the person that waits) coincide and flow in harmony? Bergson’s answer is that it is so because the waiting progress “coincides with my impatience, that is to say, with a certain portion of my own duration, which I cannot protract or contract as I like” (CE: 10). There is but *one duration lived* and it is owing to the fact that it is *lived* and not merely *thought* that the organic and the inorganic blend together in it. It is duration itself through which the ascending and descending movements are inseparably bound up with one another. Consequently, the sugar, the glass of water and even the process of the sugar’s dissolving in the water are what we abstract from, what we carve out of the Whole (CE: 10). We believe it is this sense that Bergson alludes when he says that life imposes its rhythm on matter.

Having seen how material bodies “are derived from a wider and higher form of existence” (CE: 187), and also that the powers of our intellect has much to do with this division of unorganized matter into individual objects, we have demonstrated that matter and life are not two absolutely distinct spheres. In other words, unlike in the *Essay*, here Bergson presents them to us as continuous fluxes. However the point that “continuity between life and matter means continuity between intuition and intellect” (Radhakrishnan, 1919: 286) should not be missed. That is, as we have

²² The reasoning here is in fact an implication of Bergson’s philosophizing in general, which moves not from the part to the whole, but vice versa. This also forms the basic ground for his criticism of the intellectual thinking and signifies the fundamentals of the doctrine of intuition according to which one gives up trying in vain to get to “the Whole” by combining together the parts, but grasps “the Whole” at a stroke.

mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the ontological shift in Bergson's thought finds its reflection in the epistemology, too. In order to see the shift in epistemology we should initially make another investigation relating to the history of the intellect and re-place intellect to its original position in the evolution of life.

3.3 Motion

We believe that the way motion is treated by Bergson deserves to be handled thoroughly in this study, not only because Bergson refers to it very often to articulate the notions of duration and the unbreakable continuity of duration, but also because it is a good instance for the reader to observe the shift that Bergson makes between his first and latest books. The concept of motion occupies greater place in the later works of Bergson than it did in the earlier ones. This may be because the philosopher manages to refine the necessary ground to claim the continuity and, more importantly, the reality of motion only after having written *Matter and Memory*. Indeed, the continuity of motion was all the time able to be maintained, but the physical reality of it was not always granted. As we will specify in the following lines, the *Essay* lacked sufficient base for Bergson to keep the reality of motion in the external world; the ontology inherent there did not allow him to grant motion its physicality. For the ultimate reality was rendered to be psychical. However when one reads *The Creative Mind (CM)* and *Creative Evolution*, with the shift in the relation between physical and psychical realms has already been managed, one observes that the domain of motion has also changed. In Mullarkey's words, "TFW understood Achilles's movements as actions that could not be reduced to the immobile homogeneous space subtending them. *MM* placed a peculiar twist on that tale, for it added that it is specifically our action that generates this reductive medium of homogeneous space" (Mullarkey, 1999: 57).

Another point that is common for all books is that the concept of motion is regarded by Bergson as "the living symbol of [the] seemingly homogeneous duration," which will be the primary feature of our argument (*E*: 110). After we have dealt with the aspects of motion which are shared in all the books concerned, we are going to try to shed light on how differently the issue is treated in compliance with the ontology

prevalent in the *Essay* on the one hand and *The Creative Mind* and *Creative Evolution* on the other.

Bergson handles the notion of motion basically around the ancient Zeno paradoxes (*CE*: 308-14).²³ Contrary to the reductive solutions to the paradoxes, which end up with denying the reality of motion and multiplicity and rendering them illusions, Bergson claims that we *look at* change but we do not *see* it. According to him change *is* and motion *is*, which have fallen victim to this reductive vision. We do not see change, because we try in vain to *understand* change. However change is to be immediately perceived and not to be *comprehended* with the help of retrospection. In the effort of understanding, which is bound to be retrospective, it is not the real movement but the trajectory of movement that is taken into account. Real movement, which our intellect takes as leaving a trajectory behind in order for us to grasp it, is, in fact, a continuum that cannot be divided. Contrary to the line it leaves behind only but only for us, motion is not stable in nature. It cannot be investigated as if it consists of plural stations where it stops; it cannot be stopped and started again infinitely many times (like the Cartesian universe ceasing to exist and being created by God at each and every moment). On the contrary, *motion moves*.

It is our sense of sight that plays a greatest role in pulling down that continuum into pieces. "The sense par excellence" perceives movement as a line that is traversed, and this line, like all space, can be infinitely divided.²⁴ Sight habitually separates a

²³ At this point we want to make a note on Bergson's reception of Zeno paradoxes. Now, Bergson seems to consider Zeno of Elea to be regarding motion as composed of infinitely many states (see for example *CE*, p. 308 or "The Perception of Change," *CM*, p. 141). Bergson handles the issue as if it were Zeno that postulates motion as consisting of motionless states. However the way that Bergson's perceives Zeno is, indeed, how Zeno receives the Pythagoreans. Departing from the postulation of the Pythagoreans, Zeno shows how this view is reduced to absurdity. However Bergson proceeds his philosophizing as if he is opposing not to the Pythagoreans but to the Eleatics.

²⁴ From our point of view, this characteristic of the sense of sight is one of Bergson's most distinguishing observations and he frequently addresses the distinction between it and the other senses ("The Perception of Change," *CM*: 147-8). He especially uses the advantage of the sense of hearing, which unlike the sense of sight has not developed the habit of separating. To illustrate, while listening to a melody, in so far as we do not employ our visual powers, we do not take the music in as *something* mobile. We simply perceive a movement and *nothing* that moves. In other words, the music enters to our consciousness in its continuity and entirety. It is only when we imagine the instruments or the musicians playing or visualize the melody as the succession of notes written on a note page, that we disturb the entirety of the melody and tear it apart into pieces. As for these

“mobile” from the movement, thus causes one to fall into the mistake of having the conviction that there is an object that moves. However for Bergson “*[t]here are changes, but there are underneath the change no things which change: change has no need of support. There are movements, but there is no inert or invariable object which moves: movement does not imply a mobile*” (“The Perception of Change,” *CM*: 147). With this, Bergson wants to lead us to grasp the experience of a change without something changing. He claims that what we call the “thing” is but an illegitimate solidification, only a part that we cut out of the whole of change/movement. When the “thing” is traced back to its origin, nothing but this Whole will be found.

The most frequent objection to Bergson concerning the denial of *something* moving in movement is hereby addressed: that motion implies *something* which moves. As Florian Cajori cites Bertrand Russell writing:

A friendship, for example, is made out of people who are friends, but not out of friendships... So a motion is made out of what is moving, but not out of motions. It expresses the fact that a thing may be in different places at different times, and that the places may still be different however near together the times may be. Bergson’s argument against the mathematical view of motion, therefore, reduces itself, in the last analysis, to a mere play upon words. (Cajori, 1915: 294)

Now, this is just the way of thinking that Bergson objects against and he thinks it is by departing from this view that science conceives change, as if change is constituted by a series of states. Bergson is against the mathematical view that motion is composed of a series of states; for him what holds is that in motion nothing *is* ever in any state. The common way of seeing motion is shaped by the supposition that something moving, say an arrow, *is* at some points throughout its journey. But this, according to Bergson, is no different than the idea that the moving arrow stops at some points. For only if the arrow stops can it be said that it *is* at some definite point. And this is in and of itself contradictory. This idea taken as the premise, then it follows that the moving arrow stops and moves again and again. Moreover it does this not only once but for infinitely many times. On this Bergson says that, “the most

imaginings, they appear as the result of our auditory sensation being contaminated by the visual powers.

we can say is that it [the arrow] might be there, in this sense, that it passes there and might stop there” (*CE*: 308-9). The error of regarding motion as a succession of states arises from the illusion that movement leaves behind a “motionless trajectory on which we can count as many immobilities as we will... We do not see that the trajectory is created in one stroke” (*CE*: 309). This illusive conviction is simply brought about by identifying the movement of the arrow with a line gathered from mathematics, that is, a quantitative magnitude. However although the quantitative line is divisible at will, the creation of the trajectory, which is a qualitative act, is indivisible. For the creation of the trajectory, in other words the movement of the arrow itself, is not a *thing*; on the contrary, it is a progress, a duration. A “thing” cannot be compared to a progress, since “[the thing], as intelligence understands it, is a cutting which has been made out of the becoming and set up by our mind as a substitute for the whole” (“Introduction II,” *CM*: 35). That is to say that taking the position of the arrow at certain points to be representative of its movement is merely a substitution, which only causes one to swerve from grasping real duration. Consequently, it can be asserted that motion is confused with the space traveled, space being the only thing that can be measured by the intellect.

We have emphasized in the first chapter that it is this fatal mistake to which Bergson wages war in several of his books. For him, intellect takes reality in by killing it; in other words, it forces violence on reality. Our intellect is accustomed to simplifying the superabundancy in the manifestation of reality and abstracting it at a center, a point, or a line of a *more*, that is, of a richer and more abundant reality. “The truth is that we change without ceasing, and that the state itself is nothing but change” (*CE*: 2). What we call a “state” (just like what we call a “thing”) is, indeed, an abstraction from that constant change.²⁵ However “it is expedient to disregard this uninterrupted change, and to notice it only when it becomes sufficient to impress a new attitude on the body, a new direction on the attention” (*CE*: 2). Only when the accumulation of

²⁵ Throughout the second chapter of our study we followed Bergson in using the term “state” to refer to the psychical realm (“the states of consciousness”). And it may seem to be paradoxical that Bergson now criticizes the usage of such terms as “state” and “thing.” However we have also mentioned in the first chapter that Bergson thinks we need to make use of abstractions in order to think, to speak, shortly to live... There are even lines in the *Essay* where he sounds quite desperate about managing to convey his ideas remaining true to their originality. This difficulty, he says, arises due to the language we are compelled to use, but he offers no alternative to it in that book.

change has become piled enough in order for us to pay attention to it can we talk of a change in our state. But more than what we perceive as change, there is, in truth, constant change going under, which is not remarkable to the senses. To sum up, the correspondence of our daily word “state” in reality is “change.”

Besides all these shared insights, there also exists an obvious disparity regarding motion in the development of Bergson’s philosophy. The roots of this disparity, we have already said, are supposed to be found in the underlying ontology of the relevant books. To express more clearly, for each book, how motion in the physical world is seen with regard to the psychical life depends on the ontological position adopted by the philosopher in that book.

To begin with, we handle the apparent attitude that Bergson has regarding motion in the *Essay*. There he asserts that “the successive positions of the moving body really do occupy space, but ... the process by which it passes from one position to the other, a process which occupies duration and which has no reality except for a conscious spectator, eludes space” (*E*: 111). For according to the prevailing ontology in the *Essay* conscious life and the material bodies are separated absolutely from one another. Since there is an insurmountable crevice between the two, motion, which is a durational process, is rendered to be real only in one of them, that is, in the psychical domain. Contrary to the outer world where the moving body occupies space, in conscious life motion coincides with something more than positions in space and “if consciousness is aware of anything more than positions, the reason is that it keeps the successive positions in mind and synthesizes them” (*E*: 111). Bergson has denied the existence of duration outside of consciousness, when he said, concerning the fact that we solidify movement itself, “as if this localizing of a *progress* did not amount to asserting that, even outside consciousness, the past co-exists along with the present” (*E*: 112). In our opinion, this is the basis of Bergson’s conviction that movement is real only for consciousness, because only in consciousness can it be possible that past and present exist together and intermingled, which is fundamental to the continuity of movement.

In *Creative Evolution* and *The Creative Mind*, however, we do not need to place motion in consciousness in order to grasp the reality of it. On the contrary, we should place ourselves within the motion. “Install yourself within change, and you will grasp at once both change itself and the successive states in which *it might* at any instant be immobilized” (CE: 308). We believe, it is owing to Bergson’s new understanding according to which in the physical world too there exists duration (better expressed, duration can be extended to cover the world of matter) that consciousness can install itself within another moving body. This is indeed same with the case of the sugar melting: what we call “the sugar’s melting” is not only an act where some external material objects are included and where the mathematical time reigns. In reality it is a duration like our own duration, which is only from a certain point of view, that is, from the point of view of the intellect, a discontinuous happening, where indeed the glass of water and the sugar are abstractions. There, too, past and present unfold themselves not instantaneously, that is, not once at a time. There is apparent succession in the external world too. Otherwise there would be no reason that we have to wait for the sugar to melt in the water. If there were no duration, what would happen at the end and at the beginning would be indifferently unfurled. Since Bergson talks of a duration that is immanent to the universe as a whole (thus, the material world is durational too) the motions that seem, at first sight (both in the real and the metaphorical sense of the word *sight*), external to our consciousness, can be internalized with a simple act of intuition. That is the ground which enables Bergson to say that “it [sugar’s melting] coincides with a certain degree of [my] impatience which is rigorously determined ” (CE: 339).

We conclude that together with the way he treats the notion of motion Bergson manages to establish “the point of contact” between the extended and the unextended that was missing in the *Essay*. That is, the ontological cleft between matter and life is overcome. With the fact that duration is extended to envelop matter too, they are brought together under a common attribute. Moreover they are bound up with one another by the relation of interdependence. Nevertheless, though the ontological account is given, it should be added that the ontological status of their unity (“the Whole”) is still disputable. For “the Whole” is an act without any agent acting (all

agents are abstractions that we owe to our intellect). In other words, the reality is a verb with no subject. Finally, we are going to handle the epistemological implications of this development in the third, and the last, chapter of our study.

CHAPTER IV

EPISTEMOLOGICAL RECONCILIATION: IS IT POSSIBLE?

4.1 From Ontological Duality to Epistemological Duality

In chapters I and II we have seen how the focus of importance has shifted between Bergson's first book (the *Essay*) and the last two (*Matter and Mind* and *Creative Evolution*). However we did not read this shift merely as a move in the point of view. On the contrary, we are of the opinion that this is a move in the Bergsonian ontology and bears serious epistemological implications. This basic idea will be the leading thought in this chapter.

While it was the heterogeneous continuity of consciousness that Bergson placed under the "external" world in order to bestow it with its reality, with *Matter and Memory* (*MM*) he himself shook this construction by granting the material world, too, with continuity (this also granted it with an autonomous status with regard to the consciousness). Ultimately in the mature work of *Creative Evolution* (*CE*) not only the two worlds were blended together as an enduring *Whole* but also were they driven to be dependent on one another. In other words, while writing the *Essay* (*E*) Bergson seems to reside under the influence of the Cartesian ontology which results in putting the physical and the psychical worlds too far away from each other. And the later works by the philosopher may be regarded as the attempt to overcome the problems that the Cartesian influence brought about.

It is depending on such a picture that Bergson seems to place an insurmountable cleft between intellect and intuition. This is also stated by Radhakrishnan: "By the cleavage that his metaphysics makes between the world of matter and the world of life and mind, Bergson is led to distinguish between intellect and intuition" (Radhakrishnan, 1919: 285). In other words, the epistemological dualism of Bergson can be traced back to the ontological dualism that is rooted in the *Essay*. Whereas

intuition is the way that leads to absolute knowledge, the knowledge gained through intellect is only a partial one, being abstract and relative. For the intellect is restricted to the world of the dead, which is far from the reality that is organic and psychical. However we also noted in the second chapter that Bergson introduced the relation between the world of matter and the world of life, which he formerly in the *Essay* denied of existence. In fact, with the move he made with *Matter and Memory* and *Creative Evolution* it is no more possible that we draw such a distinct line between matter and life. That is to say that there are no more absolute contrasts between matter and life. No more is the relation between the two a relation of assimilation. Both matter and life are regarded by Bergson as fluxes which then form the unity of a universe that endures. Now, the question that attracts our attention is whether this reconciled universe leads to a new epistemological understanding as to the contrast between intuition and intellect. Indeed, our idea regarding this question was already implied at the beginning of the second chapter where we stated that Bergson sounds more tolerant to science in his later works. Bearing in mind our view that epistemological implications in Bergsonian philosophy can be traced back to ontological grounds, then it will be admitted that the tolerance to scientific knowledge (that is, such an approach to intellectual knowledge that it is regarded as complementary to intuitive knowledge) is brought about by a so-called agreement between the material and psychic spheres.

Before we engage ourselves directly with examining the epistemological implications of the ontological shift in Bergsonian ontology, we prefer to handle an indispensable concept, that is, evolution. As we will see in a while, Bergson considers the concept of evolution indispensable, because he believes that it suggests to us a certain understanding of ontology and epistemology. Now let us look closer to that.

4.2 Evolution of Epistemological Faculties

The notion of evolution has an important role in the Bergsonian epistemology in the sense that it is the ground that gives birth, both in the real and the metaphorical sense of the word, to such core concepts as intellect, instinct and intuition. Owing to the

Essay we are familiar with the intellect and, to a respectively smaller extent, with intuition. In *Creative Evolution* the notion of instinct becomes the constant companion of these two, and then the three are treated in their origination. It is one of the most distinctive characteristics of the philosophy of Bergson that these three are not introduced to the reader as final (ready) forms; on the contrary, the evolution of their functional distinctions and relations is also given great importance. We have already mentioned about the relation between epistemology and ontology in the Bergsonian philosophy. To this relation Bergson himself includes additionally the theory of life:

“theory of knowledge and theory of life seem to us inseparable. As theory of life that is not accompanied by a criticism of knowledge is obliged to accept, as they stand, the concepts which the understanding puts at its disposal... a theory of knowledge which does not replace the intellect in the general evolution of life will teach us neither how the frames of knowledge have been constructed nor how we can enlarge or go beyond them.” (CE: xiii)

It is obvious that the inquiry of the evolution of life suggests a certain conception of knowledge and a certain understanding of metaphysics, which cannot be thought independent from one another. And only when we have dealt with the evolution of life can we maintain a firm ground on which we can build this certain epistemology and ontology. In our second and third chapter, we have handled how material objects and intellect have evolved parallel to each other and maintained that it is crucial not to assume intellect as given, but to investigate it in its evolution (it is equally important not to take the material things for granted). This can be seen in the lines where Bergson makes the criticism that “the evolutionist philosophy, when it imagines in space a matter cut up on the very lines that our action will follow, has given itself in advance, ready made, the intelligence of which it claims to show the genesis” (CE: 189). So, in order for philosophy to arrive at true epistemology it is not sufficient to investigate the intellect or the categories of understanding. On the contrary, philosophy should avoid assuming intellect as ready made and investigate it through its origination.

At the beginning of such an evolutionary inquiry, we should note Bergson's remark that "the intellectual tendencies innate to-day, which life must have created in the course of its evolution, are not at all meant to supply us with an explanation of life: they have something else to do" (*CE*: 21). Two points arise here upon which should be put emphasis. First, the intellectual tendencies are created by life itself, they have not been eternally there (as what we have mentioned just above). And second, other than speculation these tendencies are directed to do something else. Bergson thinks that to this original function of the intellect sufficient attention has not been paid in the history of philosophy. And just because of this neglect the nature and the structure of the intellect have been falsely understood. Therefore he is against taking intellect at its face value and he wants to lead us to a deeper inquiry about the evolution of it. Throughout this inquiry, as we said at the beginning, intellect, instinct and intuition become three close companions. The history of the one cannot be handled apart from others.

In *Creative Evolution* Bergson regards speculation as a luxury and renders action prior to it. He thinks we are first of all artisans, and that is long before we become artists (art and speculation are similar in terms of their disinterestedness). Now, it was this natural bend towards fabrication like an artisan that Bergson implied when he said the intellect has something else to do. He thinks, originally the intellect aims at not speculating but at fabricating. And this act of fabricating requires that intellect concentrates on matter, as Bergson says "life, that is to say consciousness launched into matter, fixed its attention either on its own movement or on the matter it was passing through; and it has thus been turned either in the direction of intuition or in that of intellect" (*CE*: 181-2). In this quotation, Bergson again emphasizes the fact that intellect and intuition are created with the activity of life. More precisely, they are formed by consciousness' launching itself on matter. Moreover not only we understand that they are turned towards opposite directions (intellect towards inert matter and intuition towards life) but also it is implied that intellect and intuition are functionally differentiated. For the direction that each turns its face to determines the special function of it. Of intellect this function is specializing on matter, complying with the nature of the matter and finally maintaining the knowledge of matter. Of

intuition, on the other hand, it is concentrating on life itself, not on the crust that life has entered into. In a similar fashion, the knowledge attained through intuition will be that of life.

That is why “[intellect] dislikes what is fluid, and solidifies everything it touches” (CE: 46). Having itself fixed on matter, everything that intellect touches becomes solid, like matter is solid. It is like King Midas, who has the ability to turn everything he touches into gold. According to the myth, King Midas, who was offered by Dionysus to choose whatever reward he wanted, hopes that he would be happy if everything he touches turns to gold. However it does not turn out to be the case and Midas finds himself in more of a trouble rather than at a happy end. What we want to point out is that making use of the intellect in other fields than fabricating would drag us totally to an end similar to that of King Midas. Though we hope to attain the absolute knowledge of reality through the guidance of intellect, we may be (indeed we are) victimized by the intellect, which turns everything it touches into solids. Thus what is fluid, what is not constant, what is changing, in other words, what is living eludes intellect. “We are at ease only in the discontinuous, in the immobile, in the dead. *The intellect is characterized by a natural inability to comprehend life*” (CE: 165).

Another tendency that life has created by splitting itself up as it proceeded is instinct, which is not only opposite but also complementary to intelligence. We should also note with Mullarkey that “Bergson is here describing intellect and instinct in their theoretically pure forms, what they consist of in principle. In actuality, of course, ‘neither is found in a pure state’ as he says himself” (Mullarkey, 1999: 78). Instinct and intellect are always intermingled. There is no instinct which does not carry any trace of intellect and vice versa. What differs from one being to another is the proportion of them. The most apparent difference between intellect and instinct is that intellect can make and use unorganized instruments, while intuition is perfected at only organized instruments. From Bergson’s point of view, this disparity between the two in terms of the nature of the instruments that can be used emerges from a deeper disparity. This deeper difference is with regard to the knowledge that each

bears: “*intelligence ... is the knowledge of a form; instinct implies the knowledge of a matter*” (CE: 149). That means, the knowledge that intellect provides is the knowledge of the relations in general, while the knowledge that instinct provides is limited to a certain set of things. Instinct enters into definite objects immediately and operates with the following motto: “*This is*” (CE: 149), whereas intellect enters into no particular object but builds relations between an object and another one. Unlike instinct, intellect cannot say “*This is*” but it is capable of drawing the conclusion when the premises are given. Namely it can build “if ... so” relations. In other words, intellectual knowledge is the answer to the question as to whether the form without matter can be the object of knowledge or not (CE: 148). Now, owing to its formal knowledge contrasted to “the material knowledge” of instinct, intellect is endowed with the capability of applying this knowledge on many different objects. For a formal knowledge is an external and empty knowledge and just because it is empty many objects can find place in it.

The greatest advantage that its formal knowledge endows intellect with, says Bergson, is that this knowledge is not limited to the “practically useful.” It also covers the ones that are of no use. Therefore an intelligent being possesses the capability to transcend its nature. That is, the fact that intellect can widen its range of interest without being limited endows the intelligent being to go beyond its nature. This faculty we call speculation; intellect can freely speculate on anything it likes. And here arises the interdependence between the two faculties. Although intellect can transcend its own nature, since it does not possess enough materiality, it can only familiarize itself with objects from without. That is, it remains external to its object. Now, this is the point where instinct rescues intellect by letting its “material knowledge” be utilized. It can only be with the help of the potentialities of instinct which still sleep within itself that intellect manages to adapt itself to the objects absolutely and seize them from within. “There are things that intelligence alone is able to seek, but which, by itself, it will never find. These things instinct alone can find; but it will never seek them” (CE: 150-1). So we can liken intellect to the trigger whereas instinct is the bullet itself. In order to activate the bullet, of which Bergson is sure to hit the target, one needs the trigger. With the activity of the neither one alone

can the goal can be attained. Hence not only their being opposite but also complementary to one another.

We can see now how fruitful it was to claim that intellect and instinct are found never as pure faculties, but always mingled. For Bergson is about to introduce the origination of intuition, having given the necessary ground for its formation. “But it is to the very inwardness of life that *intuition* leads us – by intuition I mean instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely” (CE: 176). This is the definition of intuition, which Bergson has been suggesting to the reader all along: Another line of evolution that houses within itself the powers both of the intellect and of the instinct. Like that of instinct, the object of intuition is also the organic and contrary to the intellect it “knows” its object from within. It no more represents the object, but builds sympathy between the object and itself, thus places itself within the object and *lives* it. However, comparable with the intellect, intuition can “talk” at the same time. It is not dumb like the instinct and in a certain sense can *express* its experience. In other words, it precisely is the version of instinct which Bergson earlier in *Creative Evolution* dreamt of, so to say, in a thought experiment: “If the consciousness that slumbers in it [the instinct] should awake, if it were wound up into knowledge instead of being wound off into action, if we could ask it and it could reply, it would give up to us the most intimate secrets of life. For it only carries out further the work by which life organizes matter” (CE: 165).

4.3 Intellect Transcending Itself

Bergson rigidly protests against the view that intellect embraces the whole reality and thus is capable of giving us the knowledge of it. According to him under this view lies the postulate that “whatever is geometrical in things is entirely accessible to human intelligence, and if the continuity between geometry and the rest [of the nature] is perfect, all the rest must indeed be equally intelligible, equally intelligent” (CE: 190). He adds, this postulate is also the source of the “exaggerated confidence of philosophy in the powers of the individual mind” (CE: 191). However this is simply ignoring intellect as an emergent faculty, in other words, failing to see the

intellect in its evolution. According to Bergson, the classical epistemology, where the intellect is taken for granted, is not a true epistemology. In this sense Bergson walks on the road not taken in the history of philosophy and investigates the intellect in its journey of emergence. As we have pointed out in the previous part of the present chapter, Bergson's diagnosis that the intellectual faculties do not provide us with the knowledge of things, but direct our action on them is of great importance for understanding his position in the history of philosophy.

The long adopted epistemological ground beneath our feet being shaken by Bergson are we then left with no explanation of life? Bergson's reply is that we should seek the answer not in the domain of science but in that of metaphysics. We should diverge to "quite another path, not in the direction of intelligence, but in that of "sympathy" " (*CE*: 176). Now let us dwell more on this divergence, this "sympathy" which will take us ultimately to intuition. How would it be possible to attain this divergence? What does it consist in and what does it require?

First of all, we should note that Bergson has already provided us with hints regarding these questions when he defined intuition as "instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely" (*CE*: 176). The faculties of reflection and enlarging its object (which we liken to generalization) in the definition come, indeed, from the characteristics of the intellect, which Bergson has constantly been criticizing. However it is hereby made cleared that intuition has something in common with the intellect; this is a point upon which we will pay more attention at the end of the chapter.

Surely Bergson is not unaware of the difficulties that his claim that it is possible to go beyond the intellect bears. Indeed by facing the possible confrontations in advance he demonstrates that he will not be indifferent to any criticism. As he anticipates it will be asked how is it possible to expand the intellect, for we have but only the intellect as a tool to manage that. We can, yes, make progress via the intellect, but will it be possible to go beyond it by itself?

Bergson faces this possible opposition by referring to an analogy. He asserts that to doubt that intellect can be expanded can be likened to doubt that no new habit can be acquired. Both doubts seems quite natural and acceptable to the mind, but what breaks the circle of the given which reasoning imprisons us is broken by action (*CE*: 192). Then he presents as an example the act of swimming and learning swimming: what he emphasizes is how impossible it seems that one can learn swimming when thought theoretically and how it indeed is realized when one hurls herself/himself in the water. Bergson wants to say that there is a risk that must be taken in order to break the theoretical vicious circle hindering the possibility of swimming. This possibility, indeed, is also theoretical and vanishes in a moment as soon as action is taken and swimming is learnt.

It is the same with transcending the intellect. If we are contented with the reasoning of our understanding we will find ourselves in a vicious circle as that of the swimming case. The thought that intellect cannot come over itself, go beyond itself appears to the understanding so true that we believe it is impossible that we can know in another way than intellect. Here again one needs to take the risk and like throwing oneself into the water, one must “thrust intelligence outside itself by an act of will.”

Reason, reasoning on its powers, will never succeed in extending them... Thousands and thousands of variations on the theme of walking will never yield a rule for swimming: come enter the water and when you know how to swim, you will understand how the mechanism of swimming is connected to that of walking. Swimming is an extension of walking, but walking would never have pushed you on to swimming. So you may speculate as intelligently as you will on the mechanism of intelligence; you will never, by this method, succeed in going beyond it. You may get something more complex, but not something higher nor even something different. You must take things by storm: You must thrust intelligence outside itself by an act of will. (*CE*: 193)

The lesson to be derived from here is that “philosophy cannot and must not accept the relation established by *pure intellectualism*²⁶ between the theory of knowledge

²⁶ Only in a few parts of his writings Bergson uses the expression “pure intellectualism” (also see *CE*, p. 199 where Bergson writes “the effort we make to transcend the pure understanding”). However we

and the theory of the known, between metaphysics and science” (*CE*: 194; italics belongs to us). For intellect is but bound to remain within the boundaries of the known. It explains everything “new” with what already exists. That is why it cannot explain how a new habit or capability is acquired. So long as intellect tries to explain swimming with the already known motional capabilities, it cannot end up in confirming that it is possible. Theory of knowledge cannot be explained by science. In fact, this is an idea of the sort that Bergson has consistently argued for throughout all his philosophy, from the beginning to the end. Expressed with the words of the *Philosophical Intuition*, “the human mind is so constructed that it cannot begin to understand the new until it has done everything in its power to relate it to the old” (“Philosophical Intuition,” *CM*: 108).

Bergson thinks that science (in fact, positive science) has its devoted tool as the intellect. So we can say whenever he is talking about science he is addressing the intellect. Moreover “intellect is at home in the presence of unorganized matter” (*CE*: 195). So the borders of the territory of positive science are drawn by Bergson as the field of unorganized (inert) matter. As long as science remains within the territory of inert matter and come up with theories, laws, etc. regarding this closed system there is no problem. However the problem arises as soon as science attempts to impose its handling which is peculiar to the inert on the living. What Bergson cannot accept and fiercely criticizes is that science does not stay within its field of expertise and generalizes the mould valid here to the field of the living. “it [the intellect] resolves the organized into the unorganized, for it cannot, without reversing its natural direction and twisting about on itself, think true continuity, real mobility, reciprocal penetration – in a word, that creative evolution which is life” (*CE*: 162).

It is also important to note that Bergson defines unorganized matter as that on which “human action is naturally exercised.” In other words, “we can act only with inert matter for instrument” (*CE*: 198). So at this point we can say that science aims at organizing and explaining our action on matter. That is also to say that the task of the

are of the idea that this expression gives the reader hints as to Bergson’s position with regard to intellectualism. We conclude that the Bergsonian philosophy is not an anti-intellectualism, but anti pure-intellectualism.

intellect, which is stripped off epistemological implications, is defined to be organizing our action. What intellect serves to, according to Bergson, is no more defined in terms of knowledge, but in terms of proficiency on matter, where our action is implemented on. “The essential function of our intellect, as the evolution of life has fashioned it, is to be a light for our conduct, to make ready for our action on things, to foresee, for a given situation the events, favorable and unfavorable, which may follow thereupon” (*CE*: 29). It is in this sense that Bergson puts forward his claim that the intellect is the extension of our senses (*CE*: 162). Just like the animals in which the evolution of life has developed a super sensibility of smell or sounds in order to gain a hold upon matter, by the same evolution of life man is endowed with the faculty of intellectualizing, which enables him to perceive matter as homogeneous and infinitely divisible. As we have no profession in directing our action via smells or sounds, not all beings possess this homogenizing ability of the intellect. Hence Bergson’s conclusion in the *Essay* that not for all beings is space as homogeneous as it is for man.

4.4 The Relation between Intellect and Space Revisited

What we have just said above with regard to the task of the intellect is also parallel with the notion of “endosmosis,” which we have dealt with in the third chapter of our study. We want to say that Bergson’s statement that “we can act only with inert matter for instrument” already involves intellect there. And this we say depending on Bergson’s theory of “endosmosis,” according to which intellectualization of consciousness and spatialization of inert matter refer to the one and the same process and neither one is prior to the other. The issue has been problematized by Mullarkey and also A. R. Lacey, for whom the case is a “chicken-and-egg puzzle” (as reported in Mullarkey, 1999: 76). This is hereby clearly stated by Mullarkey: “We are left therefore with a dilemma as to whether homogeneous space is prior to and active upon our mind or whether it is our conceptual intellect which distorts concrete extensity into homogeneous space” (Mullarkey, 1999: 76). The question can also be formulated as such: Is it (*the notion of*) homogeneous space that we need in order to form our concepts, which are characterized as external to each other by Bergson, or

is it our concepts (or “conceptual intellect” as Mullarkey says) that we need in order to form a notion of homogeneous space?

From our point of view the underlying problem, indeed, regards the reality of homogeneous space. To state better, the difficulty arises inevitably due to a weakness in Bergson’s philosophy. The weakness is that Bergson fails to give a significant account regarding the reality of space. Because to say that it is homogeneous space that we need in order to form our concepts is to say that homogeneous space is real (and this is in fact the view of the *Essay*: there is the real space absolutely devoid of duration which leaves its imprint on our sensation); on the other hand, to assert that it is our “conceptual intellect” that we need in order to form a notion of homogeneous space is to assert that space is not real.

Bergson mentions in the *Essay* that “we shall not lay too much stress on the question of the absolute reality of space: perhaps we might as well ask whether space itself is or is not in space” (*E*: 91). Thus is left the problem of the reality of space aside in the *Essay*. However, depending on this declaration and a later statement of the philosopher as “there is a real space, without duration” (*E*: 110), the reader infers that the reality of space is taken for granted in the *Essay*. But it is important to note that it is not only the reality of space that is taken for granted here, but also the fact that space is wholly devoid of duration. So, we are of the opinion that real space is totally homogeneous (contrary to duration) from the point of view of the *Essay*. However we hold with Mullarkey that the notion of space in the Bergsonian philosophy does not remain the same and it is subject to evolution which is an important aspect in Bergson’s effort to refine his understanding. To state in Mullarkey’s words,

the idea that Bergson never went beyond the position that all space is homogeneous rests wholly on a reading of *TFW*. There is a historical development in Bergson’s understanding of space, with a positive conception of it emerging to counteract the negative presentations that are mostly confined to his first book. By the time Bergson publishes *MM*, what appeared as a real property of space in *TFW*’s depiction has become the product of our pragmatic interaction with it. (Mullarkey, 1999: 12)

What Mullarkey means by “what appeared as a real property of space in *TFW*” is the fact that space is rendered to be wholly homogeneous in the *Essay*. However, as we have engaged ourselves enough with in the second chapter, this view is overcome in *Matter and Memory* and especially in *Creative Evolution* where Bergson elaborates the notion of “endosmosis.” Although taking into account that the *Essay* is home to contradictory attitudes regarding (homogeneous) space, depending on *Creative Evolution* Mullarkey justifies Bergson rightly by pointing out to the refined concept of “endosmosis.” He says that Bergson regards the process through which the mind is homogenized into the intellect and the process through which the concrete extension is modified into homogeneous space are but one and the same.²⁷ In his words, “[w]hat occurs to concrete extensity to produce homogeneous space is now but one side or pole of an activity that can just as well be viewed from what happens to mind to produce intellect” (Mullarkey, 1999: 77). So just like the fact that homogenous space is a special form of *concrete extension* (special to man), intellect is “a special function of the mind, essentially turned toward inert matter” (*CE*: 206). By denying through an evolutionary perspective that the intellect coincides with the mind Bergson opens way for the possibility of reaching the lands where intellect is surpassed.²⁸ This is also expressed by Mullarkey, who writes “Alongside Bergson’s evolutionary epistemology, therefore, we find an evolutionary physics” (Mullarkey, 1999: 77).

4.5 The Self as an Instance of the Indivisible Continuum and the Knowledge of the Self

What is the significance of the effort that man ought to exert in order to surpass the intellect? What would that yield to us at the end? Bergson’s emphasis on this arises due to his conviction that intellect is not the right means of attaining the knowledge of the reality, which is “an indivisible continuity” (*CE*: 31) of matter and life. At many points of our study we have mentioned that intellect directs not our knowledge

²⁷ We have already cited Bergson handling the same issue in our previous chapter. Just to remind can refer to him once again: “An identical process must have cut out matter and the intellect, at the same time, from a stuff that contained both. Into this reality we shall get back more and more completely, in proportion as we compel ourselves to transcend pure intelligence” (*CE*: 199).

²⁸ How intellect can be transcended was a subject matter that we dealt with above, in the present chapter.

but our possible action. Thus the knowledge it supports is relative, not disinterested and the intellect is unable to grasp the flow of reality in its originality. This is most clearly manifested by Bergson when he says that “life transcends intellect” (*CE*: 46). And because life cannot be originally and wholly encircled by the intellect, we should “compel ourselves to transcend pure intelligence.” This “effort we make to transcend the pure understanding introduces us into that more vast something out of which our understanding is cut, and from which it has detached itself” (*CE*: 199), this wider something being life itself. Thus we can replace the “symbolic” (*CE*: 199) knowledge which is “relative to our faculty of action” (*CE*: 196) that the intellect provides with a knowledge of the “true continuity” (*CE*: 162). It is important to note at such an early point as this that although intuition has much to do with the continuity of the self, intuitional knowledge is not restricted to the knowledge of the self.

This deepest reality of the universe,²⁹ life (vital impulse) bears no relation to “the knowing mind,” as Barr says: “Man’s demand for rationality is only one of the creations hurled out by the vital force” (Barr, 1913: 645). Of course, the act of knowing (thus intellect as a tool) has some relation to the universe as a whole, but this is not a necessary and, more importantly, not an exhaustive relation. In other words, the universe is more than rational. But what then is the significance of the much emphasized self consciousness of the *Essay*?

Barr later adds rightly that although the universe is in no sense stands in an exhaustive relation with man’s knowledge, “it is by looking within [himself] that he finds the clearest account of its workings; for the consciousness of self is the most immediate consciousness wherein the creative activity is most clearly manifest... It glories in irrationality; for to rationalize it is to make of it an artificial diagram and yield it to determinism” (Barr, 1913: 645-6). The continuity of the self is characterized by a never ending novelty, a characteristic which can in no way be captured by the intellect. “The state of consciousness overflows the intellect; it is indeed incommensurable with the intellect, being itself indivisible and new” (*CE*:

²⁹ We have said in the third chapter that Bergson’s focal point in *Creative Evolution* is no more the multiplicity of the conscious states of the self, but the whole of the universe.

200). To define our self making use of the term “rational” does not exhaust the essence of it, but only introduces a certain, thus narrow, aspect of it. Thus neither can be characterized only by a rational aspect, and in this sense it is the closest instance of the whole universe in man’s world, from which man can draw clear hints in order to grasp the universal reality.

The knowledge of the self has a central role in the Bergsonian philosophy, since Bergson regards it as the core departure point to arrive at the knowledge of the inner life of other things. In his own words, “There is at least one reality which we all seize from within, by intuition and not by simple analysis. It is our own person in its flowing through time, the self which endures” (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 162). What binds the self and the universe together, most important of all, is that both do *endure*. Departing from this fact Bergson concludes that “the consciousness we have of our own person in its continual flowing, introduces us to the interior of a reality on whose model we must imagine others” (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 188). Thus only through this “consciousness we have of our own person in its continual flowing” can we come to terms with the unity in multiplicity both of our own selves and of the things outside. Because what we grasp through that knowledge is that behind its differences there exists a continuity in the self. The self is qualitatively multiple, yet indivisible (qualitative multiplicity). It is flux, a stream. And the complexity at the surface is due to the work of the analytical intellect.

At this point, it can be helpful to look into Bergson’s perception of the traditional ways empiricism and rationalism have provided explanations for the unity of the self. From the point of view of Bergson both are mistaken in their regard of the self,

[empiricism] seeking the unity of the self in the interstices, so to speak, of psychological states, is led to fill up these crannies with other states... so that the self, confined in an interval which is continually contracting, tends towards Zero the further one pushes analysis; while rationalism, making the self the place where the states are lodged, is in the presence of an empty space that one has no more reason to limit here rather than there... which goes on expanding and tends to be lost, not in Zero this time, but in the Infinite. (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 174-5)

More concretely expressed, Bergson holds the view that both approaches have fallen into the mistake of hypostatizing the Ego being reconstitutable by psychological states. Departing from this illusory point, empiricism tries to squeeze the Ego into the crevices between states. But, this procedure goes on till infinity, and at the end, one is left with infinitely many psychological states succeeding each other, but no Ego at hand. On the other side, rationalism, which takes for granted the seat of the Ego, ends up in a self that is nothing but an empty infinity. That is to say, the self of rationalism is a form without matter and the rationalist is left with an absolutely indeterminate self at hand. However, far from being indeterminate, the knowledge of the self is as positive as no other knowledge is. Its pattern is that of movement, in other words the pattern of the reality itself. As can be observed in the mistaken steps in the history of philosophy, the knowledge of the self is closed to the intellect which modifies the pattern of that reality while trying to understand it.

4.6 Intellect Transcended: Intuition and the Absolute

At this point where the intellect is rendered to be too clumsy to arrive at the reality, Bergson introduces intuition as a method against intellectual faculties. His new epistemological approach which is guided by intuition Bergson calls “true empiricism” and characterizes it by saying “an empiricism which ... sees itself obliged to make an absolutely new effort for each new object it studies” (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 175). “True empiricism” is an approach that invites us to grab hold of what is unique in an object. When trying to get the knowledge of something, our intellect defines the thing with what it has in common with the others. This is, indeed, due to the fact that it is incapable of recognizing what is new in its objects. Intellect functions with the principle of seeing something already familiar in what is original. It exerts all of its effort to seek what is same, at least what is alike in its object and then using these “same”s and “alike”s it reconstructs its object. It makes use of what already exists in order to grasp what is emerging. It utilizes the past in order to cope with the present. Briefly, nothing new can arise in the fields of the intellect. Intuition, on the contrary, is “a simple act” (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 162) and denotes “the *sympathy* by which one is transported into the interior of an object in order to coincide with what there is

unique and consequently inexpressible in it” (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 161).³⁰

Bergson’s intuitional philosophy is revolutionary in the sense that it resists the tendency to conceptualize. This natural tendency, he says, found its expression also in the philosophy starting with the Ancients: “The whole of that philosophy which begins with Plato and ends with Plotinus is the development of a principle that we should formulate thus: ‘There is more in the immutable than in the moving, and one passes from the stable to the unstable by a simple diminution.’ Now the contrary is the truth” (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 193). Bergson totally opposes to the prevailing understanding in the ancient philosophy, which “proceeds as the intellect does” (*CE*: 316) and for which Bergson holds Plato responsible. To prioritize immutability to change is an understanding that we inherited from the “philosophy of Ideas” of the Ancients (*CE*: 317). But as he himself mentions for Bergson the truth is far from being so. According to him, the immutable is a diminutive form of the moving and is the result of “the cinematographical habits of our intellect.” He thinks that every idea, every concept that is devoid of change represents merely one of the infinitely many “*possible stops* imagined by us” (*CE*: 312). As highlighted, the stops are only *possible*, far from being actual (actuality being the change, the movement itself).

Regarding the dispute on the priority of the mutable or the immutable on the other, Bergson posits intuition as requiring one to start from not the immobilities but mobility itself. In other words, “analysis operates on immobility, while intuition is located in mobility or, what amounts to the same thing, in duration” (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 180).³¹ To borrow Bergson’s much frequented image of the

³⁰ At this point Bergson’s criticism of language can be remembered where we handled in the first and second chapters. Now he adds another moment of criticism by saying “the concept generalizes at the same time that it abstracts. The concept can symbolize a particular property only by making it common to an infinity of things” (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 167).

³¹ This quotation is also important in the sense that there is revealed Bergson’s ultimate understanding of duration as mobility. Indeed, this fact is conveyed most strongly in Bergson’s article titled *The Perception of Change*. The article is like Bergson’s manifestation of the fact that reality of life is movement and we experience this continuous change which is both within ourselves and around us. The case for Bergson is even more radical: There is no immobility. But then how do we derive the

“cinematographical” habit of the mind, we can say with the philosopher that when trying to understand change (motion) our intellect takes “snapshots” from it. That is, intellect regards change (motion) as a process that stops and restarts infinitely many times. That is, it isolates certain points where there no more is any change (motion) and also a thing that changes (moves). But we should see the fact that it is not possible to formulate change (motion) with snapshot taken from it, even if they are infinitely many (this is, in fact, like the inability of traditional empiricism to grasp the unity of the Ego). To assume that original change (motion) can be created by snapshots can be likened to make the change itself a film that is created by the succession of twenty four images at each and every second. Indeed, this attempt, which is in vain, exemplifies Bergson’s conviction that “from intuition one can pass on to analysis, but not from analysis to intuition” (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 180). A change can be attained in its originality only through a simple intuition, which retrospectively can be analyzed and formulated into so-called “constitutive” elements. That is, “to think intuitively is to think in duration” contrary to the intellect which “starts ordinarily from the immobile, and ... makes of change an accident which is supposedly superadded” (“Introduction II,” *CM*: 34-5). Hence the conclusion that intuition is the only method by which a reliable account of duration can be given.

Especially in his articles that are written after the year 1900, many of which are published in *The Creative Mind (CE)*, along with the *Creative Evolution*, Bergson endeavors to translate intuition into the language of the intellect as far as possible, which is the only way possible to clarify the content of the doctrine. Maybe, the most important of all, in compliance with what has been said so far with regard to the opposition between intellect and intuition, we note that intuition requires a reversal of our ordinary way of thinking. In fact, this is the way Bergson differentiates

idea of immobility? The answer of the philosopher to this is through an analogy: “what we call immobility is a certain state of things analogous to that produced when two trains move at the same speed, in the same direction, on parallel tracks: each of the two trains is then immovable to the travelers seated in the other” (“The Perception of Change,” *CM*: 143-4). What the analogy reveals is that while on the one hand there goes on movement, on the other hand is an appearance or supposition of immobility. However the analogy does not stop here. Going further, Bergson asserts that it is by means of immobility (in other words, through going in the same direction with the same speed) that the passengers are able to take hold of each others’ hands. That is, our *actions* are possible only if there “is” this immobility (“The Perception of Change,” *CM*: 144).

philosophy from science and defines it: “to philosophize means to reverse the normal direction of the workings of thought” (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 190). The way to such philosophizing consists in playing with the categories of the mind, or remodeling them. Via the arduous method of intuition the molds of the mind should at least be rendered open to change; for “[t]here do not exist *things* made, but only things in the making” (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 188). Regarding how this can be achieved we believe Bergson proposes a new understanding of “concepts.” In “continually upsetting its categories, or rather recasting them” our mind “will arrive at fluid concepts, capable of following reality in all its windings and of adopting the very movement of the inner life of things” (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 190). So an important indication of this for our study is that though Bergson very frequently opposes intuition to the intellect, he does not speak of totally giving up the tools of it, the most fundamental of which is language. In the same article he writes: “To be sure, concepts are indispensable to [metaphysics], for all the other sciences ordinarily work with concepts, and metaphysics cannot get along without other sciences. But it is strictly itself only when it goes beyond the concept, or at least when it frees itself of the inflexible and ready-made concepts and creates others very different from those we usually handle, I mean flexible, mobile, almost fluid representations, always ready to mold themselves on the fleeting forms of intuition” (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 168).

One of the rare exemplifications of playing with our language is found at the end of *Creative Evolution*, where Bergson writes on becoming and how to express it. He suggests that the proposition “The child becomes a man” should be transformed into the proposition “There is becoming from the child to the man” (*CE*: 312-3). His reasoning flows: When the first proposition is thoroughly examined one recognizes that the subject being the “child” it is not possible to attach the attribute “man” to it, because the “man” and “child” are mutually exclusive “stops.” Then the subject should be changed in order to translate the “reality, which is the *transition* from childhood to manhood.” Thus is formed the second sentence where it is emphasized that the subject is the “becoming” (*CE*: 312-3).

Only through such “a dilation of mind,” (“Introduction to Metaphysics,” *CM*: 183) only through such reversal of our intellectual habit, will one be able to locate himself/herself in the thing of interest. So, Bergson is simply claiming that metaphysics is possible through a widening, an expansion of the mind. Thus intuition is not some super-human capability and just like the intellect, it is also a function of the mind.

There are other lines in *Creative Evolution* where Bergson seems to form a closer link between intellect and intuition. Bergson puts forward as evidence to the existence of intuition in man the aesthetic faculty, where he also gives clues about the nature of intuition. Artistic activity, claims Bergson, is one through which the artist manifests his/her effort to recapture the “intention of life, the simple movement that runs through the lines, that binds them together” by “placing himself within the object by a kind of sympathy” (*CE*: 177). The same intention is exactly what eludes the intellect. But Bergson is not late in adding that when trying to understand intuition, though one can depart from the aesthetic faculty, through which one is capable of attaining the inner knowledge of an object, one should be aware of the fact that intuition refers to a much more extensive knowledge. It “take[s] life *in general* as for its object” and “just as physical science ... prolongs the individual facts into general laws” (*CE*: 177). In this will intuition be able to provide us with what the intellect cannot. Moreover intuition can also

indicate the means of supplementing it [the intellect]. On the one hand, it will utilize the mechanism of intelligence itself to show how intellectual molds cease to be strictly applicable; and on the other hand, by its own work, it will suggest to us the vague feeling ... of what must take the place of intellectual molds. (*CE*: 177)

That is, after having supplied us the insight that intellect cannot function in the domain of life, Bergson claims that intuition will guide us in the way that leads beyond the intellect. An important point not to be missed here is in doing this that intuition utilizes “the mechanisms of the intellect,” a fact that demonstrates the close kinship between the two ways of knowing. In fact, Bergson has mentioned a parallel opinion in *Creative Evolution* where he dealt with the relation between intellect and

intuition, but this time from an evolutionary perspective: “though ... [intuition] transcends intelligence, it is from intelligence that has come the push that has made it rise to the point it has reached. Without intelligence, it would have remained in the form of instinct riveted to the special object of its practical interests” (CE: 178).

Still remains obscure, however, the exact nature of intuition. A very agreeable interpretation of the Bergsonian intuition came from C. A. Bennett after a few years that Bergson has publicized *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Bennett argues that the major principle of the intellect being analysis (dissection, breaking down), the intellect “can find no finally satisfying object in which to rest. Committed to the task of resolving into predicates everything which claims to be a subject, it is precluded from any knowledge of a subject as such” (Bennett, 1916: 47-8). With the desire to get nearer to the core of the subject, the intellect digs into it. What it gains, however, is only “elements” that it was able to tear off the subject. With each step aimed at the core, it in fact modifies the subject, breaks it into those “elements” which can impossibly be brought together to give us again the whole of the subject. On the other hand, intuition can provide that whole. Better expressed, it is owing to intuition that we can grasp *a whole* to which all the predicates belong to. In Bennett’s words, “it is a seeing of why and how all these predicates belong together in the object” (Bennett, 1916: 48). The argument of Bennett is in compliance with Bergson’s declaration that it is possible to proceed from intuition to analysis, but not vice versa.

An important question regarding Bergson’s intuitional epistemology, which has been causing debates, is whether the philosopher implies that intellectual and intuitional processes are totally contradictory and mutually exclusive. In a shallow and limited reading Bergson often seems to be *for* the view that we have just expressed. However between the lines there are implications of the opposite. For example, when he says in the *Introduction* he wrote to *Creative Evolution*: “Therein [around our conceptual and logical thought] reside certain powers that are complementary to the understanding” (CE: xii-xiii). Another characterization of intuition in the article named *Philosophical Intuition* also reveals hints about how this “complementarity”

functions. Bergson declares in this article that there is a common characteristic between the demon of Socrates and his doctrine of intuition:

What first of all characterizes this image is the power of *negation* it possesses... It seems to me that intuition often behaves in speculative matters like the demon of Socrates in practical life; it is at least in that form that it begins, in this form also that it continues to give the most clear-cut manifestations: it forbids. Faced with currently accepted ideas, theses which seemed evident, affirmations which had up to that time passed as scientific, it whispers to the philosopher's ear the word: 'Impossible!' ("Philosophical Intuition," *CM*: 109-10)

Now, Bergson wants the reader to pay attention to the fact that even when his thought is not clear yet what the philosopher does first of all is to do away with certain thoughts absolutely. Bergson presents this as a mind-boggling fact with regard to the nature of intuition. From his point of view it is a fact that witnesses the negative character of intuition. However what is a bigger similarity between the Socratic demon and intuition, claims Bergson, is that intuition is what hinders the philosopher from swerving from his true flow of thought and enables him to keep in line with the direction of his genuine insight. This, however, happens without any need to the "rectilinear logic," according to which are determined the formal rules of reasoning. May the person veer off the course of his/her genuine thought (Bergson claims that this may happen when the person is engaged with a dry formal reasoning), it is again the simple intuition that one is in possession of (or the simple intuition that one is possessed by) which enables him/her to realize the fact and correct oneself. So the formation of a philosophical doctrine is an endless coming and going between the *formal structure* and the *intuition*. Indeed, Bergson says that this is what he understands by the term "*development*" of thought: "these departures toward an affirmation and these returns to the primary intuition." Throughout its "development" our thought "loses itself, finds itself again, and endlessly corrects itself" ("Philosophical Intuition," *CM*: 110).

Bergson's explanation of the philosophical intuition suggests us the procedure how intuition and intellect pay into each other. First of all, we believe that the reason why Bergson does not define intuition as a positive process here is his intention to

emphasize that what someone intuits is not perfectly expressible through language. The nature of intuition requires that it be not cast into clear-cut molds like predicates, subjects, etc. Though, it is not easier to say that intuition does not contribute to our refinement of thought than to say that it is impossible for a dumb person to communicate. We mean, although we cannot formulate our intuition directly into a symbolical way of expression, it still contributes to the manifestation of a consistent system of thought. This is what underlies Bergson's identification of intuition with "the power of *negation*."

On the other side, the domain where this negation is applied onto, that is, what the philosopher (in Bergson's illustration) negates through the help of his "simple intuition" consists of the consequences he deduces depending on purely intellectual processes. Bergson describes such processes making use of the term "rectilinear logic." The deductions that the philosopher makes according to his rectilinear logical reasoning may sometimes be such that they do not penetrate to the heart of the subject, on the contrary, they go "tangent" to it. This description of Bergson we find very similar to the way he talks about the intellectual efforts and indeed we are of the idea that Bergson again is criticizing the incapability of the intellect. What is important here, however, is not only to see this relation, but also to notice that Bergson does in no way regard this incapability as dispensable. On the very contrary, he considers it as a constituent of the development process of thought that is an unending oscillation between *formal structure* (affirmations) and *intuitive negation*. Consequently we are not of the opinion that Bergson is the spokesman of an irrationalist philosophy. What Schwartz reports also support this shared view:

Bergson often ignored his many critics, but he objected strenuously to the charge of irrationalism, arguing that intuition is not the negation of intellect but a complementary faculty designed to comprehend vital as opposed to mechanical processes. He believed that critics were confusing his philosophy with the various irrationalist currents it superficially resembled, and maintained that intuition is not sheer instinct, but a cognitive faculty that requires a discipline of mind as rigorous as that of the intellect. (Schwartz, 1992: 291).

Bennett has the same insight regarding the nature of the relation between intellect and intuition, but criticizes Bergson for not having maintained the fact that “[i]ntuition without analysis is dumb and empty; analysis without intuition is fragmentary and unfinished” (Bennett, 1916: 53). We agree with Bennett that Bergson has not laid much emphasis (at least, he has not written any articles directly) on the reciprocal complementarity of intellect and intuition, which is a topic that deserves to be handled thoroughly in order to seep away from many people’s minds the questions regarding the doctrine of intuition. But we contend that Bergson presents to his reader clues about it here and there throughout his writings (his article *The Philosophical Intuition* in *The Creative Mind* is the most condensed writing with regard to this specific issue).

Finally, we want to point out to a conviction of ours according to which there is something parallel between the relation of intuition and intellect and the relation of life and matter (Bergson never mentions it anywhere). That is, as are matter and life complementary to one another (I), so are intuition and intellect (II). Recalling our opinion that Bergson’s epistemological arguments have always ontological foundations, we assert that the former of the above mentioned propositions (I) brings about the latter (II). Intellect’s profession is unorganized bodies (that is, the inorganic), which lets itself be broken into pieces and be rearranged. So trying to attain the heart of its object, intellect breaks its object into pieces as far as the object lets. And what it supplies to us is only those broken pieces of its object. Intuition, on the other hand, is the necessary (thus complementary) method in order that we attain the knowledge of life, wherein the unorganized (matter) and the organized bodies (life; the living) are blended together.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

All our efforts in this study on the Bergsonian philosophy were first of all to shed a light on Bergson's ontology and the development of it and then to point out to the corresponding epistemological implications. In doing this we based our investigations on an evident characteristic of Bergson's works, in other words, the leitmotiv of his philosophy: the dualistic pattern, which Bergson constantly makes use of. Regarding the nature of duality we have observed that it changes not only in form but also is modified in content depending on the ontological ground it is based on. Consequently we do not think that duality is a formal structure that Bergson utilizes in order to convey better his thought and doctrine, but that it emerges from ontological concerns. Though we do not prefer to call this design "dualism." For Bergson's philosophy, regarded as a whole, cannot be characterized by two absolutely opposing substances. Although his first book *Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness (E)* emphasizes the dualistic nature of reality, this view is subject to change and is not preserved in the following writings of the philosopher.

What generally can be said about the part of the Bergsonian philosophy we have dealt with is that Bergson objects to all approaches in philosophy and science (and for the most of the time commonsense too) which attempt to construct an explanation of (regarding) life with pure quantitative terms. This is a common insight which one can find in science, philosophy and commonsense. However, though it is shared by the two greatest achievements of the mankind in carrying out an investigation of life (namely, philosophy and science), Bergson insists that it is far from reflecting the reality. In fact, we have the conviction that all the Bergsonian philosophy should be read in the guidance of the following principle: restoring the status it deserves to the neglected part of the reality, that is, to the qualitative aspect.

Bergson's initial revolt against the long-adopted reductive tradition is revealed in the *Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*. This work is also identified by the fact that it is where Bergson expresses his thought in terms of contrasts (intensity-magnitude, quality-quantity, homogeneity-heterogeneity, etc.) and finally presents a final pair among the members of which there exists no relation except for the relation of reduction or an "illegitimate translation." These are namely the extended and the unextended realities, characterized also by being spatial and durational respectively. After a certain point of the book they are identified as the inner world (the world of the consciousness) and the external world (the world of material bodies). What has been traditionally assumed in philosophy and science on the one hand and through commonsense on the other hand is that in order that the unextended be measured, labelled, become a subject of our language it is interpreted in terms that are purely quantitative. The heterogeneous continuity, which forms the fundamental characteristic of the qualitative reality, is reduced to homogeneity, that is, to numerical multiplicity. Numerical multiplicity is applicable in the external world, which is spatial; because it is the characteristic of space that its elements are external to each other (one ends at the point where another begins). On the other hand, the world of consciousness does in no way agree being depicted by this kind of multiplicity. For our consciousness does not consist of multiple, juxtaposed elements that are exterior to one another. Our normal way of thinking tells us the following: imagine juxtaposition whenever you consider heterogeneity. But Bergson says that this proposition should be restricted to a homogeneous-spatial multiplicity, for only here is the idea of multiplicity enabled by space. The nature of qualitative multiplicity (that is, the multiplicity of inner states) is radically different, as is revealed by the snowball analogy of Bergson: "My mental state, as it advances on the road of time, is continually swelling with the duration which it accumulates: it goes on increasing – rolling upon itself, as a snowball on the snow" (*CE*: 2).

We emphasize the analogy of snowball because it suggests a nice perception of being multiple and one at the same time. We interpret the analogy in the following way: First of all, the snowball should be distinguished from a ball of thread. Because once a chaotic pile of thread is made into a ball, one assumes that there is an order, thus

stability and there happens no more motion, no more change. However this is just the kind of interpretation and imagination from which Bergson tries vigorously to keep his reader away. Instead, one should think of such a formation that the interaction within it does never end. That is why Bergson uses the analogy of snowball. Though it seems immobile and stable within, the snowball houses endless processes of melting and freezing, namely, deformation and creation of new groups of ice or icy existences. That is to say, as the ball is rolled on itself, a former snow particle alone may melt itself down to form a novel combination or a former combination may dissolve into new ones and those new ones may form new combinations with other new elements. So, a snowball expresses, indeed, a never ceasing change, a continuous transformation.

It is just the same with mental states. As one is added upon the others, that which changes is not a line consisting of beads, nor is it a new layer of thread piled onto the existing ball. Rather, the newly experienced mental state attracts certain particles and calls them up to the surface or if not successful in attracting a group of former elements it goes deep down where it is neglected (maybe for a while or for ever). In this respect, it can be likened to a snow particle which, being combined recently into a snowball, forms new combinations and not only itself changes but also transforms the ball as a whole. An emerging mental state does not only change itself, but through several attractions it is involved in, it transforms the whole. In Bergson's words "the present moment of a living body does not find its explanation in the moment immediately before, ... *all* the past of the organism must be added to that moment" (*CE*: 20).

What plays the most important role in our tendency to interpret the snowball as an unchanging formation or to translate the qualitative to the quantitative is our habit of spatialization. It is again in the *Essay* where Bergson introduces this critical concept which is indispensable for a thorough understanding of his philosophy. From Bergson's point of view, determining the habit of spatialization is vital for the salvation of some problems in the history of philosophy. What Bergson means with "spatialization" is that our intellect requires that we think in terms of homogeneous

space and why he calls this a “habit” is because it is inevitable for us, human beings. Other living beings have developed other ways of coping with the multiplicity of life (such as the sharpening of a particular sense) but spatialization is peculiar to man. It is no more different than an animal’s developing a certain instinct.

Bergson says further in the *Essay* that the concept of homogeneous space is an imprint that the external world leaves on our perception. So spatialization fits perfectly when we consider material bodies. Material bodies have clear-cut boundaries through which each and every one of them is separated from the others (when one appears the other ends).³² It is also in this form that we conceive conscious states. We assess the inner world as we do the material world and as a consequence arise false perceptions of facts such as duration. That is how the idea of homogeneous time emerges (“*compromise*”). We attain the idea of homogeneous time when we *think* real time in terms of space, the characterizations of which are fundamentally opposite to each other. In order to get rid of this and other similar mistaken “compromises,” we should tear off the marks that our perception of the external world forces on our perception of our selves. At this point, one understands that Bergson has endowed his *Essay* with (thus introduced his philosophy as) a mission not only to present the neglected and falsely interpreted inner world but also to replace the confused-for-us elements with the original pure-in-itself elements. That is the task of philosophy. And just like science (and also commonsense) which eliminates the non-fitting aspects of the reality to its moulds, philosophy too should get rid of the categories that are formed in compliance with the external world. Only then can the knowledge of inner life be attained in its immediacy. Only then does duration not slide through our fingers.

It is also observed in the *Essay* that Bergson places an insurmountable crevice between material world (matter) and inner world (consciousness) when he claims that there is only a relation of interpretation between the two. As the boundaries of

³² Later in *Creative Evolution* the opinion of Bergson changes. There Bergson is of the idea that a material body exists wherever its effect is felt: “the materiality of a body does not stop at the point at which we touch it: a body is present wherever its influence is felt... The more physics advances, the more it effaces the individuality of bodies... [B]odies and corpuscles tend to dissolve into *a universal interaction*” (CE: 188; italics belongs to us).

them are definitely determined, objects of the material world do not make up a continuous whole. They can be rendered continuous only by the combining act of a consciousness. That is to say that, only when they appear in consciousness can the states of the material world succeed each other. The states of the physical world are bound to remain distinct, except for the case that one is prolonged into the others in consciousness. Now, this claim leads, at the same time, to very critical implications regarding the reality of motion. If a state of the external world cannot be prolonged by itself to another, then movement in the external world is impossible. That is where Bergson's philosophy finally rests in the *Essay* and it sounds quite idealistic. Because it is only the consciousness that endures (that has a registration of the past states), movement cannot be real except for the representation of a consciousness. There is no history in the physical world, but only a present, that is, simultaneity. The idea of history is only due to the synthesis of a conscious observer. And this conscious observer is its history.

Now, our claim is that an epistemological implication of the absolute ontological separation of the inner and external worlds from one another is that the knowledge of these two spheres will also be absolutely opposed to one another. In other words, the ontological discrepancy which Bergson presents as fundamental leads to an epistemological disparity in the *Essay*. Hence in this first book Bergson holds the conviction that intellectual knowledge and intuitional knowledge are radically different, as are the domains from which they are derived. Thus a strict dividing line is drawn between the two ways of knowing. Intuitional knowledge is restricted to the knowledge of the self (for intuition can grasp the knowledge of that which is durational) while intellectual knowledge is restricted to the material world (intellect's profession is the domain which is wholly denuded of duration).

This is not all that Bergson has to say on the intellect. In *Matter and Memory (MM)*, where he tries to build the relation between the inner and the external worlds, which he denied of existence in the *Essay*, he handles, at the same time, how the human perception of the material world emerges, which will yield important inferences regarding the nature of the intellect. So, on certain pages of *Matter and Memory* the

reader witnesses Bergson's effort to give an explanation of the conscious representation. What Bergson does as the initial step in *Matter and Memory* is that he redefines matter as "the aggregate of images." Thus he is able to place the material object in the halfway between the idealist's *representation* and the realist's (materialist's) *thing*: an object is an "image" which "exists in itself" (*MM*: 10). When Bergson argues that the idealist cannot construct the world as a whole with perceptions, he points out to the self-existence of the images. Bergson does not conceive of a world that vanishes at the moment that it is no more perceived. On the contrary, self-existing images are potentially perceivable, as Pearson argues (Pearson, 2002: 143). It is this potentiality that the idealist does not take into account and that is the explanation of the fact that we cannot cover the whole of the material reality with our perceptions.

Our perception presents us only a limited set of "the aggregate of images" so as to reflect our possible action on them. Perception, which we assume as a mental process through which our unextended sensations are endowed with extensional (and also durational) aspects via the formal structures of the mind, is indeed a limited recognition of what we call the "external world" (aggregate of images). From Bergson's point of view this is where classical epistemology has been mistaken (and has influenced our commonsensical reception of the case) all along. Namely perception does not involve addition in any sense of the word. On the contrary it is a subtraction, subtraction of what does not interest us from the aggregate. There is something that is prior to our conception of space and that is what Bergson calls "the *extensive*." So our perception is by itself extended and in this sense it is not placed inside us, but outside of us, "in things." The homogeneous space of the classical epistemology refers, in fact, to an intricate arrangement of our intellect that has been laid beneath the "material continuity" so that we could break this continuity into pieces in any form and as much as we like. Hence Bergson's inference that between matter and our perception of matter there is not a difference of kind.

By re-defining perception as a process of "dis-cernment," Bergson detaches "the point of view of action" and "the point of view of knowledge" from one another. In

other words, perception does not serve to supply us a knowledge of “the external world” but is, in fact, a diminution of the “the external world” in compliance with the interests of our body. Our perception reflects the plan of our possible action on matter. Thus with *Matter and Memory*, the material world gains a fundamental status according to which physical objects are forms that are abstracted from it. That is why we conclude that the world of matter becomes closer to the world of consciousness of the *Essay* in the sense that now both are regarded as indivisible continua, from which our intellect cuts out individual objects and individual states, respectively. As the continuity of duration is prior to the conscious states, so is “material continuity” to the physical objects. Thus builds Bergson his “theory of matter” (*MM*: 200) which he claims, and we have seen, helped him transcend the habitual images that our intellect perceives as absolute and arrive at the reality beneath.

This is the perspective from which Bergson writes *Creative Evolution* (*CE*). Though it differs in this ontological background, *Creative Evolution* can also be read as a continuation of the *Essay*, too, in the sense that Bergson goes on rigorously to defend the status that he claimed for the qualitative reality in his first book. It can even be said that *Creative Evolution* is a justificatory endeavor in favor of the status claimed for “real duration” (*durée réelle*). However Bergson feels the difficulty of keeping at a balance the pressures that come from the separated realms of the *Essay*. He has been insisting in order for the neglected part of our experience (that is the qualitative aspect of our experience) to be recognized, but this cannot mean that the material realm be subordinated to that. So Bergson endows *Creative Evolution* with a universal standpoint which depends on a reciprocal interaction between the estranged realms of the *Essay*. These realms are detached from the individual level and extended to the universal domain. Thus Bergson mentions not about the world of consciousness (inner) opposed to the world of matter, but life and matter as “inseparable.” Moreover the interaction between life and matter consists of life’s “impos[ing] its rhythm on [matter]” (*CE*: 11).

We have said that our perception of matter is composed of images of individual bodies and these bodies are relative to our needs. That is, our perception does not

represent things themselves, but reflects the possibility how we can act on matter. However these individuated bodies can be “reintegrated” to “the Whole” from where they have been cut out (isolation), claims Bergson. In order to attain this, it is enough that the motivation beneath isolation be suppressed. That is, one should hinder his/her mind from surrendering to the intellectual faculties. Because, says Bergson, it is through the same progress that the mind gets more and more intellectualized and matter is divided into separate material objects (*endosmosis*). The one movement is not prior to the other. Only when the physical objects are not viewed by us with regard to our possible plans on them do those objects juxtaposed in homogeneous space lose their precise boundaries and melt down into each another. This is what Bergson means by reintegration and we hold the conviction that it has much to do with the philosophical effort. “Philosophy can only be an effort to dissolve again into the Whole” (CE: 191). Later Bergson will conclude that intuition, which is the philosophical way of knowing things, supplies us the knowledge of “the Whole.” The knowledge of “the Whole” covering not only the knowledge of the living but that of matter and life together.

In *Creative Evolution* Bergson points to a common feature of matter and mind, by characterizing each as a flux of becoming. In other words, contrary to his opinion in the *Essay*, in *Creative Evolution* it is not only the mind but also matter that endures. Hence the conclusion that they are not absolutely opposing movements and the relation between the two is not of assimilation. We have always underlined the point that our intellect is unfair to the undivided flux of life, unfair to true duration. Now, we also emphasize with Bergson that it is claimed that true duration encompasses not only life but also matter. Consequently matter is rendered to be an integral part of “the Whole.” However it is only because “the Whole” endures that the material bodies can be thought as enduring. Namely only because they are integrally bound to “the Whole” they do endure.

Briefly, by extending duration to encompass matter too, not only the cleft between matter and life is eliminated but also are they bound “inseparably” (also independently) together. At the end of comparison of this ultimate synthesis with the

corresponding attitude that dominated the *Essay* we conclude that Bergson asserted in the *Essay* that a consciousness was necessary in order for the physical domain (as is observed in the case of motion) to attain its continuity, while with *Matter and Memory* and *Creative Evolution* the material world is granted with continuity, thus it gains an independent status. This is the construction that enables Bergson to come to a point where he can deal with “the Whole.” We should nevertheless add that although an ontological account for this unity (“the Whole”) is provided by Bergson, its status can still be subject to argument. The reason for this is that because all agents are regarded by Bergson as fictitious elements that we abstract out of the reality, “the Whole” is an act without any agent acting (“universal interaction”). In other words, it is disputable that even thinking in terms of a subject and a predicate is a tendency of man.

We have said that the discrepancy between inner and external worlds in the *Essay* led Bergson to make a differentiation also in the way that we attain the knowledge of them. Thus were the intellect and intuition absolutely opposed to each other. However we advocate that once the cleft in the ontological domain is transcended, the epistemological attitude adopted by Bergson also shifts. In order to make a better epistemological investigation we initially handle one of the fundamental concepts of *Creative Evolution*, namely evolution of the instinct, intellect and intuition. We should also note that Bergson regards it quite crucial to make that evolutionary inquiry regarding the epistemological faculties, since he thinks that without a “theory of life that is not accompanied by a criticism of knowledge” (*CE*: xiii) we cannot come to see how and why we “perceive” and “know” depending on such and such structures and how we can transcend these structures. In a word, it is indispensable for an epistemological investigation that the origins of our faculties of knowledge be known to us.

Departing from this point of view, Bergson says that our “intellectual tendencies” do not serve to provide us with an elucidation of life. On the contrary, they are directed towards action. In fact, we are not unfamiliar with this claim. Bergson has proposed it already in *Matter and Memory* regarding the conscious perception. This time it is

put forward encompassing the intellect, since Bergson regards intellect as the extension of perception (*CE*: 162). In this sense, the evolution of intellect should not be considered any different from that of instinct in the animal. Both are ways of survival that are developed in the living being in order for it to cope with the endless multiplicity of life.

However, though the evolutionary background is the same for these faculties, the nature of them differs radically. Instinct places itself directly in a definite object and implies the knowledge of that which is peculiar to that object. Intellect, on the other hand, does not enter into a particular object, but forms relations between an object and another one (the knowledge it supplies is “formal knowledge”). That is, instinct lacks the characteristic of the intellect owing to which the intelligent being is capable of extending the knowledge it attains beyond the limits of its object, even stripping this knowledge from all material associations and end up with a purely formal product. But instinct that is absolutely absorbed in its definite object is bound to stay within it, has no means to move beyond (the knowledge it supplies is “material knowledge”). However though it is characterized by being “empty” by Bergson the “formal knowledge” of the intellect has an advantage over instinctual knowledge. It provides the intelligent being to transcend its nature. For intellect can detach itself from being limited to the “practically useful” and broaden its range of interest to anything, “speculate” in the direction of anywhere. Thus is endowed the intelligent being with the capability of going beyond its nature. But however much intellect widens its scope of interest it can never attain the knowledge of the living. Because the characteristic of the intellect’s “formal knowledge” is that in it is eliminated everything that is subject to change, everything that is “fluid.” It is exactly owing to that characteristic that intellectual knowledge obtains its capability of unlimited travel ignoring the natures of the objects it deals with.

Now this is the point where Bergson criticizes intellectual knowledge. Better to say, what Bergson criticizes is the unlimited use of the intellect, or which may be termed as “pure intellectualism.” Bergson’s departure point is the fact that when trying to attain “the very heart of thing” we surrender and finally fall victim to the habits of

our understanding. This is the prevailing attitude especially in the doctrines of science: to neglect everything that is a qualitative change and to formulate them in terms of already existing terms. However it should be seen that intellect is not the right tool to utilize in order to attain a knowledge of life. For life means endless creation, constant change that never stops. In other words, it corresponds to what intellect cannot grasp.

Bergson's position with regard to the classical epistemology can be determined at this point: "true empiricism." What is emphasized in this genuine attitude by Bergson is that it should be an effort which is obligated to engage in a *new* endeavor for each and every object it deals with ("Introduction to Metaphysics," *CM*: 175). This is also how Bergson's challenge against traditional epistemology can be formulated. To replace the existing, self-same elements that are utilized in order to explain the new objects of study with authentic terms so as to reflect the authentic nature of them. In order to do this surely we should do away with the intellectual habits. However to what extent we should (and can) detach ourselves from the intellect is an important question in the Bergsonian philosophy. The answer to this question is what enables us to clarify Bergson's attitude towards intellectualism.

We have mentioned about the fact that intellect has the capability to transcend itself. But the point that in doing this intellect does not totally abandon its tools should not be missed. At the point where intellect is transcended emerges intuition. And as we have just mentioned, intuition does not require that the "the mechanism of the intellect" (*CE*: 177) be entirely wiped out of the process of attaining knowledge of an object. It only necessitates a reversal of our ordinary way of thinking, "a dilation of mind" ("Introduction to Metaphysics," *CM*: 183). That intuition is not a super-human capability but is a faculty of the mind is one of the most crucial statements of Bergson which allows his reader to consider that intellect and intuition do not imply completely discontinuous processes. We believe that Bergson was preparing a way for the reconciliation between intellect and intuition when he declared that intellect and instinct are never found in their pure states in any being and that without intellect intuition would have never developed. As stated above, intellect's tendency to widen

its range of interest beyond that which is useful, that is to say, its capability to speculate, enables the motive to attain a knowledge of life to emerge. This forms the evolutionary ground for building an association between intellect and intuition.

In getting hold of the knowledge of life intuition plays a role that functions in the opposite way that the intellect functions. While intellect's task is to analyze a whole, that is, to break down it into particles, intuition is "a simple act" ("Introduction to Metaphysics," *CM*: 162). The knowledge that intuition supplies is, thus, a unitary one and in this sense more comprehensive than intellectual knowledge. Intuitional process does not proceed like the intellect which tries to attain a whole from the abstract elements that it isolated from it. On the contrary, it captures the knowledge of its object at a simple move. In fact, it is on this concrete attainment, which the intuition provides, that intellect can exert its mechanisms of dissection. We are convinced that this is what Bergson tries to express when he says that "from intuition one can pass on to analysis, but not from analysis to intuition" ("Introduction to Metaphysics," *CM*: 180). As is revealed in Bergson's article *The Philosophical Intuition*, intuition is a basic attainment of the object depending on which our understanding can derive further analysis. Otherwise the philosopher (of the article) could not have negated, as if by instinct, the ideas that he has reached through "rectilinear logic."

Our conviction regarding the Bergsonian epistemology is that intuitional and intellectual procedures are complementary to one another in the sense that intuition provides the intellect with a, so to say, raw material to process. However what the intellect attains at the end, of course, yields into our "*development*" of thought, but does not in itself give us the "absolute" knowledge of the reality. On the other hand, intellectual knowledge is through what our "simple intuition" is expressed and in this sense indispensable for it.

As we have mentioned in the "Introduction" to our study Bergson's philosophy can be regarded as a philosophy of acknowledgements in the sense that his efforts are directed towards pointing out to the neglected side of our experience and to revitalize

them both in the ontological and the epistemological domains. That is why Bergson constantly emphasizes the heterogeneous multiplicity of our inner experience in contrast to the homogenized multiplicities. That is why he presents intuition as a new method of grasping reality in contrast to our intellect. After all his devoted efforts, Bergson leaves us with the question, better to say, with the task of developing an expansion of his metaphysical and more importantly epistemological breakthroughs. We regard Bergsonian intuition as a dawn from where new philosophies inspired by it are to rise.

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