

BERGSON'S CONCEPTION OF TIME: ITS EFFECTS ON A POSSIBLE
PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

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ABSTRACT**BERGSON'S CONCEPTION OF TIME: ITS EFFECTS ON A POSSIBLE
PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE****Kurtoğlu, Taşdelen, Demet****PhD., Department of Philosophy****Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. David Grünberg****July 2003, 215 pages**

The aim of this study is to show how a possible philosophy of life can arise from Bergson's conception of time. In realizing this aim, I appeal to Hadot's description of the paradox of the human condition. I claim that in order to understand how a Bergsonian philosophy of life through Bergson's conception of time would arise we need to understand the paradox of the human condition. The reason for this is that there are a lot of dualities in Bergson's philosophy all of which, I claim, are based on this fundamental duality concerning the human condition. I believe that when this paradox and its possible resolution are restated in Bergsonian notions, a Bergsonian philosophy of life that consists of a life sub specie durationis, that is a life under the aspect of duration, would arise.

Hadot considered the paradox within the context of phenomenology alone. This made me proceed by searching for other approaches to the paradox

within Bergson's philosophy. I realized that the attempts in finding out possible solutions to this problem cannot be found in the context of phenomenology alone and that the vitalist and the existentialist aspects have to be considered in order to remain faithful to Bergson's philosophy as well as in order to construct a Bergsonian philosophy of life. The phenomenological aspect of the paradox arises around Bergson's notion of displacement of attention and when the notion of *durée réelle* is considered with consciousness in the light of the notion of intensity. The vitalist aspect enters into our discussion when we analyze Bergson's notion of *élan vital* around the consideration of true evolution. I believe that the existentialist aspect of the paradox of the human condition comes from Bergson's notion of freedom around the discussion of the superficial and the fundamental self. It emerges if the individual asks himself how to deal with this paradox that in turn defines his struggle to transform the tension the paradox involves and that tells him to bring his own attitude towards it.

Keywords: Paradox of the Human Condition, habits of mind, *durée réelle*, *élan vital*, superficial self, fundamental self, life under the aspect of matter, *life sub specie durationis*, paradox of life

BERGSON'UN ZAMAN ANLAYIŐI: OLANAKLI BİR YAŐAM FELSEFESİ ÜZERİNE ETKİLERİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı Bergson'un zaman anlayışından nasıl bir olanaklı yaşam felsefesinin çıkabileceğini göstermektir. Bu amacı gerçekleştirmek için, Hadot'nun insan durumu paradoksu betimlemesine başvuruyorum. Bergson'un zaman anlayışından nasıl Bergsoncu bir yaşam felsefesi çıkacağını anlayabilmek için insan durumu paradoksunu anlamamız gerektiğini iddia ediyorum. Bunun sebebi, Bergson'un felsefesinde bir çok ikilik bulunması ve iddiama göre bu ikiliklerin hepsinin insan durumunu ilgilendiren temel ikilik üzerinde temellenmiş olmalarıdır. İnanıyorum ki bu paradoks ve bunun olanaklı bir çözümü Bergsoncu kavramlarla yeniden ifade edilirse, sub specie durationis bir yaşamı, yani sürenin görünüşü altında bir yaşamı, oluşturan Bergsoncu bir yaşam felsefesi ortaya çıkacaktır.

Hadot, paradoksu yalnızca fenomenoloji bağlamı içerisinde ele almıştır. Bu beni Bergson felsefesi içerisinde paradoksa farklı yaklaşımlar bulmaya yöneltmiştir. Farkettim ki bu sorunsala olanaklı çözümler bulma girişimleri yalnızca fenomenoloji bağlamında bulunamaz ve gerek Bergson'un felsefesine sadık kalabilmek için, gerek Bergsoncu bir yaşam

felsefesi kurabilmek için, paradoksun dirimsel ve varoluşçu yönleri ele alınmak durumundadır. Paradoksun fenomenolojik yönü, Bergson'un dikkatin yer değiştirmesi kavramıyla birlikte ve *durée réelle* kavramının, yoğunluk kavramı ışığında bilinçle birlikte ele alınmasıyla ortaya çıkmaktadır. Dirimsel yön, Bergson'un gerçek evrim anlayışını *élan vital* kavramı temelinde incelediğimiz zaman tartışmamıza dahil olmaktadır. İnanıyorum ki insan durumu paradoksunun varoluşçu yönü Bergson'un özgürlük kavramının yüzeysel ben ve esas ben tartışmasından gelir. Birey kendisine bu paradoksla nasıl başetmesi gerektiğini sorduğunda ortaya çıkar ve bu onun paradoksun içerdiği gerilimi dönüştürme mücadelesini belirleyerek paradoks karşısında kendi tavrını ortaya koymasını söyler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İnsan Durumu Paradoksu, Zihnin Alışkanlıkları, *Durée Réelle*, *Élan Vital*, Yüzeysel Ben, Temel Ben, Madde Görünüşü Altında Yaşam, *Sub Specie Durationis* Yaşam, Yaşam Paradoksu

In Memory of Suvar Köseraif

Chapter One

Chapter Two

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT		iii
ÖZ		v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS		ix
 CHAPTER		
1. INTRODUCTION		1
2. BERGSON AND THE PARADOX OF THE HUMAN CONDITION		23
3. BERGSON'S PHILOSOPHY OF TIME		43
3.1 The Immediate Data of Consciousness.....		43
3.2 Consciousness as Intellect and Intuition.....		48
3.2.1 The Habits of Mind.....		50
3.2.2 Theory of Image.....		54
3.2.3 The Point of View of Action Versus The Point of View of Knowledge.....		63
3.3 Consciousness as Memory.....		69
3.4 Consciousness as Duration.....		83
3.4.1 The Intensity of The States of Consciousness and The Extensity of Space.....		86
3.4.2 Homogeneous Time and Concrete Duration.....		99
3.5 The Theory of True Evolution.....		107
3.6 The Ontological Status of Duration.....		116
3.7 The Superficial and		

	The Fundamental Self.....	125
3.8	Causality and Concrete Duration.....	136
4.	TO LIVE SUB SPECIE DURATIONIS A BERGSONIAN PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE.....	149
4.1	To Live in Society.....	152
4.2	The Call of The Great Mystics, The Effort of The Individuals and The Role of The Philosophers.....	155
4.3	The Experience of the Intuition of Time.....	164
4.4	The Paradox of the Human Condition Reflecting a Philosophy of Life.....	175
5.	CONCLUSION.....	184
	REFERENCES.....	197
	APPENDIX A. TURKISH SUMMARY.....	200
	VITA.....	215

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to show how a possible philosophy of life¹ can arise from Bergson's notion of time. In realizing this aim, I appeal to Hadot's description of the paradox of the human condition. I claim that in order to understand how a Bergsonian philosophy of life through Bergson's notion of time would arise we need to understand the paradox of the human condition. The reason for this is that there are a lot of dualities in Bergson's philosophy all of which, I claim, are based on this fundamental duality concerning the human condition. In other words, in order to understand why there are dual notions in Bergson's philosophy, we need to grasp the paradox of the human condition. I believe that when this paradox and its possible resolution are restated in Bergsonian notions, a Bergsonian philosophy of life that consists of a life *sub specie durationis*, that is a life under the aspect of duration, would arise.

The term "human condition" is not in fact a new term. It is found in Ancient Greek philosophical texts, in Christianity, in contemporary philosophy, in Nietzsche, and especially in Sartre and Camus. However, in each case it is used in a different sense. With Antigone, for instance, it expressed a revolt against the law, in Christianity it acquired a religious sense that man was born with his sins, with Nietzsche it expressed a revolt against God that arose from

¹ As the title of this dissertation indicates, this is an attempt to derive a *possible* philosophy of life. Therefore, my attempt is not to find a place for Bergson's philosophy of life along with other philosophies that could be equally placed within the philosophy of life.

the notion of eternal recurrence, with Sartre and Camus the term expressed that which characterized all human beings, that is, human nature and the revolt against it gave way to the notion of absurdity as well as to a kind of nihilistic philosophy. Although used in different senses, the term always involved the sense of a deadlock of human beings and a metaphysical revolt against it. So far it seems that the problem of the human condition has only an existential sense. In fact, it would not be wrong to claim that this problem is mainly an existential problem. However, it also has a phenomenological as well as a vitalist aspect. I believe that with Bergson's philosophy we are able to see the problem of the human condition in the light of these other aspects as well.

Pierre Hadot introduced this problem of the human condition as a paradox. Therefore, in the second chapter, I aim at putting forward how Hadot presents this paradox and try to determine how this paradox arises in Bergson's philosophy. Hadot expresses this paradox by saying that "we must separate ourselves from the world qua world in order to live our daily life, but we must separate ourselves from the "everyday" world in order to rediscover the world qua world" (1995: 258). Similarly, the paradox in Bergson's philosophy arises because of the tension existing between our habits of mind that we need in order to live our everyday lives and the dismissal of these habits in order to philosophize and so grasp reality as it is. We will see that in order to dismiss the habits of mind, a "displacement of attention" is needed and that the notion of concrete duration has to be considered with consciousness in the light of the notion of intensity. I claim that these constitute the phenomenological aspect of the paradox of the human condition. The vitalist aspect of the paradox comes

from Bergson's notion of life as a vital process to which human existence is integrated. Lastly, the existentialist aspect of the paradox emerges if the individual asks himself how to deal with this paradox that in turn would define his struggle to transform the tension the paradox involves and that tells him to bring his own attitude towards it. I will mainly deal with this latter aspect in the last chapter of this study. In fact, in all these three aspects, there is a related philosophy of life that are phenomenological, vitalist and existentialist. Moreover, I believe that the paradox of the human condition already presents us a philosophy of life because it manifests two levels of life which are everyday life and a life that can be carried on by turning the attention to the world as it is; a life lived through the habits of mind and a life lived through the effort of getting rid of these habits.

I should say that the phenomenological, vitalist and existentialist aspects of the paradox of the human condition constitute at the same time the different possible readings of Bergson's philosophy. However, I do agree with Mullarkey that neither of these possible readings can be a proper reading by itself because Bergson never stuck to one philosophy at all. However, it is my claim that, considered within the context of the paradox of the human condition, these different aspects or readings acquire a sense together, which is different from each considered separately. In other words, the paradox of the human condition gives us a way that brings these different aspects together and therefore, enable us to remain true to Bergson's use of different philosophies. In fact, Hadot, in his book *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, read Bergson within the context of phenomenology alone. He compares Bergson's position with that of

Husserl and especially Merleau-Ponty. He says that both in Husserl's and Ponty's philosophies there is an opposition between "the world of science" and "the world of everyday perception" and that these two philosophers "want us to return to the world of lived perception" in order for us to "become *aware* of it." Therefore, according to their view, philosophy becomes a process in which we try "to relearn to see the world." Accordingly, Hadot claims that we find a similar distinction in Bergson's philosophy concerning the habitual and philosophical perception and that Bergson's "displacement of attention" in this sense is similar to Ponty's "phenomenological reduction." However, Hadot's putting forward the paradox of the human condition only in the context of phenomenology make me proceed by searching for other approaches to the paradox within Bergson's philosophy. I believe that the attempts in finding out possible solutions to this problem cannot be found in the context of phenomenology alone. Now let me continue to resume this study by sections.

In section 3.1, I aim at finding out the reason why we should accept unreservedly as true and real the ultimate data supplied by consciousness. It is Bergson's claim that all philosophy is obliged to start from the immediate data of consciousness due to the fact that only these data are admissible in the beginning. By immediate data Bergson means the direct feeling of anything given to consciousness. However, since immediate data implies the direct feeling, they can differ according to individuals and I claim that Bergson should accept as true and real every individual's immediate data. Thus, we see that there is a relation between the immediate data of consciousness and Bergson's intention to make philosophy universal. A philosophy that everybody can agree

upon has to start from these data but proceed by the effort of the philosophers to complete, correct and improve one another. Such an effort is needed in order for reality to be grasped as it is. By reality Bergson understands the oscillation of the opposites which also implies that there are intermediate zones in reality. The intellect, according to Bergson, speculates from the standpoint of one of the two opposites which then puts them as thesis and antithesis. Intuition, on the other hand, enables one both to understand why the opposing views are considered as opposing and to awaken to the fact that there are intermediate zones. As such, reality is no longer distorted.

I begin the section 3.2 by giving a brief explanation of what Bergson means by consciousness. Consciousness corresponds to the living being's power of choice and it is synonymous with invention and freedom. Consciousness awakens when there is the least free action and becomes dormant when there is no free action. Only man is able to break the chain of automatism that implies routine or habitual acts. However, man is not free all the time. His consciousness becomes dormant because of getting trapped in routines found in daily life. In this respect, it can be said that Bergson gives us the means of waking up consciousness of its inactivity, the means of becoming free. Consciousness consists of both the intellect and intuition. Intuition goes in the direction of life whereas intellect goes in the direction of matter. If these two forms of conscious activity had attained their full development, a complete and perfect humanity would have been realized. However, the evolution of man is such that his consciousness is formed on the intellect and not on intuition. This caused intuition to be sacrificed to the intellect.

I reserve the explanation concerning the function of the intellect for the section 3.2.1. According to Bergson, human intellect represents the powers of conceptual thought and it is constituted of perception, conception and understanding. The functions of all these three show that the intellect attaches itself to what is stable and regular. Man's consciousness is formed on the intellect because nature has destined man to master and utilize matter that implies tending toward fabrication. In this sense the intellect evolves with ease only in space. Intellect is described by Bergson as the attention mind gives to matter whereas intuition is described as the attention mind gives to itself. The attention mind gives to matter causes man to think in order to act, in other words, it is the function of the intellect to aim at practical utility. The intellect is turned towards the act to be performed and the reaction to follow. This constitutes at the same time man's habitual acts. Man's habitual way of thinking and acting proceeds through resemblance and contiguity.² When we think, we put side by side the ideas that resemble one another concerning certain situations and act as our thought requires. This is the meaning of mind's attention turning towards matter.

Since there is a close relation between the intellect and matter, I make a section on what Bergson understands by matter. Thus, 3.2.2 puts forward

² Although when Bergson talks about resemblance and contiguity, he does not mention Hume's name, we can nevertheless say that these two notions were already inherent in Hume's philosophy. In *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume talks about the "principle of human nature" that refers to the association of ideas that is engendered by "custom or habit." We are accustomed to expect one idea from the appearance of another when, for instance, we associate heat and flame. In this sense, it can be said that there is a similarity between Bergson's description of man's habitual way of thinking and Hume's description of the principle of human nature.

Bergson's conception of matter which centers around the disputes of idealism and realism. Bergson criticizes idealism in reducing matter to the perception we have of it and realism in making matter a thing which able to produce in us perceptions and comes up with his own notion of matter which is an aggregate of images placed between the thing and the representation. Matter is a self-existing image. By defining matter as such, Bergson claims to have ended the distinction philosophers made between the appearance and the existence of an object and ipso facto the dispute concerning the reality or ideality of the external world. Bergson says that idealism cannot pass from perception to reality and realism fails to pass from reality to immediate consciousness which we have of it. As a result, the point of contact between matter and mind is lost. This is due to the failure of distinguishing between the point of view of action and the point of view of knowledge. Both idealism and realism including the Kantian realism³ consider the matter-mind issue from the standpoint of "pure knowledge" instead of action. In Kantian realism, we find no "common measure" between the "thing-in-itself", the real, and the sensuous manifold from which we construct our knowledge. Bergson's theory of matter implies many kind of images. However, our body which is among them is one image that we know both from without and from within. Our body is a center of action and therefore can in no way be considered as a center that engenders the external world. This dispute about the ideality or reality of the external world arises due to the consideration of mind and matter from the standpoint of knowledge. Bergson's consideration of mind and matter is built upon the notion

³ By describing Kantian philosophy as a kind of realism instead of transcendental idealism, Bergson wants to emphasize the reality of the thing-in-itself in Kant's philosophy in order to point out to the gap between the phenomenal and the noumenal world. By so doing, Bergson

of body which is a center of action. By this Bergson explains that there is an interaction between external images influencing our body through transmitting movement to it and our body influencing external images by giving back movement to them. That is the reason why our intellect, and our perception in particular, is turned towards action. And since it is turned towards action, it would be a mistake to consider it from the standpoint of pure knowledge.

Section 3.2.3 discusses the true character of perception. All images are bound up with all other images. Thus, when we perceive a material object, we do not only have its representation by itself, but rather, we have it together with what precedes and follows that representation. It seems to us that each image is individual because we take perception to be a kind of photographic view of things, taken from a fixed point by that special apparatus which is called an organ of perception. In this lies the difference between considering the subject of matter and mind from the standpoint of pure knowledge and from the standpoint of action. When we take up the first position, perception becomes a kind of photographic view and it is this conception of perception that we then put at the center of getting pure knowledge. In the second one, on the other hand, we no longer take perception to be a photographic view and as something to give us pure knowledge. Instead, we look at things from the point of view of action. Perception then becomes that which makes our body act. So the aim is no longer to get at pure knowledge. We are trying to grasp everything in the way we live. That is the reason why this is a life philosophy. When by perception we mean getting at pure knowledge, we attribute to it a purely

speculative end and therefore we isolate it from action. We take perception to be that which acts no longer. However, the true character of perception is activity. Considered as such, reality of things then becomes that which is touched, penetrated and lived. According to this true character of perception, our successive perceptions are not the real moments of things but rather are the moments of our consciousness.

In section 3.3, I attempt to show Bergson's conception of consciousness understood as memory. In order to explain the survival of images, Bergson introduces three processes which are pure memory, memory-image and perception. Perception is considered this time in its relation with memory. Pure memory refers to the whole of our past without any attachment to the present that is possible only in theory. Memory-image refers to the memory actualized in an image. Our past remains in the state of pure memory until it becomes an image in the present. Memory actualized in an image consists of the prolongation of the past into the present. None of these three processes occurs apart from the others. Pure memory, for example, although independent in theory, shows itself only in images; memory-image always partakes of the pure memory and perception is always saturated with memory-images that complete it. Memory generally is defined by Bergson as the intersection of mind and matter. Mind is pure memory and matter is pure perception. Between memory and perception there is a difference in kind because perception is turned towards action whereas memory is a spiritual manifestation. Pure perception, which is matter, is the domain of the law of necessity whereas memory, which refers to

between mind and matter from the standpoint of action.

spirit, is the domain of freedom. Memory is synonymous with consciousness with respect to duration. That is the reason why our successive perceptions are the moments of our consciousness and not the moments of things.

Hence in section 3.4, I aim at demonstrating Bergson's notion of consciousness understood as duration. Duration as consciousness is considered together with the states of consciousness. More precisely, the idea of duration is considered as the multiplicity of conscious states. According to Bergson, duration (*durée*) is inner experience and inner life that is grasped in intuition. It expresses the real time we experience in our own conscious life. Bergson's assumption is that if time is inner experience then it must be related with the life of the consciousness. His claim is that our intellect understands time by means of space, and since space is measurable, time understood by means of space becomes measurable as well. By space, Bergson understands all that can be reduced to measurement. To grasp time by means of space is the habit of our intellect and the real sense of time implies the dismissal of this habit.

In section 3.4.1, I consider this habit of the intellect with the treatment of the psychic states. I try to clarify Bergson's claim that psychic phenomena like sensations, feelings and passions are thought to possess a measurable magnitude which cause psychological life to be in parallel with matter. In order to explain this claim, I make use of Bergson's notion of the container and the contained. Psychic states do not contain one another, they are of a comparable intensity which is characteristic of qualitative change. The intensity of the psychic states is not measurable and therefore refer to mind's spiritual realm.

Our habit of understanding psychic states through magnitude comes from the intellect which delights in clear cut distinctions. However, all our psychic states co-exist. They are not to be separated from one another but permeate one another. When our consciousness recalls its former states, it rather makes them permeate with its actual states. All conscious states, according to Bergson, are in a succession without a distinction which implies that every conscious state represents the whole conscious life.

In section 3.4.2, I try to show the difference between the notion of time based on measurement, which is homogeneous time, and the notion of time as experienced, lived, which is concrete duration or *durée réelle*. According to Bergson, we have to learn to distinguish between duration as quality and time that has become quantity by being set out in space. The question that made Bergson delve into the domain of the inner life is the question “how would it appear to a consciousness which desired only to see duration without measuring it?” This search for the inner life made Bergson find out that consciousness could grasp duration without stopping it only by means of consciousness turning towards itself. This duration can be grasped in intuition. Homogeneous time, according to Bergson, is the symbolical image of real duration which our intellect is accustomed to think of. However, it implies an illegitimate translation of the unextended into the extended and of quality into quantity. The difference between homogeneous time and concrete duration is explained by Bergson by means of two kinds of multiplicity that are “qualitative multiplicity” or “qualitative heterogeneity” and “quantitative multiplicity” or “discrete multiplicity.” What is homogeneous is space alone and every discrete

multiplicity is got by a process of unfolding in space. I conclude this section by saying that if there were no consciousness, the external world would be nothing but pure homogeneity or pure space. On the other hand, if there were no external world, there would only be pure heterogeneity, pure duration, states of consciousness without any admixture of extensity. This is not a logical impossibility. In fact, real space and real duration exist. However, the fact that we are beings with consciousness, life forces us to meet in the intersection of real space and real duration which is “simultaneity,” that is, the symbolical representation of duration.

In section 3.5, I aim at explaining Bergson’s notion of true evolution which is closely connected with the notion of duration because the idea that something evolves already gives us the notion of duration. The evolution of the organisms and the evolution of consciousness resemble each other because life is creative evolution itself which is true continuity, real mobility and reciprocal penetration. The history of life, in this sense, is nothing other than the creative evolution itself. Science in general seeks for that which repeats itself whereas it should be the function of philosophy to show the continuity of life which implies irreducibility and irreversibility. There are no ready-made forms in life. On the contrary, life creates its forms continuously in accordance with changing circumstances. Life is a tendency that consists of creating divergent directions. It preserves all the different tendencies and creates with them diverging series of species that will evolve separately. This is the characteristic of the general movement of life that Bergson calls “*élan vital*”, that is “vital impetus.” The direction of this vital impetus towards the intellect is only the one among the

different lines of evolution and therefore gives us a partial view of life. Since our psychical life is the existence of which we are most assured and which we know best, it is this internal life that will guide us in our search for life in general. Evolution, according to Bergson, is the very essence of life that takes place in real duration. In this sense, to endure is not only peculiar to consciousness but also to life and to universe. In other words, duration is immanent to the whole of the universe.

In section 3.6, I claim that Bergson's conception of duration is ontological. And I also attempt to show certain pragmatic and nominalist traits of Bergson's philosophy. Now, Bergson's notion of duration is ontological because duration is the foundation of our being that enables us to see all things *sub specie durationis*, that is, under the aspect of duration, as against *sub specie aeternitatis* which implies that the universe implies eternity. Bergson's notions of quality and quantity, intensity and extensity, succession and simultaneity all enable us to understand the nature of time and therefore are all ontological notions. Indeed time has a purpose which is to act like a substance. It is the very stuff of reality. However, since Bergson's philosophy allows only for processes or events, his notion of substance is different from the Aristotelian, the Lockean as well as Cartesian one. In this section I also reconsider the ontological notions of quality and quantity in having an equal status in Bergson's philosophy with respect to the principle of qualitative multiplicity. This is the principle of true evolution in which both materiality and spirituality reside. Because reality is duplicitous, the principle of qualitative multiplicity enables us to see this double side as complementing one another. To accept reality to be duplicitous implies

at the same time to accept the functions both of the intellect and intuition as necessary for life. Our everyday lives, for example, require certain orders and repetitions without which we could not but live in isolation from society. Since the individual is obliged to adapt himself to his environment⁴—otherwise he cannot live in society—I ask the question of how it would then be possible to act freely?

Thus, in section 3.7, I attempt to find out the answer to this question. It is possible to act freely when our acts spring from our whole personality which means that when we feel the uniqueness of our self and act with this feeling in us, our acts become free. According to Bergson, this is what characterizes our fundamental self. The superficial self and the fundamental self are the two aspects of conscious life, the first arising from the notion of homogeneous time whereas the latter arising from the notion of concrete duration. The superficial self has a static and conformist character that is peculiar to practical life, to language and to communication; it belongs more to society than to us. From these two selves, two ways of grasping reality arise: reality grasped with the superficial self gives us a picture of the world as static, noncontinuous and fragmentary whereas the one grasped with the fundamental self gives us a world in which we feel we are the agents, in which we feel we are really living. Bergson rejects psychological determinism which can briefly be explained as

⁴ It must be noted that the individual's adaptation to his environment, to society, is to be understood in relation to the spatialized thinking rather than to ethical norms. As we will see in our study, the individual's minimum adaptation to his environment does not imply doing violence in society or to revolt against the norms of his society he lives in. Adaptation to environment means to grasp reality in accordance with the natural bent of our intellect. In other words, it means to grasp reality only by means of symbols, the language and the clock based conception of time we use in our everyday life. Therefore, when an individual thinks and lives spatially, he fully manifests his sociability.

the view that every conscious state is followed by another in a succession of causes and effects. Reality grasped with the superficial self gives us a picture of the world in which the law of causality operates while the reality grasped with the fundamental self gives us a world in which the causal relation between states are confused because there are no repetitions of causes and so of effects. A world in which the law of causality operates can have but homogeneous conception of duration since it is only in such a view of time that one can talk about repetitions. We generally live with our superficial self. However, one can always get back into pure duration and therefore these two levels of life become a choice for the individual. Each of our conscious states can be conceived only within the whole they are continuously and confusingly being added into. This Bergson explains by using the term dynamic series and claims that the act will be so much freer the more the dynamic series which it is connected tends to be the fundamental self. From this claim we understand that freedom admits of degrees. I end this section by presenting Bergson's criticism against the view of the determinists and the libertarians which he thinks that both are based on a geometrical representation of free will and that this is due to their mistake to focus on the time which has passed instead of the time which is passing. Since the subject of freedom generally involves the discussion of causality, I make a section on how Bergson approaches this issue.

In section 3.8, I therefore aim at showing Bergson's view of two kinds of causality: causality in nature and causality in consciousness. In the first one we find regularity as well as repetition in such a way that causes are followed by their effects. I claim that for those who live with their superficial self, there is

also a kind of regularity found in consciousness and that we usually behave as if there really is regularity in our states of consciousness. We think that the notion of causality found in physical phenomena is, in a similar way, found in consciousness because of our ability to predict some of our actions. To predict an action beforehand means, according to Bergson, to know completely the conditions of that action, which in fact implies to perform it. Since we have got used to anticipate, for example, astronomical phenomena, says Bergson, we think that we can also anticipate voluntary actions. In the second kind of causality in fact there is no regularity and repetition. Here anticipation is impossible because no two conscious states are identical and therefore the cause of an inner state produces its effect once for all and will never reproduce it. According to Bergson, when we talk about regularity, we mean a regularity turned towards the past. In this sense, he does not differentiate between regularity and repetition. Repetition implies the old forms coming to the scene over and over again, in other words, the past being recomposed continuously, using the same elements but with different combinations. Each of these combinations corresponds to a regularity involved in the fact, event, or phenomena. So what repeats is the same or identical conditions applied to a fact, to an event or to a phenomenon and the fact that identical conditions are applied in this way constitute or refer to the past. What is regular, on the other hand, is the production of combinations.

I begin the fourth chapter by saying that in Bergson's philosophy, one chooses to be free or not as well as the extent of his freedom only when he is awakened to the existence both of his superficial and the fundamental self. The

problem is, because we are human beings, we have to live according to our practical needs even if we want to choose to live with our fundamental self. This problem is due to the human condition of sociability. Therefore, on the one hand, I claim that to live in accordance with our superficial and fundamental self is a choice, on the other hand, that we are the real obstacle to ourselves.

In section 4.1, I argue that the nature of human beings is such that it both involves a pressure-making tendency and a sense of freedom. The former essentially appears in what Bergson calls “closed morality” and “static religion” while the latter appears in “open morality” and “dynamic religion”. In open morality, individuals try to break away from the rigid rule-following. This is the sign of life itself in human beings that they are not bound by repetitious routines. However, because closed morality is inherent in open morality, it is easy for the individual to get stuck in routines. I ask, in the next section, what can the role of the great mystics, of individuals and especially of the philosophers be concerning the break from the repetitious routines.

Section 4.2 therefore, discusses the call of the great mystics, the effort of the individuals and the role of the philosophers in relation to the paradox of the human condition. Bergson claims that the great mystics try to propagate the feeling of a flow that goes from their soul to God and from God to all humanity. What they bring humanity is a new temperament of the soul. Bergson also thinks that due to these mystics as well as the effort of the individuals, mankind started to progress towards a more and more advanced society. The mystics had their own special language and their own life which did not involve the

characteristics peculiar to human life. By their nature, their lives are not based on the intellect, rather they are those who already placed themselves in duration. Therefore, the dismissal of the habits of mind concerns only human beings and not the mystics. What is needed in order for the individuals to get rid of the habits of mind is to change the direction of their reasoning that goes from intellect to intuition to the direction that goes from intuition to intellect. However, according to Bergson, since we are the vital current already loaded with matter itself, the prolongation of intuition beyond a few instants becomes very difficult and that there always is an oscillation between nature and mind. Due to this reason, the greatest dismissal of the habits of mind becomes a problem for the individuals. Since we are the vital current already loaded with matter, the philosopher knows that true metaphysics requires to move between two extreme limits that are materiality or pure repetition on the one hand, and concrete flowing of duration on the other hand. This also implies the philosopher to move between intuition and concepts and it is his role to try to prolong intuition as much as he can. The reason for this, says Bergson, is that if such knowledge is generalized, both speculation and everyday life would profit and get illuminated by it. Philosophy is not a discipline that belongs only to philosophers because it means to see all things *sub specie durationis* that can be accomplished by every individual to the extent that he gets accustomed to see everything as such, just like he is already accustomed to see all things under the aspect of matter.

In section 4.3, I claim that to grasp everything *sub specie durationis* means to grasp ourselves in a present which is thick and elastic as well as to

awaken our perception to mobility, to the flow of things. A thick present, according to Bergson, is a present that evolves, a present that changes continuously, which is open to creation and novelty and which involves both the past and the future. In this section, I consider Mc Taggart's A-theory of time and B-theory of time in order to determine Bergson's position. For this aim, I make use of the article of Clifford Williams, "A Bergsonian Approach to A- and B-Time." Williams' claim is that we cannot differentiate between the two theories of time when we consider them from the context of Bergsonian intuition and that if we cannot differentiate it as such, there is no means of distinguishing between the two theories of time. In order to find out whether there are any differences between the two theories, Williams considers the possible differences with respect to the experiences of both theories and finds that there are no experiential differences and therefore claims that there is no intuitional difference between the two theories of time. Using this reasoning, I claim that there is no intuitional difference between Bergson's notion of present that is thick and elastic and a present that is instantaneous. The reason for this is that there is only one real sense of time with only different conceptions. Hence the scientific conception of time, for instance, is the notion of time stripped from the experienceable level and brought instead to the level of analysis. From these considerations, I claim that there can be no intuitional difference between living *sub specie durationis* and living under the aspect of matter. The latter implies to have forgotten the intuition of time and to grasp everything by means of our intellect alone. I think that is the reason why Bergson recommends us to try to get rid of the habits of mind and so remember that we have a faculty of intuition. The intuition of time makes us a part of reality that goes on before our eyes.

When this is the case, we express the notion of present as thick and elastic, and instantaneous when this is not the case. These two expressions of the notion of present are images. Images, according to Bergson, direct consciousness to the point where there is an intuition to seize on and thus help us in grasping duration indirectly. The direct presentation of duration is possible only in intuition and so it is inexpressible. Moreover, all the conceptual representations of duration such as indivisibility, continuity, multiplicity, and even the term duration itself, kill the notion of time. However, this is not a problem concerning Bergson's method of philosophy. It rather refers to the human situation Bergson himself aimed at showing us: since our intellect is made to think matter and our concepts are formed according to the model of the solids, our intellect "is incapable of presenting the true nature of life, the full meaning of the evolutionary movement."

In the concluding section 4.4, I try to consider the paradox of the human condition as reflecting a philosophy of life. I claim that Bergson gives us a metaphysical standing in order for people to be more joyful and stronger by making them awakened to their true self which is the fundamental self. We think that true freedom, according to Bergson, is a state of consciousness in which one is participating in creation and in which one feels the creative evolution he is a part of. Therefore, I claim that Bergson has to distinguish between the joy and strength found in practical daily life and the same found in placing oneself in duration: the former is ephemeral because of its dependency upon outer circumstances while the latter is not because it arises from mind turning its

attention to itself and it represents “the coincidence of human consciousness with the living principle whence it emanates.”

I also claim that both a life *sub specie durationis* and a life under the aspect of matter arise from the same vital impetus and point out to two different directions. Due to the very nature of life, vital impetus will leap from one to the other. Therefore, I will conclude that the paradox of the human condition in fact expresses the evolution of life itself in that, the obstacle of the individuals to perceive the world qua world comes from the double movement of evolution. One direction of the vital impetus enable the individuals to adapt to their surrounding conditions whereas the other direction makes possible to dismiss the habits of mind. The former direction turns towards materiality and intellect whereas the latter turns toward life, intuition and spirituality in general. I claim that Bergson’s philosophy, thus requires that these habits of mind are continuously dismissed and regained due to vital impetus. Only the great mystics are able to be one with the vital impetus. That is the reason why, I claim, the paradox concerns the *human* condition. Our existence consists of the tension between the existence made of a present devoid of concrete duration and the one in concrete duration. I claim that this metaphysical standing itself is the Bergsonian philosophy of life.

I will end the section by restating the paradox of the human condition in Bergsonian notions by means of two arguments. Focusing on the conclusions, it will be seen that the conclusions of both arguments do not lead to a formal contradiction and so we do not have a paradox in a strictly logical sense.

Nevertheless, I will claim that an individual who is bound to accept the legitimacy of both arguments and thus to accept both conclusions will find himself in a deep confusion. I will then explain this confusion and claim that the paradox of the human condition expresses a paradox of life in the sense of existential contradiction.

CHAPTER 2

BERGSON AND THE PARADOX OF THE HUMAN CONDITION

One of the issues philosophy has to consider is the ‘paradox of the human condition’ Pierre Hadot mentions in his work *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (1995: 258). I will first put down Hadot’s expression concerning this paradox and then try to determine the place this paradox has in Bergson’s philosophy. However, since this attempt will continue throughout this study, the present chapter should be regarded as a preliminary.

Hadot explains the ‘paradox of the human condition’ in terms of an inescapable fact. He says,

man *lives in* the world without *perceiving* the world...The obstacle to perceiving the world is not to be found in modernity, but within man himself. We must separate ourselves from the world qua world in order to live our daily life, but we must separate ourselves from the “everyday” world in order to rediscover the world qua world (1995: 258).

The ‘human condition’ Hadot talks about is that, be it ancients or moderns, there is not a change in our way of looking at the world: we look at the world in order to “humanize” it, that is, we transform it, especially, by action and perception according to our needs. This fact is not changed with respect to our

familiarity with the developments in science and technology. Our world looks like an aggregate of “things” useful for living. Hadot says, “thus, we fabricate the objects of our worry, quarrels, social rituals, and conventional values” and as a result, “we no longer see the world qua world” (1995: 258). The claim here is that there is such a thing as ‘the world qua world’ and also a world outside our needs. However, that there exists a world qua world does not imply ‘the world’ minus ‘the world outside our needs’. There are not actually two different worlds *in themselves*: the difference lies only in the mind of the people, that is, either the attention is turned towards everyday life or towards the world as the world. This situation exhibits mutually exclusive aspects because it is not possible to have our attention turned towards everyday life and towards the world qua world *at the same time*. The reason for this is that the attention turned towards everyday life is such that we perceive things under their aspect of usefulness for life whereas the attention turned towards the world qua world is such that we perceive things under the aspect removed from their usefulness for life. Therefore, we can talk about not ‘the world’ minus ‘the world outside our needs’ but rather ‘perceiving things under the aspect of usefulness’ on the one hand and ‘perceiving things removed from the aspect of usefulness’ on the other. As can be understood, it is by showing that these two aspects are mutually exclusive that Hadot tries to put forward the paradox of the human condition.

Existentialists dealt intensively on the issue of the conception of human existence and they saw it as a tension between two different aspects of our being: the aspect according to which we are creatures with specific needs

and drives on the one hand and the aspect according to which, since we are capable of self-awareness, we are able to reflect on our own desires and as such we transcend our own being as mere things. Phenomenologists, on the other hand, opposed the world of science and the world of everyday perception and attempted “to return to the world of lived perception” in order to make us aware of the fact that “we *are perceiving the world.*” Philosophy, according to them, “is nothing other than this process by means of which we try to relearn to see the world” and therefore reach to the “perception of the world as a world” (Hadot, 1995: 253).

Bergson’s way of considering the human existence is based on displacement of attention or the dismissal of the habits of mind that, in fact, implies learning the world by a different kind of awareness. The paradox of the human condition implicitly involves two ways of learning the world: by living out our daily lives, and, by philosophizing. In what sense(s) then these two ways of learning can lead to a paradox? Hadot does not fully analyse the paradox and therefore leaves us with the intuition of the paradox of the human condition and claims that Bergson is aware of this paradox. This constitutes the beginning of this study. I attempt to delve into Bergson’s philosophy in order to search for the source of this paradox as well as for its possible resolution, if it resolves at all.

Bergson’s basic notions can be claimed to be ‘real time’ (*durée réelle*) and related with this, ‘movement’. However, in order to understand these basic

notions, we have to dismiss our mental habits. Kolakowski expresses the reason why, according to Bergson, we have to do this:

Once we place ourselves in the position of a disinterested observer and dismiss the natural habits of mind, we see easily that movement and time are *the* reality we deal with directly, in the simplicity of unmediated contact (1985: 27).

If we do not dismiss our mental habits, it is not possible to grasp time and movement in terms of being immediately given us and as a consequence, it is not possible to grasp the world qua world. On the contrary, one will grasp the world through mediation. There then seems to be a tension between learning the world with the habits of mind and learning it after they are being dismissed. We will see in due course that the attempt to overcome this tension is actually the inherent drive of every part of Bergson's philosophy. Although this tension might not be overcome absolutely, the effort in trying to overcome it gives rise to 'true philosophy'.

Bergson tries to clarify certain of our common beliefs. He attempts to show the erroneous or illusory conclusions that arise with a certain *way of thinking* that constitute the habits of our mind. He says:

Before philosophizing one must live; and life requires that we put on blinders; we must not look to the right, to the left, or behind, but straight ahead, in the direction in which we are supposed to walk. In order to live, we must be selective in our knowledge and our memories, and retain only that which may contribute to our action upon things (PC: 137).

In order to live we have to put on blinders. The attention here is turned towards the daily life's requirements. Our perception captures only that which interests us practically. At first there may be nothing wrong with this kind of attention.

However, the tension seems to arise when the individual tries to isolate himself from his daily requirements and start philosophizing. The self seems then to be broken because in order to live, it has to put on blinders, since life requires so, and from this we may infer that in order to philosophize, to understand the world qua world, the individual then has to remove the blinders. This putting on and removal of the blinders causes tension because of they being excluding one another.

However, in the case when one is not aware of the blinders and philosophizes, I do not think we can talk about a tension. Being unaware of the fact that one's perception in general concentrates on one's daily interests, the individual brings the same perception while philosophizing. In other words, not being aware of the habits of mind implies to necessarily bring these mental habits to the realm of philosophy and Bergson claims that it is due to this that we create "fictitious problems" in philosophy. On the other hand, the self is not broken because the individual remains in the same realm of practical necessities even while philosophizing. So in a sense, the individual by not being aware of this human condition, does not create a tension for he places himself in the realm where the attention is on the daily requirements. However, it is because of not being aware of the tension that certain philosophical problems such as the problem of free will arise. In this sense it can be claimed that this tension is in fact necessary to philosophize. Bergson says:

in psychological analysis we must never forget the utilitarian character of our mental functions, which are essentially turned toward action...the habits formed in action find their way up to the sphere of speculation, where they create fictitious problems, and that

metaphysics must begin by dispersing this artificial obscurity (*MM*: 16).

In psychological analysis, we have to be aware of and in a sense emphasize this utilitarian aspect of our mental life which is reflected in our actions. However, if we do philosophize, it is the duty of philosophy or metaphysics to dispel the illusory problems formed out of our attention turned towards action. The paradox of the human condition reflects then at the same time a tension between psychology and metaphysics as well as between action and the act of turning away from it.

As to the distinction between psychology and metaphysics Bergson says, “psychology has for its object the study of the human mind working for practical utility” and to describe metaphysics he says, “metaphysics is but this same mind striving to transcend the conditions of useful action and to come back to itself as to a pure creative energy” (*MM*: 15). It can be said that the tension between psychology and metaphysics is tantamount to the tension between practical utility and pure creative energy. It can also be said that the condition of understanding the world qua world is our mind coming back to a pure creative energy. In other words, we have to understand that our mind in itself is in fact pure creative energy. This constitutes the vitalist aspect of the paradox of the human condition. I will clarify it when we talk about Bergson’s famous concept *élan vital* or vital impulse.

Bergson also introduces us other tensions such as the tension between real time and physical or mechanical time, the one between superficial self and

fundamental self, one between spirit and matter, and one between intuition and analysis or intellect. All these tensions, as Kolakowski remarks, share the same fate: “at the outset they seem clear-cut and deprived of all intermediate zones, yet in the final analysis we see that each side carries within it a shadow of the other” (Kolakowski, 1985, p. 23).

Bergson, coming from the Cartesian tradition, saw a meaning in dualism. However, he is in no way a dualist philosopher. He is in fact concerned with the dualistic approaches in order to overcome the difficulties the dualism had fallen into. It is in this way that he tried to show, in *Matter and Memory* especially, the problems both Descartes and Berkeley had fallen into. He argues that if, for instance, we affirm the reality only of matter and understand by this the “extended” or if we affirm the reality only of consciousness and understand by it the “inextensive”, we will have difficulties in finding something common between body and mind. He says,

If we imagine on the one hand the extended really divided into corpuscles, for example, and, on the other hand, a consciousness with sensations, in themselves inextensive, which come to project themselves into space, we shall evidently find nothing common in such matter and such a consciousness to body and mind. But this opposition between perception and matter is the artificial work of an understanding which decomposes and recomposes according to its habits or its laws: it is not given in immediate intuition. What is given are not inextensive sensations: how should they find their way back to space, choose a locality within it, and coordinate themselves there so as to build up an experience that is common to all men? And what is real is not extension, divided into independent parts: how, being deprived of all possible relationship to our consciousness, could it unfold a series of changes of which the relations and the order exactly correspond to the relations and the order of our representations? That which is given, that which is real, is

something *intermediate* [my italics] between divided extension and pure inextension (*MM*: 244-245).

For the moment I will not go into detail of what Bergson understands by consciousness and matter. I leave this for the next chapter of this study. For my present purpose it suffices to note that, as can be understood from this matter-consciousness opposition, the tension concerning dualities are mitigated as to open up intermediate zones. Where there are no intermediate zones, oppositions have to remain as oppositions. Bergson gives an example for how we deal with oppositions:

our understanding, of which the function is to set up logical distinctions, and, consequently, clean-cut oppositions, throws itself into each of these ways in turn and follows each to the end. It thus sets up, at one extremity, an infinitely divisible extension and at the other, sensations which are absolutely inextensive. And it creates thereby the opposition which it afterwards contemplates amazed (*MM*: 245).

We saw that Bergson's way of putting down dualities can in no way be considered as a Cartesian dualism. Can this be characterized as a kind of a dialectical method then? There are some who sees a resemblance between the Hegelian and the Bergsonian 'dialectic'. One resemblance, for example, is that Hegel too criticized the understanding because of its producing clean-cut distinctions. As understood from the English abstract of the Spanish article of Maria Elosegui, one should read Bergson again from a dialectical perspective because according to this author, Bergson sees "the reality of a vital self, made

up of dialectic and contradiction, caused by the stress between desires” and this being the case human existence is a dialectical process.⁵

On the other hand, with respect to the relation between quality and quantity, which I will also deal with later on in this study, Jean Theau claims that despite certain resemblance, Hegel and Bergson differ in their consideration of the negative process concerning, for example, the opposition of quality and quantity: in Hegel, this negative process is an “Aufhebung” that can be conceived by a logical dialectic. In contrast, in Bergsonian philosophy, the negative process is in fact a reversal, a turning backwards and has to be studied empirically.⁶

The same idea is reflected in the title of Moore’s book on Bergson: Bergson, *Thinking Backwards* (1996). Lastly, when explaining the ‘law of dichotomy’ Bergson talks about in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* as well as the “constant dichotomisation” inherent in Bergsonian philosophy, Mullarkey mentions that in this act of dichotomisation we cannot talk about the “Hegelian mediation” (1999: 181). Therefore, I think that if one insists on using the term ‘dialectic’ in order to describe Bergson’s philosophy, one should be very careful as not to use it in the same sense with that of Hegel’s; he should redefine it and make clear the reason why he is insisting on using this term.

⁵ Elosegui, Maria (1989) “La dialectica del deseo como realizacion de la identidad en Henri Bergson”, *Themata*, pp. 45-50.

⁶ Theau, Jean (1975) “Le Rapport Quantit[è]-Qualit[è] Chez Hegel et Chez Bergson”, *Philosophiques*: 2, pp. 3-21.

In fact, on rare occasions, Bergson himself used the term dialectic. In *Creative Evolution*, for example, he describes dialectic as “a relaxation of intuition”, and says “dialectic is necessary to put intuition to the proof, necessary also in order that intuition should break itself up into concepts and so be propagated to other men.”⁷ And he also claims that though there is one truth only, together with dialectic “different agreements are possible” (*CE*: 238). It can be said that on the one hand, Bergson does not totally separate dialectic from intuition, and on the other hand, he emphasizes the speculative or maybe argumentative side of dialectic. Therefore, it can be said that dialectic, according to Bergson, is a conceptual method the intellect makes use of. Since dialectic is a relaxation of intuition, we then have to say that this conceptual method is based on intuition and not vice versa. In other words, dialectic becomes the means of expressing our intuition. If this is so, we have to admit that dialectic has a very important role in Bergsonian philosophy. However, in this study, I will not use the term ‘dialectic’. This is because the term is mostly associated with Hegel’s philosophy and also because Bergson himself did not use it often. Therefore, instead of using the term dialectic, I prefer to use the terms ‘dichotomisation’ and ‘thinking backwards’.

It would be worthwhile to say in advance that whatever dichotomy would be in question, the distinctions would be mitigated and open up intermediate zones. Moreover, as I mentioned before, I claim that Bergson’s attempt to overcome the existing tension between the habits of mind and their dismissal is actually the inherent drive of every part of his philosophy and thus

⁷ We will talk about the propagation of intuition in the fourth chapter.

lead all the others. The effort in trying to overcome this tension gives way to intermediate zones that Bergson expresses it by using the terms ‘diversity’ and ‘degree’. He says:

There are then, in short, divers tones of mental life, or, in other words, our psychic life may be lived at different heights, now nearer to action, now further removed from it, according to the degree of our attention to life (*MM*: 14).

Above I have said that the paradox of the human condition arises when one philosophizes by knowing his mental habits and that only then we can talk about a tension existing, for instance, between the fundamental and the superficial self. However, knowing the mind’s habits does not lead to their ultimate dismissal. That is the reason why it gives way to intermediate zones. In other words, the tension arises when one philosophizes by trying to remove his mind’s habits. Because he then sees that this awareness of the mental habits is not sufficient in the ultimate dismissal of the habits and that it rather ends up by an effort to overcome it through intermediate zones. Thus it can be claimed that this awareness of the tension gives way to intermediate zones and that although the paradox of the human condition is not resolvable, it is nevertheless transformable into intermediate zones.

Guy LaFrance claimed that ultimately “in the action which is really free, there no longer is a separation between the superficial self and the fundamental self” (1991: 133). However, according to Bergson, it is also true that this real freedom is not permanent. This implies that the separation between the two selves becomes unavoidable. Moreover, I claim that this separation of the two selves is a problem only for the one who is aware of the habits of mind.

One who tries to philosophize by an attempt to dismiss the habits of mind is aware both of the paradox of the human condition and the fact that we can talk about two selves: the fundamental and the superficial. However, it is this same individual who awakens to the fact that if the opposition of the two selves are to be overcome, his self will no longer be broken into two. At the beginning, the paradox seemed to appear in the form of a choice before the individual: either one has to adapt to the requirements of social life or he has to understand reality as it is (the world qua world); either he has to live with his fundamental self or according to his superficial self. However, this cannot be a real choice and this is just what makes the situation paradoxical. We will see in detail the reason why this is not a real choice and is rather an inescapable fact when we will attempt to understand the vitalist aspect of the paradox of the human condition.

We live inevitably in a world of continuously satisfying our practical needs. If this is so, it also seems that we gradually lose sight of our fundamental self by adapting ourselves to the necessities of social life. Bergson says, “that which is commonly called a *fact* is not reality as it appears to immediate intuition, but an adaptation of the real to the interests of practice and to the exigencies of social life” (*MM*: 183). What I think is that Bergson tries to show that if we adapt to social life the least we can, this will enable us merely to perceive the world qua world, it will not make us capable people in our everyday life. On the other hand, if we live only according to our everyday needs and interests, which means adapting ourselves to social life abundantly,

we will be incapable to perceive the world qua world. I claim that this is one of the ways we can express the paradox of the human condition in Bergson's philosophy.

Bergson attempts to bring in a possible resolution for the paradox of the human condition by an appeal to unite his main concepts 'dur[e]' and (philosophical) 'intuition' together with the act of philosophizing. The concepts 'dur[e]' and 'intuition' gathered with the act of philosophizing can be explained in such a way as to engender a kind of a philosophy of life. Therefore, it will be one of my main aim to show the relation between Bergson's expression of the paradox of the human condition and his concepts 'dur[e]' and 'intuition' gathered with the act of philosophizing. When this is established, I believe, a Bergsonian philosophy of life will arise.

It seems that Bergson's conception of 'true philosophy'—as Bergson also says, true metaphysics or true empiricism—in general can give rise to a philosophy of life in such a way that the perspective one gains through the effort in trying to overcome the habits of mind no longer remains in the realm of speculation but spreads over everyday life. It provides us with an intuition according to which our habitual way of perceiving things will be replaced by seeing all things *sub specie durationis* and as such it will give us joy and strength because “we shall feel we are participating, creators of ourselves, in the great work of creation which is the origin of all things and which goes on before our eyes” (*PR*: 105). In order to explain what *sub specie durationis* means Bergson says, “immediately in our galvanized perception what is taut becomes

relaxed, what is dormant awakens, what is dead comes to life again” (*PI*: 129). As a consequence, it is through ‘true philosophy’ that the paradox of living in the world and grasping the world as it is will be transformed. Hadot says, “Bergson correctly grasped the reason for this situation [that is, for the emergence of the paradox], when he distinguished between habitual, utilitarian perception, necessary for life, and the detached, disinterested perception of the artist or philosopher” (1995: 258). I will show that Bergsonian philosophy of life I am going to talk about would begin when the paradox of the human condition is embraced as an unavoidable existential fact and that the human existence consists of a continuous tension between the fundamental self and the superficial self. In other words, my claim would be that the paradox of the human condition plays the role of giving way to a philosophy of life. And in order for this paradox to give way to a philosophy of life, we will have to grasp the concepts ‘durée’ and ‘intuition’ gathered with the act of philosophizing.

There is something that is called “philosophical perception” or “philosophical intuition” in Bergson’s philosophy. It refers to the philosopher’s way of seeing the world qua world. In explaining this, Bergson uses the artist’s way of creating a work of art as an analogy. The artist goes outside the fixity and monotony of his senses while creating because abandoning the realm of habitual actions and daily needs, he perceives “for the sake of perceiving”.

Hadot explains this situation very well when he says,

The utilitarian perception we have of the world, in everyday life, in fact hides from us the world qua world. Aesthetic and philosophical perceptions of the world are only possible by means of a complete transformation of our relationship to the world: we have to perceive it *for itself*, and no longer *for ourselves* (1995: 254).

Bergson says that artists and philosophers have this ability of perceiving the world for itself. In his book *Laughter*, Bergson describes art as follows:

So art, whether it be painting or sculpture, poetry or music, has no other object than to brush aside the utilitarian symbols, the conventional and socially accepted generalities, in short, everything that veils reality from us, in order to bring us face to face with reality itself (1911: 157).

Bergson thinks that artists create works of art in such a way “to reveal nature to us.” He contrasts our normal way of experiencing things with the experience we have when we are in immediate contact with things as well as with ourselves. The former kind of experience refers to the “labels” we affix to things according to which we consider them as “members of classes” whereas the latter kind of experience is an experience artists live due to their detachment from life and in which they are in perfect accord with nature. If all of our experiences were of this latter kind, then, according to Bergson, either art would be useless or we will all become artists (Beardsley, 1966: 325-326).

However, he also mentions the difference between the philosopher and the artist: whereas few of us can have the privilege of being an artist—and that the artist has the satisfaction “upon rare occasions”—and therefore few of us has the satisfaction in creating, “all of us, at all times,” can have the satisfaction that philosophy can give us (*PI*: 129).

Perceiving the world *for itself* means perceiving pure *durée* and “we perceive pure *durée* when we concentrate on our internal experience only, leaving aside the world of things among which we live, abandoning the

practical orientation of the mind, and taking instead an attitude of disinterested contemplation” (Kolakowski, 1985: 16). To concentrate on our internal experience means to concentrate on our consciousness. It is only by concentrating on our consciousness that we understand that the world is in flux. As Kolakowski remarks, “consciousness maintains the continuity of the world” (1985: 17).

Our intellect is very good at the spatialization of the world. Bergson says, “it is natural to our intellect, whose function is essentially practical, made to present to us things and states rather than changes and acts. But things and states are only views, taken by our mind, of becoming” (*CE*: 248). Perceiving the world *for itself* means to understand it in its becoming. The world is this becoming itself and the only means to understand this is the attention turned towards our consciousness. Bergson says that the philosopher “seeks to sympathize”⁸ with things (*PI*: 126). The way that leads to the experience of *durée réelle* comes from this sympathy. It is only through this sympathy and therefore through the experience of *durée réelle* that it is possible to understand life as a whole and as processes. Therefore, it would be correct to say that duration is that which enables us to perceive the moving world of phenomena without stopping it and breaking it into pieces; it frees us of perceiving it by means of separation. In this sense, when Bergson mentions the concept

⁸ “il cherche \diamond sympathiser” (“L’Intuition Philosophique” in *La Pensée et le Mouvant, Essais et Conférences*, 1939: 158. Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan). This phrase is translated into English as “seeks to be at one with nature.” Since I think that this translation is misleading, I retranslated it as “seeks to sympathize.” This translation is much more faithful to Bergson’s philosophy because in his philosophy the concept “sympathy” is important. In order to define intuition, for instance, Bergson uses the notion of sympathy and says that intuition is “the sympathy by which one is transported into the interior of an object in order to coincide with what there is unique

“displacement of attention”, he means the shift from this fragmentary perception of life or of the world to the indivisible, continuous and immeasurable view. We perceive the moving world of phenomena in the same way as we listen to a melody. Although the notes of the melody succeed one another, “we perceive them in one another, and that their totality may be compared to a living being whose parts, although distinct, permeate one another just because they are so closely connected” (*TFW*: 100).

The tension between intuition and the intellect present in Bergson’s philosophy is criticized a lot due to the misconception that Bergson tried to do away with the intellect. However, Bergson did not intend to do so. His ultimate aim was twofold: to emphasize the importance of intuition in true philosophy and related with this, to change the direction of reasoning. The habitual direction of the intellect, Bergson claimed, prevented philosophers to see things in duration (*sub specie durationis*) because any reasoning starting from the intellect is ready to understand what happens in the world through making separations. This can be characterized as perceiving the world for ourselves.

This habit actually goes back to Plato. Plato’s method which was dialogue consisted in fact of this act of separating. The aim of dialogue was to put forth the existing relation between concepts brought to discussion. However, while trying to demonstrate this relation, concepts were acquiring their place through their difference from other concepts. As a result, movement was lost for the sake of analysis. This is what Bergson calls the habitual way of thinking. He

and consequently inexpressible in it” (*IM*, in *Creative Mind*, p. 161). Monroe Beardsley

describes it by saying that “there is more in the immutable than in the moving, and one passes from the stable to the unstable by a simple diminution (*IM*: 193).

Kolakowski explains the same idea by claiming that actually “we are born Platonists.” The reason for this is that,

our mind spontaneously assumes that abstract entities are more real than, and prior to, individual objects and that there is less to movement than to mobility, that the former is a degradation of the latter. This Platonism is an innate characteristic of our intellect and derives from the utilitarian nature of thought. In order to live and to improve our skills we have to dissect the world into fragments (1985: 18).

It is only in this sense that Bergson put intuition in opposition to the intellect. While the intellect proceeds according to this habitual way of thinking, intuition has another mission to fulfill: to understand things from within. He tries to describe intuition by saying that, it is “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” (*IM*: 161). Analysis is expressible whereas intuition is not and in this respect one wonders about the use of intuition in philosophy. However, the fact that intuition is inexpressible does not mean it has no place in philosophy. On the contrary, what analysis is incapable of, intuition is there to fulfill its mission. As we will see in this study, it grasps reality “over and above all expression” by means of duration. Whatever it grasps, it grasps it in flux.

Among other things, there is one thing “which we all seize from within” (*IM*: 162). It is our own self. Whether intellectually or spiritually, the

considers this theory of intuition as a “penetrating artistic cognition” (1966: 326).

truth is that we understand our own person from within. By means of intuition in duration, we grasp ourselves as a whole and not in pieces. Analysis, on the other hand, breaks the self into pieces by means of introducing endless different points of view without being able to complete them. It uses the intellect's habitual way of thinking. It breaks into pieces and then tries to combine these pieces together. However, as was the case in Plato's method of dialogue, once the intellect decomposes its material at the beginning, it no longer becomes possible to obtain a complete view; it unavoidably grasps partially. This is the reasoning that starts from the intellect and then proceeds towards intuition. But, when the direction of reasoning changes and so goes not from intellect to intuition but from intuition to intellect, the intellect drops its habitual act and works together with intuition in understanding things. Through this change in the direction of reasoning, we can say that analysis and intuition complete each other in grasping reality. Since due to this change in the direction of reasoning the intellect is able, at least to a certain degree, to drop its habitual act, we can say that this change of direction is a necessary condition for the displacement of attention.

The intellect has the tendency to arrange the everyday life by means of analysis: it leads the way for things to be in their proper place, to have an order, to have the most possible clear demarcation among them, to frame anything that can be framed. It is in this way that life requires that we put on blinders, and it is the same self who tries to philosophize. In this respect, it is natural that the paradox of the human condition arises and it is also natural to see it as unresolvable, as if it is the destiny of human beings to live through it. In one

sense it is the destiny of human beings to live this paradox. However, doing utmost effort to change the direction of reasoning, grasping the self in duration by means of intuition leads toward the transformation, if not toward resolution, of the paradox of the human condition into a new perspective. This new perspective one will gain will spread over one's everyday life as well as over the act of philosophizing. It is this philosophy done within this new perspective that Bergson calls 'true philosophy'. It is the way of bringing philosophy into closer contact with life. When our self lives through duration, the knowledge we will acquire would be 'true philosophy': the realm of what is continuous, indivisible and immeasurable in which the paradox of the human condition is both embraced and transformed and as such gives way to a Bergsonian philosophy of life.

CHAPTER 3

BERGSON'S PHILOSOPHY OF TIME

3.1 The Immediate Data of Consciousness

I will begin this chapter by asking the question Bergson's opponents asked: "Why should we accept unreservedly as true and real the ultimate data supplied by consciousness?" (Chevalier, 1970: 124). In order to answer this question, we should really understand what Bergson means by consciousness, which I think is one of the most difficult part of his philosophy. However, once we grasp its meaning, we will see that all Bergsonian concepts acquire their

proper place and we will also understand Bergson's main problems in a new light, whether we agree or disagree with him.

Bergson starts from the 'immediate' data of consciousness and his preliminary intention is to be able to find the philosophy that everyone could agree upon. This implies that there is to be found a relation between the immediate data of consciousness and the intention of making philosophy universal. In his *Vocabulaire Technique et Critique de la Philosophie*, explaining the term 'immediate' and answering the question asked above by his opponents, Bergson says,

Because all philosophy, whatever it may be, is obliged to start from these data. If we are treating of free will, either to affirm or to deny it, we set out from the direct feeling which we have of it. If we are speculating about movement, we set out from the immediate consciousness of mobility, and so on...In short, my data are only those which everybody admits at the start (Chevalier, 1970: 124).

The sole reason for Bergson to start from the immediate data is his claim that only my immediate data are *admissible* in the beginning. By immediate data he means the direct feeling of anything given to the consciousness. There is no other means to start from in philosophy. He says, "all philosophy, whatever it may be." This means he does not make a distinction between different philosophies when the question is to begin a philosophy.

Bergson's conception of philosophy implies universality in the sense that it consists of starting from what everybody admits at the beginning. The question is, as can be concluded from the above quotation, different persons, or same persons at different times, might possibly have different feelings at the

start of searching, for example, for the feeling concerning free will: one can have the feeling of free will while the other can claim to have the immediate feeling of not having free will. So can immediate data differ? If yes, why do we claim that Bergson's conception of philosophy implies universality? It seems that either my claim is not true and that there is something wrong with Bergson's way of starting philosophy in relation to the intention of making it universal or he accepts, for certain reasons, as true both person's immediate data. I claim the latter is the case.

To start from some data other than the immediate ones are not admissible. We can ask here what is meant by other data? They are the data given by other philosophers, scientists, intellectuals; those things we have learnt from other people are not considered to be immediate. These are not admissible at the start. But why is it so? The reason is that these other data are no longer immediate. They all are the results obtained after long reasoning and researches. They are not pure anymore. When we read the works written by other philosophers, for example, we see that their immediate data are not easy to find out. What were immediate becomes hidden in the writings and so an effort of mind is needed to get at them. However, once we get at them, we get at what is true and real. It may be immediate data different than ourselves. This does not matter. The important thing is its being immediate. This implies that from different immediate data different philosophies would arise. This is indeed the case. It is Bergson's call for philosophers to work together in this respect. He states,

But a philosophy of this kind will not be made in a day.
Unlike the philosophical systems properly so called, each

of which was the individual work of a man of genius and sprang up as a whole, to be taken or left, it will only be built up by the collective and progressive effort of many thinkers, of many observers also, completing, correcting and improving one another. (*CE*: xiv).

One could ask about what is to be completing, correcting and improving if we were to start from immediate data which are already admissible. However, it is because we start from immediate data that we shall have to complete, correct and improve one another. I mentioned before that immediate data are not the same for everyone and that it is even possible for two different persons or same person at different times to have immediate data that are mutually exclusive. However, even if this is so, this does not mean that one of them has to be rejected in favor of another but it means that they have to *complete* each other in certain ways. In this sense, if a philosopher has chosen only one of these mutually exclusive immediate data in order to build his system, another philosopher has to feel himself responsible of this error and *correct* it. Finally, by making these corrections and seeing different immediate data as complementary, we should then find the way of progressing upon them that implies *improvement*.

I can claim that Bergson has a strong sense to accept reality as it is. Usually, if we think some dichotomies arise due to the fact that there are different immediate data of consciousness, we choose the way of rejecting one side of the dichotomy. However, by doing so, we distort reality: if we philosophize, we do not have the right to distort reality by trying to change it through accepting as true one side of the dichotomies. These mutually exclusive immediate data of consciousness seem to us as dichotomies because in fact we

want to see them as dichotomies. Our intellect refuses to accept them as facts and therefore name them as dichotomies. The truth is that if one feels free where the other is not it is because in reality there is both freedom and determinism; if one feels at one time that he lives in duration where at another time he feels he has no choice but to live according to the time understood in everyday life it is because in reality there is both concrete time and physical time; if one feels as if his whole life is centered around the notion of quality where the other feels it is centered around quantity and that everything is reducible to it, it is because in reality there is both quality and quantity. Reality, according to Bergson, is the oscillation of the opposites. To put this fact as an oscillation is to affirm at the same time that there are intermediate zones. One of the opposites may sometimes seem to be more real than the other but the truth is that each side is as real as the other side. Having the immediate data of free will at one time and determinism at another time means that there is an oscillation between the two and it implies that it is a fact that at times one feels more free than other times. Therefore, according to Bergson, we should be aware of this fact when we philosophize. Problems arise when we are not aware of it because philosophy then consists of putting down opposing viewpoints as thesis and antithesis. It is in this respect especially that Bergson criticizes metaphysics and the Kantian antinomies. He says,

the metaphysics of the moderns is not made of solutions so radical that they can lead to irreducible oppositions. This would no doubt be so if there were no means of accepting at the same time and in the same field the thesis and antithesis of the antinomies. But to philosophize consists precisely in placing oneself, by an effort of intuition, inside this concrete reality on which from the outside the *Critique* takes the two opposing views, thesis and antithesis. I shall never imagine how black and white

intermingle if I have not seen grey, but I have no difficulty in understanding, once I have seen grey, how one can envisage it from the double viewpoints of black and white (*IM*: 198).

It is only by an effort of intuition that one is able to understand why these opposing viewpoints are seen as opposing. Following his analogy we can say that it is only when we see or experience the intermediate zones of free will-determinism that we can really understand how our intellect speculates from the standpoint of one of the two opposing views. Without seeing these intermediate zones, we are obliged to grasp reality only from the standpoint of one of the opposite viewpoints and therefore to distort it by eliminating one side. On the other hand, once awakened to the fact that there are intermediate zones, that is, grey, we no longer distort reality by seeing it from the standpoint of opposite viewpoints.

3.2 Consciousness as Intellect and Intuition

Bergson claims that “consciousness corresponds exactly to the living being’s power of choice” (*CE*: 263). Consciousness is, at certain times and in certain living beings such as plants, dormant. Bergson, in *Creative Evolution*, claims that every living beings have consciousness. However, in some of them it is dormant when it is not possible for that being to act freely. Similarly, when it is possible to talk about free action the least, there consciousness awakens and the living being then has the power of choice. Bergson also says that “consciousness is synonymous with invention and with freedom.” And only “with man, consciousness breaks the chain” of creating automatism after

automatism. When there is no freedom of action, there is only a “routine”, only the “habits” of the species in question. The Animal have this kind of living: “the gates of its prison close as soon as they are opened; by pulling at its chain it succeeds only in stretching it.” So the animal is prisoned in its habitual acts and it cannot break this chain, it can only create new habitual acts, “it escapes automatism only for an instant, for just the time to create a new automatism” (*CE*: 264). Man is able to break this chain. He is not obliged to live automatism. However, it is also the case that many people “die without having known true freedom” (*TFW*: 166). It cannot therefore be said that only because I am a man that I am all the time free. My consciousness also may at times become dormant and can, for example, easily get trapped in daily habitual acts. In short, man chooses to be free or not and I think Bergson tries to show this. His aim is, as Pierre Trotignon expresses it very well, “to wake up the consciousness of its torpor, of its slavery that it imposes to itself by the blind recourse to the concepts of the mechanic and to the determinism of inert matter” (1968: 9).⁹ The difference between the mutually exclusive immediate data concerning, for instance, the feeling of freedom and its opposite result in one’s forming a point of view: I can claim that one’s point of view arising from one’s immediate data approving free will would be quite different than the one arising from rejecting free will. In the second one, there is a blind recourse to the concepts of the intellect. Bergson gives us the means of waking up the consciousness of its inactivity, the means of becoming free.

⁹ “de r[é]veiller la conscience de sa torpeur, de l’esclavage qu’elle s’impose ◊ elle-même par le recours aveugle aux concepts de la m[é]canique et du déterminisme de la mati[è]re inerte.” The English translation is mine.

Consciousness consists of both the intellect and intuition. In fact,

Intuition and intellect represent two opposite directions of the work of consciousness: intuition goes in the very direction of life, intellect goes in the inverse direction, and thus finds itself naturally in accordance with the movement of matter. A complete and perfect humanity would be that in which these two forms of conscious activity should attain their full development (*CE*: 267).

Life, in its course, could fix its attention either “on its own movement or on the matter it was passing through” and therefore it could either be turned “in the direction of intuition or in that of intellect” (*CE*: 181-182). However, the evolution of man is such that his consciousness is “formed on the intellect” (*CE*: 273). Bergson also claims that “a different evolution might have led to a humanity either more intellectual still or more intuitive. In the humanity of which we are a part, intuition is, in fact, almost completely sacrificed to intellect” (*CE*: 267). The life in our planet is attached to matter and Bergson says that if it were attached not to matter but to “pure consciousness”, life would then be “pure creative activity” (*CE*: 245). Consciousness implies creative activity and if life were pure consciousness, it would be creative activity in itself and nothing else. As such it would not have been possible for life to turn its attention towards matter and so consciousness will be formed not on the intellect but on intuition. Now let us see the characteristics of the intellect and intuition that will make us progress in understanding more on Bergson’s conception of consciousness.

3.2.1 The Habits of Mind

Human intellect represents briefly “the powers of conceptual thought” (*CE: x*). In this respect, perception, conception and understanding constitutes the intellect. The function of perception, says Bergson, is to “seize upon the infinitely repeated shocks which are light or heat, for example, and contracts them into relatively invariable sensations.” The function of conception is to abstract from things that are continuously changing, to find out an aspect common to them all that does not change as to form a general idea. And the function of understanding is “finding connections, establishing stable relations between transitory facts, evolving laws.” It is an operation such that the more the relation becomes more definite and the law more mathematical, the more the operation becomes perfect. All these functions of perception, conception and understanding show that the function of the intellect as a whole is to attach itself “to what is stable and regular in the real, that is to say to materiality. In so doing it touches one of the sides of the absolute.” The other side of the absolute is to be touched by consciousness again but this time not by its intellectual aspect but by its intuitive aspect when this one “grasps within us a perpetual efflorescence of novelty or when, broadening out, it comes into sympathy with that effort of nature which is constantly renewing” (*CE: 95*). Consciousness when turned towards itself is no longer intellect or intelligence. The reason for this is that the function or purpose of the intellect is opposed to the purpose of intuition.

What, really, is intelligence? It is the human way of thinking. It has been given to us, as instinct has been given to the bee, in order to direct our conduct. Since nature has destined us to master and utilize matter, the intelligence evolves with ease only in space, and feels at its ease only in the unorganized. By its origin it tends toward fabrication; it manifests itself in an activity which serves as prelude to mechanical art and by a language which announces science...The normal development of the intellect then takes place, therefore in the direction of

science and technique...precise or vague, it is the attention that mind gives to matter. How then could mind still be intellect when it turns upon itself? We can give things whatever names we choose and I see no great objection, I repeat, to knowledge of the mind by the mind still being called intelligence, if one insists. But then it will be necessary to specify that there are two intellectual functions, the one the inverse of the other, for mind thinks mind only in climbing back up the slope of habits acquired in contact with matter, and these habits are what one currently calls intellectual tendencies. Is it not better to designate by another name a function which certainly is not what one ordinarily calls intelligence? I call it intuition (*I: 78-79*).

Intellect and intuition are distinguished from each other on the basis of the attention turned either toward matter or to consciousness itself. Hence we can talk about two different kinds of attentions. The first is the attention mind gives to matter. The second one is the attention mind gives to itself, implying that it is turned toward itself.¹⁰

The opposition of the intellect and intuition becomes apparent when we take intuition to be one of the two intellectual functions. It is then, Bergson claims, the inverse of the other intellectual function. The intellectual function we ordinarily know is in the sense of the habits we have in contact with matter. These habits are the ones turned toward the actions to be performed because “we think only in order to act. Our intellect has been cast in the mold of action.” In order to explain how we do act, Bergson says, “in order to act, we begin by

¹⁰ This immediately reminds us of the Hegelian movement of thought: thought thinking itself. Hegel attempted to show the movement of thought by an appeal to what he calls ‘dialectical reasoning’ that consisted of the thesis-antithesis-synthesis process of the categories of thought, a process that Bergson would still think of it to be too intellectual to be called intuition. Here we talk about the attention that the mind gives to itself. As we will see in the course of our study, when the attention is turned towards itself, consciousness grasps everything in flux, in the continuous becoming. Therefore, it would be correct to say that the attention the mind gives to itself implies the conception of concrete duration that is the principle of consciousness.

proposing an end; we make a plan, then we go on to the detail of the mechanism which will bring it to pass” (*CE*: 44). This is described by the term ‘intellect bent’ meaning that the intellect is turned toward “the act to be performed and the reaction to follow” (*CE*: xi). Therefore, man’s habitual acts consists of making strategies after strategies in order to make realize the intended act. If the intended act does not succeed in fulfilling the end required, the plans are changed accordingly as to accomplish it in the end. This implies at the same time that in a certain sense we foresee the future. Our intellect operates as if we already accomplished the desired end. If you want, it is like the moves in the play of chess. The chess player tries to calculate each of the moves of himself and those of his opponent’s by looking at all the moves already made and changes his strategy according to the moves of his opponents. He tries to determine the best strategy for him to win, which constitutes the desired end.

The normal development of the intellect, as Bergson said, takes place in the direction of science and technique. Science always aims at “practical utility”. “Even when it launches into theory, it is bound to adapt its behavior to the general form of practice. However high it may rise, it must be ready to fall back into the field of action, and at once to get on its feet” (*CE*: 329-330). Therefore, the intellect aims at practical utility just like science and since our consciousness, as I mentioned before, is formed on the intellect, so do our actions in the daily life. We think in order to act. So our habitual way of thinking is action based. When we talk about intellect or intelligence, we mean this habitual way of thinking and so acting. Bergson says,

The interest of a living being lies in discovering in the present situation that which resembles a former situation, and then in placing alongside of that present situation what preceded and followed the previous one, in order to profit by past experience. Of all the associations which can be imagined, those of resemblance and contiguity are therefore at first the only associations that have a vital utility (*MM*: 242).

Our habitual way of thinking and acting proceeds in general through resemblance and contiguity. When we think, we put side by side the ideas that resemble one another concerning certain situations and act as our thought requires. It is in this sense that the intellect is turned toward action and that the attention of the mind as a whole is fixed on matter. Thus, if we insist on naming the knowledge of the mind by the mind as intelligence, we should climb back up the slope of this habitual way of thinking acquired in contact with matter. This act of climbing back up the slope means to return back to consciousness, that is, to “think backwards”. In other words, not to follow the natural bent of the intellect any longer. Within this framework, it becomes natural to accept these two functions of the intellect as opposed to one another since one follows its natural direction whereas the other tries to inverse this direction. This is one way of getting at intuition and if we choose this way, we would be inclined to oppose intuition to intellect. However, there is another way that consists of placing oneself immediately in intuition. This second way does not make these two aspects of consciousness opposed to each other. On the contrary, as we will see in the course of this study, it makes them complete one another. Therefore, I can easily say that those who criticized Bergson for opposing intellect to intuition and accused him of being an irrationalist due to Bergson’s emphasis on intuition,

understood the relation between intuition and intellect only from the first point of view.

3.2.2 Theory of Image

I have talked about the function of the intellect which is to think matter. Bergson says that “our intellect, in the narrow sense of the word, is intended to secure the perfect fitting of our body to its environment, to represent the relations of external things among themselves—in short, to think matter” (*CE*: ix). Since there is a close relationship between intellect and matter, we have to understand what Bergson really means by ‘matter’ in order to deepen the search on his conception of consciousness.

In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson claims that matter “is an aggregate of images.” He considers the issue around the discussion between idealism and realism. He criticizes idealism in reducing “matter to the perception which we have of it” and realism in making matter “a thing able to produce in us perceptions” and claims instead that it is “an existence placed halfway between the “thing” and the “representation”, adding that this conception of matter is the conception also of common sense (*MM*: 9-10). To explain this latter, he gives the example of a man who does not know about the philosophical discussions and who has just been told that the object in front of him exists only in his mind—using the term ‘object’ instead of ‘matter’. This man, Bergson says, would be astonished by this claim because of his ongoing belief that the object

he perceives “exists independently of the consciousness which perceives it.” On the other hand, if we told this man that the object he perceives exists independently of his consciousness, that the object is different from what he perceives, that the color and the resistance his eyes and his hands finds in the object are in no way “states of mind” but are found only in the object itself so that “they are part and parcel of an existence really independent of our own,” the man would be astonished again. Therefore, Bergson concludes, for common sense the object both exists in itself and it is also as we perceive it. He comes up with another determination: the object is then a “self-existing image.” By using now the term ‘matter’ instead of ‘object’ he says,

We place ourselves at the point of view of a mind unaware of the disputes between philosophers. Such a mind would naturally believe that matter exists just as it is perceived; and, since it is perceived as an image, the mind would make of it, in itself, an image. In a word, we consider matter before the dissociation which idealism and realism have brought about between its existence and its appearance. No doubt it has become difficult to avoid this dissociation now that philosophers have made it. To forget it, however, is what we ask of the reader (*MM*: 10).

Thus, once we forget about the distinction philosophers already made between the appearance and existence of an object, the object becomes a “self-existing image”.

According to Bergson, Berkeley’s mistake was “to place matter within the mind and make it into a pure idea” whereas Descartes’ mistake was to “put matter too far from us when he made it one with geometrical extensity” (*MM*: 11). When we claim that matter is a “self-existing image”, according to Bergson, we place matter in its proper place which is a place between the “thing” and the

“representation”. Matter can neither be reduced to the thing nor to the representation. When we claim that matter is a “self-existing image”, we are then in no way reducing it to something which it is not. Matter is then an image. However, as Bergson states, what is understood by ‘image’ is different from the preestablished views of the idealists and the realists. Image is “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). To determine matter as a “self-existing image” corresponds then to this place Bergson determines to be between a thing and a representation. This conception of matter forces us to forget also about the disputes concerning “the reality or ideality of the external world.” When these are forgotten, Bergson claims, we are left only with images (*MM*: 17) which constitutes at the same time the standpoint of common sense.¹¹

Bergson says,

¹¹ Common sense has in certain cases a positive sense and in certain cases a negative sense in Bergson’s philosophy. In *Creative Evolution*, he defines it as “the continuous experience of the real” and therefore we must appeal to it (p. 213). He also talks about it in the sense that it already, “instinctively” makes certain distinctions that we try to reach in philosophy (*Ibid.*, p. 224). According to Jacques Chevalier, this conception of common sense is “good common sense” as Bergson tells us in his speech “Le Bon Sens et Les Etudes Classiques”. The extension of this common sense is “philosophical spirit” which “endeavors to model its ideas upon reality.” But the common sense we here talk about is “of a superior kind, and if philosophy brings us back to the conclusions reached by that form of common sense, it is by a conscious and considered return submissive to the control of the facts and receptive to criticism of its doctrines.” Chevalier gives also an example: “Thus the man who proved the existence of movement by walking was right; only he failed to explain why he was right” (*Henri Bergson*, p. 107-108). This philosophical spirit and Bergson’s concept ‘intuition’ has the same meaning in certain contexts. Thus, we could have determine common sense with intuition. However, intuition is something more than common sense, it is the extension of common sense and thus requires an effort of the mind. As it can be understood from Chevalier’s example, we must also succeed in giving the reasons of what we do feel. This is done by intuition when we take it to be as a method of doing philosophy. If common sense is not supported by an effort of the mind, it may even lead us to a “vicious circle” and so cannot advance “as a philosophical explanation” (*TFW*, p. 2). Daniel J. Herman argues that according to Bergson, common sense has to be “verified” and therefore, consciousness has to be cleared up from the opinions which are not verified (1991: 123). Moreover, we cannot again equate common sense with intuition because in his book *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, for instance, he defines common sense as “social sense” which is “innate in normal man.” And since common sense gives us “the existence of society”, it “may become impaired” (p. 106). We should then have to say that we have to be careful when Bergson uses the term ‘common sense’ because it may either be in the sense of philosophical spirit or in the sense of social sense. In *Creative Mind*, where he talks

To ask whether the universe exists only in our thought, or outside of our thought, is to put the problem in terms that are insoluble, even if we suppose them to be intelligible; it is to condemn ourselves to a barren discussion, in which the terms *thought*, *being*, *universe*, will always be taken on either hand in entirely different senses. To settle the matter, we must first find a common ground where combatants may meet; and since on both sides it is agreed that we can only grasp things in the form of images, we must state the problem in terms of images, and of images alone (*MM*: 25-26).

Bergson says that idealism cannot pass from perception to reality and realism fails to pass “from reality to immediate consciousness which we have of it.” As a result, the point of contact between matter and mind is lost. This is due to the failure of distinguishing between the point of view of action and the point of view of knowledge. Both idealism and realism including the Kantian realism (as Bergson says), consider the issue matter-mind from the standpoint of “pure knowledge” instead of action. In Kantian realism, we find no “common measure” between the “thing-in-itself”, the real, and “the sensuous manifold from which we construct our knowledge.” And again in Kantian philosophy, my consciousness of matter is relative because the relation between the phenomena and the thing is considered as a relation between that of appearance and reality (*MM*: 230-232). The mistake of both simple realism and that of Kantian realism come from the same source: “both raise homogeneous space as a barrier between the intellect and things.” The first one “makes of this space a *real* medium, in which things are in suspension” (*MM*: 231) and hence making it one with

about philosophical intuition, Bergson characterizes common sense to be “nearer to the attitude of science than to that of philosophy” because the attitude of common sense “results from the structure of the senses, of intelligence and of language.” Ordinary knowledge like scientific knowledge takes “things in a time broken up into an infinity of particles” in such a way that instants follow one another without duration. “Movement is for it a series of positions, change a series of qualities, and becoming, generally, a series of states” (p. 126). Common sense here has a negative sense. It is not used in the sense of “philosophical spirit”.

“extensity”.¹² “Our senses perceive the qualities of bodies and space along with them” and the realist claims that “extensity is an aspect of these physical qualities—a quality of quality” (*TFW*: 91-92). Kantian realism, on the other hand, considers space “as an *ideal* medium, in which the multiplicity of sensations is coordinated” (*MM*: 231). In the first case, space is understood in the sense of an external reality that is completely independent of the consciousness which we have of these things in suspension and hence no point of contact between matter and mind. In the second case, space is regarded only as an ideal medium in the sense that it is the pure a priori form of intuition as outer sense. Together with the a priori form of intuition as inner sense which is time, these two imply that they come prior to any experience, that they are not derivable from but rather are the necessary conditions of experience and that things are known as they appear to us under these two forms of sensibility. However, Bergson claims, by so doing, Kant “separated space from its contents,” “the Transcendental Aesthetic consists in endowing space with an existence independent of its content” (*TFW*: 92-93). Although Kant rejected Descartes’ identification of space and matter as well as Locke’s conception of space “as an abstraction from sensibles,” he turned to a conception of space which is “subjective and ideal, issuing from the ‘nature of mind in accordance with a stable law as a scheme, so to speak, for co-ordinating everything which is sensed externally’.” In order to produce experience and knowledge, the intuitions of space and time are adapted to the concepts of the understanding. This implies at the same time that if these intuitions cannot be adapted to the concepts of the understanding, no possible experience and knowledge could be

¹² Descartes, for example, identified space with “extension in length, breadth, and depth” (1644,

obtained. This subjective conception of space and time brought then with it the spatial and temporal “limits of human intuition” (Caygill, 1995: 372).¹³ Thus, Bergson claims, homogeneous time and space became a barrier between the intellect and things. He says, “Kant imagines on the one side “things in themselves,” and on the other a homogeneous Time and Space, through which the “things in themselves,” are refracted (*TFW*: 233). In other words, things in themselves were outside the spatial and temporal limits of intuition. As I said before, these Kantian claims are due to the consideration of mind and matter from the standpoint of knowledge. What would Bergson’s claims be then if he considers this issue from the standpoint of ‘action’ as he suggested?

I previously said that matter is an aggregate of images which implies that there are many kinds of images. “Yet there is *one* of them which is distinct from all the others, in that I do not know it only from without by perceptions, but from within by affections: it is my body” (*MM*: 17). In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson says that the material objects are cut out by our perception, but there is an object among all the objects which is privileged: it is “the living body” (*CE*: 12). Our body seems to be then an image but a special one in that it is the only image that I can also know it through my affections. The difference between affections and perceptions is that the former are felt where the latter are perceived and that the former are “within our body” where the latter are “outside our body”. Considered from its surface, our body “is given to us in the form both of sensations and of an image” (*MM*: 234). Considered from within, it is given in

p. 46). For him, space, matter and extensity were used in the same sense.

¹³ Besides the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Caygill uses Kant’s *Inaugural Dissertation*, §15 to explain Kant’s notion of space.

the form of affective sensations. All the different affections contains “an invitation to act” including the act of waiting or doing nothing (*MM*: 17-18) and consciousness is present in all these different affections. Bergson says,

I interrogate my consciousness as to the part which it plays in affection: consciousness replies that it is present indeed, in the form of feeling or of sensation, at all the steps in which I believe that I take the initiative, and that it fades and disappears as soon as my activity, by becoming automatic, shows that consciousness is no longer needed (*MM*: 18).

Previously, I have said that there were two attentions: the attention mind gives to matter and the attention mind gives to itself. Concerning this second one I have said that consciousness turned toward itself was no longer intellect. In the above quotation, Bergson claims to have interrogated his consciousness and his consciousness in turn to have replied. I can claim this situation to be an example of consciousness being turned toward itself. In this example, consciousness is not turned toward action, if it were we would call it intellect. However, I just mentioned that affections were containing an invitation to act and that consciousness was present in these affections, on the condition that our actions does not become automatic. This implies that consciousness is indeed turned toward action and therefore, Bergson talks here about the intellect. Now, in the above quotation, it is clear that the attention is turned toward consciousness itself. In this sense, the *answer* for when consciousness is present and when it is not, does not come from the intellect. It comes from intuition. On the other hand, it is with our intellect that we take the initiative to act because as I mentioned before, in order to act, we begin by proposing an end, we make a plan. *Ipsa facto*, if there is no end anymore and no plan to be made, then we cannot talk

about the presence of consciousness meaning that our acts became automatic. From these analyses, we can also, I believe, realize that there is a relation between intuition and intellect: one feeling the action to be performed from within, the other taking the initiative at the same time from without. Intuition and intellect seem then to complement each other. Do not these analyses give us also some hints concerning the relation between mind and body?

Our body, says Bergson, is “a center of action” (*MM*: 20) or “an instrument of action, and of action only. In no degree, in no sense, under no aspect, does it serve to prepare, far less to explain, a representation” (*MM*: 225). By this assertion is meant that the external world or the whole universe—which is defined by Bergson as “aggregate of images” just like matter—cannot be produced by our body because if this were true, it would have implied that either our nerves or nerve centers, in short our brain, which are all images, would have determined “the image of the universe”. However, the universe is a self-existing image. The reason is that our brain is part of the material world and not vice versa.

If the image which I term cerebral disturbance really begot external images, it would contain them in one way or another, and the representation of the whole material universe would be implied in that of this molecular movement. Now to state this proposition is enough to show its absurdity. The brain is part of the material world; the material world is not part of the brain. Eliminate the image which bears the name material world, and you destroy at the same time the brain and the cerebral disturbance which are parts of it. Suppose, on the contrary, that these two images, the brain and the cerebral disturbance, vanish: *ex hypothesi* you efface only these, that is to say very little, an insignificant detail from an immense picture. The picture in its totality, that is to say the whole universe, remains. To make of the brain the

condition on which the whole image depends is, in truth, a contradiction in terms, since the brain is by hypothesis a part of this image. Neither nerves nor nerve centers can, then, condition the image of the universe (*MM*: 19).

Our body is only “a center of action” and not a center for engendering to the external world. By this is meant the interaction between external images “influencing the image that I call my body” through transmitting movement to it and my body influencing external images by “giving back movement to them.” All the images act by “receiving and giving back movement” and so does our body. The difference between my body as an image and other images is that “my body appears to choose, within certain limits, the manner in which it shall restore what it receives” (*MM*: 19).

Matter is an aggregate of images and the perception of matter is defined by Bergson as “*these same images referred to the eventual action of one particular image, my body*” (*MM*: 22) and because of this, perception is “directed toward action, and not toward pure knowledge” (*MM*: 31). He says, “that which constitutes our pure perception, is our dawning action” (*MM*: 68). And so we can say that perception and intellect have the same function, that is they are both turned toward action. In fact, in *Creative Evolution*, Bergson defines perception in terms of the intellect by saying that perception is prolonged in intellect. “The aspect of life that is accessible to our intellect—as indeed to our senses, of which our intellect is the extension—is that which offers a hold to our action” (*CE*: 162).

3.2.3 The Point of View of Action Versus The Point of View of Knowledge

Let us for the moment resume the study of consciousness we have dealt so far in order not to get lost in the determination of different concepts. I have said that intellect and intuition were the two aspects of consciousness. I then started to analyze the first aspect. I saw that the intellect was turned toward action, that we think in order to act which meant that we were proposing an end and making a plan accordingly, and that all this meant that the attention of our mind was fixed on matter. Without explaining in detail, I mentioned that when the mind was turned toward itself it would no longer be called intellect but intuition. I then continued the study on determining what Bergson understands by matter because I claimed this would further our search for the intellect and so for consciousness. We saw that this concept was considered along the disputes of idealism and realism and I mentioned Bergson's claim that these disputes were due to a misunderstanding of the concept of matter. I gave Bergson's definition of matter which was an aggregate of images. This constituted also, as Bergson claimed, the common ground of both schools of philosophy. However, what was meant by image was to be understood neither in the way the idealists used it nor in the way realists had used it, the first making it one with representation where the second making it one with thing. Bergson placed image in a place between the thing and the representation. This conception of matter enabled him to claim matter to be a self-existing image. We saw that the external world or the whole universe was an aggregate of images as well and so also a self-existing image. In this aggregate of images, there was one which is different than all the others in that I knew it not only from without by perceptions but also from within by affections. This was my body. We also saw that these affections were inviting the body to action. Our body consisted also of other images such

as the nerves, nerve centers or the brain itself. The external world could not be produced by the brain because of its being part of the material world and not vice versa. As to how we were perceiving the aggregate of images, Bergson had claimed that the perception of matter was these aggregate of images pointing out to the actions of my body. So perception had to be understood from the standpoint of action and not from the standpoint of pure knowledge like the idealists and the realists attempted to understand it. I lastly concluded that perception and the intellect shared the same function that was to be turned toward action.

Let us now continue our analyses. We still do not know what really the philosophical outcome of looking at the subject of matter and mind from the standpoint of action and not from pure knowledge would be. Concerning perception Bergson says, "Let us no longer say, then, that our perceptions depend simply upon the molecular movement of the cerebral mass. We must say rather that they *vary with* them, but that these movements themselves remain inseparably bound up with the rest of the material world" (*MM*: 24-25). From this claim, I think, we understand Bergson's point. He tries to place both mind and matter in a whole in such a way that these two influence one another. In no way he wants to separate the external from the internal world. He aims to grasp the reality as a whole, to explain life from the point of view of an original impulse, to describe the different lines of evolution and different tendencies so that what we think we are pointing out, for example, in the language we use, through different concepts that have to be separated necessarily from one another in one way or other, are to be suspected in giving us the reality as it is,

that is, as a whole. When we read Bergson from this point of view, I think, we are remaining true to him, otherwise his real aim would be lost and we were then left with some Bergsonian concepts that we try to grasp by themselves.

Every philosophical doctrine, Bergson claims, asserts two systems of images: the system of science and the world of consciousness. Idealism tries to derive the first one from the second one while realism does the contrary. “But in this deduction neither realism nor idealism can succeed, because neither of the two systems of images is implied in the other, and each of them is sufficient to itself (*MM*: 26-27). Thus I can claim that Bergson is pursuing a system according to which there would not be the need to derive one system of images from the other because there would then be one system only. This aim of one system of images cannot be realized by means of certain reductions, by reducing, for example, matter to “atoms in motion”. Because even in this latter reduction, atoms in motion are still images.

The presence of an image and its representation are not separated from each other because there is no individual image, every image is “bound up with all other images.” Bergson says,

It is true that an image may *be* without *being* perceived—it may be present without being represented—and the distance between these two terms, presence and representation, seems just to measure the interval between matter itself and our conscious perception of matter...If there were *more* in the second term than in the first, if, in order to pass from presence to representation, it were necessary to add something, the barrier would indeed be insuperable, and the passage from matter to perception would remain wrapped in impenetrable mystery. It would not be the same if it were possible to pass from the first

term to the second by way of diminution, and if the representation of an image were *less* than its presence; for it would then suffice that the images present should be compelled to abandon something of themselves in order that their mere presence should convert them into representations (*MM*: 35).

There is no relation either of an addition or of a diminution kind between the presence and the representation of an image. But Bergson asks, “how then does it not appear to be in itself that which it is for me?” He replies that it is because all images are “bound up with all other images.” Thus, when we perceive a material object, we do not only have its representation by itself, but rather, we have it together with what precedes and follows that representation (*MM*: 35-36). It seems to us that each image is individual because we take perception to be “a kind of photographic view of things, taken from a fixed point by that special apparatus which is called an organ of perception (*MM*: 38). In this lies the difference between considering the subject of matter and mind from the standpoint of pure knowledge and from the standpoint of action. When we take up the first position, perception becomes a kind of photographic view and it is this conception of perception that we then put at the center of getting pure knowledge. In the second one, on the other hand, we no longer take perception to be a photographic view and as something to give us pure knowledge. Instead, we look at things from the point of view of action. Perception then becomes that which makes our body act. So the aim is no longer to get at pure knowledge, in other words, we are not aiming at *getting at* something, we are trying to do philosophy and so grasp everything in the way we *live*. That is the reason why this is a *life philosophy*.

Bergson says that “*perception is master of space in the exact measure in which action is master of time*” (*MM*: 32). By this he means that when by perception we mean getting at pure knowledge, we attribute to it “a purely speculative end” and as such we isolate it from action. The result is perception rendered “both inexplicable and useless.” Inexplicable because it is incapable of explaining how images “act and react upon each other,” and useless because by misunderstanding the past as “*that which acts no longer*,” it does not make a distinction between perception and memory—claiming that memory is nothing but a storehouse of present images—and by so doing, the subject becomes unable “to pass beyond itself.” On the contrary, by the assertion “action is master of time,” he tries to show that “the *actuality* of perception lies in its *activity*, in the movements which prolong it” (*MM*: 68-69) and as such, he claims to have restored “the true character of perception.”

Restore, on the contrary, the true character of perception; recognize in pure perception a system of nascent acts which plunges roots deep into the real; and at once perception is seen to be radically distinct from recollection; the reality of things is no more constructed or reconstructed, but touched, penetrated, lived, and the problem at issue between realism and idealism, instead of giving rise to interminable metaphysical discussions, is solved, or rather, dissolved by intuition (*MM*: 69).

The reality of things are “touched, penetrated, lived.” What is this other than a life philosophy? It is true that such a conception of perception is subjective since individuals’ actions will differ from one another. This, Bergson is aware of. However, in no way he sees this characteristic of perception as an obstacle to know things “*in themselves*, from within and not from without” because of the existing relation between pure perception and time. He says, “pure perception, in

fact, however rapid we suppose it to be, occupies a certain depth of duration, so that our successive perceptions are never the real moments of things, as we hitherto supposed, but are moments of our consciousness” (*MM*: 69). This is the philosophical outcome of the attention our mind gives to itself.

3.3 Consciousness as Memory

I have said that the relation between the presence and the representation of an image was not that of an addition or a diminution kind and that images were all bound up with other images. I said, moreover, that we can know things in themselves from within and that our successive perceptions were the moments of consciousness. However, it is still true that things in themselves have something more than their representation. Bergson says, “there is in matter something more than, but not something different from, that which is actually given (*MM*: 71). The reason for this comes from the fact that our conscious perception consists of the act of “discernment”. Consciousness, “*in regard to external perception*” [my italics] implies choosing according to our needs. In this sense, it has a “necessary poverty” due to the fact that it is obliged to choose from the aggregate of images (*MM*: 38). Bergson says,

Undoubtedly, conscious perception does not compass the whole of matter, since it 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).

The presence and the representation of matter should be considered in terms of time and not of space, that is, in terms of the moments of consciousness and not of the moments of things. This being the case, between the perception of matter and matter itself, we only see a difference of degree. Seen in terms of space, we place a kind of barrier between the two and become unable to really explain the relation between them other than claiming them to differ in kind. Seen in terms of time, we are not placing a barrier between them, we only grasp the interval between the two, this interval varying according to our “body’s power of action,” at times having increased and at times decreased. Consider, for example, the distance between our body and the perception of an object. The distance between them measures, according to Bergson, “the greater or less imminence of a danger, the nearer or more remote fulfillment of a promise.” If our perception of an object is separated by an interval from our body, then we can only talk about a “*virtual* action.” On the other hand, “the more distance decreases between this object and our body (the more, in other words, the danger becomes urgent or the promise immediate), the more does virtual action tend to pass into *real* action.”¹⁴ If the object we perceive is our body itself, this implies that there is no distance we can talk about, or that the distance is “reduced to zero.” “Then it is no longer virtual action, but real action, that this specialized perception will express, and this is exactly what affection is.” The virtual action of our body “concerns other objects and is manifested within those objects; its real action concerns itself, and is manifested within its own substance” (*MM*: 57). From this follows that external perception expresses virtual action whereas

¹⁴ The difference between virtual and real action is considered in *Matter and Memory* in terms of the distance or the interval existing between them. In *Creative Mind*, in the essay “The

affections express real actions. This time we see that there is a difference in kind between virtual and real action implying that in real action there is something different from virtual action. This difference lies in the objects they are concerned with, either with the body itself or with other objects. Where there is no longer virtual action, there is real action. There is not something more in real action than in virtual action and by the same token, we cannot talk about an action becoming more real. These are different planes of actions. An action is either virtual or real. We can only talk about virtual action tending more or less to pass into real action.

Affections are felt whereas images are perceived. As such, affections are within our body and images are outside of it, in other words, affections represent the internal where images represent the external. Our body, defined as “the common limit of the external and the internal,” gives us the reason why our body “is given to us in the form both of sensations and of an image” (*MM*: 57, 234). Let us remember that our body was a special image, the image that I knew both from without and from within. I said that virtual actions, though differing in kind from real actions, tend to pass into real actions. This claim tells us at the same time that virtual actions permeate real actions. So I have to say that, by claiming that these two actions differ in kind from one another, Bergson did not mean to put down a barrier between them. He meant rather that their objects were different, with the surface of our body being the common limit of them. He says that the virtual actions of our body are

Possible and The Real”, it is put down to serve the claim of unforeseeability and novelty that will be important in understanding Bergson’s philosophy of life.

complicated by, and impregnated with, real actions, or, in other words, that there is no perception without affection. Affection is, then, that part or aspect of the inside of our body which we mix with the image of external bodies...The truth is that affection is not the primary matter of which perception is made; it is rather the impurity with which perception is alloyed (*MM*: 58).

Affections do not then exist by themselves because they are not pure. On the contrary, they have to be impure because they are mixed by perceptions. In other words, perception destroys the purity of affections. Reversibly, since there is no perception without affection, “pure perception” is possible only theoretically. In order to explain Bergson’s conception of pure perception, Kolakowski says,

Pure perception would be what is purely ‘external’; it is not really a part of the individual consciousness (between ‘to be’ and ‘to be perceived’ there is only a difference of degree, not in kind); but pure perception—which would be pure present—is an ideal entity’ in fact each act of perception contains various layers of memory and it is memory which makes up its ‘subjective side’ and thus makes it conscious (1985: 39-40).

Since pure perception consists of what is purely external, it implies matter itself. Matter is not really a part of the individual consciousness since, as I previously mentioned, there is a difference of degree between the two. On the other hand, they do not differ in kind. If, in the course of this study, we will discover other senses of consciousness other than the one that is individual, this may well imply that matter could be a part of this consciousness. However, pure perception or matter, in relation to our individual consciousness, implies pure present that is an impossibility since there is no perception without memory just like there can be no memory without perceptions. As I mentioned before, “our successive perceptions are the moments of our consciousness.” In other words,

there is for us nothing that is instantaneous. In all that goes by that name there is already some work of our memory, and consequently, of our consciousness, which prolongs into each other, so as to grasp them in one relatively simple intuition, an endless number of moments of an endlessly divisible time (*MM*: 69-70).

What is the reason for the subject of memory entering now in our discussion? As we saw, our affections and our successive perceptions do not exist by themselves, they rather permeate one another. This fact is explained by Bergson with the concept “memory-image”. It refers to the “memory actualized in an image.” Our past remains in the state of “pure memory” until it becomes an image in the present. As such, memory actualized in an image consists of “the prolongation of the past into the present” (*CE*: 17). Pure memory refers to our past “without attachment to the present” (*MM*: 140-141). However, this is only in theory. In order to explain the survival of images, Bergson introduces three processes which are pure memory, memory-image and perception and claims that “none of them in fact, occurs apart from the others.” He explains it as such,

Perception is never a mere contact of the mind with the object present; it is impregnated with memory-images which complete it as they interpret it. The memory-image, in its turn, partakes of the “pure memory,” which it begins to materialize, and of the perception in which it tends to embody itself: regarded from the latter point of view, it might be defined as a nascent perception. Lastly, pure memory, though independent in theory, manifests itself as a rule only in the colored and living image which reveals it (*MM*: 133).

Mind is defined as “pure memory” whereas matter is defined as “pure perception.” With memory, we are “in the domain of spirit” because it is “a spiritual manifestation” (*MM*: 240, 244). Matter is a material manifestation. It is defined as pure perception because it consists of those aggregate of images in

themselves. Since we do perceive certain of these images, there is always something more to matter itself but never something different from what we do perceive.

Although it seems that when we say that matter is pure perception we define matter in terms of ourselves, this is not the case. The universe itself is an aggregate of images. My body itself, though special, is an image too and we do perceive nothing but images (we have to remember again how Bergson defines “image”). My body is a center of action. My perception is a nascent action. Life itself is understood in terms of action. It consists of the interaction between our bodies and other bodies. My perception of images is never a mere contemplation, it always refers to a nascent action, either virtual or real.

When we look at from the point of view of action, matter itself is no longer defined in terms of ourselves. It becomes so only when we try to understand life from the point of view of knowledge because then we look at it in terms of a knowing subject and a known object. Through this first division we go on with other divisions. As a consequence, we are left with many divisions. We then attempt to bring together what we have divided, in other words, we make artificial unions, which implies at the same time that our divisions themselves were artificial. The opposition between perception and matter is then an artificial one. Bergson says, “this opposition between perception and matter is the artificial work of an understanding which decomposes and recomposes according to its habits or its laws: it is not given in immediate intuition” (*MM*: 244). So understood, our point of view of knowledge comes from the

understanding or the intellect. Basing our viewpoints on the intellect, we decompose and recompose everything. Our point of view of action, on the other hand, comes from intuition. Basing our viewpoints on intuition, we grasp everything as a whole, in relation (this time not artificial) to one another.

I said that with memory we were in the domain of spirit. Memory is defined by Bergson as “the intersection of mind and matter” (*MM*: 13). Mind is pure memory and matter is pure perception. Their intersection is memory or our successive perceptions. As I said before, perception was never a mere contact of the mind with the object present. In whatever we perceive, memory is there. And pure memory manifests itself also with these perceptions. However, there is a difference in kind, and not of degree, between perception and memory, they are not of the same nature. Recollection, for instance, is not “a weakened perception” and perception is not “an intenser memory” (*MM*: 239). Perception is turned toward action whereas memory is a spiritual manifestation. With perception, we are in the domain of action, with memory, we are in the domain of spirit. Bergson says,

To touch the reality of spirit we must place ourselves at the point where an individual consciousness, continuing and retaining the past in a present enriched by it, thus escapes the law of necessity, the law which ordains that the past shall ever follow itself in a present which merely repeats it in another form and that all things shall ever be flowing away. When we pass from pure perception to memory, we definitely abandon matter for spirit (*MM*: 235).

Pure perception, that is matter, is the domain of the law of necessity whereas memory, that is spirit, is the domain of freedom. “In determinate conditions

matter behaves in a determinate way. Nothing it does is unforeseeable...but with life there appears free movement. The living being chooses or tends to choose. Its role is to create”. There is “a zone of indetermination” according to which nothing is foreseeable (*ME*: 17). This is due to the nature of memory. Now we understand that life does not consist only of the totality actions. It has a spiritual side. Just like human beings being consisted of both a body and a mind, reality itself consists of both mind and matter. In the preface of *Mind-Energy*, consisted of Bergson’s lectures and essays, Wildon Carr explains this fact:

Mind is not a *vis vitae* convertible into a *vis inertiae*. Equally impossible is it to conceive an ultimate dualism,—mind and matter as the co-existence of two independent realms of reality. Mind and matter are divergent tendencies; they point to an original and necessary dichotomy; they are opposite in direction; but they are mutually complementary and imply the unity of an original impulse. The new concept [Mind-Energy] therefore is of a reality with which life and consciousness are identical, as distinct from the concept of a reality independent of life (*ME*: vii).

Matter is necessity (*CE*: 264, *ME*: 17). The determinism of matter, however, is not absolute, it admits relaxation. At moments when matter shows elasticity, consciousness then finds the opportunity to install itself. And “once installed, it will dilate, it will spread from its point of entry and not rest till it has conquered the whole, for time is at its disposal.” Freedom inserts itself within necessity and turns it to its profit. Remembering that matter is an aggregate of images, we can say that by perceiving certain of these images, consciousness is then said to turn to its profit what it has perceived. If this were not the case, Bergson says, “life would be an impossibility” (*ME*: 18).

We see that matter is necessity and mind is freedom. Now in what sense it is claimed that they are mutually complementary? The evolution of life, from the beginning, shows us that consciousness flows against matter in order to realize itself. This is the direction in the line of evolution which ends in man. Consciousness is directed toward freedom, creation and choice. Matter, on the other hand, since it is necessity itself, is that which “brings division and precision.” In order to differentiate itself from matter, consciousness had to follow its direction in the line of evolution and realize its tendency through utmost effort. The question is, did consciousness, while realizing itself, went away from matter as to create an absolute opposition between them? The truth is that matter is necessary to the realization of life. We understand this fact when we consider the material realization of, for example, a thought, a poem or a work of art. “Matter calls forth effort” and makes their realization possible. In thought, there is confusion and so in order for it to become distinct, “there must be dispersion in words.” “Our only way of taking count of what we have in mind is to set down on a sheet of paper, side by side, terms which in our thinking interpenetrate.” In this way matter distinguish and separate the confused elements in our thought (*ME*: 27-28). Bergson says,

Thought which is only thought, the work of art which is only conceived, the poem which is no more than a dream, as yet cost nothing in toil; it is the material realization of the poem in words, of the artistic conception in statue or picture, which demands effort. The effort is toilsome, but also it is precious, more precious even than the work which it produces, because, thanks to it, one has drawn out from the self more than it had already, we are raised above ourselves. This effort was impossible without matter (*ME*: 28-29).

It is in this way that matter and consciousness or mind are mutually complementary, although they appear to us “as radically different forms of existence, even as antagonistic forms” (*ME*: 17).

Bergson claims that, in right if not in fact, consciousness is co-extensive with life. He says,

The living being chooses or tends to choose. Its role is to create. In a world where everything else is determined, a zone of indetermination surrounds it. To create the future requires preparatory action in the present, to prepare what will be is to utilize what has been: life therefore is employed from its start in conserving the past and anticipating the future in a duration in which past, present and future tread one on another, forming an indivisible continuity. Such memory, such anticipation, are consciousness itself. This is why, in right if not in fact, consciousness is co-extensive with life (*ME*: 17).

Life and memory or consciousness are indivisible continuity. That is the reason why they are co-extensive. Both extend to past, present and future with respect to indivisible continuity. Bergson gives us an example concerning the way life and consciousness work. The properties of a cell or the instinct of an animal demonstrate the same knowledge and the same ignorance peculiar to memory or consciousness. “All goes on as if the cell knew, of the other cells, what concerns itself; as if the animal knew, of the other animals, what it can utilize—all else remaining in shade.” It seems that when life confines to a species, “is cut off from the rest of its own work” keeping only what is vital for that species in continuing its existence. This Bergson resembles the way memory works. He says, “we trail behind us, unawares, the whole of our past; but our memory pours into the present only the odd recollection or two that in some way complete our

present situation (*CE*: 167). We have to remember that pure memory was the whole of our past. In it, nothing is forgotten. In a way, nothing is lost, all is in a sense recorded in pure memory. It is with our successive perceptions that are selective that we forgot what is not of vital concern for us. It is the same with the workings of life. Bergson says,

There is no universal biological law which applies precisely and automatically to every living thing. There are only *directions* in which life throws out species in general. Each particular species, in the very act by which it is constituted, affirms its independence, follows its caprice, deviates more or less from the straight line, sometimes even remounts the slope and seems to turn its back on its original direction. It is easy enough to argue that a tree never grows old, since the tips of its branches are always equally young, always equally capable of engendering new trees by budding. But in such an organism—which is, after all, a society rather than an individual—*something* ages, if only the leaves and the interior of the trunk. And each cell, considered separately, evolves in a specific way. *Wherever anything lives, there is, open somewhere, a register in which time is being inscribed* (*CE*: 16).

Within life, nothing is forgotten because of time being inscribed. All the details such as the reason for the extinction of one species and its replacement with another one, life already records it. In this sense, it functions like pure memory which is all our past. It can be said that life itself has its own memory. Life too, works in such a way that it only shows us what is not forgotten, what remains to be of vital concern for every form of existence. However, in truth, life and pure memory forget nothing. Life functions in the same way as memory or consciousness while the essence of life is in truth operates like pure memory. We understand this only when we grasp time in terms of life itself. This truth is also expressed by Bergson in terms of our narrowed consciousness and the

principle of consciousness which we shall deal with shortly. Before that, let us try to understand what is given in the immediate data of consciousness.

Bergson claims that what is given immediately to our consciousness is on the one hand the existence of memory (*CE*: 17) and on the other hand the existence of external reality (*IM*: 188). So another answer to the question asked previously “why should we accept unreservedly as true and real the ultimate data supplied by consciousness?” it can now be said that it is because they give us the existence of both memory and external reality. By memory Bergson means *duration* or “the prolongation of the past into the present” (*CE*: 17) that also implies consciousness (*IM*: 179). It seems that what is given in consciousness is consciousness itself. This is in no way a contradiction. It means that it is with memory that consciousness finds itself, is aware of itself and realizes itself and so it is in this sense that memory and consciousness have the same meaning. As to the existence of external reality, Bergson explains it in terms of *mobility* (*IM*: 188). He says,

There do not exist things made, but only *things* in the making, not states that remain fixed, but only *states* in process of change. Rest is never anything but apparent, or rather relative. 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 the others (*IM*: 188).

Change is immanent to both things and states and so they are rather to be called ‘things in the making’ and ‘states in process of change’. Our intelligence, however, “substitutes for the continuous the discontinuous, for mobility stability” because it seeks “solid bases for operation” (*IM*: 188). Intuition, on the

other hand, attains the absolute. “Intuitive knowledge...establishes itself in the moving reality and adopts the life itself of things (*IM*: 192). It is only through intuition that we come to understand things as things in the making and states as states in process of change. Now these latter seems to refer to the change existing in external reality. However, Bergson mentions the states in process of change and just after he talks about the consciousness we have that introduces us to the interior of reality. Therefore, by states in process of change he actually implies our states of consciousness.

External reality is mobility or change; change is immanent to both things and states; our consciousness introduces us to the interior of a reality on whose model we must imagine the others. It seems that external reality and consciousness, or let us name it this time internal reality, are not distinguished from one another with respect to mobility. Consciousness introduces us to the interior of a reality. This means that there is an external reality and that the work of consciousness is to enter that in order to attain absolute knowledge and which means in turn that this reality is internalized. However, we have to be careful in identifying this internal reality. There is no internal reality by itself. Although Bergson’s notion of consciousness, as Sartre had claimed, cannot be reduced to the “consciousness *of* something,” as it was the case in Husserlian phenomenology, and that consciousness “can be in a purely virtual state” (1962: 39-40), the fact that consciousness always involves elements from the whole aggregate of images alongside from pure memory, implies, I believe, that consciousness cannot actually be in a purely virtual state, in other words, consciousness being in a purely virtual state is itself virtual.

Mullarkey says, “wherever subjectivity touches the external world, it is shaped into the image of the latter” (1999: 20). In this way, it is not possible to distinguish the internal from the external. We use these terms, external reality and internal reality because this distinction is already made by philosophers so that it becomes difficult to explain to the metaphysicians of our time the reality as a whole without appealing to this distinction previously made. However, the truth is that, as Bergson says,

the matter and life which fill the world are equally within us; the forces which work in all things we feel within ourselves; whatever may be the inner sense of what is and what is done, we are of that essence. Let us then go down into our own inner selves: the deeper the point we touch, the stronger will be the thrust which sends us back to the surface. Philosophical intuition is this contact, philosophy is this impetus (*PI*: 124-125).

And a little further he says,

the act of philosophizing is a simple one. The more we become imbued with this truth, the more we shall be inclined to take philosophy out of the school and bring it into closer contact with life (*PI*: 126).

The act of philosophizing is a simple one if we succeed in going down to our inner selves. However, it would be wrong to understand this in terms of psychological analysis of our consciousness. I mentioned before that Bergson differentiates between psychology and metaphysics, saying that “psychology has for its object the study of the human mind working for practical utility” whereas “metaphysics is but this same mind striving to transcend the conditions of useful action” (*MM*: 15). It would then be correct to say that it is the reason why we try to go down to our inner selves, that is, in order to transcend the conditions of

useful action. There we would grasp the immediate that will then make our philosophy a simple act. And it is this immediacy which will be our *contact* with life. Immediate data are the data in which we can find our answers in relation to life, in other words, the answers to our philosophical questions concerning life lie within us because we are of the essence of the content of what we have asked. Immediate data are the only data to start from in order to bring philosophy into closer contact with life. In these senses, the immediate data of consciousness are at the same time ultimate data.

3.4 Consciousness as Duration

Going down to our inner selves which is nothing but immediacy, gives us the simple intuition according to which the distinction between the internal and the external is no longer considered to be absolute. This simple intuition is always accompanied by the idea of time. It is with intuition that we grasp that past, present and future constitute an indivisible continuity. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that what we here talk about is the intuition of time. Although the concept of intuition has several meanings in Bergson's philosophy, the idea of time is present in each case. More precisely, it is the notion of concrete duration which Bergson calls *durée réelle* that he takes into account. This duration, as we saw, is nothing but memory and also consciousness. Duration in the sense of consciousness is considered together with the *states of consciousness*. More precisely, the idea of duration is considered as "the multiplicity of conscious states" (*TFW*: 75), a "qualitative multiplicity" that can

be defined as “a unity that is multiple and a multiplicity that is one” (*CE*: 258) and “a group of mutually interpenetrating elements” (Mullarkey, 1999: 19).

Durée is inner experience, it is the inner life itself and as such it is grasped by means of intuition. As Kolakowski says, it is “the real time we experience in our own conscious life” (1985: 15). What is at issue here is a conception of *experienced time* that is distinguished from both the scientific conception of time and that of everyday life. Bergson’s underlying assumption is that if time, that is *durée réelle*, is inner experience, then it must be related with the life of the consciousness and so with the states of consciousness. To put down his concept *durée réelle*, Bergson has to show that states of consciousness are prone not to a quantitative but to a qualitative change. The reason for this is that the scientific conception of time is quantitative, that is measurable, whereas what can be called inner experience is not essentially quantitative, in other words, inner experience becomes quantitative only if we attempt to measure it through spatial relations.

Bergson’s claim is that our intellect understands ‘time’ by means of ‘space’. Since space is measurable, time understood from this point of view becomes measurable as well. One can understand the idea involved here, for example, by watching the movement of a clock. In fact, clock is the best example of our intellect that understands time in terms of space. Watching the movement of the second hand, it can be seen that time is grasped through measurement, that is spatially. The same cycle of the movements of the clock repeats itself constantly (in every twelve hours). It can be said that where

there is measurement, there are also spatial relations and vice versa. Space in Bergson's philosophy, is all that can be reduced to measurement. Time understood by means of space implies, for instance, that we can talk about a temporal interval 't' that is measured in one way or other. To give an example for time understood by means of space, we can quote from a contemporary book:

Necessarily, space allows something to move within it only if there are at least two places. This is because necessarily, an entity, x, moves only if there is a temporal interval, t, and two places, p1 and p2, such that x (or a proper part of x) occupies p1 and p2, such that: x (or a proper part of x) occupies p2 at the end of t (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, 1994: 57).

It is "because of its relation with number" that "time at first seems to us to be a measurable magnitude, just like space" (*TFW*: 104). Time understood as such is not concrete in Bergsonian sense of the term. Here time can only be thought to be concrete because of its being measurable. However, Bergson uses the term concrete only in the sense of experienced, leaving the term abstract for everything that is not experienced. Time measured is the sign for the notion of time understood only through space, it does not at all give us the idea of concrete time.

3.4.1 The Intensity of The States of Consciousness and The Extensity of Space

It seems that what Bergson calls abstract time is time understood through the habit of our consciousness (in the sense of the intellect) comprehending time through space whereas concrete time is time understood

as real duration—the real sense of time that implies the dismissal of this habit. We can ask what kind of a habit is this. As Pearson states,

The fundamental habit of thought that needs to be overcome is the one which would attribute qualities (in the form of sensations) to consciousness and conceive movements (always divisible) in terms of calculable differences of direction and velocity (2002: 162-163).

One important example analyzed by Bergson is our treatment of the psychic states.¹⁵ According to Bergson, we try to understand these states through quantitative relations among which there are the relations such as ‘greater than’, ‘less than’, ‘more intense’, and ‘less intense’. One body, for example, argues Bergson, can be said to be greater than another body. This consists of a quantitative difference which implies that the greater *contains* the other.

Daniel J. Herman argues that sensations, feelings and passions are psychic phenomena and these are thought of possessing a measurable magnitude. In this, both common sense and physiological psychology agree, with the former talking about, for example, having a greater or less pain while the latter expressing the same thing by means of scientific facts and therefore only objectively. He says that whatever the nature of the “subjective” phenomenon is, physiological psychology always talks about a “quantitative augmentation or diminution” because the facts that science engages with are

¹⁵ The term ‘psychic states’ is used in a very general way in the sense of states of consciousness consisting of deep-seated psychic states such as desire, hope, joy, sorrow; aesthetic feelings such as beauty and grace and the feelings concerning music, poetry or art in general; moral feelings such as pity; states involving physical symptoms like muscular effort; violent emotions like rage and fear; affective sensations such as pleasure, pain and disgust; representative sensations consisting of sensation of sound, sensations of heat and cold, sensations of pressure and weight and finally sensation of light. See TFW, p. 1-60.

all extensive and therefore measurable. Common sense, on the other hand, uses words that belong in fact to the perception of solid objects. Taking into consideration both of these views with regard psychic phenomena, we see that the intensity of psychic phenomena are measurable just like material facts and so “psychological life” becomes “parallel to matter,” and therefore, “we will always be confronted with the image of a container and contained.” In order to clear up these misunderstandings, we have to “place ourselves on the phenomenological terrain” because here we are concerned not with an explanation or an analysis but with a description, that is, the description of intensity which is not reducible to extensity. In order to describe this, we have to place ourselves in “the subjective life to see psychic phenomena going on.” “Psychological positivism” cannot achieve this because it places itself outside the subject he observes. To place itself inside the subjective life is what phenomenological psychology can achieve and only then “the subject can recognize himself as subject” (1991: 123-125).

It may be argued that the relation ‘greater than’ is different, for instance, from the relation ‘longer than’ in that, depending on the case, it may be a quantitative as well as a qualitative relation while the latter is definitely a quantitative relation. However, what Bergson understands by ‘quantity’ is anything that can possibly be divided in such a way as to have parts in which some of them can be said to contain others. Within this context, the relation ‘greater than’ becomes a quantitative relation as well. He says,

When we assert that one number is greater than another number or one body greater than another body, we know very well what we mean. For in both cases we allude to

unequal spaces,...and we call that space the greater which contains the other. But how can a more intense sensation contain one of less intensity? (*TFW*: 1-2).

Psychic states are not quantitatively superior or inferior to one another. They can rather be said to be of a comparable intensity which is characteristic of a qualitative change. When, for example, the intensity of the psychic state ‘pity’ increases, there is “a qualitative progress” which consists of “a transition from repugnance to fear, fear to sympathy, and from sympathy itself to humility.” Intensity is a “quality of the sensation” (*TFW*: 19). Therefore, the proper determination for intensity is not to talk about “an increase of sensation” but of “a sensation of increase”—the former sensation being a quantity whereas the latter being a quality (*TFW*: 48). In other words, the notion of intensity expresses a quantitative relation when we attempt to measure it, that is, when we talk about an increase as if we measured it (and it might be possible to measure it in which case it will be also possible to talk about a quantitative change). This is expressed in terms of an *increase* of sensation. The notion of intensity expresses a qualitative relation when we talk about the *sensation* of the increase, in other words, in this case it is what we have felt that counts. According to this second sense of intensity, intensity is not measurable, it is rather lived, that is, experienced. Therefore, the intensity of the psychic states can only imply qualitative changes. There is no means of measuring the transition from repugnance to fear, fear to sympathy, sympathy to humility. Moreover, even if we had the means for measuring them, Bergson would not have changed his claim because no matter how far scientific researches advances, what is experienced is one thing, what is measured another. That which can be measured à propos our psychic states,

can only be based on the brain which is a part of the material world. Mind, referring to the spiritual domain, is not apt to measurement. If it would be possible to measure memory, this would be an advance. However, since memory is “the intersection of mind and matter” (*MM*: 13), there would still remain a part, that is the spiritual part, that cannot be possibly measured. The intensity of our psychic states refer then to this spiritual realm.

Herman considers Bergson to be one of the founders of phenomenology, at least with regard to *Time and Free Will*. He argues that Bergson in fact obeyed to Husserl’s commandment, which is to return back to the things themselves, by talking about the intensity of the psychic states.¹⁶ He also claims that Bergson makes a phenomenological reduction like Husserl when he attempts to clear consciousness from scientific superstructures as well as from the opinions of common sense which are not verified. It is this clearing up, Herman says, that gives us the way to the life of the deep consciousness which is in fact time lived or *durée réelle* (1999: 122-123). Mullarkey also accepts that Bergson is doing a kind of phenomenology in *Time and Free Will* but warns us against labeling him to be a phenomenologist, a vitalist or in a certain sense an empiricist because he does not think that “Bergson ever stuck to one philosophy at all” (Mullarkey, 1999: 3). I do agree with Mullarkey. In fact, there are times Bergson can be said to be a phenomenologist, an existentialist, to be a process philosopher, an

¹⁶ Bergson never met with Husserl personally and heard of him only from his friends which means that he did not read his books. In fact, Husserl and Bergson were born in the same year but lived in different areas. Thus to claim that Bergson obeyed Husserl’s commandment should mean something else. It might mean, for example, a kind of anachronism or disregarding years as well as personal or reading encounters and so consider phenomenology as a whole movement.

empiricist or even a pragmatist in a certain sense. In fact, he is all of them and not one of them.

When we talk about a qualitative change, the change in question is said to have occurred in *durée*. Similarly, when we talk about a quantitative change, the change can only be said to have occurred in time understood by means of space. Bergson's notion of time as *durée réelle* is the qualitative change consisting of the transition from one state of consciousness to another. We have the habit of comprehending this transition between psychic states spatially, that is to say measurably. When there no longer is the relation of the container and the contained, we can no longer talk about quantity and measurement. The qualitative change that occurs in *durée réelle* does not involve this relation of the container and the contained. If we perceive the psychic states from the viewpoint of "the less inside the more," this relation refers to a quantity which is divisible and extended (*TFW*: 3). In other words, we think of the intensity of the states of consciousness as greater or less, in the sense that a forest is greater than a grove. We think in terms of being more sad than ever or less sad than before, determining the feeling through magnitude, in terms of quantitative differences. This is the way reflective consciousness, that is the intellect, treats things. In Bergson's words, reflective consciousness "delights in clean cut distinctions, which are easily expressed in words, and in things with well-defined outlines, like those which are perceived in space." This is where our habit of understanding psychic states through magnitude comes from. However, when for instance, we consider "deep-seated feelings," it becomes much easier to grasp them not quantitatively but qualitatively: when a desire, for example,

gradually becomes a deep passion, it is no more possible to treat the states of consciousness related to these deep-seated feelings as feelings “set side by side,” that is, grasped by means of space. Rather, we understand that these feelings constitute “the gradual alterations which take place in the confused heap of co-existing psychic states.” These gradual alterations indicate qualitative changes (*TFW*: 8-9). By the idea of *co-existence* of the psychic states, we see the notion of time entering into the dispute of qualitative change.

I have said that qualitative change occurred in *durée réelle*. *Durée* could be understood in terms of memory which was the prolongation of the past into the present. “The truth is that memory does not consist in a regression from the present to the past, but, on the contrary, in a progression from the past to the present” (*MM*: 239). This idea of *progression* expresses the co-existence of the psychic states. We bring our past to the present, in other words, in the present we find the past. This means that our states of consciousness are not separated from one another, rather, they *permeate* one another. Concerning quantitative changes, we cannot say that the different states in this change permeate one another. They are rather “set side by side.” It also means that our past moves like our present:

An attention to life, sufficiently powerful and sufficiently separated from all practical interests, would thus include in an undivided present the entire past history of the conscious person—not as instantaneity, not like a cluster of simultaneous parts, but as something continually present which would also be something continually moving...What we have is a present which endures (*PC*: 152).

Reflective consciousness understands time homogeneously. As Bergson says, “When we speak of *time*, we generally think of a homogeneous medium in which our conscious states are ranged alongside one another as in space, so as to form a discrete multiplicity” (*TFW*: 90). In other words, when we understand time as homogeneous (time conceived as measurable), we do not grasp the qualitative transition among conscious states. Homogeneous time brings with it the notion of discrete multiplicity. Our reflective consciousness, accustomed to think of conscious states through quantitative relations, makes of time nothing but space, whereas pure duration is devoid of the idea of space (*TFW*: 91). Bergson says,

Let us ask consciousness to isolate itself from the external world, and, by a vigorous effort of abstraction, to become itself again. We shall then put this question to it: does the multiplicity of our conscious states bear the slightest resemblance to the multiplicity of the units of a number? Has true duration anything to do with space?...if time, as the reflective consciousness represents it, is a medium in which our conscious states form a discrete series so as to admit of being counted, and if on the other hand our conception of number ends in spreading out in space everything which can be directly counted, it is to be presumed that time, understood in the sense of a medium in which we make distinctions and count, is nothing but space. That which goes to confirm this opinion is that we are compelled to borrow from space the images by which we describe what the reflective consciousness feels about time and even about succession; it follows that pure duration must be something different (*TFW*: 90-91).

Bergson defines space as “the material with which the mind builds up number, the medium in which the mind places it” (*TFW*: 84). And he thinks that we take number to be “a juxtaposition in space”.¹⁷ From this conception of number, two

¹⁷ This conception of number actually goes back to the Pythagorean number theory. Pythagoreans did not make a distinction between number and magnitude. Measuring and

kinds of multiplicities arise: the multiplicity of material objects counted in space and the multiplicity of conscious states that are countable only when they are symbolically represented in space. The conception of number “is immediately applicable” to the multiplicity of material objects whereas concerning the multiplicity of conscious states, we can say that number is applicable only when conscious states are represented symbolically with the help of space (*TFW*: 85-87). From this it follows that Bergson thinks of number in terms of its applicability.

counting were one and the same thing. They believed that the continua of time, motion and space were discrete, These were all discrete collections made up of points. Every point on a line could be reached by a process of division and multiplication of the unit which was known to be as the principle of commensurability (I take this as an opportunity to thank Prof. Carl Posy who taught me for one semester the history of mathematics concerning the conception of number and the continuum including especially Brouwer’s intuitionistic ideas. I also thank Prof. Mark Steiner, who did everything for me to come to Jerusalem, to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, to study with him and Prof. Posy). Pythagorean mathematics depended strongly on pictures and imagination: numbers had shapes. Thence they constructed triangular numbers, square numbers, oblong numbers. They represented numbers and explained their properties by means of dots arranged in certain figures or patterns. It was Aristotle’s claim that since Pythagoreans claimed that things were composed of numbers, they failed to separate the numbers from the things numbered. They associated numbers with spatial arrangements. When they claimed that things were numbers, they had also asserted that it was the quantitative form of things which gave each thing its identity (See, John Burnet (1968), *Greek Philosophy*; The Oxford Companion to Philosophy; Robert S. Brumbaugh (1964), *The Philosophers of Greece*; W. K. C. Guthrie, *The History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1). What I think is that, when Bergson claims that number is spatial, he actually tries to show us that we are all inclined to Pythagoreanism, that we are inevitably all born as a Pythagorean. The tendency of the intellect Bergson talks about can in fact be explained with the tendency of the Pythagoreans in not making a distinction between number and magnitude or between measuring and counting by making numbers spatial arrangements. In fact, according to Bergson, the image of number is formed through a certain stage which afterwards we forget the origin. This stage is as follows: counting the objects (for example, a row of balls), then counting the points (the row of balls transforms into points), finally the points are transformed into abstract numbers (See *TFW*, p. 75-85). This view implies that originally numbers are formed from the empirical world. Bergson seems to think of mathematics in terms of its application to sciences. That is the reason why, I think, his conception of number is spatial, that is, measurable. Is it then possible to change the Pythagorean view by changing our conception of number? The history of mathematics shows us that this is indeed the case. However, even today, there is no agreement between philosophers of mathematics concerning the notion of number. There are different even opposing views. This implies that Bergson’s conception of number is among many others. I also think that Bergson would still claim that our states of consciousness are not countable and cannot therefore be measured, no matter which other conceptions of number he could adapt among the existing ones such as Fregean, Brouwerian or even that of Benacerraf. Because his ultimate aim is to differentiate between the discrete and the continuous in order to give us a picture of reality as it

Bergson thinks that time, in so far as it is a homogeneous medium, and not concrete duration, is reducible to space (*TFW*: 98). Pure duration, on the other hand, is defined as follows: “unadulterated inner continuity, continuity which was neither unity nor multiplicity, and which did not fit into any of our categories” (*I*: 14). And in another place he says, “within myself a process of organization or interpenetration of conscious states is going on, which constitutes true duration” (*TFW*: 108) and again, “pure duration is the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself *live*, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states” (*TFW*: 100). This is the meaning of *endure*. Albert Thibaudet says that “to endure is to change, to change like we change by living.” It means that we accumulate a past that is modified continuously in the present (implying Bergson’s conception of memory). When we say “I am a thing that endures” the verb ‘to be’ is not in its proper place because it does not give us the notion of duration as flowing. Language, in this sense, “is the work of a substantialist metaphysics.” Philosophy should create another language, if it was capable of creating it, in which the verb ‘to be’ is replaced by the verb ‘to become’ as the most essential verb. It would create this new language on the model of the expression “*to live a life*” and so would produce such sentences as “*I am becoming a becoming that endures*” (1923: 22).

As it is understood, the aim here is to build a language that reflects life as we live it, that reflects the “true evolution”, “the radical becoming”. Our intellect is unable to understand that duration is “the very stuff of reality” and

is. In this sense, his aim is not to do a kind of philosophy of mathematics but a philosophy of

the fact that it does not understand it is reflected in our common language. Bergson says, “of becoming we perceive only states, of duration only instants” and he describes it as the “two illusions” we have: “it consists in supposing that we can think the unstable by means of the stable, the moving by means of the immobile” (*CE*: 272-273). He also says, “just as we separate in space, we fix in time. The intellect is not made to think *evolution*, in the proper sense of the word—that is to say, the continuity of a change that is pure mobility” (*CE*: 163).

When our consciousness recalls its former conscious states, it does not place them alongside with its actual states but rather makes both the former and the actual states an organic whole, just like the notes of a tune melting into one another such that even if the notes succeed one another, one perceives them “in one another” (*TFW*: 100). Therefore, the fact that conscious states are in succession does not imply a spatial apprehension of them. The truth is that they succeed one another but at the same time *permeate* one another. This is, in Bergson’s words, “succession without distinction,” that is, “an interconnection and organization of elements, each one of which represents the whole, and cannot be distinguished or isolated from it except by abstract thought” (*TFW*: 101). This is again the reason for Bergson mentioning the *co-existence* of the conscious states. In fact, what forms the distinctions among conscious states is not the idea of succession but simultaneity. Simultaneity, as contrary to its common association, brings with it the idea of succession understood as “a continuous line or a chain,”¹⁸ when in fact it is not. Bergson says,

life.

¹⁸ We can remember here Aristotle’s notion of the continuum which is not made up of points like that of the Pythagoreans. Aristotle rather claims that the points are constructed in such a

We set our states of consciousness side by side in such a way as to perceive them simultaneously, no longer in one another, but alongside one another; in a word, we project time into space, we express duration in terms of extensity, and succession thus takes the form of a continuous line or a chain, the parts of which touch without penetrating one another (*TFW*: 101).

Now, let us examine closely Bergson's concepts of permeability or interpenetration and impenetrability. I said that there were two kinds of multiplicities: that of the material objects counted in space and that of the conscious states that are not countable unless symbolically represented. Bergson claims that we in fact make such a distinction when we talk about "the impenetrability of matter."¹⁹ According to him, impenetrability of matter is not "a quality of matter", it is a "logical necessity." When we say that "two bodies cannot occupy the same place at the same time," we do not mean that these two

way that they come into question only when we attempt to divide or extend a line. Therefore, points do not exist prior to the continuum, they are always end points or beginning points. Prof. Posy describes Aristotle's notion of the continuum as "viscous" or "goeey". One of Aristotle's rejection for the continuum being made up of discrete points is that if points were next to one another, then two or more points would share the same border which would imply that since the border belongs to both, points cannot be discrete. On the other hand, if points were separated from one another by some void, this would still imply a space between them. As a consequence, there is no way for the continuum to be made up of discrete points. Sorabji says that according to Aristotle, "now" is an instant. "An instant is not a very short period, but rather the beginning or end (the boundary) of a period. It therefore has no size, for it is not a very short line, but rather the boundary of a line" (Richard Sorabji (1983), *Time, Creation, and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*. Cornell University Press, p. 8). All the three continua of time, motion and space are described by Aristotle in the same way. According to Bergson, the continuum of time is not the same as the continuum of space. The continuum of space could be the way Aristotle describes but this is the idea of succession understood as "a continuous line or a chain" according to which the points cannot be said to permeate one another, they rather follow one another in succession in a way that we grasp them simultaneously. All the points are placed alongside one another. This can only be the description of the continuum of time projected into space. The real continuum of time is the continuum of duration that we understand when we look at our states of consciousness in terms of succession without distinction, in terms of their co-existence.

¹⁹ We have to say that Bergson thinks of matter, here, in terms of solid objects. It is only with *Matter and Memory* that we can talk about a theory of matter which is formed on the aggregate of images. This does not mean, however, that he changes his conception of matter. Rather it is proper to say that in *Time and Free Will*, Bergson concentrates on the intensity of the psychic states and so in order to explain it, he refers to a conception of matter in terms of its impenetrability.

bodies penetrate one another. This fact is not “a physical but a logical necessity.” The impenetrability of matter is related with the idea of number and therefore with the idea of space. “If impenetrability is generally regarded as a quality of matter, the reason is that the idea of number is thought to be independent of the idea of space.” The idea of two bodies occupying the same place refer to the idea of the number 2 and the idea of number 2 refers to “two different positions in space.” As a consequence, two bodies cannot occupy the same place at the same time because necessarily they refer to two different positions in space. Therefore, “to assert the impenetrability of matter is simply to recognize the inter-connexion between the notions of number and space, it is to state a property of number rather than of matter.” That is the reason why impenetrability is a logical necessity. On the other hand, states of consciousness “permeate one another.” We can count our feelings, sensations and ideas only when “we represent them by homogeneous units which occupy separate positions in space and consequently no longer permeate one another” (*TFW*: 88-89). In other words, if we want we can count our states of consciousness. However, we cannot do so without changing their nature. The nature of our states of consciousness is such that they interpenetrate one another. They follow one another in succession but in a succession that cannot be expressed in a homogeneous medium.

Thinking of conscious states in terms of successiveness brings the idea of their being ‘in one another’ whereas thinking of conscious states in terms of simultaneity brings the idea of them being ‘alongside one another’ which leads to the idea of succession with distinction, that is, succession in the form of a

continuous line. It is this latter notion which has the idea of a clear cut “before” and “after” that leads to an understanding of the states of consciousness in separation, that is, in the sense of a line that has parts of which some are said to be before or after the others. The idea of before and after brings with it the idea of “*order* of succession” (*TFW*: 101). Bergson asks,

Now, when we speak of an *order* of succession in duration, and of the reversibility of this order, is the succession we are dealing with pure succession, such as we have just defined it, without any admixture of extensity, or is it succession developing in space, in such a way that we can take in at once a number of elements which are both distinct and set by side? There is no doubt about the answer: we could not introduce *order* among terms without first distinguishing them and then comparing the places which they occupy (*TFW*: 101-102).

Pure duration implies the intensity of the states of consciousness whereas space implies the extensity of a number of elements placed in a homogeneous medium. Elements that are placed in a homogeneous medium can be easily differentiated from one another and any order can be attributed among the parts that are ranged side by side. Intensity of the states of consciousness does not allow such an order because since these states co-exist, what is before and after in such a wholeness cannot be grasped. Bergson gives an example comprising the two senses of succession: there are two ways of conceiving the movement I do with my finger when I move it, for instance, on a surface. I have “sensations of different qualities.” Either I picture these sensations in duration and therefore feel them in succession in a way that “I cannot at a given moment perceive a number of them as simultaneous and yet distinct,” or I picture them in “an order of succession” in a way as to perceive them not only with my faculty of “perceiving a succession of elements, but also of setting them out in line after

having distinguished them.” The second conception of succession is the succession “converted into simultaneity and is projected into space” (*TFW*: 102) whereas the first conception of succession is pure succession which Bergson describes it as “succession without a distinction.” It is this conception of succession that is at the heart of the real conception of time as opposed to the time conception based on measurement.

3.4.2 Homogeneous Time and Concrete Duration

One could ask about the difference between conceiving time as based on measurement and time as real, concrete duration. Bergson says,

The line one measures is immobile, time is mobility. The line is made, it is complete; time is what is happening, and more than that, it is what causes everything to happen. The measuring of time never deals with duration as duration; what is counted is only a certain number of extremities of intervals, or *moments*, in short, virtual halts in time. To state that an incident will occur at the end of a certain time t , is simply to say that one will have counted, from now until then, a number t of simultaneities of a certain kind. In between these simultaneities anything you like may happen. Time could be enormously and even infinitely accelerated; nothing would be changed for the mathematician, for the physicist or for the astronomer. And yet the difference with regard to consciousness would be profound (I am speaking naturally of a consciousness which would not be integrated with intra-cerebral movement); the wait from one day to another, from one hour to the next would no longer cause it the same fatigue. Science cannot concern itself with this specific wait (or interval), and its exterior causes (*I*: 13).

‘Fatigue’ is important then in grasping the real sense of time, that is, pure or concrete duration. It indicates that something endured, that an experience went on, that we carried on our life, that we did not counted the moments but just

placed ourselves in becoming, that we let ourselves live, in short, that we refrained from separating our present state from our former states. In this sense, time becomes that which causes everything to happen.

Bergson also says that we experience duration especially in sleep. Our consciousness, in sleep, does not “measure duration” but simply “feel it.” What we have to *learn*, Bergson claims, is the way to distinguish between “duration as quality” and “time that has become quantity by being set out in space” (*TFW*: 126-127). As can be understood, Bergson tries to show that this notion of homogeneous time is not the real sense of time and that such a notion rather belongs to the notion of space and that such an apprehension is due to the habit of our consciousness. Now, let us try to understand what he means by this habit.

Duration is “what one feels and lives” and in that it is very difficult to understand. Bergson asks, “how would it appear to a consciousness which desired only to see it [that is, duration] without measuring it?” It is this question, Bergson says, that led him to “delve deep into the domain of the inner life, which until then had held no interest” for him. This look into the inner life made him find out that consciousness could then grasp duration without stopping it which would mean that consciousness has taken itself as object (*I*: 13), in other words, that consciousness has turned towards itself. This implies that it is in intuition that duration is grasped. As such the intuition of time is “the flow of the inner life” and the role of philosophy is to put down the conditions of “the direct, immediate observation of oneself by oneself.”

However, “this inner observation is warped by habits we have developed” which in turn create pseudo-problems for philosophy (*I*: 27). In the preface of *Time and Free Will*, Bergson says,

We necessarily express ourselves by means of words and we usually think in terms of space. That is to say, language requires us to establish between our ideas the same sharp and precise distinctions, the same discontinuity, as between material objects. This assimilation of thought to things is useful in practical life and necessary in most of the sciences. But it may be asked whether the insurmountable difficulties presented by certain philosophical problems do not arise from our placing side by side in space phenomena which do not occupy space, and whether, by merely getting rid of the clumsy symbols round which we are fighting, we might not bring the fight to an end. When an illegitimate translation of the unextended into the extended, of quality into quantity, has introduced contradiction into the very heart of the question, contradiction must, of course, recur in the answer (*TFW*: ix).

Our conscious life consists of “successive phases” which permeate one another. However, each of them corresponds to an “oscillation” of the clock “which occurs at the same time.” Since these oscillations are conceived as distinct from one another, “we get into the habit of setting up the same distinction between the successive moments of our conscious life.” This conception begets the spatial apprehension of time in the form of a “homogeneous inner duration” which implies the identity of the successive phases and according to which these phases do not permeate one another. Each oscillation of the clock disappears when the following one appears. Bergson gives an example for the illegitimate translation of the unextended into the extended that concerns our conceiving the musical notes. He says,

Forget what you have learnt from physics, examine carefully your idea of a higher or lower note, and see whether you do not think simply of the greater or less effort which the tensor muscle of your vocal chords has to make in order to produce the note? As the effort by which your voice passes from one note to another is discontinuous, you picture to yourself these successive notes as points in space, to be reached by a series of sudden jumps, in each of which you cross an empty separating interval: this is why you establish intervals between the notes of the scale (*TFW*: 45).

Similarly, the same is mistakenly attributed to our conscious states which beget the notion of “homogeneous time” (*TFW*: 109). In other words, homogeneous time, Bergson claims, is “the symbolical image of real duration” (*TFW*: 125). This symbolical image is the way our consciousness is accustomed to apprehend. However, it implies an illegitimate translation of the unextended into the extended and of quality into quantity. That is the reason why Bergson says that “time could be enormously and even infinitely accelerated; nothing would be changed for the mathematician...And yet the difference with regard to consciousness would be profound.” Contradiction here arises because since time is then nothing but moments placed side by side, we will have counted a number t of simultaneities as if all in an instant, not caring about what is going on in the actual moments themselves. When we then ask, “how then would it be possible to explain this number t of simultaneities in terms of what we live?” we do not have an answer other than saying that “nothing is lived because we accelerated time enormously.” This cannot be said without asserting that our consciousness does not play a role in the conception of time. But, how would it then be possible to explain aging, being bored, getting tired, waiting, struggling for something and so on?

I can now say that for Bergson, if we cannot take into consideration our states of consciousness, we cannot talk about a conception of time but only of space. On the other hand, when we take into consideration the states of consciousness, there only we can talk about *durée réelle*. In other words, there is only one real sense of time and this is *durée réelle*, other senses which are mistakenly attributed to the concept of time are merely the illegitimate translation of the unextended into the extended and of quality into quantity, like the translation of our states of consciousness in terms of counting, ordering or comparing magnitudes. We can again give the example of clock: when the eyes follow the hand of the clock, we “merely count simultaneities.” Bergson says,

Outside of me [my states of consciousness], in space, there is never more than a single position of the hand and the pendulum, for nothing is left of the past positions. Within myself a process of organization or interpenetration of conscious states is going on, which constitutes true duration. It is because I *endure* in this way that I picture to myself what I call the past oscillations of the pendulum at the same time as I perceive the present oscillation (*TFW*: 108).

Therefore, “what we call measuring time is nothing but counting simultaneities.” It is the ego which thinks about the successive movements of the hand of a clock. If we think for a moment that there is no self, then there will always be one position of the clock devoid of past positions, which means there is no duration. In fact, it is through the act of recalling past conscious states and bringing them to their present state that the self conceives time. It conceives in succession without a distinction, that is, by keeping the past in mind whereas outside ourselves, there is no succession but only simultaneity,

that is, pure space. This will be understood when we think about the absence of the clock and its movements. Then there would only be “the heterogeneous duration of the ego.” Homogeneity of time implies a single position put alongside the same single position and this is what Bergson calls ‘pure space’. Heterogeneity, on the other hand, implies the multiplicity of conscious states permeated into one another, which Bergson calls ‘pure duration’ (*TFW*: 108). Here is then again a definition of pure duration: by pure duration, we can understand nothing other than the multiplicity of the states of consciousness permeating into one another. This multiplicity is, Bergson calls, “qualitative multiplicity” or “qualitative heterogeneity” as opposed to “quantitative multiplicity,” “discrete multiplicity” or “extensive homogeneity” (*TFW*: 95, 120-121).

The fact that there are two kinds of multiplicities implies that there are two kinds of meaning of the word “distinguish” which is again qualitative and quantitative. These two meanings refer to “the difference between *same* and *other*.” The first one is the multiplicity or heterogeneity that “contains number only potentially.” In this case, “consciousness, then, makes a qualitative discrimination without any further thought of counting the qualities or even of distinguishing them as *several*.” We have then a multiplicity that does not involve quantity. The second meaning of the word “distinguish” refer to “a multiplicity of terms which are counted or which are conceived of being counted.” In this case, we place these terms in space because we then think of “the possibility of externalizing them in relation to one another.” We then have a multiplicity that is only quantitative. When we externalize them, we radically

differentiate them from one another that Bergson explains by the phrase “the one having ceased to be when the other appears on the scene.” It is in this sense that space is employed, in other words, in order to allow our states of consciousness exist separately. Bergson concludes that what is homogeneous is space alone and that “every discrete multiplicity is got by a process of unfolding in space” (*TFW*: 120-122). He says,

There is neither duration nor even succession in space, if we give to these words the meaning in which consciousness takes them: each of the so-called successive states of the external world exists alone; their multiplicity is real only for a consciousness that can first retain them and then set them side by side by externalizing them in relation to one another. If it retains them, it is because these 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 connexion (*TFW*: 120-121).

Duration and succession do not then belong to the external world, they belong only to the consciousness that retains its states in their co-existence. States of the external world exist by themselves (in an aggregate of images, if you want) and as distinct from one another whereas states of consciousness exist by permeating one another and by retaining the states of the external world in this permeability. When Bergson claims that duration belongs only to our consciousness, he does not mean that only consciousness exists, which would imply a kind of solipsism. What he intended to do was to *reduce* duration to consciousness, to explain becoming in terms of consciousness alone. However, he also have asserted that the external world exists by itself, that is, outside of my consciousness, since he believed that the states of the external world existed alone. On the other hand, there is duration because there is

consciousness or states of consciousness. If there were no consciousness then there would be nothing but homogeneous time which means that there would only be simultaneities, only a single position and becoming would be an impossibility. Nothing would change since nothing would have endured. Since such a world is an impossibility for consciousness, we have to conclude that, basing our claims on the fact that we have consciousness, it is not possible to distinguish between what is internal and what is external. We can only say that, if there were no consciousness, the external world would be nothing but pure homogeneity or pure space. On the other hand, if there were no external world, there would only be pure heterogeneity, pure duration, states of consciousness without any admixture of extensity. This is not a logical impossibility. In fact, real space and real duration exist. However, the fact that we are beings with consciousness, life forces us to meet in the intersection of real space and real duration which is “simultaneity,” “the symbolical representation of duration.” Bergson thus says,

There is a real space, without duration, in which phenomena appear and disappear simultaneously with our states of consciousness. There is a real duration, the heterogeneous moments of which permeate one another; each moment, however, can be brought into relation with a state of the external world which is contemporaneous with it, and can be separated from the other moments in consequence of this very process. The comparison of these two realities gives rise to a symbolical representation of duration, derived from space. Duration thus assumes the illusory form of a homogeneous medium, and the connecting link between these two terms, space and duration, is simultaneity, which might be defined as the intersection of time and space (*TFW*: 110).

Let us remember here that Bergson’s way of proceeding had begun from his question “how would it appear to a consciousness which desired to see

duration without measuring it.” It was with this question that he had started to search for “the inner life” (*I*: 13). After claiming that our consciousness had been formed on the intellect and not on intuition, he then attempted to find out the reality when our consciousness would rather be turned toward intuition. He searched for whether by doing this, most of the unsolvable, even contradictory philosophical problems would come to an end.

3.5 The Theory of True Evolution

Based on Kant’s theory of knowledge that involves antinomies, Bergson claims that there seem then to be only three alternative theory of knowledge: “either the mind is determined by things, or things are determined by the mind, or between mind and things we must suppose a mysterious agreement.” However, he claims another one that he thinks that Kant did not find out because of his claim that time and space were on the same plane. The fourth alternative, according to Bergson, consists,

first of all, in regarding the intellect as a special function of the mind, essentially turned toward inert matter; then in saying that neither does matter determine the form of the intellect, nor does the intellect impose its form on matter, nor have matter and intellect been regulated in regard to one another by we know not what pre-established harmony, but that intellect and matter have progressively adapted themselves one to the other in order to attain at last a common form. *This adaptation has, moreover, 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).

In order to understand this substantial claim, we have to understand Bergson's theory of true evolution. The key in grasping true evolution is in the terms 'adaptation' and 'creation' as Bergson uses them. Adaptation is not a "mechanical adjustment" in the sense that water and wine are adapted to the form of the glass in which they are poured together. Here, both the content and the container have the same form, in other words, these two liquids adapted themselves to a form which is "ready-made" because this form of the container "has forced its own shape on the matter." This is only a mechanical adjustment and not the adaptation of organisms to their environment. Bergson asks, "in the adaptation of an organism to the circumstances it has to live in, where is the pre-existing form awaiting its matter? The circumstances are not a mold into which life is inserted and whose form life adopts." There are no ready-made forms. Life creates its forms continuously according to the changing circumstances (*CE*: 57-58). The sentence "intellect and matter have progressively adapted themselves one to the other in order to attain at last a common form," has to be understood in this sense. The form they attained was not a pre-established form. But they finally attained a common form because intellectuality and materiality are created within the same movement of life.

The thing is that "life is a tendency" and a tendency consists of creating "divergent directions." Life preserves all the different tendencies and "creates with them diverging series of species that will evolve separately." As such, we can talk about "the general movement of life, which on divergent lines is creating forms ever new." That which constitutes this general movement, Bergson calls it "original impetus" or "vital impetus." It refers to

“an internal push that has carried life, by more and more complex forms, to higher and higher destinies,” it is “a creation unceasingly renewed” (*CE*: 99-103). That is the reason for rejecting an end life has to fulfill:

To speak of an end is to think of a pre-existing model which has only to be realized. It is to suppose, therefore, that all is given, and that the future can be read in the present. It is to believe that life, in its movement and in its entirety, goes to work like our intellect, which is only a motionless and fragmentary view of life, and which naturally takes its stand outside of time. Life, on the contrary, progresses and *endures* in time (*CE*: 51).

We cannot determine the direction of life by looking at the present circumstances. The only thing we can do is to think over the direction of life by looking at the past. Only in this sense it can be said that life had an end to pursue. This would naturally be a partial view since the general movement of life, as we said, creates continuously. Life, says Bergson, “is the continuation of one and the same impetus, divided into divergent lines of evolution” (*CE*: 53). The direction of the general movement of life towards the intellect is only one among the different lines of evolution and it gives us a fragmentary view of life. That is why Bergson asks “created by life, in definite circumstances, to act on definite things, how can it [that is the intellect] embrace life, of which it is only an emanation or an aspect?” (*CE*: x).

Our intellect, as I mentioned before, is turned towards matter. By this Bergson understands that “our concepts have been formed on the model of solids” (remember his concept “impenetrability”) and that “our logic is, pre-eminently, the logic of solids” (*CE*: ix). That is why the notion of life that the

intellect presents us is artificial and symbolical (*CE*: xii). Both in logic and language, we cannot find “the element of real time.” On the other hand, we see that our psychological life is made of time and that the continuum of psychological life is not splittable in reality. It is discontinuous only when our attention is fixed on what we think to be a considerable change occurring among our mental states (*CE*: 2-4). This makes Bergson claim that life is of psychological order, psychological in the sense that since our states of consciousness “accumulate duration” (*CE*: 2), the general movement of life can truly be understood within this framework. He says, “as regards the psychological life unfolding beneath the symbols which conceal it, we readily perceive that time is just the stuff it is made of” (*CE*: 4). Time is not psychological by nature. However, since time is immediately given to our consciousness, there is no other means of grasping the very becoming of life in general. Outside of my conscious states, there is but a fragmentary view of life whereas within my consciousness, there is but a connected view of life because of the continuum of psychological life not being splittable due to duration. The real sense of time, therefore, is grasped only together with my conscious states. This claim is in no way implies that time is psychological by nature. On the contrary, since our psychological life is “the existence of which we are most assured and which we know best” (*CE*: 1), it is this internal life that truly guides us in our search for life in general. In other words, in freeing ourselves from our pre-conceived ideas that come from understanding life in terms of the intellect alone, the psychological life is our best means. Here, we cannot talk about a priority either of psychological life over duration or duration over psychological life. Without duration, there would be no psychological life and since it is due to our psychological life that we become aware of

duration, it is also true that without psychical life, there would no longer be duration.

What we live from our birth on—even before our birth because there are also prenatal dispositions—constitute our past but only a small portion of it, that is, only the part that is useful for our act, and it is this small part only that is brought to the present. “Doubtless we think with only a small part of our past, but it is with our entire past, including the original bent of our soul, that we desire, will and act.” From this follows that “consciousness cannot go through the same state twice.” Our personality changes continuously, at every moment, because it accumulates experience, without ceasingly. Hence, what constitutes our history is “the moments of our life.” Bergson says that we are “the artisans” of our moments of life which implies that each moment of our life “is a kind of creation” (*CE*: 5-7). Thence arises what I find to be one of his most important motto: “for a conscious being, to exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly” (*CE*: 7).

To endure is not only peculiar to our consciousness itself. In fact, duration is “immanent to the whole of the universe,” in other words, it is also true to say that “the universe *endures*.” Bergson says, “the more we study the nature of time, the more we shall comprehend that duration means invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new” (*CE*: 11). Therefore, I can again say that Bergson’s conception of time is in no sense subjective or psychological by nature. The universe endures just like my conscious states.

Evolution is “the very essence of life” and it takes place in real duration. According to the scientific conception of time, it is always an “instantaneous present” which is renewed continuously that counts. The mathematician who calculates the time never takes into consideration the past that is “bound up with the present.” In order to explain the work of the mathematicians, Bergson says,

When the mathematician calculates the future state of a system at the end of a time t , there is nothing to prevent him from supposing that the universe vanishes from this moment till that, and suddenly reappears. It is the t -th moment only that counts—and that will be a mere instant. What will flow on in the interval—that is to say, real time—does not count, and cannot enter into the calculation. If the mathematician says that he puts himself inside this interval, he means that he is placing himself at a certain point, at a particular moment, therefore at the extremity again of a certain time t' ; with the interval up to T' he is not concerned...he is always speaking of a given moment—a static moment, that is—and not of flowing time. In short, *the world the mathematician deals with is a world that dies and is reborn at every instant* (CE: 22).

It is not possible to talk about the evolution of life within such an understanding of time. The mathematician considers only the extremities and not what is went on in the intervals. The phrase “a world that dies and is reborn at every instant” could in fact be understood in the sense of a mystical aphorism if only it is cut out from its context. It could have meant a lot, for example, placed within a context about free will. It would have, then, meant that as beings having free will, we have the opportunity to start our life afresh and that we can do this whenever we want. However, at least in this context, Bergson did not mean this. He rather tried to emphasize that according to the

scientific conception of time, the past does not remain “bound up with the present.” The idea here, as I mentioned previously, is that there is a real space, without duration, in which phenomena appear and disappear simultaneously with our states of consciousness. On the other hand,

Evolution implies a real persistence of the past in the present, a duration which is, as it were, a hyphen, a connecting link. In other words, to know a living being or *natural system* is to get at the very interval of duration, while the knowledge of an *artificial* or *mathematical system* applies only to the extremity (*CE*: 22-23).

Real duration was the heterogeneous moments of which permeate one another. This makes us think that it is the same with the movement of evolution in general. The idea that something evolves already gives us the notion of duration. The moments of evolution, in this sense, also do permeate one another because there is no other means to create a history. In other words, we can talk about a history of life as a whole only when we consider each of the life’s moments as retaining its previous moments, that is, to bring its history to the present. This history of life is nothing other than the evolution itself. It is true that in this sense we can also talk about a kind of memory of life in general. That is the reason why Bergson says,

The more we fix our attention on this continuity of life, the more we see that organic evolution resembles the evolution of consciousness, in which the past presses against the present and causes the upspringing of a new form of consciousness, incommensurable with its antecedents (*CE*: 27).

And a little further he says, “it might be said of life, as of consciousness, that at every moment it is creating something” (*CE*: 29). Life is “creative

evolution” itself which is “true continuity”, “real mobility”, “reciprocal penetration” (*CE*: 162).

True continuity implies “irreducibility” and “irreversibility.” Of these, science tries to escape from because it only seeks “repetition”, searches for that which repeats itself. However, when we place ourselves within concrete duration, we do not find repetition but that which is “irreducible” and “irreversible” concerning “the successive moments of a history.” In order

to get a notion of this irreducibility and irreversibility, we must break with scientific habits which are adopted to the fundamental requirements of thought, we must do violence to the mind, go counter to the natural bent of the intellect. But that is just the function of philosophy (*CE*: 29-30).

The natural bent of our intellect is such that it pursues repetition, arranges the old elements it has at its disposal as if it creates something new, gets “*partial views* of the whole,” establishes between ideas “sharp and precise distinctions” and establishes again a discontinuity like the one between material objects. These are the scientific habits the intellect has. The function of true philosophy is, therefore, no to follow this bent but to go against it. To follow the natural bent of our intellect is useful in practical life and necessary for the sciences (*TFW*: ix). However, it is not proper for true philosophy.

The distinction I have mentioned before, between psychology and metaphysics, now gets its real meaning. Bergson has said that metaphysics was the “human mind striving to transcend the conditions of useful action and to come back to itself as to a pure creative energy” (*MM*: 15). To transcend

these conditions implies going counter to the natural bent of the intellect. To come back to itself as to a pure creative energy implies our mind grasping the true continuity, real mobility, reciprocal penetration, in short, creative evolution. This does not mean, however, that life does not have a kind of mechanism if we go against the natural bent of the intellect. Life, indeed, has a mechanism. However, as Bergson asks, “is it the mechanism of parts artificially isolated within the whole of the universe, or is it the mechanism of the real whole?” (*CE*: 31). By real whole, he understands “an indivisible continuity.” The mechanisms we construct by cutting out this continuity will be nothing but “*partial views* of the whole.” And, “with these partial views put end to end, you will not make even a beginning of the reconstruction of the whole, any more than, by multiplying photographs of an object in a thousand different aspects, you will reproduce the object itself.” These partial views then come from a notion of ‘part’ which cannot be taken as real parts (*CE*: 31), but more like artificial parts because of being obtained from dividing the indivisible continuity.

3.6 The Ontological Status of Duration

What rescues an organism from being “a mere mechanism” is duration. Because “the essence of mechanical explanation, in fact, is to regard the future and the past as calculable functions of the present, and thus to claim that *all is given*.” If we accept such a claim, we also have to accept that only “a superhuman intellect” would be able to grasp the past, present and future because only such an intellect could make this calculation (*CE*: 37).

Since all is given, this intellect would be able, just by looking at the present, to calculate the past and the future. However, this is not the case and radical mechanism, by being aware of this, comes up with another notion of duration. The metaphysic of radical mechanism is the one “in which the totality of the real is postulated complete in eternity, and in which the apparent duration of things expresses merely the infirmity of a mind that cannot know everything at once” (*CE*: 39). In other words, the notion of duration comes into play with regard the weaknesses of human mind. In this sense, it arises from an epistemological concern. Bergson’s conception of duration, on the other hand, is ontological since it is “the foundation of our being.” He says,

We perceive duration as a stream against which we cannot go. It is the foundation of our being, and, as we feel, the very substance of the world in which we live. It is of no use to hold up before our eyes the dazzling prospect of a universal mathematic; we cannot sacrifice experience to the requirements of a system. That is why we reject radical mechanism (*CE*: 39).

Duration is the substance of the world. It is that which enables us “to see all things *sub specie durationis*” (*PI*: 129), that is, to see everything under the aspect of duration.²⁰ This is what Bergson understands by ‘experience’. What are the outcomes of this conception of experience, we will see when we will discuss Bergson’s philosophy of life. However, for the moment I can say that there is a certain pragmatic trait in Bergson’s conception of duration. He says

²⁰ *Sub specie durationis* is a phrase Bergson probably made up after *sub specie aeternitatis* which means ‘under the aspect of eternity’, that is, viewed in relation to the eternal. Duration and eternity oppose one another because concerning duration, the emphasis is on human experience, on consciousness whereas with regard eternity, the emphasis is on something transcending human kind of experience, it is in a sense a Godlike experience as in Schopenhauer’s conception of eternity with respect to art, that is, that art enables us somehow to see things *sub specie aeternitatis*. For the different uses of this phrase see *Oxford Dictionary*.

that to conceive everything under a universal mathematic is of no use. He also says, “if there is nothing unforeseen, no invention or creation in the universe, time is useless.” Indeed what purpose time will serve to an understanding which sees everything as given? (*CE*: 39). Everything is not given because of becoming, because of true continuity, because of the evolutionary movement. It is not possible to claim both that all is given and that there still is becoming because once we assert that all is given, we already exclude the use of time. On the other hand, when we claim that there is becoming, if we use ‘becoming’ in its proper sense, we already posit the indivisible continuity and creation, thence we already exclude the possible fact that all might be given; instead we give time a purpose. This is a pragmatic trait.

When we say, on the contrary, that “time is purposeful,” which is a truth, we also see that it has an ontological status. I do not want to say teleological because although ‘teleological’ implies a purpose, this purpose is put down in relation to God’s existence. And I do not also want to say cosmological because although Bergson’s conception of time is also related with the nature of the cosmos or universe, it does not again put down in relation to God, on the contrary, it is always argued in relation to human experience. Moreover, in cosmology, the universe is usually assumed to be eternal, whence arise the notion of God and the opposition of *sub specie aeternitatis* with *sub specie temporis* or *durationis*. In criticizing Leibniz’s conception of time Bergson says, “in the doctrine of Leibniz, time is reduced to a confused perception, relative to the human standpoint, a perception

which would vanish, like a rising mist, for a mind seated at the center of things” (CE: 39-40).

Bergson’s claim that the universe endures does not imply eternity. That is the reason why he uses the phrase *sub specie durationis*. Therefore, having eliminated the possibilities of his conception of time to be teleological and cosmological, I claim once more that it rather is ontological because the basis of the universe and of our consciousness is time. Moreover, the question related with the difference between qualitative and quantitative difference, which is being discussed in relation to duration is ontological (Mullarkey, 1999: 123). The difference between extensity and intensity as well as the distinction between succession and simultaneity, permeability and impermeability are all ontological subjects since these are all notions that enable us to understand the nature of time.

Time *acts like* a substance. Thus when we said that time was purposeful, it has to be understood in this sense only. However, it is *not* a substance in the sense, for example, of a particular concrete object as well as the form of that object (Aristotle’s concept of substance), or in the sense that which remains for something when all its properties are removed (Locke’s concept of substance) or again that which can exist without depending on anything else (Descartes’ concept of substance). Bergson’s concept of time can be said to act like a substance in the sense that it is “the very stuff of reality” (CE: 272). However, in Bergson’s philosophy there are no substances but only processes or events. There is no substance because there is no eternal

truth. For these reasons, Bergson's philosophy is usually classified as "process philosophy" along with that of Heraclitus. Mullarkey says that Bergson rejects Heraclitanism which "may sound astonishing coming from someone purporting to be a process philosopher, but it is actually consistent with a 'full-process' theory, so to speak, which can never allow itself the title of an eternal truth." Thus, since processes themselves are inside the flux, they themselves undergo other processes and so on. In such a theory, there is no place for eternal truth and therefore, no priority either of mobility or of immobility (Mullarkey, 1999: 142) and so no priority either of quality or of quantity?

Haven't I previously argued that *durée réelle* was qualitative whereas the abstract idea of time was quantitative? Yes, and this is indeed the case. However, it is also true that this is only our perspective to grasp them separately as an external dichotomy. There is another way in which *durée* is understood as expressing an internal dichotomy in such a way that the notions of quality and quantity have to be reconsidered. Let us proceed by an example: When we talk about, for instance, the pain of pulling out of a tooth and pulling out of a hair, we cannot say that the former is greater than the latter because the former can in no way be said to contain the latter. The difference between the two kinds of pain is an example of qualitative difference and not, as is usually thought to be, an example of quantitative difference (*TFW*: 2-5). It could be argued that these two kinds of pain cannot be compared in a way in which the greater contains the less because after all these two are different in kind and not in degree. However, Bergson would

not change his claim even if we consider, for example, the pain that increases gradually in the pulling out of a tooth. In *Creative Evolution*, he says, “but from the fact that we pass from one thing to another by degrees, it does not follow that the two things are of the same nature” (*CE*: 70). And in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, he says that in certain cases, “the difference in degree amounts to a difference in kind” (*TSMR*: 10). Therefore, returning to our example we can say that, although from the beginning of pulling out of a tooth to the moment it is about to be pulled out we pass by degrees, it does not follow that these two pains are of the same nature. It is plainly possible that because the difference of degree among the different stages of pain was so immense that it ended by changing its nature and that a qualitative difference took place. Since differences of degree refer to quantity or to quantitative changes and differences in kind refer to quality or to qualitative changes,²¹ it may seem that “it is quantity which seems to subtend quality” (Mullarkey, 1999: 143). However, in his article “Introduction to Metaphysics”, Bergson had considered quantity as “a nascent quality” (*IM*: 191) which implied that quantity could in fact be reduced to quality. In *Time and Free Will*, he says that “it is through the quality of quantity that we form the idea of a quantity without quality” (*TFW*: 123).

In order to understand that in fact both quality and quantity have an “equal status” in Bergson’s philosophy, it is necessary to consider his notion of “qualitative multiplicity” (Mullarkey, 1999: 143). As I mentioned

²¹ Deleuze interpreted ‘qualitative change’ as ‘difference’ and ‘quantitative change as ‘repetition’. The difference between Deleuze and Bergson on this subject, is that Deleuze

previously, this term refers to “a unity that is multiple and a multiplicity that is one” (*CE*: 258). Mullarkey explains this fact as follows:

It [that is, qualitative multiplicity] represents a higher-order difference which separates and subsumes quality and quantity, one which cannot be conceived in terms of either and yet which generates both. The quality of the multiple and the quantity of the one or same are mutually implicative, despite operating at different levels (1999: 144).

With this analysis, Mullarkey determines qualitative multiplicity as expressing an “internal dichotomy” rather than an “external dualism” (1999: 144). This implies that this dichotomy cannot even be said to *arise* within Bergson’s philosophy because it is already its constituent. So, it can be said that internal and external dichotomy do not have the same meaning. External dichotomy is a dichotomy that one tries to dispel with it by trying to unite the two opposite parts. Internal dichotomy, on the other hand, is not one that has to be done away with. It is necessary in grasping reality. The two opposing parts are still there. However, there is no need to try artificially to make them come together because union is already inherent in the two poles. This is best explained again by Mullarkey:

In his later work, this inherently dualistic term, qualitative multiplicity, is present in a number of analyses. It acts as a principle of complementarity facilitating an inescapably double-sided approach to reality. Physics, he finds, by treating matter as both ‘wave and...corpuscule’—as a mobility and as an immobility, in other words—is itself rediscovering this duplicitous reality. That the mental and life sciences too can render consciousness and evolution either into the solid substances of molecular chemistry or into emergent, creative complexity (depending on the

chooses one pole between the two poles of difference and repetition, where Bergson “moves instead between the poles” and these two poles “have equal status” (Mullarkey, 1999, p. 142).

methodology used), is another aspect of this complementarity. Furthermore, *durée* itself is described at this stage as a ‘continuity which was neither unity nor multiplicity’ but potentially both (1999: 144).

Qualitative multiplicity is a principle in which both materiality and spirituality reside. Reality is duplicitous. The principle of qualitative multiplicity enables us to see this double side as complementing one another. Qualitative multiplicity is neither only quality itself nor quantity but gives rise to both of them. Therefore, it is neither unity itself nor multiplicity but both. Described as such, *durée* is nothing but this principle of qualitative multiplicity.

Qualitative multiplicity is the principle of true evolution, of the theory of processes and therefore, although it gives rise to both quantity and quality, it always refers to a continuous change. It is the principle of not the intellect but more of intuition, because only with the intuition of time it is possible to grasp that “everything changes inwardly.” Bergson says,

If everything is in time, everything changes inwardly, and the same concrete reality never recurs. Repetition is therefore possible only in the abstract...Thus, concentrated on that which repeats, solely preoccupied in welding the same to the same, intellect turns away from the vision of time. It dislikes what is fluid, and solidifies everything it touches. We do not *think* real time. But we *live* it, because life transcends intellect (*CE*: 46).

By “concrete reality” Bergson means the reality that constitutes an indivisible continuity. The term ‘divisible continuity’ would actually be a contradiction in terms since continuity should already be that which is indivisible, that

which cannot be separated. While living we actually do not separate our states. It is only when we start thinking over what we are or we will going through that we have separated our moments from one another. However, as soon as we start thinking over what we are living, we are no longer in real duration. That is the reason why it is not possible to think real, concrete duration. What we think can only be the abstract idea of time which consists of the possibility of the repetition of our states. As such, we think we are going through the same states of consciousness over and over again. Herman says that the misunderstanding of common sense is to determine the dynamic progress of qualities by the same name. Thus, it seems for us that it is always the same sorrow, same joy, same effort but only which grows or diminishes (1991: 127).

The intuition of time, on the other hand, enables us to grasp each state as unique, as that which cannot repeat itself. However, since it is impossible to give each of our states a new name, intellect groups them according to the principle of resemblance. Here we see nominalist traits. As Kolakowski says,

Intuition is supposed to give us direct, yet non sensual, contact with reality, 'direct' meaning that it dispenses with abstract concepts. What is real is always unique. Bergson follows the nominalist tradition: abstractions have no equivalents in reality; since they serve to isolate, for practical purposes, certain qualities, and to group objects into classes, they are not, strictly speaking, cognitive instruments and do not open any avenues leading to genuine acquaintance with reality (1985: 28).

That which repeats serves well in our daily lives. Without this, it is impossible for us, for example, to communicate with others. Our everyday lives require certain orders which we go through all the time. Without these orders we could not but live in isolation from the society in which we live in. This fact can also be interpreted as pragmatic traits of Bergson's philosophy. The individual is already a society because he has to adapt himself to his environment no matter what. How would it then be possible to act freely? Is it possible to break the chain of society that lives in each of us? Is it possible to adapt to the environment and at the same time to act freely?

3.7 The Superficial and The Fundamental Self

Previously I have argued that the language we commonly use did not give us the notion of duration as flowing because it was the work of a substantialist metaphysics, that it was a means for thinking the unstable by means of the stable, that it required us to establish between our ideas the same sharp and precise distinctions, the same discontinuity, as between material objects, and that both in logic and language we did not find the element of real time. These characteristics of our common language cause us to limit in expressing what we get from intuition. Intuition reveals us a dynamic life that is not expressible by means of certain words that reflect reality as static. It could be possible, like Albert Thibaudet discussed, to create a new language in which the verb 'to be' is replaced, for example, by the verb 'to become'. Such a language would indeed have helped us in thinking over the dynamic nature of life, just as the language we commonly use now enables us to think over a static

life. However, since we do not have such a language that reflects dynamic life, that reflects particular cases as unique cases, our only means to express what we get from intuition is the words of our common language. This means that what we get from intuition is not inexpressible since, as with everything else, I try to express the best I can by means of at least choosing certain words instead of others. On the other hand, it is not totally expressible since we do not have another language to express each particular case as a new case and so by means of a new word. In this sense, as I said before, Bergson follows the nominalist tradition. As different from other nominalists, Bergson pays attention especially to the fact that the language we use limits our thoughts, our conception of reality as well as ourselves since we understand ourselves by finding ourselves a place in this conception of reality. And since language thus limits ourselves, it plays a negative role in our conception of freedom, the role that makes ourselves imprisoned in the words of the language.

We are thus limited by the language we use. However, it is true that we are also limited both by society and by our habits. In our daily routine life, we are so much get used to live with our habits which we do not want to change and we, consciously or unconsciously, obey the rules of society that we forget how things can be otherwise grasped.²² Moreover, it is because we are imprisoned in language, in society's rules and the habits we have that our sense of freedom is concealed. But since it is human beings who forms or formed these according to our practical needs and that these were in fact not given to us, this caused reality to be grasped only under the influence of these factors. This

also implies that it is again in our hands to conceive reality as stripped from these factors. Therefore, we are imprisoned in the words of the language, in our habits or in society's rules only if we conceive reality under the influence of these factors. And if we conceive it as such, it means that we live in the level of our *superficial self*, our *fundamental self* remaining hidden in our consciousness. As LaFrance claims, Bergson's distinction between the superficial and fundamental self shows us and makes us understand the different levels of life and liberty (1991: 130-131). According to Bergson, many people live in the level of the superficial self, that is, "without having known true freedom" (*TFW*: 166).

Bergson has this line of reasoning: only the fundamental self can live true freedom and the fundamental self is the self who lives in *durée*; *durée* is related to inner experience and inner experience is related to our conscious life—the relation of our conscious or psychic states with one another.²³ Therefore, it can be said that Bergson approaches the issue of freedom by delving into the notions of duration and conscious states. As I mentioned previously, conscious states are in succession without a distinction which means that although some conscious states precede or follow some other, in reality they all permeate into one another. Interpreting this fact now within the context of freedom, we can say that Bergson rejects psychological determinism since, according to this view, every conscious state is followed by another in a

²² This can be likened to what Heidegger calls *authenticity* or *Dasein*. It is only when we get out of the routine we have that we can feel ourselves as authentic or as *Dasein*.

²³ That is the reason why I started this study by trying to grasp what Bergson means by consciousness, then to grasp the real sense of time and finally to grasp Bergson's conception of freedom.

succession of causes and effects. According to Bergson, on the other hand, we can no longer talk of definite causes yielding definite effects, rather our conscious life *progresses* in such a way that the causes and effects of conscious states permeate into one another so that especially when ‘deep-seated’ psychic states are concerned, which causes yielded or will yield which effects get confused. Therefore, to accept psychological determinism is not plausible.

The superficial and fundamental self are “two aspects of conscious life,” the first coming from the notion of homogeneous time, the latter coming from the notion of concrete *durée*. Bergson says that there is

below the self with well-defined states, a self in which *succeeding each other* means *melting into one another* and forming an organic whole. But we are generally content with the first, i.e. with the shadow of the self projected into homogeneous space. Consciousness, goaded by an insatiable desire to separate, substitutes the symbol for the reality, or perceives the reality only through the symbol. As the self thus refracted, and thereby broken to pieces, is much better adapted to the requirements of social life in general and language in particular, consciousness prefers it, and gradually loses sight of the fundamental self (*TFW*: 128).

LaFrance thinks that “the superficial and exterior self is not really ours” since it belongs more to society than to us. That is the reason why it has a “static and conformist” character which is “peculiar to practical life, to language and to communication that operates in spatial and homogeneous time (1991: 131). Remember that there was in each of us a society that lives. This implies that society refers to that part of our consciousness, which is the superficial self, that enables us to go on our daily lives. And remember also that the function of the

intellect was to separate, to grasp reality in clear-cut distinctions. In this sense, therefore, it can be said that these two aspects of consciousness, that is, the superficial self and the intellect, coincide.

I can say that according to Bergson, there are two ways of grasping reality: the reality grasped with the superficial self and the reality grasped with the fundamental self. The reality grasped with the superficial self gives us *being* whereas the reality grasped with the fundamental self gives us *becoming*. The one gives us a picture of the world as static, noncontinuous and fragmentary while the other gives us a world in which we feel we are the agents, a world in which we feel we are really living and in which we feel free.

Hence there are finally two different selves, one of which is, as it were, the external projection of the other, its spatial and, so to speak, social representation. We reach the former [the fundamental self] by deep introspection, which leads us to grasp our inner states as living things, constantly *becoming*, as states not amenable to measure, which permeate one another and of which the succession in duration has nothing in common with juxtaposition in homogeneous space. But the moments at which we thus grasp ourselves are rare, and that is just why we are rarely free. The greater part of the time we live outside ourselves, hardly perceiving anything of ourselves but our own ghost, a colourless shadow which pure duration projects into homogeneous space. Hence our life unfolds in space rather than in time; we live for the external world rather than for ourselves; we speak rather than think; we “are acted” rather than act ourselves. To act freely is to recover possession of oneself, and to get back into pure duration (*TFW*: 231-232).

Here we find a duality between two kinds of selves. Bergson explains this duality in a way to criticize our human condition. The phrase “we live for the external world rather than for ourselves” is the desperate situation human

beings fall into. Why is it desperate? Because it implies that we are not really free, that we live in a deterministic world according to which we can neither change the causes nor the effects of the states of our being because of the strict law of causality, that is, that the same causes yield the same effects. Therefore, I can say that the reality grasped with the superficial self gives us a picture of the world in which the law of causality operates while the reality grasped with the fundamental self gives us a world in which the causal relation between states are confused because there are no repetitions of causes and so of effects. A world in which the law of causality operates can have but homogeneous conception of duration since it is only in such a view of time that one can talk about repetitions. That is the reason why the superficial self brings with it a life that “unfolds in space” while the fundamental self brings with it a life that unfolds in “pure duration”. The fundamental self which is nothing but the uniqueness of the self in duration can be grasped only in intuition.

According to Bergson, what causes the problem of freedom arises from the claim that the world we perceive with our superficial self is the “real one” so that there can be one meaning of causality. On the other hand, if we want to get rid of this problem of freedom, “we have only to go back to the real and concrete self and give up its symbolical substitute” (*TFW*: 139). This is one of the point that Bergson claims Kant misunderstood. At the basis of Kant’s conception of freedom, Bergson claims, lies Kant’s mistake “to take time as a homogeneous medium.” In other words, Kant did not distinguish between concrete duration and homogeneous duration and therefore what he considered to be time was nothing but space. He says,

In a duration assumed to be homogeneous, the same states could occur over again, causality would imply necessary determination, and all freedom would become incomprehensible. Such, indeed, is the result to which the Critique of Pure Reason leads. But instead of concluding from this that real duration is heterogeneous...Kant preferred to put freedom outside time and to raise an impassable barrier between the world of phenomena, which he hands over root and branch to our understanding, and the world of things in themselves, which he forbids us to enter (*TFW*: 234-235).

The self then is outside of both space and time. In fact, it is true that the fundamental or “genuine” self is outside space. However, it is not also outside of concrete duration. On the contrary, it exists only in duration. On the other hand, the superficial self “unfolds in space” and therefore it is outside of duration. With the *Critique of Pure Reason*, therefore, freedom was raised “to the sphere of noumena” and so outside “of our faculty of knowing.” To this conception of freedom Bergson objects and says,

But the truth is that we perceive this self [fundamental self] whenever, by a strenuous effort of reflection, we turn our eyes from the shadow which follows us and retire into ourselves. Though we generally live and act outside our own person, in space rather than in duration, and though by this means we give a handle to the law of causality, which binds the same effects to the same causes, we can nevertheless always get back into pure duration, of which the moments are internal and heterogeneous to one another, and in which a cause cannot repeat its effect since it will never repeat itself (*TFW*: 233).

We generally live with our superficial self. However, since one can always get back into pure duration, to live with the fundamental self is up to people. It is a choice. One can choose to turn the attention to his inner life and thus break the chain of same causes-same effects. If, on the other hand, one continuously lives

with his superficial self and so in the chain of same causes-same effects, it is his choice to live in this way. However, since it is his choice, this means that it is him who makes his daily life nothing more than a routine life. “Our daily life is and must be an expectation of the same things and the same situations” (*CE*: 226). I claim that a routine life is our daily life that is prisoned within the circle of same causes-same effects. Does this also imply then that outside a routine life there is but only our inner life?

We know that by inner life we mean the unique experiences one lives through. One’s thoughts, feelings and sensations all constitute this inner life. When I retire into myself, I find nothing but these elements being brought out continuously to the present in the way that which causes yielded which effects cannot be determined. These thoughts, sensations and feelings can be subject to general laws but only when they are made expressible through language. This means they have to be made *general* thoughts, sensations or feelings. However, as soon as they are made general, they are expressed in such a way that it is possible to separate causes from their effects and effects from their causes. This is the characteristic of the superficial self whereas as far as the fundamental self is concerned, such a separation between the causes and the effects is no longer possible (Matthews, 1996: 22-23). That is the reason why, as far as our conscious life is concerned, Bergson does not believe in psychological determinism. Against the view which is called “physicalism” or “materialism”, Bergson says that no reasoning can prove that psychological facts are strictly determined by some kind of movements in our brain cells. He says, “for in a movement we may find the reason of another movement, but not the reason of a

conscious state.” Bergson accepts that there are some cases in which we can talk about a parallelism between the physiological and the psychological, but such examples which are nothing but mechanical explanations concerning the conscious states are rare and that we cannot say a priori that there exists such a parallelism (*TFW*: 146-148).

Between successive conscious states there always exists “a difference of quality which will always frustrate any attempt to deduce any one of them *a priori* from its predecessors.” It is true that there is a relation between the previous states of consciousness and the new states which follow but, Bergson says, “is this relation which explains the transition, the cause of it?” (*TFW*: 155-156). In other words, there seems to be a relation other than the relation embodied in the law of causality. Therefore, if we understand this relation to be nothing but a succession of definite causes yielding definite effects, we are inevitably led to a determinism in which there will be no area for freedom. Language reflects such a relation because it denotes certain kind of our conscious states by some definite words and some others by some other definite words; attributing more or less the same meaning to conscious states. However, according to Bergson, each of us have our own way of, for example, loving and hating such that these reflect our whole personality. Language does not take into consideration the personal aspects of each feeling, sensation or idea, it only fixes the impersonal and objective aspects of these conscious states (*TFW*: 164). And it is as such that categories of conscious states are produced: we give the name ‘love’ to a certain kind of feeling, the name ‘fear’ to another kind and so

on. However, what is important, according to Bergson, is particularity or singularity; in other words, the uniqueness of each conscious state.

Bergson uses the expression “the shadow of the ego” to describe the self that is projected to space (*TFW*: 165). Herein again lies the *view* which is based on space. As soon as one looks at the world in clear-cut distinctions, one’s view becomes spatial.²⁴ As opposed to this shadow of the ego, which is the superficial self, we have a fundamental self in which the whole personality is involved in a single conscious state. Bergson believes that in every new conscious state all the preceding ones are involved like a drop in the water so that once the drop is dropped in the water, it becomes difficult to conceive it as distinct from the other drops. Likewise, each of our conscious states can be conceived only within the whole they are continuously and confusingly being added into. This is to talk about conscious states in terms of what Bergson calls “dynamic series” and it refers to the fundamental self acting freely: where there is no law of causality, the self is said to act freely. Bergson says, “the act will be so much the freer the more the dynamic series which it is connected tends to be the fundamental self.” By this remark, we can understand that freedom admits of degrees (*TFW*: 167).

Bergson believes that “we are free when our acts spring from our whole personality” (*TFW*: 172). It seems that when we feel the uniqueness of

²⁴ This was also Hegel’s critique of the understanding. Hegel believed understanding to conceive things in clear-cut distinctions and so as losing sight of the reality that underlies all notions.

our self and act with this feeling in us, our acts become free.²⁵ Now Bergson thinks that the view of the determinists and the libertarians rests on a geometrical representation of free will. In cases of taking decisions, we usually believe that there are possible ways, say X and Y, in front of us so that we choose between the two. We are, in the end, more inclined to prefer one to the other and we believe we have chosen. Bergson says, “these are symbolical representations, that in reality there are not two tendencies or even two directions, but a self which lives and develops by means of its very hesitations, until the free action drops from it like an over-ripe fruit” (*TFW*: 176). Therefore, according to Bergson, such representations do not reflect what a person lives at the moment of decision.²⁶ Even if one says that, at a moment of time, he has many different paths (X, Y, Z, etc.) in front of him ready to be chosen by him, this, Bergson claims, does not prove the existence of true freedom. Such a conception of freedom, for Bergson, is only a “mechanical conception of freedom” (*TFW*: 177). In reality, there are no such paths, lines or points. To accept this mechanical conception implies representing time by space that leads to a homogeneous conception of freedom. According to Bergson, only if one accepts this conception of freedom that he produces such questions whether at a given time the self could have chosen to do otherwise; whether the self could have chosen Y instead of X or vice versa (*TFW*: 180). Such similar questions are asked by both the determinists and the libertarians. The reason, Bergson

²⁵ As opposed to Levinas’ view, Bergson believes that in order to become free, one needs to look at his fundamental self whereas according to Levinas, the capacity for free action begins with the awareness of an Other and not of the sense of myself. See, Matthews, 1996: 160-161.

²⁶ All philosophers who have a kind of philosophy of life and who have a philosophy which mostly projects towards the future would agree with Bergson on this point. Existentialism, Phenomenology and the pragmatism of William James can be counted as being among such philosophies.

thinks, is that asking such questions imply to focus on not to “the time which is passing but the time which has passed.” And he continues:

Defenders and opponents of free will alike forget this—the former when they assert, and the latter when they deny the possibility of acting differently from what we have done. The former reason thus: “The path is not yet traced out, therefore it may take any direction whatever.” To which the answer is: “You forget that it is not possible to speak of a path till the action is performed: but then it will have been traced out.” The latter say: “The path has been traced out in such and such a way: therefore its possible direction was not any direction whatever, but only this one direction.” To which the answer is: “Before the path was traced out there was no direction, either possible or impossible, for the very simple reason that there could not yet be any question of a path (*TFW*: 182).

Therefore, Bergson concludes, it is not possible to prove, disprove or even illustrate free will by using a mechanical representation of freedom (*TFW*: 183).

This means that determinists thought to have disproved free will when in fact they did not and libertarians thought to have proved free will when in fact they did not. Now let us see how does Bergson explain causality? and what is the relation between causality and concrete duration?

3.8 Causality and Concrete Duration

What we roughly understand by causality is “the relation between two things when the first is thought of as somehow producing or responsible for the second.” Hume, on this subject, thought that what observation could reveal us was that “some things regularly follow on other things” and that it could tell us nothing about the necessity we feel that the notion of causality involves (Lacey, 1986: 42-43). Now Bergson thought about the necessity causality might involve

and differentiated between causality in nature and that one we can find in consciousness. Determinists, however, did not attempt to make such a distinction. Hence some things were regularly following others in a way they thought the relation between what precedes and what follows was necessary. In other words, determinists, according to Bergson, did not differentiate between causal relation and necessary relation: they treat ‘A causes B’ and ‘B necessarily follows A’ as equal statements. Moreover, they equate the latter statement with ‘B regularly follows A’ in the actual world. This notion of causality, according to Bergson, can be applied only in “physical phenomena.” On the other hand, causality understood in terms of “regular succession” or “regularity” cannot be applied to conscious states. And if it cannot be applied to conscious states, we cannot say a priori that freedom does not exist in consciousness for the same reasons that it is not found in nature. Bergson says,

We perceive physical phenomena, and these phenomena obey laws. This means: (1) that phenomena *a, b, c, d*, previously perceived, can occur again in the same shape; (2) that a certain phenomenon *P*, which appeared after the conditions *a, b, c, d*, and after these conditions only, will not fail to recur as soon as the same conditions are again present. If the principle of causality told us nothing more, as the empiricists claim, we should willingly grant these philosophers that their principle is derived from experience; but it would no longer prove anything against our freedom. For it would then be understood that definite antecedents give rise to a definite consequent wherever experience shows us this regular succession; but the question is whether this regularity is found in the domain of consciousness too, and that is the whole problem of free will (*TFW*: 202-203).

Here, the phenomenon or event *P* is thought in terms of possessing a set of conditions (*a, b, c, d*) that constitute the cause of *P*. Although Bergson did not mention the terms ‘necessary’ and ‘sufficient’, we can say that this set of

conditions is thought to be “either necessary or sufficient, or both, for the event” (Lacey, 1986: 43). Empiricists who did not have another notion of causality other than the one applied in physical phenomena are then at the same time determinists.

Concerning psychological determinism Kolakowski says,

The fundamental impossibility of psychological determinism is rooted in the continuity of psychological life. A determinist states that, in the same conditions, the same phenomena occur. However, the same conditions can never, by definition, obtain in the life of the self, because each, artificially isolated, moment of its duration includes the entire past, which is, consequently, different for each moment. By contrast with the universe of abstract equations, the same situation never occurs twice in the being endowed with memory; since real time is absolutely irreversible, neither the same cause nor the same effect can ever reappear in experience (1985: 20).

Bergson accepts determinism in nature, that there is causality in the form of regular succession in nature but rejects the same for consciousness, in other words, there is no regularity in consciousness. However, for those who live with their superficial self only, there has to be found a regularity in consciousness. Since these persons live exterior to themselves, that is, in space, they find in their consciousness the same regularity as in space or in nature. Therefore, we should say that there are cases in which the law of causality applies to our consciousness as well: we then see our states of consciousness as conditions *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, which yield in the end the phenomenon *P* (for example sadness). And each time when the phenomenon *P* appears on the scene, we think we already know the conditions that prepared *P* appear and that these are in fact always the same conditions. If, on the other hand, we find out that one or two of the

conditions that lead toward P happen changed, then this expresses another regularity for us. We may then say, for example, that the conditions a, b, c, d as well as the conditions a, c, e, f yield the same phenomenon P . And therefore, if we do not want phenomenon P to happen, we try to avoid the conditions we already know. This is indeed the way we behave in our daily routine lives. Some of the phenomena we encounter during our daily lives have in the end been so familiar to us that we do not even think of their conditions: we know them mechanically. This causes us at the same time to behave in accordance with the claim of the determinists: the same causes always precede the same effects.

We think that the notion of causality found in physical phenomena is also found in consciousness because of our ability to predict certain of our actions. To predict an action beforehand means, according to Bergson, to know completely the conditions of that action, which in fact implies to perform it. Since we got used to anticipate, for example, astronomical phenomena, says Bergson, we think that we can also anticipate voluntary actions (*TFW*: 184-193). However, it is because astronomical phenomena are subject to the principle of causality that we can anticipate them. In this sense, the act of anticipation is turned toward the past: once we understand the structure of the phenomenon in question, its conditions become given to us. The only thing we then have to do is to look for the same conditions appear and then the anticipation is realized. The fact that same conditions emerge again and again is nothing but the repetition of the regularity we find involved in the principle of causality. In other words, when we observe, for example, a couple of times that

the sun having entered between the earth and the moon gives rise to (cause), for example, the sun to be seen black from the earth (effect), we conclude that there is a regularity involved in this phenomenon: the fact that the sun enters between the earth and the moon is followed by the fact that the sun is seen black from the earth, in other words, the first fact *is regularly followed by* the second fact. And so, to the phenomenon that involves this kind of regularity, we give the name ‘eclipse of the sun’.

Based on the conception of homogeneous time, anticipation implies to accept the relation of ‘identity’ in the realm of consciousness because a state of consciousness s_1 and a state of consciousness s_2 are then assumed to be a single thing, that is, a single state of consciousness which facilitates anticipation. To conceive in duration, on the other hand, is to accept that no two conscious states are identical according to which anticipation becomes impossible. Even if anticipation is put aside and a new claim which says that a kind of law of causality similar to that one of nature applies to our inner states comes into question, this implies, according to Bergson, that “the same inner causes will reproduce the same effects,” which will be to assume that “the same cause can appear a second time on the stage of consciousness.” Hence comes Bergson’s distinction of two kinds of causality: one is the causality in nature and the other is causality in the realm of inner states, say causality in consciousness. Concerning the first one, “the same cause always produces the same effect”, concerning the second one, the cause of an inner state “produces its effect once for all and will never reproduce it” (*TFW*: 200-201). Herein lies Bergson’s conception of freedom. According to him, freedom is “the relation of the

concrete self to the act which it performs” and this relation is not definable “just because we are free.” For Bergson, human being’s being free is a fact, in fact a fact which is very obvious. This is obvious when we conceive time as duration because Bergson says, “the free act takes place in time which is flowing and not in time which has already flown” (*TFW*: 219-221).

It seems that Bergson uses regularity and repetition in the same sense. Previously I said that both science and our intellect were seeking repetition, that they were looking for what was repeating itself. Repetition, in fact, is defined by Bergson as that which makes generalization possible (*CE*: 230-231) and it is the act of “welding the same to the same” (*CE*: 46). Our intellect, rejecting creation, is always preoccupied with reconstructing what is already given. It is satisfied only with “definite antecedents” generating “a definite consequent.” In this case, “we have to do with the known which is combined with the known, in short, with the old which is repeated” and therefore, “the intellect lets what is *new* in each moment of a history escape.” It can be said that, in the first place, repetition is opposed to the new because whatever object the intellect will analyze, “it will abstract, separate, eliminate, so as to substitute for the object itself, if necessary, an approximate equivalent in which things happen in this way” This is “the causality” our intellect pursues: it recomposes “the same whole with the same parts, repeating the same movements to obtain the same result.” As such, an effect is determined by its causes (*CE*: 163-164). Within the context of laws and genera Bergson says,

What we meet in our daily experience is a certain determinate living being, certain special manifestations of life, which repeat, *almost*, forms and facts already known;

indeed, the similarity of structure that we find everywhere between what generates and what is generated—a similarity that enables us to include any number of living individuals in the same group—is to our eyes the very type of the *generic*: the inorganic genera seem to us to take living genera as models. Thus the vital order, such as it is offered to us piecemeal in experience, presents the same character and performs the same function as the physical order: both cause experience to *repeat itself*, both enable our mind to *generalize* (*CE*: 224-225).

The intellect does not differentiate between the physical and the vital order. The manifestations of life we meet in our everyday experience, although they belong to the vital order, are treated in the same way with the lifeless that belongs to the physical order. As far as the physical order is concerned, the causes are not considered to be “unique in their kind” and so they are not “part of the effect,” as is the case with the vital order (*CE*: 164). Hence we see that Bergson brings about two senses of causality: the one that belongs to the physical order and the one that belongs to the vital order. In the former, an effect is determined by its causes whereas in the latter, causes are part of the effect so that nothing is foreseeable. The first kind of order is “that of the *inert* and the *automatic*” and refers to the physical phenomena whereas the second kind of order refers to the vital phenomena which are “facts of organic creation” and is at the same time the order of “the *willed*” and so Bergson says that “the whole present study strives to prove that the vital is in the direction of the voluntary” (*CE*: 224, 226). That is the reason why it would be a mistake to talk about one causality, which is the one expressed by the principle of causality. There are two kinds of order that corresponds to two kinds of causality. However, our intellect tries to understand the second kind of order in terms of the first kind of causality. Thus the difference between the physical and the vital order is expressed by the

intellect as “the former making the same combination of causes give the same combined effect, the latter securing the constancy of the effect even when there is some wavering in the causes” (*CE*: 225-226). Since the intellect solidifies everything it touches, it does not allow little variations become important in the determination of causes. However, it is these little variations that make us feel that we live in duration.

Within the context of the principle of causality, there is no duration since, as we saw, it presents us with the past only. Therefore, when we talk about regularity, we should say that it is always a regularity turned toward the past. That is the reason why Bergson does not differentiate between regularity and repetition. Repetition implies the old forms coming to the scene over and over again, in other words, the past being recomposed continuously, using the same elements but with different combinations. Each of these combinations corresponds to a regularity involved in the fact, event, or phenomena. So what repeats is the same or identical conditions applied to a fact, to an event or to a phenomenon and the fact that identical conditions are applied in this way constitute or refer to the past. What is regular, on the other hand, is the production of combinations.

When we consider the causality of the vital order and of consciousness, we find neither repetition and nor therefore regularity. One can ask why do we still talk about causality then? The fact that there are no definite causes and definite effects does not amount to affirm that there is no causality. First of all, causes and effects are there when we turn toward the past. And secondly,

causes are part of the effect when we place ourselves within the present. They do not succeed one another. They do succeed one another only when we look toward the past, when we are no longer in duration, and so we could tell the causes and effects from one another. Bergson says,

While the external object does not bear the mark of the time that has elapsed and thus, in spite of the difference of time, the physicist can again encounter identical elementary conditions, duration is something real for the consciousness which preserves the trace of it, and we cannot here speak of identical conditions, because the same moment does not occur twice...even the simplest psychic elements...are in a constant state of becoming, and the same feeling, by the mere fact of being repeated, is a new feeling (*TFW*: 200).

Repetition seems to have two senses too: one was, as we saw, that which makes generalization possible and as such it is applied in space whereas the other is the sense it acquires within the realm of consciousness and refers to duration. If the same feeling occurs again, it does not mean that it has the same conditions or causes. In other words, different causes might lead to the same feeling. However, it is because we do not have other means than using the same word that we believe it is the same feeling. The truth is, on the one hand, since every state or act of consciousness is a new one, there cannot be two identical conscious states. On the other hand, the fact that the same feeling did repeat indicates that the feeling we get is a new one. Here, repetition acquires a positive meaning, that is, the fact that a feeling repeats is the proof that we have endured. Therefore, repetition in space refers to the same elements used in different combinations while repetition in duration refers to different elements yielding a different consequence, though we express the consequence with a

ready-made word. We may say that this is not a real repetition and that it is more proper to call it *difference* because what characterizes consciousness is the difference of time it involves as opposed to an object outside consciousness. However, as Deleuze remarked, what is repetition and what is difference depends on our “reading of the world.” He says,

Let us consider the two formulas: ‘only that which resembles differs’ and ‘only differences can resemble each other’. These are two distinct readings of the world: one invites us to think difference from the standpoint of a previous similitude or identity [that is, that which repeats]; whereas the other invites us to think similitude and even identity as the product of a deep disparity (1990: 261).

And, as Mullarkey mentions, “saying one is also saying the other so that priority can be given to neither” (1999: 149). This is just the point people have misunderstood Bergson. It was thought that because Bergson emphasized difference, heterogeneity and mobility, people also thought that he undermined repetition, homogeneity and immobility.

Bergson tells us the correct understanding of his philosophy by using his notion of intuition as well as making a distinction between recommending and explaining:

I recommend a certain manner of thinking which courts difficulty; I value effort above everything. How could certain people have mistaken my meaning? To say nothing of the kind of person who would insist that my “intuition” was instinct or feeling. Not one line of what I have written could lend itself to such an interpretation. And in everything I have written there is assurance to the contrary: my intuition is reflection. But because I called attention to the mobility at the base of things, it has been

claimed that I encouraged a sort of relaxing of the mind. And because the permanence of substance was, in my eyes, a continuity of change, it has been said that my doctrine was a justification of instability. One might just as well imagine that the bacteriologist recommends microbic diseases to us when he shows us microbes everywhere, or that the physicist prescribes the exercise of swinging when he reduces natural phenomena to oscillations. A principle of explanation is one thing, a maxim of conduct is another. One could almost say that the philosopher who finds mobility everywhere is the only one who cannot recommend it, since he sees it as inevitable, since he discovers it in what people have agreed to call immobility. But the truth is that in spite of the fact that he views stability as a complexity of change or as a particular aspect of change, in spite of the fact that in some way he resolves stability into change he will none the less, like everybody else, distinguish stability and change. And for him, as for everyone, will arise the question of knowing to what extent it is the special appearance called stability, to what extent it is change pure and simple that he must recommend to human societies (*I*: 87-88).

To explain and to recommend are two different things. Bergson recommends in order to call attention to the reality detached from socialization which requires “a certain manner of thinking.” What is recommended to societies is pure change that implies grasping mobility at the base of everything. What societies forget is to grasp this mobility and that is the reason why it is recommended to them. Societies reinforce “certain habits of mind” which consist of “the substitution of concepts for things” as well as “the socialization of the truth,” that is, “practical truths.” Bergson recommends us to leave practical truths to the realm of socialization and not to bring them to the realm of philosophy (*I*: 87). Bergson thus recommends two things: to societies he recommends to turn the attention to mobility in order not to grasp reality as being consisted only of practical truths. To the philosophers he recommends to give up the habits of mind in order to exercise another manner of thinking. Bergson does not

recommend mobility even though he sees it at the base of everything. He does not recommend it because people call immobility what Bergson discovers it to be mobility. In other words, even if he recommends it, it would not make any sense since people would not understand it in the sense Bergson takes mobility to be. Moreover, to recommend implies two things one of which is preferred to the other. In this case, however, there are no two things to talk about since mobility is found everywhere and even stability is seen as a “complexity of change.” Bergson can be said to *recommend* the dismissal of certain habits of mind and to *explain* the notions of mobility and stability. To explain in this context, then, implies *to give reasons* as to what extent mobility can be seen as stability and to what extent it can be grasped as pure change. This is the work of the philosopher. Therefore, it would be correct to say that Bergson’s recommendations are made for all people, whether philosophers or not, whereas to explain is only the work of the person who wants to philosophize and what he explains, then, is in terms of a principle.

Returning now to our discussion of difference and repetition, it can be said that neither difference nor repetition are notions that are recommended. Their discussion, rather, refers to a principle they are based upon. And this principle is “qualitative multiplicity.” Only based upon this principle that to claim that “saying one is also saying the other so that priority can be given to neither” makes sense. Only if we were said to recommend one of them that we would have given a priority to one of them. Since what Bergson recommends is the dismissal of the habits of mind, it implies that he gives priority to this dismissal. In other words, as this study also is made on this claim, it is only

when we accept we have such habits that we may start to philosophize properly. Similarly, only based upon this claim that we can understand Bergson's conception of time in a way that leads to a philosophy of life.

CHAPTER 4
TO LIVE *SUB SPECIE DURATIONIS*

To be free or not depends on how we conceive reality. As long as we conceive it from a spatial viewpoint, we are inevitably led to conceive only homogeneous reality—which in a sense means the world we live in according to our practical needs such as our individual and social habits as well as our use of language. If, on the contrary, we conceive it from a heterogeneous viewpoint, then we can feel ourselves free. This implies that in Bergsonian philosophy, one chooses also whether to be free or not and also one chooses the extent to which he wants to be free. In other words, freedom “is not absolute, as a radically libertarian philosophy would have it; it admits of degrees.” One can be free or live and die without knowing true freedom (*TFW*: 166). That seems to be our biggest choice. As Mullarkey says, “the reason why freedom admits of degrees is due to spatialisation: at a second-order level, we are perfectly free to lose our freedom through increasing self-automation” (1999: 26). In other words, at a first-order level, we live with our superficial self without knowing about true freedom. At a second-order level, however, we become aware of our both selves due to placing ourselves in duration that gives us a feeling of true freedom. It is in this second-order level that to be free or not becomes a choice: by being enlightened to the fact that we have two selves, we can increase the spatialisation of our superficial self and therefore escape from true freedom or, we can minimize our living according to our superficial self and increase instead our experiences of real duration and hence our sense of true freedom.

As Mullarkey also says, Bergson is a compatibilist. We know that the theories of determinists and libertarians are opposed to one another because both theories are based “on the axiom of their incompatibility,” that is, that free will and determinism are incompatible (1999: 26). Libertarianism is generally characterized by the assumption that “we always could do otherwise than we do” whereas determinism is generally characterized by the assumption that “every event is caused and that human actions cannot be excepted.” However, this latter assumption is attributed to hard determinists. Soft determinists are also called compatibilists in that they think that “our actions are indeed caused, but we are not therefore any less free than we might be, because the causation is not a constraint or compulsion on us” (Lacey, 1986: 114-115). Bergson also thinks that our actions are caused. However, as we saw, he differentiates between the causality in nature and the one applied to our conscious states. So, although he does think that causation is not a constraint on us, he means by this the causation applied to our consciousness.

Free will is compatible with determinism just because, as Mullarkey says,

there are levels of *durée*, rhythms that more or less approach the minimum-level *durée* of our superficial ego. Consequently, there are varying degrees of freedom amongst our numerous actions. The degree of freedom of an action depends on whether we have got ‘back into ourselves’ and away from the superficial public realm, away, quite literally, from our ‘outer face’. However, paradoxical though this must sound, according to Bergson we are rarely willing to do so: ‘Free acts are exceptional’ (1999: 26-27; *TFW*: 166, 240, 167).

This implies that there really are intermediate zones concerning the life of our consciousness and that when and how much we live in *durée* is up to us. This being the case, it would be very easy to say “choose to live in *durée* and be free.” However, this is not the case. The reason is that because we are human beings, we have to live according to our practical needs even if we choose to live with our fundamental self. That is the reason why freedom is not absolute. Our human condition requires sociability. The only thing we can do is to minimize our adaptation to society. But then such a case would make us incapable people in our social lives. And I think that this is the reason why most people choose to live superficially, even though they become aware of both their superficial and fundamental self. They choose social life. This is the situation that sounds paradoxical: although we know the means for true freedom which is to get away from “the superficial public realm,” “we are rarely willing to do so.” But why is this situation paradoxical if it is also the case that there are degrees of freedom so that one can choose the extent to which he wants to live with his superficial self and the extent to which he wants to live with his fundamental self?

The paradox might become apparent when we consider the extremes: maximum adaptation to society and maximum return to ourselves or minimum adaptation to society and minimum return to ourselves. It is not possible, for example, to adapt ourselves to society the most we can and at the same time to get back to ourselves the most we can. As it is stated in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, there are cases in which “the difference in degree

amounts to a difference in kind” (*TSMR*: 10). In this respect, it can be said that when the degree of our adaptation to society increases at most, it differs in kind from our minimum adaptation to society. The first can be said to be a life based on our superficial self whereas the latter is a life based on our fundamental self. In the same way, The first refers to a life with the habits of mind whereas the second refers to a life in which these habits are dismissed.

4.1 To Live in Society

In the following two sections, we will see the reason why the paradox of the human condition concerns only human beings and not for example the great mystics. In *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, Bergson says that nature has created human beings to be social, to necessarily have social lives. Two things are here considered: there cannot be an individual isolated from the entire social life; and the individual is socialized in the point of which he is fundamentally attached to other individuals in society. In this “obligation” plays an important role: it is that which ties people to one another (*TSMR*: 8-9). Usually we are accustomed to think that obligation comes from external factors. However, each of us, according to Bergson, does not only belong to society but also to oneself. This implies that the sense of obligation comes also from inside of us. The individual needs obligation in order to survive because only then he feels he is a part of society in which he lives. Even if an individual has to live for some reasons isolated from society, like the case of Robinson Crusoe, he nevertheless is in society because he is tied to society through his thoughts. Therefore, even if he does

not see the society, he knows that society is with him, that it watches him (*TSMR*: 9).

It is society that traces the individual's daily program. Without obeying the rules, the obligations, one can neither live in a family nor can do his work, neither he can walk around in the streets, nor even stay in his house; he cannot deal with any of his daily work (*TSMR*: 13). Moreover, the more the individual obeys the rules and the obligations, the more he is able to live comfortably in society. By pointing out to the nature of human beings, Bergson says that in what he calls closed morality, there is a "pressure" that consists of rigid customs similar to the laws of nature. These customs are imposed on us through the pressure of other individuals of the society (Matthews, 1996: 36). This pressure the individuals got used to live with functions as what instinct functions in the societies of animals. On the other hand, Bergson says "a humanist society is an ensemble of free beings" (*TSMR*: 3). This implies that the nature of human beings is such that it both involves a pressure-making tendency and a sense of freedom. The former appears essentially in closed morality and static religion whereas the latter appears in open morality and dynamic religion. Concerning closed and open morality Bochenski says,

A closed morality is derived from the most general phenomena of life; it arises from the pressure exercised by society, and its appropriate behavior is performed automatically and instinctively. The individual self and the social self clash only in exceptional circumstances. This impersonal closed morality is closed in three ways; it wishes to preserve social conventions; it almost identifies the individual and society, so that the mind always revolves in the same circle; lastly, it is always the product of a limited group and can never be valid for all mankind

because the principle of the social unit which produced it is the need for self-defense. Besides this closed morality of sheer duties there is an *open morality* which receives embodiment in outstanding personalities, saints, and heroes, and is human and personal instead of social. It does not result from pressure but from an inner vocation, and, far from being fixed, is essentially progressive and creative. It is open in the sense that it embraces life with love, and, even more, supplies the sense of freedom and harmonizes with the life principle. It is born of a deep emotional experience which is similar to that afforded by music through having no object (1969: 111).

We are limited with norms, natural obligations and our individual habits. However, in open morality, individuals try to break away from the rigid rule-following. This is “the sign of life itself in human beings that they are not bound by repetitious routines (Matthews, 1996: 37). However, because closed morality is inherent in open morality, the individual can easily get stuck in routines. To liberate oneself from the ties of society is possible when there is transition from closed morality to open morality and from static religion to dynamic religion. In static religion and closed morality, individuals obey certain commands that exist and are valid only within their community.

4.2 The Call of the Great Mystics, the Effort of the Individuals and the Role of the Philosophers

Bergson brings his humanistic approach and claims that only in dynamic religions such as Islam and Christianity there is a “call” for the whole humanity. In static religions like the East Oriental religions, there are no heroes because the central figures of these religions did not call for the whole humanity. In order to pass from static religion to dynamic religion, we need heroes, charismatic figures like Mohammed or Christ “who will exercise the emotional power over us which is needed to liberate us from the ties of our own

special community and its myths (Matthews, 1996: 37). These charismatic figures have their own special language; they represent the particular emotion of a soul that opens up. They remain indifferent to things like wealth, pleasures and well-being, which are common among people of a community. Through a call to all humanity, they try to propagate the feeling of a flow that goes from their soul to god and from God to all humanity (*TSMR*: 49-50). These people Bergson calls “great mystics.” What they bring humanity is a new temperament of the soul. What characterizes this new temperament?

Belief in magic, in gods, in totemism and the belief in spirits, all these exist within static religion. These beliefs still exist today in somewhat more primitive communities. However, throughout the history of mankind, there had been a shift from static to dynamic religion. In this, the great role was to the mystic figures. But also, by the effort of the individuals, mankind started to progress and to be involved in the evolutionary current that yielded dynamic religion. When the more modern people of community replaced the beliefs in the spirits with the beliefs in gods, this made a progress towards civilization. And then, this belief in gods started to evolve. Zeus, for example, was at the beginning the being who is worshipped on the mountains; the clouds, the rain and the thunder were in his hands. Then, by the time being, a more social role is added to the previous ones. Lastly, Zeus became a God who was responsible for all communities, from families to the state (*TSMR*: 200). This was one of the most important progress towards civilization. The other progress is from Judaism to Christianity. The movement among the prophets started together with the Jewish prophets. Therefore, Christianity, in his complete mysticism,

owes much to Judaism. However, Judaism, was not, according to Bergson, a religion which aimed to involve the whole humanity, rather it was a national religion. That is the reason why its mysticism was not complete.

Due to the Great Mystics and the effort of the individuals, mankind started to progress towards a more and more advanced society. However, this progress will not end. Instead, it will continue as long as there is the evolutionary current or movement. The greatest dismissal of the habits of mind does not apply to the Great Mystics. In fact, it can be said that their being did not even know about what these habits of the mind were since they had their own special language and their own life which did not involve the characteristics peculiar to human life. They could have been able to propagate the feeling of flow because they had already placed themselves in duration. The fact that they thus introduced a new temperament of the soul was possible due to their placing themselves in the flow of the evolutionary movement. In other words, they propagated what they had lived through. In this sense, their lives and their ideas was not distinct from one another. By means of their special language, they found the way of expressing what they were lived through. That is the reason why they could have been able to make societies progress. Their lives were lives in *sub specie durationis*. Now what about the effort of the individuals in this progress then? Do we have to try to behave as a mystic would behave? Does Bergson ask us to become mystics?

The effort of the individuals is not the same as that of the Mystics. In fact, the effort of the individuals can be said to be harder since by nature they

have habits of mind. As, for example, Bergson says in the last sentences of *Time and Free Will*, “even in the cases where the action is freely performed, we cannot reason about it without setting out its conditions externally to one another, therefore in space and no longer in pure duration” (*TFW*: 240). This expresses a habit of our mind that seems inevitable. There are cases in which we act freely. However, as soon as we try to determine the conditions of free action, we are no longer free because we are no longer in duration. It is this situation that causes the problem of free will and it is this situation, therefore, that misled the determinists and the libertarians since they could not have been able to formulate the notion of freedom in the way they had lived through. They placed themselves in space in order to formulate it. Is this not because we are not able to create a special language and a special way of living similar to that of the Great Mystics?

There is a way to greatly dismiss the habits of mind. In order to place ourselves in duration, we neither do need to be a Great Mystic nor to become mad by trying to transcend our human situation. What we need to do is to change the direction of our reasoning that goes from intellect to intuition to the direction that goes from intuition to intellect. This is what is understood by ‘placing oneself in duration’. Bergson says,

the mind once brought back to real duration will already be alive with intuitive life and its knowledge of things will already be philosophy. Instead of a discontinuity of moments replacing one another in an infinitely divided time, it will perceive the continuous fluidity of real time which flows along, indivisible...No more inert states, no more dead things; nothing but the mobility of which the stability of life is made. A vision of this kind, where

reality appears as continuous and indivisible, is on the road which leads to philosophical intuition (*PI*: 127).

Intuition does not refer to a mystical realm. Intuition, as Bergson claims, is “reflection” (*I*: 88). That is why he talks about turning the direction of reasoning to that of intuition to intellect. What results is still a reasoning, a reflection. However, this time it is a reflection that enables us to grasp reality “as continuous and indivisible.” “In order to reach intuition it is not necessary to transport ourselves outside the domain of the senses and of consciousness.” What we need to do is to attribute a new task to our senses and consciousness which is actually nothing but to “bring our perception back to its origins.” What results is “a new kind of knowledge” that we obtained “without having been obliged to have recourse to new faculties” (*PI*: 127-128). This new kind of knowledge is also called by Bergson “metaphysical knowledge of the real.” By reality Bergson understands “tendency”. He says, “all reality is...tendency, if we agree to call tendency a nascent change of direction.” This change of direction consists of starting from our own consciousness that is in a continuous flow and then to take this as a model in grasping things. When we do so, “the very essence of the real” does not escape from us (*IM*: 188-189). The reason why we take our consciousness as a model is because if we take something other than consciousness as a model, it is no longer possible to place ourselves in duration. It is consciousness that enables us to grasp the flow of continuity and indivisibility. Does this imply that *durée* is imprisoned in my consciousness?

Human consciousness, according to Bergson, “emanates” from the evolutionary movement or creative evolution he calls “the living principle” (*CE*:

369-370). I have previously explained that consciousness had two aspects: intellect and intuition. Intellect is described as “the narrowed consciousness that functions in each of us” whereas intuition refers to the “principle” of consciousness. It constitutes that part of our consciousness that brings us into contact with the evolutionary movement. Seen within this perspective, *durée* is not imprisoned in our consciousness. On the contrary, it frees us from our narrowed consciousness which, although “it does indeed move in the same direction as its principle, it is continually drawn the opposite way, obliged, though it goes forward, to look behind.” In other words, intellect or our narrowed consciousness has a “retrospective vision” that is characterized by the direction that goes towards matter or the material world and so we grasp only “the *already-made*.” Bergson says,

In order that our consciousness shall coincide with something of its principle, it must detach itself from the *already-made* and attach itself to the *being-made*. It needs that, turning back on itself and twisting on itself, the faculty of *seeing* should be made to be one with the act of *willing*—a painful effort which we can make suddenly, doing violence to our nature, but cannot sustain more than a few moments...Intuition, if it could be prolonged beyond a few instants, would not only make the philosopher agree with his own thought, but also all philosophers with each other. Such as it is, fugitive and incomplete, it is, in each system, what is worth more than the system and survives it. The object of philosophy would be reached if this intuition could be sustained, generalized and, above all, assured of external points of reference in order not to go astray. To that end a continual coming and going is necessary between nature and mind (*CE*: 237-239).

This coming and going (oscillation) between nature and mind is the movement of intuition as well as that of metaphysics (*IM*: 188). It is because intuition has to move between nature and mind that *durée* cannot be said to be imprisoned in

my consciousness. Intuition cannot be prolonged beyond a few instants because “we are not the vital current itself; we are this current already loaded with matter” (*CE*: 239). This being the case, the dismissal of our habits of mind cannot be absolute. We can dismiss them to a certain extent but then acquire them again since we cannot sustain intuition more than a few moments. However, this is already a great effort as to the parts of the individuals who choose to make violence to their nature. And it is as such that the individuals contribute to the advancement of societies as well as to the progress of philosophy. As the Great Mystics *propagated* the feeling of a flow that goes from their soul to God and from God to all humanity, Bergson says that intuition should “be *propagated* [my italics] to other men” by philosophers (*CE*: 238). Philosophers have a special role in Bergson’s philosophy in that, like the Great Mystics, they have something to propagate. Philosophers are those people who could make other people remember their faculty of intuition and awaken them to the evolutionary movement.

On the other hand, because we are the vital current already loaded with matter, the philosopher knows that while philosophizing, he is

obliged to abandon intuition, once he has received from it the impetus, and to rely on himself to carry on the movement by pushing the concepts one after another. But he soon feels he has lost foothold; he must come into touch with intuition again (*CE*: 238).

True metaphysics requires the philosopher to move between “two extreme limits” that are “materiality” or “pure repetition” on the one hand and “concrete flowing of duration” on the other (*IM*: 187-188). Therefore, it can be said that, on the one hand, the philosopher has to try to “bring our perception back to its

origins” that is possible by means of intuition and on the other hand, he has to “abandon intuition” and so come back to the conceptual task once he has received the impetus from intuition. He is obliged to come back because, as I said before, intuition cannot be prolonged beyond a few instants. However, it is the mission of the philosopher to try to prolong it. Why? Because

If this knowledge is generalized, speculation will not be the only thing to profit by it. Everyday life can be nourished and illuminated by it. For the world into which our senses and consciousness habitually introduces us is no more than the shadow of itself: and it is as cold as death. Everything in it is arranged for our maximum convenience, but in it, everything is in a present which seems constantly to be starting afresh; and we ourselves, fashioned artificially in the image of a no less artificial universe, see ourselves in the instantaneous, speak of the past as something done away with, and see in memory a fact strange or in any case foreign to us, an aid given to mind by matter (*PI*: 128).

Everyday life will be illuminated if this knowledge we get from intuition is generalized, that is, if intuition is prolonged. In our everyday life, we are used to live in accordance with matter; in accordance with the model of the solids. Our senses and consciousness turn towards matter which in turn make us see ourselves in the instantaneous, meaning that we live in a present separated from the past and as such by memory we understand only an aid given to mind by matter, that is, what we retain or store up according to our needs and interests. This, claims Bergson, is a case foreign to us. This is because, what we retain according to our needs and interests constitute only our superficial self, that is, a self that lives under the aspect of matter. In other words, then, contrary to what we might believe, it is not our needs and interests that make up our real self. As long as we choose to live in the instantaneous, we can neither find ourselves,

that is, our fundamental self, nor grasp the external world as it really is. What then has to be done? What does Bergson propose us to do?

Let us on the contrary grasp ourselves afresh as we are, in a present which is thick, and furthermore, elastic, which we can stretch indefinitely backward by pushing the screen which masks us from ourselves farther and farther away; let us grasp afresh the external world as it really is, not superficially, in the present, but in depth, with the immediate past crowding upon it and imprinting upon it its impetus; let us in a word become accustomed to see all things *sub specie durationis*: immediately in our galvanized perception what is taut becomes relaxed, what is dormant awakens, what is dead comes to life again. Satisfactions which art will never give save to those favored by nature and fortune, and only then upon rare occasions, philosophy thus understood will offer to all of us, at all times, by breathing life once again into the phantoms which surround us and by revivifying us. In so doing philosophy will become complementary to science in practice as well in speculation. With its applications which aim only at the convenience of existence, science gives us the promise of well-being, or at most, of pleasure. But philosophy could already give us joy (*PI*: 128-129).

Bergson recommends or proposes us a *way of life* in which there is place for philosophy. Seen from today, it can be said that in daily life, most probably more than the times Bergson lived, we are already used to live with science and technology. On the other hand, for most of us, there is no place for philosophy. Although it is true for Bergson that philosophy, just like science and technology, progresses by the works of the philosophers, it is not a discipline that belongs only to philosophers because philosophy, as Bergson understands it, means to see all things *sub specie durationis*, that is, seen under the aspect of duration and this can be accomplished by each of us to the extent that we get *accustomed* to see as such, just like we are already accustomed to see all things *under the aspect of matter*. To be a scientist or an artist require people to have

certain abilities that not all of us have. It is also true that to be a philosopher, we need to have certain abilities. However, the basic ability a philosopher should possess is to turn towards duration that all of us possess. In this sense, all of us can become philosophers. In other words, we do not need to read the works of say Aristotle, Descartes, Kant or even Bergson in order to see everything *sub specie durationis* because this is an ability that belongs to each of us. We know that when we see everything *under the aspect of matter*, we are able to adapt ourselves to society the most it is possible, if by this adaptation we understand, most crudely, to lead a life according to our practical needs. Let us now try to see what it means to grasp everything *sub specie durationis*.

4.3 The Experience of the Intuition of Time

To grasp everything *sub specie durationis* means to grasp ourselves in a present which is thick and elastic. Furthermore, it means to grasp the external world as it really is and to awaken our perception to mobility, to the flow of things. Grasping ourselves in a present which is thick and elastic is opposed to grasping ourselves in a present which is instantaneous. The notion of present then has two senses and according to the second sense, we need the notion of past, beside the notion of present, with the past referring to something done away with and the present referring to instants followed by instants. On the other hand, according to the former sense of present, we are not in need of introducing the notion of past since what is in question is a present which is thick, that is, a present which already involves the past. Such a present is also elastic because, contrary to the second sense of present, it is not a static present.

Just the contrary: it is a present that evolves, a present that changes continuously, a present that is open to creation and novelty. Herein also lies the idea of future. The notion of future cannot be considered from the viewpoint of foreseeability. It does not consist of the idea of possibility becoming real. Bergson reverses the direction from the possibility to the real to the direction that goes from the real to the possible. “The possibility of things” does not “precede their existence” and so they are not “capable of representation beforehand” (*PR*: 99-100). Bergson says,

As reality is created as something unforeseeable and new, its image is reflected behind it into the indefinite past; thus it finds that it has from all time been possible, but it is at this precise moment that it begins to have been always possible, and that is why I said that its possibility, which does not precede its reality, will have preceded it once the reality has appeared (*PR*: 101).

What is possible does not become real. On the contrary, what is real indicates to what has always been possible. This is to think backwards. Both the past and the future is thought then in terms of the present and therefore once the present is grasped truly, we will see that we no longer need the notions of a distinct past and a distinct future. We look from the perspective of what is real, that is, in a present that already involves a past in the sense of a growing snowball and a present that already involves a future in the sense of novelty.

This idea of time made Lacey, for instance, to describe Bergson as a “thoroughgoing A-theorist” (1989: 56). The difference between A-theory of time and B-theory of time that arose from Mc Taggart’s paradox is briefly that the first one refers to a dynamic view of time whereas the second one refers to a

static understanding of time. Clifford Williams explains the two conceptions of time Mc Taggart describes in his paradox as follows:

A-time consists of a series of events, the A-series, each of which is successively past, present, and future. B-time consists of a series of events, the B-series, each of which is 'permanently' related to each other by the time-relations [earlier than, simultaneous with and later than]. There is no change in the B-series because each event in the B-series always has the relations it has to other events...In the A-series, however, events do change (1998: 379-380).

Mullarkey says that Lacey described Bergson as an A-theorist because A-theory of time emphasizes "the passage of time and appearance of novelty." This, however, is to neglect certain "aspects of his [that is Bergson's] philosophy which do not harmonize so well with the idea of continual succession, aspects which, in some respects, emphasize the coexistence of different levels of time" (1999: 12). Ikeda says,

According to Bergson's theory of time, the division into past, present, and future is the product of human consciousness...Bergson considered the true nature of consciousness to be in flux, and he spoke of "flowing time." Time perceived from the physical, objective viewpoint is time past. In contrast, "flowing time" is the flow of consciousness or of life itself. In essence, there is no distinction between past, present, and future, since they are created by the flow of consciousness. What is inseparable becomes separated in our minds (73).

Only when we want to distinguish them that they become distinct from one another. But the truth is, when we separate them, we violate the essence of time. In this sense, although Bergson might seem to be an A-theorist, he is not. On the other hand, it can be said that B-theory of time is what Bergson describes as the scientific conception of time. Since Bergson is neither an A-theorist nor a B-

theorist, this may suggest that his conception of time is another one that can, for instance, be described as a C-theory of time. And if this is the case, we have to really understand in what respects it differs from A-theory of time as well as B-theory of time. However, to do this, we have first of all really succeed in putting down the difference between A-theory and B-theory. If we cannot do so, there is no point in describing different conceptions of time as A-theory, B-theory, C-theory.

In his article, “A Bergsonian Approach to A- and B- Time,” Clifford Williams says,

Both A- and B- theorists have operated on the assumption that Mc Taggart was right to differentiate two concepts of time. Although they have sometimes disagreed as to how these concepts of time should be described, they have agreed that there is a clear difference between the two. I shall challenge this assumption by showing, first, that we cannot differentiate them by means of Bergsonian intuition, and, second, that unless we do so, we cannot differentiate them at all (1998: 380).

The starting point of Williams is Bergson’s starting point in *Creative Evolution* when he says, “I find, first of all, that I pass from state to state” (*CE*: 1). This datum, Williams says, is a datum that not only Bergson intuits but everyone else can also intuit, because it is true that “what we first notice about time is some sort of shift or transition.” This datum about transition or shift may not be in the sense of passing from state to state. However, “we do, like Bergson, experience it as a passing—something like a motion, but not itself motion.” In this sense, Williams claims that “both A- and B-time contains transition.” Whether one is an A-theorist or B-theorist, he experiences this shift or transition. “Time is not

an unexperienceable metaphysical entity, such as a universal or a possible state of affairs,” Williams says. What he means is that in order to find out whether there are any differences between the seemingly different conceptions of time, we need to look at the differences in our experiencing them. “Is one vibrant and the other not? Is one a real transition and the other a false transition? Is one out of my control and the other not? None of these questions point to a way I can imagine a different transition.” We cannot imagine an “intuitional difference” between the description of A-time as dynamic and transient and the description of B-time as static and permanent. Williams then goes on to express ‘dynamic’ by other words to see whether anything would change with respect to experiencing a different conception of time. He uses the terms that A-theorists have used before: “alive and whooshy, flowing and vibrant.” And then he says,

what, then, would it be to intuit a time that is not alive or whooshy, flowing and vibrant? Nothing comes to mind here, either. Intuitions of B-time are just as alive and whooshy, flowing and vibrant, as intuitions of A-time are (1998: 385).

I agree with Williams that with respect to Bergsonian intuition we cannot differentiate between A- and B-time. And if we cannot do so there is no point in introducing another conception of time, C-time, that would refer to Bergson’s notion of time.

What I would now claim following Clifford Williams’s reasoning is that there is no *intuitional difference* between Bergson’s notion of present that is thick and elastic and a present that is instantaneous. In other words, when we try to imagine a difference between experiencing a thick present and an

instantaneous present, nothing comes to mind. This is because the intuition of time is one. The fact that there is no *intuitional difference* between the two senses of present shows that there is indeed one real time but that there are different conceptions of it. Bergson tries to show that the scientific conception of time considers real time from the perspective of measurement and that is the reason why he characterizes it as space. At bottom there is no *intuitional difference* between concrete duration and the scientific conception of time. What would be the intuition of time, for instance, in which there is no flux, which is not indivisible and not continuous? Nothing comes to mind except that these determinations cannot be said to be of time since at the experienceable level we intuit time as flux, as indivisible and continuous. The intuition of time, we can say, is forgotten in the scientific conception. In other words, the scientific conception of time is the notion of time stripped from the experienceable level and brought instead to the level of analysis. Time is then made to be nothing but a concept, which Bergson rejects.

I have said that to grasp everything *sub specie durationis* meant to grasp ourselves in a present which is thick and elastic whereas to grasp everything *under the aspect of matter* meant to grasp ourselves in a present which is instantaneous. I also said that this difference itself gets blurred when it comes to experiencing a thick present and an instantaneous present, when we try to find out an *intuitional difference* between the two. In what sense then to live *sub specie durationis* and to live *under the aspect of matter* are different? From our considerations, it follows that at bottom there can again be no *intuitional difference* between *to live sub specie durationis* and *to live under the*

aspect of matter. To grasp everything *under the aspect of matter* means to have forgotten the intuition of time and grasp everything by means of our intellect alone. That is the reason why Bergson recommends us to get rid of our habits of mind because when we do so, we are able to remember this intuition. This is tantamount to claim that at bottom there are not two different lives in themselves. We have one life but either a life involving the intuition of time or a life that is stripped from this intuition or again a life in which we remember, from time to time, we have an intuition of time.

It is true that Bergson proposes us a way of life and what he recommends is, in fact, a life *sub specie durationis*. However, this is not a way of life in the sense of ‘know-how’. Bergson’s recommendation refers to a metaphysical standing. He recommends all of us to intuit time and sustain this intuition as long as it is possible in order to make a difference to our lives. We may ask in what way the intuition of time could make a difference to our lives? I think that to intuit time already refers to this difference itself since we most of the time forget we have a faculty of intuition and act only under the aspect of matter. In his presentation speech for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1927, Bergson ended up his words by quoting the comment of professor Gösta Forssell: “Bergson’s high-minded works strive to regain for man’s consciousness the divine gift of intuition and to put reason in its proper place: serving and controlling ideas.”

Bergson’s most important contribution to philosophy, I think, is to make us awaken to the fact that the intuition of time could be spread into all

areas of our lives. With respect to philosophy, Bergson recommends that “to do metaphysics we need to intuit time” (Williams, 1998, p. 380). But in fact, this recommendation, as we saw, is not only for philosophers, it is for all who want to make a difference in their lives by choosing *to live sub specie durationis*—a metaphysical choice— that will give them “greater joy and strength.” He says,

Philosophy stands to gain in finding some absolute in the moving world of phenomena. But we shall gain also in our feeling of greater joy and strength. Greater joy because the reality invented before our eyes will give each one of us, unceasingly, certain of the satisfactions which art at rare intervals procures for the privileged; it will reveal to us, beyond the fixity and monotony which our senses, hypnotized by our constant needs, at first perceived in it, ever-recurring novelty, the moving originality of things. But above all we shall have greater strength, for we shall feel we are participating, creators of ourselves, in the great work of creation which is the origin of all things and which goes on before our eyes (*PR*: 105).

When we choose *to live sub specie durationis*, the reality is invented before our eyes. It is not the same when we choose *to live under the aspect of matter* because then what we find before our eyes is a reality that is already given, it is a ready-made reality. In the former case we are active agents whereas in the latter we remain passive to all that happens. When we feel we are active agents, that is, when we feel we are the creators of ourselves and so can also participate in the creative evolutionary movement, we become stronger. Stronger because we feel that we are part of the movement of evolution. Therefore, we can say that the intuition of time makes us a part of the reality that goes on before our eyes. When this is the case, we express the notion of present as thick and elastic, and as instantaneous when this is not the case.

There is only one intuition of time but different ways for the mind to have a conception of that experienced intuition: the conception that removes this intuition and turns toward analysis or the conception that remains in intuition. The problem with the first one is to depart from the real time, time that by definition has to be experienceable, by deviating from the intuition of time. The problem with the second one, on the other hand, is the intuition of time to be “inexpressible” (*IM*: 161). Therefore, when Bergson talks about, for instance, the notion of present as thick, elastic and instantaneous, these cannot then be said to be proper descriptions of time. They rather refer to the effort of the mind that tries to express the real time by means of different images. This is tantamount to say that although there is no *intuitional difference* between the two conceptions of time, the difference arises by means of our use of different images. Therefore, I claim that in fact Bergson tries to show that there is at bottom no *intuitional difference* between the two conceptions of time by means of showing the difference between them through the use of different images. Indeed, According to Bergson, neither images nor concepts that are either general or simple abstract ideas can represent, for example, “the inner life” and moreover, it is not necessary “to try to express it.” In fact, when we attempt to express it, we distort the reality of inner life just like when we try to express time we inevitably distort it again by the use of images and concepts. This is a puzzle that Helmut Wagner designated it the “Bergson paradox.” Bergson himself expresses the puzzle:

I said that several conscious states are organized into a whole, permeate one another...but the very use of the word “several” shows that I had already isolated these states, externalized them in relation to one another (*TFW*: 122; Mullarkey, 1999: 150).

Nevertheless, the philosopher should aim at expressing it by means of “a certain effort which the utilitarian habits of mind of everyday life tend, in most men, to discourage” (*IM*: 165). This effort involves also the use of images because

the image has at least the advantage of keeping us in the concrete. No image will replace the intuition of duration, but many different images, taken from quite different orders of things, will be able, through the convergence of their action, to direct the consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to seize on” (*IM*: 166).

Both the present that is expressed as thick and elastic and the present that is expressed as instantaneous are images. Bergson says, “by choosing images as dissimilar as possible, any one of them will be prevented from usurping the place of the intuition it is instructed to call forth” (*IM*: 166). These images then direct the consciousness where there is an intuition to seize on but when we use them, that is, when we try to express our intuition by means of them, we should be careful in employing the ones that are as dissimilar as possible, because otherwise we will lose the intuition we had (of time) and will be left by nothing but images. In this respect, these dissimilar images Bergson used in order to express the notion of present, direct the consciousness to this precise point where there is the intuition of time to seize on. This is an “indirect” presentation of present because Bergson says that duration “can be suggested [only] indirectly to us by images.” Direct presentation of duration is possible only “in intuition” and that we cannot express, whence comes the puzzle. Bergson also says that duration cannot “be enclosed in a conceptual

representation” (*IM*: 168). This amounts to say that when we say, for example, that duration is indivisibility, continuity, unity as well as multiplicity, we are only “juxtaposing concepts to concepts” in order to obtain “an intellectual equivalent” of the object we want to form its representation (*IM*: 166). Moreover, since even *durée* and time itself are representations, Mullarkey says that “representations kills time, or rather, ‘time’ kills the non-symbolic or non-conceptual intuition it is meant to express” (1999: 151). Bergson says,

in so far as abstract ideas can render service to analysis, that is, to a scientific study of the object in its relations with all others, to that very extent are they incapable of replacing intuition, that is to say, the metaphysical investigation of the object in what essentially belongs to it (*IM*: 167).

These determinations point out to the unique place intuition has as different from both the images and concepts, though the images have an advantage concepts do not have. Concerning the puzzle, we leave it as it is, claiming that although this were an unavoidable situation Bergson had to fall into, this was not a problem peculiar to Bergson’s method of philosophy. On the contrary, it referred to the human situation Bergson himself aimed at showing us: our intellect is made “to think matter” and that “our concepts have been formed on the model of solids” and that therefore, our intellect “is incapable of presenting the true nature of life, the full meaning of the evolutionary movement” (*CE*: ix-x).

I previously asked in what way the intuition of time could make a difference to our lives and said that the intuition of time already referred to this difference itself. However, the truth is that I have been pointing out to this

difference throughout this study. Therefore, let me now state what I have been pointing out within the framework of the difference(s) the intuition of time would bring into our lives.

4.4 The Paradox of the Human Condition Reflecting a Philosophy of Life

Bergson gives us a metaphysical standing in order for people to be more joyful and stronger. To do this, he makes us awaken to our fundamental self. To live with the fundamental self is to live *sub specie durationis* and it is our fundamental self which makes us become more joyful and stronger because then people feel themselves freer. In other words, people experience true freedom by being awakened to their true self. In practical life, we lose this self while in duration we regain it. So the claim is: to live freer makes people more joyful and stronger. To feel free, however, does not mean to do whatever you want to do. True freedom is a state of consciousness in which you are participating in creation, in which you feel the creative evolution of which you are a part and that is the main reason why what Bergson recommends us refers to a metaphysical standing and not to a 'know-how'. This does not mean that Bergson claimed that people cannot be joyful and strong when they are not experiencing true freedom, when they carry on their practical lives. The joy and strength one feels in practical life, however, is ephemeral because they mostly depend on outer circumstances. The joy and strength that comes from placing oneself in duration, on the other hand, is not ephemeral, it is eternal due to the ongoing movement of evolution and it does not depend on outer practical circumstances but comes from "the turning of the mind homeward, the

coincidence of human consciousness with the living principle whence it emanates, a contact with the creative effort” (CE: 369-370).

As I said before, in closed morality there was a pressure exercised by society, the individual and society were almost identified, and, people were behaving automatically and instinctively. It can be said that closed morality is a morality that is mostly appropriate to our practical lives because what constitutes our practical lives is the utmost adaptation to society. In this respect, the joy and strength that could be found in practical life might resemble those peculiar to closed morality. Thus we can imagine the joy and strength that might possibly come from behaving automatically, from feeling the pressure of society and that might come from feeling to be like anyone else. On the other hand, open morality has those characteristics that resemble to a life *sub specie durationis*: inner vocation, creation, progress and a sense of freedom. The images we used to describe closed morality and open morality are dissimilar and therefore, considered together, they direct the consciousness where there is an intuition to seize on. Thus we can have the intuition of joy and strength peculiar to closed morality and practical life and those peculiar to open morality and life in duration.

Now the truth is, “at bottom the closed and the open moralities are complementary manifestations of one and the same life impulse” (Bochenski, p. 112). I think that this is also true for practical life, that is, *life under the aspect of matter*, and *life sub specie durationis*. I mentioned before that these two were not two different lives in themselves. Now I can say that this is because they

both arise from the same life impulse. However, this impulse of life or the evolution of life proceeds “in the double direction of individuality and association.” This “is due to the very nature of life.” Therefore, “the vital impetus is neither pure unity nor pure multiplicity” and that the life impulse “will leap from one to the other indefinitely” (*CE*: 261). Within this framework, I can say that *life under the aspect of matter* and *life sub specie durationis* arise from the same vital impetus and point out to two different directions. And because they arise from the same vital impetus, there should always have to be a leap from one to the other.

Let us remember how Hadot described the paradox of the human condition:

man *lives in* the world without *perceiving* the world...The obstacle to perceiving the world is not to be found in modernity, but within man himself. We must separate ourselves from the world qua world in order to live our daily life, but we must separate ourselves from the “everyday” world in order to rediscover the world qua world” (Hadot, 1995: 258).

It is true that the obstacle to perceiving the world is found within man himself. However, it would be more appropriate to say that, according to Bergson, the obstacle comes from the very nature of life, from the double movement of evolution. One direction of the vital impulse enables us to adapt ourselves to the environment whereas the other direction makes possible to greatly dismiss the habits of our mind. The former direction turns toward ‘materiality’ and ‘intellect’ whereas the latter direction turns toward ‘life’, ‘consciousness’, ‘intuition’ and therefore toward ‘spirituality’ (*CE*: 249, 267, 201). Bergson

says, “consciousness, in man, is pre-eminently intellect. It might have been...also intuition” (*CE*: 267). It might have been, but it is not. That is why it is not easy for us to place ourselves in duration. But the fact that this is not easy does not mean that it is not possible. In fact, it is Bergson’s main objective to try to show that to place ourselves in duration is possible. What we need is to grasp the spirituality that is found in everything. Only when we do so that we can fully participate in the creative evolutionary movement. It is not difficult for us to see materiality in everything because this is our natural tendency. Therefore, we need to grasp the other direction of the vital impetus, which is intuition. Bergson says, “intuition is what attains the spirit, duration, pure change. Its real domain being the spirit, it would seek to grasp in things, even material things, their participation in spirituality” (*I*: 33). Since intuition and intellect represent two opposite directions and that we naturally tend toward the direction of our intellect, we must do violence to our intellect in order for intuition to accomplish its task. To do violence to our intellect implies to try to dismiss the habits of our mind. Only when we do so we can grasp the world qua world. To live our daily lives in intuition is not possible because we have to use the habits of our mind in our daily or practical lives. In other words, even if we want to go counter to the vital impetus, we cannot. Similarly, we cannot grasp the world qua world by means of the habits of our mind. We might think we do but there will always be an obstacle in our conception of reality because it is these habits themselves that prevent us to see the becoming in general. Therefore, Bergsonian philosophy requires that these habits are continuously dismissed and regained.

Bergson says that God “has nothing of the already made; He is unceasing life, action, freedom. Creation, so conceived, is not a mystery; we experience it in ourselves when we act freely (*CE*: 248). We are indeed able to experience true freedom. However, only the Great Mystics possess a God-like freedom. Our experience of true freedom, as I mentioned before, are rare. Bergson says,

we never do fall into (this) absolute passivity, any more than we can make ourselves absolutely free. But, in the limit, we get a glimpse of an existence made of a present which recommences unceasingly—devoid of real duration, nothing but the instantaneous which dies and is born again endlessly (*CE*: 200-201).

We cannot make ourselves absolutely free. Our very existence is the tension between the existence made of a present devoid of real duration and the existence made of a present in real duration. This metaphysical standing itself is the Bergsonian philosophy of life. The paradox of the human condition does not have an absolute resolution for the reasons I stated. However, this paradox itself reflects the Bergsonian philosophy of life because it consists of the existential tension that comes from the evolutionary movement. Moreover, though the paradox of the human condition is not absolutely resolvable, it is by itself able to give us a new perspective according to which we can make a difference to our lives. Whether we are aware of it or not, each one of us has a metaphysician within us that strives for intuiting time. To awaken this metaphysician brings a difference to ourselves who are used to live mostly according to our everyday needs and interests. To awaken this metaphysician is to lean towards a life *sub specie durationis* that will give us joy and strength.

I used Hadot's formulation of the paradox of the human condition. I will now try to restate this paradox in Bergsonian notions by means of two arguments and end our discussion.

The First Argument:

(1) It is necessary that one reaches the greatest degree of freedom if and only if he reaches a life based on the fundamental self.

(2) It is necessary that one greatly dismisses his habits of mind if and only if he achieves the greatest degree of freedom.

(3) It is possible for anyone to greatly dismiss his habits of mind.

Conclusion: It is possible for anyone to reach a life based on the fundamental self.

These are acceptable premises according to Bergson's philosophy. Our reasoning is acceptable and the conclusion is acceptable. Therefore, our argument is valid.

The Second Argument:

(1) It is necessary that one reaches the greatest degree of freedom if and only if he reaches a life based on the fundamental self.

(2) It is necessary that one greatly dismisses his habits of mind if and only if he achieves the greatest degree of freedom.

(3 \exists) It is possible not for anyone to greatly dismiss his habits of mind.

Conclusion: It is possible not for anyone to reach a life based on the fundamental self.

These are again acceptable premises according to Bergson's philosophy. Our reasoning is acceptable and the conclusion is acceptable. Therefore, our second argument is also valid.²⁷

The first two premisses in both arguments are the same. Therefore, it is the difference in the third premisses that leads to different conclusions. I claim that according to Bergson's philosophy both premise 3 and premise 3 \exists are plausible. Premise 3 is plausible because it is Bergson's main intention to show that anyone can dismiss his habits of mind. In other words, to try to dismiss the habits of mind is a choice. This is possible by means of a change in the direction of our reasoning that also implies a displacement of attention, which constitutes the phenomenological aspect of the paradox. Given that to dismiss the habits of mind is a possibility, a continuous effort of our mind is

²⁷ By using modalities, I can formalize the two arguments as follows:

First Argument:

(1) $\Box (P \leftrightarrow Q)$

(2) $\Box (R \leftrightarrow P)$

(3) $\circ R$

Conclusion: $\circ Q$

Second Argument:

(1) $\Box (P \leftrightarrow Q)$

(2) $\Box (R \leftrightarrow P)$

(3 \exists) $\circ \neg R$

Conclusion: $\circ \neg Q$

needed. Therefore, it is possible for anyone to reach a life based on the fundamental self.

Premise 3 \exists is also plausible. To greatly dismiss one's habits of mind is possible but necessary. In other words, it is not necessary for anyone to dismiss his habits of mind. Not everyone can change the direction of his reasoning and therefore, one can never be certain whether he himself can change the direction of his reasoning and so reach a life based on the fundamental self. To choose to dismiss the habits of mind is not thus a real choice. Moreover, because man has already evolved based on the intellect and so adapted certain mental habits that might not be ultimately resolvable, his intellect would remain as the greatest obstacle in determining whether he could reach a life based on the fundamental self. This is at the same time, the vitalist aspect of the paradox.

Focusing on the conclusions we see that these conclusions taken together do not lead to a formal contradiction just by logical means. Therefore, we do not have a paradox in a strictly logical sense. However, I may claim that an individual who is bound to accept the legitimacy of both arguments and thus to accept both conclusions will find himself in a fairly deep confusion: the possibility of attaining a life based on the fundamental self, given by the conclusion of the first argument, forces the individual not to give up his effort in dismissing his habits of mind. On the other hand, the possibility that he may never reach a life based on the fundamental self which is given by the conclusion of the second argument would lead him to the doubt that his efforts

are in vain when he encounters obstacles in dismissing his habits of mind. Based on these considerations, I can claim that this is a *paradox of life* (or existential contradiction in Kierkegaardian terms)²⁸ and that the individual has nothing but to determine his existential standpoint in face of this paradoxical situation. This implies at the same time the transformation of the paradox into a real philosophy of life and into intermediate zones: the individual should determine for himself the place he gives to philosophy in his life; it enables him to determine how eager he is in transforming his life through philosophy, for instance, whether he wants to awaken his fundamental self or not; it also enables the individual to determine the meaning he would bring to his life with philosophy. Therefore, it can be said that the existentialist aspect completes our analyses of the paradox of the human condition, that is, the paradox of life.

CHAPTER 5

²⁸ See Kierkegaard (1990) *Either/Or*, Part I and Part II, edited and translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Kierkegaard (1992) *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, vol. I, edited and translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, Princeton: Princeton University Press. For further explanation on the “paradoxes of living” see Robert Solomon (1990) *From Rationalism to Existentialism, The Existentialists and Their Nineteenth Century Backgrounds*, New York: Harper & Row. See also Jamie Ferreira (1991) “Kierkegaardian Transitions: Paradox and Pathos”, *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 31, pp; 65-80.

CONCLUSION

I tried to show how a possible philosophy of life could arise from Bergson's notion of *durée réelle*. In the realization of this aim, I appealed to Pierre Hadot's description of the paradox of the human condition because I claimed that in order to understand how a Bergsonian philosophy of life by means of *durée réelle* would arise, we had to understand this paradox. I asserted that Bergson attempted to bring a possible resolution for the paradox of the human condition by an appeal to unite his main concepts *durée réelle* and philosophical intuition together with the act of philosophizing. I tried to show that when this paradox and its possible resolution are restated in Bergsonian notions, a Bergsonian philosophy of life that consisted of a life *sub specie durationis* would arise. In order to establish this relation, I attempted to show the phenomenological, vitalist and existentialist aspects of the paradox of the human condition—these aspects, at the same time, constituted different possible readings of Bergson's philosophy. Hadot expressed this paradox only within the context of phenomenology. I claim that the phenomenological aspect is only one aspect of the paradox and that if we do not include the other aspects we would not remain faithful to Bergson's philosophy and also that my attempt to show Bergson's philosophy of life would not be completed.

Hadot expressed the paradox of the human condition by saying that “we must separate ourselves from the world qua world in order to live our daily life, but we must separate ourselves from the “everyday” world in order to

rediscover the world qua world” (1995: 258). In a similar way, the paradox of the human condition in Bergson’s philosophy arose because of the tension existing between our habits of mind that we needed in order to live our everyday lives and the dismissal of these habits in order to philosophize and so grasp reality as it is.

The phenomenological aspect of the paradox arose around Bergson’s notion of “displacement of attention” and when the notion of *durée réelle* was considered with consciousness in the light of the notion of intensity. The vitalist aspect entered into our discussion when we analyzed Bergson’s notion of *élan vital* around the consideration of true evolution. Reality, according to Bergson, was a vital process to which human existence was integrated. I believe that the existentialist aspect of the paradox of the human condition would emerge if the individual asked himself how to deal with this paradox that in turn defines his struggle to transform the tension the paradox involves and that tells him to bring his own attitude towards it. This existentialist aspect of the paradox cannot be easily grasped in Bergson’s philosophy. Nevertheless, I believe that it is a necessary aspect one cannot disregard because the problem of the human condition is basically an existential problem: a problem that concerns human beings’ standpoint in social, individual and philosophical life.

The vitalist aspect of the paradox expresses the evolution of life itself in that, the obstacle of human beings in perceiving the world qua world comes from one direction among different directions of the vital impulse, which is the direction towards the intellect that is turned towards matter. In the course of the

evolution, “intellect and matter have progressively adapted themselves one to the other” (*CE*: 206) and as a result, “our concepts have been formed on the model of the solids” (*CE*: ix). I can claim that this is the reason why to perceive the world qua world is difficult for us: since we have already evolved in the direction of the intellect, the paradox of the human condition becomes unavoidable. In other words, it is because of the course of our evolution that we have to face this paradox. We cannot change the direction of this evolution. However, by an effort of the mind, we can change the direction of our reasoning which is from intellect to intuition to that from intuition to intellect. Due to this change in the direction of reasoning, the intellect is able to a certain degree to drop its habitual act. This change in the direction of reasoning is at the same time a necessary condition for the displacement of attention because in order to perceive the world qua world, to get out of the realm of the habitual practical way of perceiving things, we need to change the direction of our reasoning. Therefore, I can say that whereas the phenomenological aspect of the paradox presents the paradox as a choice for the individual, that is, if one wants to perceive the world qua world he has to displace his attention, he must separate himself from the practical utilities of the everyday world, the vitalist aspect of the paradox shows that this cannot be a real choice because man has evolved based on his intellect and therefore adapted some mental habits that cannot be ultimately resolvable.

On the other hand, I can equally say that, whereas the vitalist aspect of the paradox shows that the paradox cannot be ultimately resolved due to the general movement of the evolution, the phenomenological aspect shows that we

can displace our attention by changing the direction of our reasoning. The former interpretation strengthens the paradox of the human condition while the latter weakens it. I believe that both interpretations are equally possible. That is the reason why when I restated, in section 4.4, Hadot's description of the paradox of the human condition in Bergsonian notions, I reached at two different conclusions: it is possible for anyone to reach a life based on the fundamental self and it is possible not for anyone to reach a life based on the fundamental self.

The existentialist aspect of the paradox of the human condition enables the paradox to transform into a real philosophy of life and into intermediate zones because in face of this paradoxical situation, man has nothing but to determine his own attitude. Here by philosophy of life I understand the place each individual gives to philosophy in his life, how eager he is in transforming his life through philosophy, for instance, whether he does want to awaken his fundamental self or not, and the meaning he brings to his life with philosophy. Moreover, because the notion of time is at the center of Bergson's conception of philosophy, this philosophy of time presents itself as a philosophy of life: Bergsonian philosophy of life is a life *sub specie durationis*.

Whether we really need the paradox of the human condition in putting forward Bergson's philosophy of life can be argued. However, because this paradox brings together different approaches to Bergson's philosophy and therefore enables us to understand Bergson's philosophy of life seen from different aspects and it already by itself presents two different levels of life, it

plays the crucial role in establishing Bergson's philosophy of life. Moreover, it shows the reason why the notion of time presents itself as two opposed views of time that are homogeneous time and concrete duration: there are two views of time because there are two different ways of perceiving things (the perception of everyday life and the perception of the world qua world); there are two views of time because there are (at least) two different directions of evolution (one direction enables the individual to adapt to his environment and the other enables the individual to greatly dismiss his mental habits as long as he tries to change the direction of his reasoning); lastly the individual has to determine his own attitude in face of the two opposed notion of time.

By doing philosophy, individuals bring to their lives strength and joy. The best existentialist attitude the individual can have with respect to the paradox of the human condition is to spare most of his time in reading and doing philosophy and to make himself free the most he can (since freedom comes in degrees). I tried to show that in the realization of this aim intuition and intellect complete each other. Intuition and intellect constitute the two opposite directions of the work of consciousness. I said that, according to Bergson, "a complete and perfect humanity would be that in which these two forms of conscious activity should attain their full development." However, our humanity is not complete and perfect because in the course of our evolution, intuition is "almost completely sacrificed to intellect" (*CE*: 267). Therefore, what we have to do is to try to prolong intuition beyond a few instants that implies doing violence to our mind. As such, the individuals contribute to the advancement of societies and to the progress of philosophy. Intuition "should be propagated to

other men” (*CE*: 238) because philosophers are those people who can make other people remember their faculty of intuition and make them awaken to the evolutionary movement. However, true metaphysics require the philosopher to move between “two extreme limits” that are “materiality” and “concrete flowing of duration” (*IM*: 187-188), that is, between intellect and intuition. The philosopher has to bring our perception back to its origins by means of intuition and then abandon intuition and come back to the conceptual task once he has received the impetus from intuition since intuition cannot be prolonged beyond a few instants. However, it is the mission of the philosopher to try to prolong intuition because when the knowledge we get by intuition is generalized, not only speculation but also everyday life would profit by it. In intuition, “everything is in a present which seems constantly to be starting afresh” (*PI*: 128), in other words, it is in intuition that we grasp the world as it is, in its continuous flux and becoming. To grasp the world in its becoming makes us feel we are participating in vital impulse and as a result, brings joy and strength to our lives.

I ended the last chapter by restating Hadot’s formulation of the paradox of the human condition in Bergsonian notions by means of two arguments. Focusing on the conclusions, we saw that the conclusions of both arguments did not lead to a formal contradiction and thus we did not get a paradox in a strictly logical sense. However, I claimed that an individual who is bound to accept the legitimacy of both arguments and thus to accept both conclusions will find himself in a deep confusion: the possibility of attaining a life based on the fundamental self, given by the conclusion of the first argument,

forces the individual not to give up his effort in dismissing his habits of mind. On the other hand, the possibility that he may never reach a life based on the fundamental self which is given by the conclusion of the second argument would lead him to the doubt that his efforts are in vain when he encounters obstacles in dismissing his habits of mind. Based on these considerations, I claimed that this is a *paradox of life* (or existential contradiction in Kierkegaardian terms). As such, the phenomenological and the vitalist aspects of the paradox of the human condition are completed by the existentialist aspect.

I end this study by presenting two problems open to interpretations. The first one is concerned with Bergson's theory of action that I dealt with in the second as well as in the third chapter. The second one concerns Clifford Williams' reasoning as I applied it to Bergson's two conceptions of time in chapter 4.3.

In chapter 3.2.3, we understood that Bergson uses the concept action in a positive sense when he pointed out to the difference between considering the subject of matter and mind from the standpoint of pure knowledge and from the standpoint of action. When we took up the first position, perception became a kind of photographic view. It was this conception of perception that we then put at the center of getting pure knowledge. In the second one, we did not take perception to be a photographic view and as something that gave us pure knowledge. Instead, we looked at things from the point of view of action that enabled us to grasp things in the way we live. On the other hand, we saw, in the

second chapter, that our intellect was turned toward action and that our habits of mind were formed when “the utilitarian character of our mental functions” was turned toward action (*MM*: 16). These two different considerations of action make us claim that the concept action is used in two senses in Bergson’s philosophy. While action based on the intellect is used in a negative sense, action that leads us to intuition and makes Bergson claim that “action is master of time” is used in a positive sense. How to reconcile these two different conceptions of action is a problem. Here, I offer my own solution.

The true character of perception is restored when we consider pure perception as “a system of nascent acts which plunges roots deep into the real...the reality of things is no more constructed or reconstructed, but touched, penetrated, lived” (*MM*: 69). This is, at the same time, the real sense of action. “Action is master of time,” says Bergson (*MM*: 32). When perception is understood as “that which acts no longer,” we take perception to be a kind of photographic view that photographs images as snapshots. It is in this sense that the function of perception and of the intellect coincides. Our intellect (and so our perception) is turned toward action. Here, action is not used in its real sense. It is understood as constructing or reconstructing things and as such is not master of time but rather master of space. The real sense of action comes from the actual lived experience in which things are touched, penetrated and lived. This sense of action coincides, I believe, with the function of intuition. Inverting the usual direction of the intellect implies then to restore the true character of perception and therefore the real sense of action. When this is restored, our successive perceptions become the moments of our consciousness,

it is transformed into a concrete experience. That is the reason why the true character of perception has to be seen in its relation to duration. Each of our perceptions “occupies a certain depth of duration” (*MM*: 69). When we ignore this fact, the reality of things is seen from the point of view of knowledge and not from the point of view of action. Considered from the first point of view, our successive perceptions become the real moments of things that is always turned toward the past and as such give us things as snapshots.

Let us now consider the second problem open to interpretation. Whether Williams’ reasoning applied to Bergson’s two notions of time shows that there are no *intuitional differences* between homogeneous time and concrete duration or indicates that there are in fact differences between the two notions of time, is open to interpretation. In fact, I argued in favor of the first one. However, since Bergson does not quite explicitly say that there are no *intuitional differences* between the experience of homogeneous time and the experience of concrete duration, one might equally argue in favor of the second view. I argued that there can be no *intuitional difference* between *experiencing* homogeneous time and concrete duration. Here we talk about not any kind of experience but the experience of time. It is true that, as I argued in the second chapter, there are two ways of experiencing things according to Bergson: our normal way of experiencing things and the experience we have when we are in immediate contact with things as well as with ourselves. The first kind of experience refers to our experience of the world when we, as Hadot says, humanize it according to our needs. It is the experience we have when our

intellect guides us. Since our intellect proceeds by “solid perceptions” and “stable conceptions,”

it starts from the immobile and conceives and expresses movement only in terms of immobility. It places itself in ready-made concepts and tries to catch in them, as in a net, something of the passing reality. It does not do so in order to obtain an internal and metaphysical knowledge of the real. It is simply to make use of them, each concept (like each sensation) being a *practical question* which our activity asks of reality and to which reality will answer, as is proper in things, by a yes or a no. But in so doing it allows what is the very essence of the real to escape (*IM*: 189).

The second kind of experience, on the other hand, refers to the “disinterested knowledge” we have of the real and implies that we start not from the immobile but from the mobile. When one starts from mobility, then, “one can draw from it through thought as many halts as one wishes.” This means that when our starting point is the “mobile reality” itself, then we can extract “fixed concepts” from it. However, we cannot reconstitute the “mobility of the real” by means of fixed concepts (*IM*: 189). These are the two ways of our experiencing things. Therefore, it is also possible to say that, if we succeed in starting from the mobility of the real in order then to arrive at fixed concepts, there would no longer be two kinds of experiences for us, but only one. And the only way for such an experience is to base our experience of things on the intuition of time.

Our intuition of time is indivisible and continuous and we do not have *intuitional difference* that tells us the way to *experience* time in which there is no flux, which is not indivisible and not continuous because, as Williams said, “time is not an unexperienceable metaphysical entity, such as a universal or a

possible state of affairs” (1998: 385). If time would have been an unexperienceable entity, then we could have certain ways to point out to the differences between, for instance, Mc Taggart’s A-time and B-time, or between Bergson’s homogeneous time and concrete duration. Indeed Bergson points out to the differences between the two views of time. However, I claim that it is because we do not consider time as an experienceable entity that Bergson had to point out to two seemingly different views of time. Therefore, it can be said that homogeneous time and concrete duration are two different conceptions of time arising from the same intuition of time. That is the reason why Bergson says that homogeneous time is the symbolical representation of concrete duration. Homogeneous time make us conceive the present as instantaneous whereas concrete duration make us conceive the present as thick and elastic. However, there are no *intuitional differences* between the two at the experienceable level. These are the reasons why I claimed that Williams’s reasoning applied to Bergson’s two notions of time shows that there are no *intuitional differences* between homogeneous time and concrete duration.

If, on the contrary, one would argue that, Bergson’s intention was to show that there are *intuitional differences* between the scientific conception of time and concrete duration, he has to explain in what senses there can be *intuitional differences* between Bergson’s notion of present that is thick and elastic and a present that is instantaneous (the first referring to concrete duration and the second referring to the scientific conception of time that is homogeneous time). These two notions of present would then indicate to two

real senses of time because the intuition of the two notions of present would be different.

Williams' reasoning was that if we cannot differentiate between A-time and B-time by means of Bergsonian intuition, we cannot differentiate them at all. Since time is an experienceable entity, our only means to distinguish between different conceptions of time is to look at their differences at the experienceable level. Williams uses Bergsonian intuition to show that there are no *intuitional differences* between A-time and B-time. However, as I now argued, if one argues that Bergson's two notions of time point out to two different intuitions, Williams' reasoning would turn out to be a criticism for Bergson's notion of time since there would then be *intuitional differences* between the two conceptions of time.

As we saw in the last chapter, by means of the use of different images, consciousness was able to direct consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to seize on. It must then be claimed that these different images might direct consciousness to different intuitions to seize on. A present that is thick and elastic and a present that is instantaneous are both images and we do not have any means to verify whether these refer to one intuition or to different intuitions since intuition is inexpressible. Therefore, one can argue that one can never be certain whether different images direct consciousness to the precise point where there is one intuition or several different intuitions to seize on.

Similarly, one can never be certain whether the experience of the allies of A-theorists and B-theorists refer to the same intuition of time or not. They might both express the experience of time by the terms “vibrant, whooshy and flowing,” for example, and that a time which is not expressed in these terms cannot indeed be imaginable by them. Nevertheless one can never be sure whether they really do have the same experience. Therefore, the dispute between A-time and B-time, or between homogeneous time and concrete duration, can never end. In other words, whether there is a clear difference between the two conceptions of time or not can never be resolved.

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APPENDIX A

TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu çalışmanın amacı Bergson'un zaman anlayışından nasıl bir olanaklı yaşam felsefesinin çıkabileceğini göstermektir. Bu amacı gerçekleştirmek için, Hadot'nun insan durumu paradoksu betimlemesine başvuruyorum. Bergson'un zaman anlayışından nasıl Bergsoncu bir yaşam felsefesi çıkacağını anlayabilmek için insan durumu paradoksunu anlamamız gerektiğini iddia ediyorum. Bunun sebebi, Bergson'un felsefesinde bir çok ikilik bulunması ve iddiama göre bu ikiliklerin hepsinin insan durumunu ilgilendiren temel ikilik üzerinde temellenmiş olmalarıdır. İnanıyorum ki bu paradoks ve paradoksun olanaklı bir çözümü Bergsoncu kavramlarla yeniden ifade edilirse, *sub specie durationis* bir yaşamı, yani sürenin görünüşü altında bir yaşamı, oluşturan Bergsoncu bir yaşam felsefesi ortaya çıkacaktır.

Hadot insan durumu sorunsalını bir paradoks olarak şu şekilde ifade etmiştir:

Günlük yaşamımızı yaşayabilmek için kendimizi dünya olarak dünyadan ayırmamız gerekir, ancak dünya olarak dünyayı yeniden keşfetmek için kendimizi "günlük yaşam" dan ayırmamız gerekir (1995: 258).

Benzer bir şekilde, Bergson'un felsefesinde bu paradoks günlük yaşamımızı yaşayabilmemiz için gereken zihnin alışkanlıkları ile felsefe yapabilmek yani gerçekliği olduğu gibi kavrayabilmemiz için gereken bu alışkanlıkların giderilmesi arasındaki gerilimden ortaya çıkar. Bergson'un insan durumu paradoksuna getirdiği olanaklı çözüm, onun *durée réelle* (gerçek süre, somut süre) kavramı ile felsefe yapma edimiyle birlikte gelen felsefi sezgi kavramını bir araya getirmesiyle ortaya çıkar.

Hadot, paradoksu yalnızca fenomenoloji bağlamı içerisinde ele almış olduğu için, bu beni Bergson felsefesi içerisinde paradoksa farklı yaklaşımlar bulmaya yöneltmiştir. Farkettim ki bu sorunsala olanaklı çözümler bulma girişimleri yalnızca fenomenoloji bağlamında bulunamaz ve gerek Bergson'un felsefesine sadık kalabilmek için, gerek Bergsoncu bir yaşam felsefesi kurabilmek için, paradoksun dirimsel ve varoluşçu yönleri de ele alınmak durumundadır. Paradoksun fenomenolojik yönü, Bergson'un "dikkatin yer değiştirmesi" kavramıyla birlikte ve *durée réelle* kavramının yoğunluk kavramı ışığında bilinçle birlikte ele alınmasıyla ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bergson, "bir kimse felsefe yapmadan önce yaşamak zorundadır ve yaşam bizim at gözlüğü takmamızı gerektirir; sağa, sola, ya da arkaya bakarak değil dosdoğru yürümemiz gereken yönde ilerlememiz gerekir" (*PC*: 137) der. Dirimsel yön, Bergson'un gerçek evrim anlayışını *élan vital* (yaşam gücü) kavramı temelinde incelediğimiz zaman tartışmamıza dahil olmaktadır. *Élan vital*, yaşamı gittikçe daha karmaşık biçimlere taşıyan, içsel bir ittirmeye karşılık gelen yaşamın genel hareketidir; durmaksızın kendini yenileyen bir yaratımdır. Kanımca, insan

durumu paradoksunun varoluşçu yönü Bergson'un özgürlük kavramının yüzeysel ben ve esas ben tartışmasından gelir. Birey kendisine bu paradoksla nasıl başetmesi gerektiğini sorduğunda ortaya çıkar ve bu onun paradoksun içerdiği gerilimi dönüştürme mücadelesini belirleyerek paradoks karşısında kendi tavrını ortaya koymasını sağlar.

Paradoksun dirimsel yönü yaşamın evrimini ifade eder. Aslında, insanların dünya olarak dünyayı algılamalarındaki engel élan vital'in (yaşam gücü, yaşamsal itki) farklı yönlerinden birinden, maddeye doğru dönmüş aklın yönünden, gelir. Evrim sürecinde, akıl ve madde giderek birbirlerine uyum sağlamışlar ve bunun sonucunda da kavramlarımız katı cisimler modeli üzerinden oluşmak durumunda kalmıştır. Bunun içindir ki dünya olarak dünyayı algılamak bizim için zordur: zaten akıl yönünde evrimleşmiş olduğumuz için, insan durumu paradoksu kaçınılmazdır. Bir başka deyişle, evrim sürecinden dolaydır ki bu paradoksla yüzleşmek durumunda kalırız.

Bu evrimin yönünü değiştiremeyiz. Ancak, zihnin çabasıyla, akıl yürütmemizin yönünü akıldan sezgiye giden yön yerine sezgiden akla giden yön olarak değiştirebiliriz. Bu akıl yürütme yönünün değişimi sayesinde aklımız bir dereceye kadar alışkanlıksal edimini bırakabilir. Bu yön değişimi aynı zamanda dikkatin yer değiştirmesi için zorunludur çünkü şeylerin alışkanlıksal pratik algılanma biçimlerinden sıyrılabilmek için akıl yürütme yönümüzü değiştirmemiz gerekir. Dolayısıyla, diyebiliriz ki, paradoksun fenomenolojik tarafı paradoksu birey için bir seçim olarak sunarken, dirimsel taraf bunun gerçek bir seçim olamayacağını çünkü

insanın akıl merkezli evrimleşmiş olduğunu ve dolayısıyla mutlak anlamda çözülemeyecek bazı zihinsel alışkanlıkları benimsediğini gösterir. Paradoksun varoluşçu tarafı paradoksun gerçek bir yaşam felsefesine ve ara bölgelere dönüşmesine olanak sağlar çünkü bu paradoksal durum karşısında bireyin kendi tavrını belirlemesi gerekir. Burada, yaşam felsefesinden anladığım her bireyin kendi yaşamında felsefeye ne kadar yer ayırdığı, yaşamını felsefeyle dönüştürmeyi ne kadar istediği, örneğin, esas ben'ini ortaya çıkarmak isteyip istemediği, ve felsefeyle birlikte yaşamına getirdiği anlamdır. Buna ek olarak, zaman kavramı Bergson'un felsefesinin temelinde olduğu için, bu zaman felsefesi kendisini bir yaşam felsefesi olarak ortaya koyar: Bergsoncu bir yaşam felsefesi *sub specie durationis* bir yaşamdır.

İnsan durumu paradoksu, Bergson'un zaman kavramının kendisini neden homojen zaman ve somut süre olarak karşıt iki kavram olarak ortaya koyduğuna açıklık getirir: iki zaman kavramı vardır çünkü şeyleri algılamanın iki farklı yolu vardır (günlük yaşam algısı ve dünya olarak dünyanın algısı; ya da faydacı algı ve ilintisiz algı; ya da dünyayı kendimiz için algılamak ve dünyayı kendisi için algılamak); iki zaman kavramı vardır çünkü evrimin (en az) iki farklı yönü vardır (bir yön, bireyin çevresine uyum sağlamasına ve zamanı birbirinden ayrı ardarda gelen anlar olarak kavramasına yönlendirirken diğer yön, bireyin akıl yürütme yönünü değiştirdiği sürece zihnin alışkanlıklarını büyük ölçüde gidermesine ve kendisini somut süre içerisine yerleştirmesine yönlendirir); ve bu iki karşıt zaman kavramı karşısında birey kendi tavrını belirlemek durumundadır. Homojen zaman, zamanın bilimsel kavranışına karşılık gelir; deneysel

düzleminden koparılmış ve analiz düzlemine getirilmiş olan zamanı ifade eder. Niceliksel, ölçüme dayanır. Somut sürenin simgesel tasarımıdır. Bergson, bu zaman anlayışını mekansal zaman olarak ta ifade eder. Diğer taraftan, somut süre sezgi ile kavranan içsel deneyime karşılık gelir. Kendi bilinç yaşantımızda deneyimliyoruz olduğumuz gerçek zamandır, bilinç hallerinin çokluğudur. Bergson, bu zaman anlayışını içsel süreklilik olarak ifade eder.

Bu iki zaman kavramından şeylerin iki temel kavranışı ortaya çıkar: maddenin görünüşü altında kavramak ve *sub specie durationis* kavramak. Maddenin görünüşü altında kavramak şu anlamlara gelir: kendimizi anlık şimdi içerisinde kavramak, değişimi değişmez kavramlar aracılığıyla kavramak, dikkatimizi geçmiş olan zamana odaklamak, gerçekliği verilmiş olarak kavramak, dikkatimizi günlük ve sosyal yaşamın pratik gereklerine çevirmek. Bu aynı zamanda bireyin içinde yaşadığı topluma uymasını sağlayan ve zaman sezgisinin unutulduğu bir yaşama karşılık gelir. Diğer taraftan, sürenin görünüşü altında kavramak şu anlamlara gelir: kendimizi kalın ve esneyen bir şimdi içerisinde kavramak, şeylerin akışını kavramak, gerçekliği gözlerimizin önünde inşa ediliyor olarak kavramak, kendimizi yaratımdan pay alıyor olarak hissetmek ve kendimizi kendimizin yaratıcıları olarak algılamak. Bu aynı zamanda bireyin zihin alışkanlıklarını büyük ölçüde giderdiği, yaşamın pratik gereklerinden sıyrılabilmesi ve zaman sezgisini mümkün olduğu kadar tutmaya çalıştığı bir yaşama karşılık gelir.

Bergson'un somut süre kavramı bilinç kavramı ile birlikte ortaya çıkar. Bilinç, yaşayan varlığın seçme gücüne, icat ve özgürlüğe karşılık gelir. Bilinç, en az bir özgür edimin olduğu yerde uyanır, hiç bir özgür edimin olmadığı yerde ise uyur konumuna geçer. Bilinç, bireyin “otomatizm” zincirini kırmasını sağlar. Bergson bize bilincin edimsizliğinden uyanmasının, özgür olmanın yolunu gösterir. Bilinç üzerine tartışma, bilinç hallerinin tartışması ile birlikte yürür. Bilinç halleri ile ilgili yanlışlıkları temizleyebilmek için, kendimizi fenomenolojik düzleme yerleştirmemiz gerekir. Bilinci bilimsel üstyapılardan temizlemeli ve yaşanan zaman yani durée réelle olan derin bilincin yaşamına ulaşmalıdır. Bunu yaptığımızda, yoğunluk kavramını niceliksel olarak değil niteliksel olarak ele alır ve bilinç hallerinin birbirleri ile içiçe olduklarını kavrarız.

Bilinç, akıl ve sezgiden oluşur. Akıl ve sezgi, bilincin iki karşıt yönüdür. Sezgi yaşam yönünde giderken akıl madde yönünde gider. Eğer bu iki bilinç formu tam gelişimlerine ulaşmış olsalardı, tamamlanmış ve mükemmel bir insanlık gerçekleşmiş olurdu. Ancak, insan bilincinin evrimi akıl formu üzerinden oluşmuştur çünkü doğa insanı maddeyi yönetme ve kullanmaya, yani yapıma, doğru yöneltmiştir. Bu sezginin akla kurban gitmesine yol açmıştır. Bergson bu durumu “akıl eğimi” kavramıyla açıklar: akıl, gerçekleştirilecek olan edime ve bu edimi takip edecek tepkiye yönelmiştir.

Aklı, algı, kavrayış ve anlık olan kavramsal düşüncenin güçleri temsil eder. Bu üçünün işlevleri, benzeme ve bitişiklik kavramlarıyla

açıklanan alışkanlıksal düşünme biçimimize karşılık gelir. Zihnin bu alışkanlıkları şöyle açıklanabilir: bağlantılar bulma; geçici olgular arasında değişmeyen ilişkiler kurma; gerçek içindeki sabit ve düzenli olana saplanma ki Bergson bunu maddesellik olarak nitelendirir; sürekli olarak değişen şeyler arasında ortak bir taraf bulma ve bu şeyleri aynı kümenin elemanları olarak yorumlama.

Bergson'un madde anlayışına göre madde, şey ve tasarım arasında bulunan, kendi başına varolan bir imgedir. Algılandığı gibi varolur. Madde ve maddenin tasarımı arasında yalnızca bir derece farkı vardır. Bu, maddede bilince verilenden daha fazla bir şey olduğu ancak daha farklı bir şey olmadığı anlamına gelir. Bu durumu anlayabilmek için madde-zihin konusunu bilgi açısından değil eylem açısından ele almak gerekir (bu dirimsel bir bakış açısıdır). Madde ve zihin konusu, eylemin merkezi olan beden kavramı üzerine kurulmuştur: hareket göndererek bedenimizi etkileyen dışsal imgeler ile bedenimizin dışsal imgeleri, onlara geri hareket yollayarak, etkilemesi arasında bir etkileşim vardır. Bu sebeptendir ki aklımız, özellikle de algımız, eyleme doğru dönmüştür.

Madde ve zihin konusunu bilgi açısından ele aldığımızda, algı bir tür fotoğrafsal bir görüşe dönüşür. Eylem açısından ele aldığımızda ise algı, bedenimizi harekete geçirendir. Böylelikle bedenimiz, algımızın imgeler yığından ihtiyacına göre seçtiği bir şekilde, eyleme doğru dönmüştür. Biz, edimde bulunmak için bize gerekeni algılar ve ancak hatırlamamız gerekeni hatırlarız. Aslında, şimdiyle ilişiksiz tüm

geçmişimize karşılık gelen saf bellekte hiç bir şey kaybolmaz. Ancak, algısız saf bellek ve belleksiz bir algı ancak teoride olanaklıdır. Bellek-imge, belleğin bir imgede gerçekleşmiş halidir. Geçmişimiz, şimdide bir imge oluncaya kadar saf bellek halinde kalır.

Bellek, şimdiden geçmişe doğru bir geri çekilme değil, geçmişten şimdiye doğru bir ileri gidiştir. Bu bellek anlayışı, bilinç hallerinin birarada varolma kavramını beraberinde getirir. Bilinç hallerimiz *ayrısız bir ardardalık* içindedir. Ayrısız ardardalık, her biri bütünü temsil eden ve birbirinden ancak soyut düşüncede ayrılan unsurların birbiriyle bağlantısı ve düzenini ifade eder. Belleği şimdiden geçmişe doğru bir geri çekilme olarak ele aldığımızda, bilinç hallerimizi eşzamanlı olarak düşünürüz. Eşzamanlılık, *ayrımli bir ardardalık* anlamına gelir; bilinç hallerimizi birbirlerinin içinde değil birbirlerinin yanında olarak algıladığımız ve beraberinde, devam eden bir çizgi anlamındaki ardardalık fikrini getiren durumu ifade eder.

Bilincimizin işleyişi ve yaşamın işleyişi benzerlik gösterir: her bir tür kendi bağımsızlığını ortaya koyar, kendi kapisini takip eder ve düz çizgiden bir ölçüde sapar. Yaşam da, belleğimiz gibi, yalnızca unutulmamış olanı, her bir varoluş biçimi için yaşamsal önemde olanı gösterecek şekilde çalışır. Bu yüzdendir ki bilincimiz, gerçekliği anlamada model oluşturur. Bilinç yaşantımız, birbiri içine giren ardarda safhalardan oluşmuştur. Ancak, bu safhaların her biri aynı anda saatin salınımına karşılık gelir. Bu salınımlar

birbirinden ayrı olarak kavranıldıkları için, biz de bilinç yaşantımızın ardarda anları arasında aynı ayrımı oluşturma alışkanlığı içerisine gireriz.

Benzer bir şekilde, organizmaların çevrelerine uyum sağlamalarında önceden verilmiş hazır bir biçim bulunmaz. Yaşam kendi biçimlerini sürekli olarak değişen durumlara göre yeniden yaratır çünkü yaşam da zaman içerisinde devam eder ve süregelir. Yaşam, tek ve aynı itkinin devamıdır, yalnızca farklı evrim yönlerine ayrılmıştır. “Bilinçli bir varlık için, varolmak değişmektir, değişmek olgunlaşmaktır, olgunlaşmak kendini durmaksızın yaratmaya devam etmektir.” Tıpkı bilinç gibi yaşam için de denebilir ki, her bir anda bir şey yaratıyordur. Bu sebeple Bergson felsefesinde tözler değil süreçler söz konusudur. Bu kurama göre, ebedi hakikate yer yoktur ve bu yüzden de hareketlilik veya hareketsizliğin, ya da nitelik veya niceliğin önceliği yoktur. Gerçeklik iki-yüz'lüdür ve bu, maddeselliği ve tinselliği barındıran niteliksel çokluk ilkesiyle açıklanır.

Yüzeysel ben ve esas ben, bilinç yaşantısının iki görünüşüdür. İlki homojen zaman kavramından, ikincisi somut süre kavramından ortaya çıkar. Yüzeysel ben ile kavranan gerçeklik bize dünyanın statik, devamsız ve parça halinde bir resmini verir. Esas ben ile kavranan gerçeklik ise bize kendimizi etkin ve özgür hissettiğimiz bir dünya verir. “Edimlerimiz bütün kişiliğimizden fırladığı zaman özgürüzdür.” Ancak, genellikle yüzeysel ben'imizle yaşarız. Yüzeysel ben'in, pratik yaşama, dile ve iletişime özgü olan, değişmez ve konformist bir özelliği vardır; bizden çok topluma aittir. Bergson'a göre bir çok kişi gerçek özgürlüğü bilemeden yaşar ve ölür.

Bergson felsefesinde özgürlük mutlak değildir, dereceyle gelir. Somut sürenin düzeyleri, ritimleri vardır. Buna göre, yüzeysel ben'in minimum düzey süresine daha çok ya da daha az yaklaşabiliriz. Ancak birey, yalnızca yüzeysel ben ve esas ben'inin farkına varabildiğinde ne kadar özgür olabileceğini seçecektir. Diğer taraftan, sorun şudur ki, esas ben'imizle yaşamayı seçmek istesek bile, insan olmamızın gereği olarak pratik ihtiyaçlarımıza göre yaşamayı asla bir kenara koyamayız. Bu sorunsal, insanın kaçınılmaz olarak toplumsal olmasından ileri gelir. İnsan hem topluma en yüksek seviyede uyum sağlayıp hem de en yüksek derecede özgür olamayacaktır.

İnsanın doğası hem baskı-yapıcı bir eğilimi, hem de özgürlük hissini barındırır. Kurallara uymadan bir insan toplum içerisinde yaşayamaz. Ancak, hümanist bir toplum özgür varlıklar bütünüdür. Bu iki olguyu Bergson, kapalı ahlak, açık ahlak ve statik din, dinamik din kavramlarıyla açıklamaya çalışır. Açık ahlakta bireyler, katı kural-takipçiliğinden kurtulmaya çalışırlar. Bu, insanların tekrarlayan rutinelere bağlı olarak yaşamak zorunda olmadıklarının bir göstergesidir. Ancak, kapalı ahlak açık ahlak içerisinde bulunduğundan, bireyler rutinler içerisine kolayca hapsolabilir ve zihinsel alışkanlıkları doğrultusunda bir yaşam sürebilirler. İnsanların tekrarlayan rutinelere bağlı olarak yaşamaktan kurtulmalarında büyük mistiklerin, bireylerin çabalarının ve özellikle de felsefecilerin rolü büyüktür. Büyük mistikler, ruhlarından Tanrıya ve Tanrı'dan tüm insanlığa giden bir akış hissini yayarlar. Onlar insanlığa yeni bir ruh huyu getirirler. Mistiklerin kendi özel dilleri ve kendi yaşam biçimleri vardır ve bunlar

insanların kullandığı dilden ve onların yaşam biçimlerinden farklılık gösterir. Mistiklerin yaşamları, doğaları gereği akıl üzerinde temellenmemiştir. Onlar kendilerinin zaten somut süre içerisinde yerleşmiş olanlardır. Bu sebeple, zihnin alışkanlıklarını gidermek sadece insanları ilgilendirir, mistikleri değil. Bir başka deyişle, mistikler doğaları gereği zihnin alışkanlıklarına sahip değildirler.

Bireyin zihinsel alışkanlıklarından kurtulabilmesi için akıl yürütme yönünün değiştirilmesi zorunludur. Ancak, madde ile yüklenmiş yaşam gücü olduğumuz için, sezginin bir kaç anın ötesine uzatılması oldukça zor olmaktadır ve her zaman için doğa ile zihin arasında bir salınım olacaktır. Bu sebeple, zihinsel alışkanlıkların büyük ölçüde giderilmesi bir sorunsala dönüşmektedir. Madde ile yüklenmiş yaşam gücü olduğumuz için, felsefeci gerçek metafiziğin maddesellik ile somut süre akışı arasında hareket etmesi gerektiğini bilir. Bu aynı zamanda felsefecinin sezgi ve kavramlar arasında da hareket etmesini gerektirir. Onun görevi, sezgiyi tutabileceği kadar tutmaktır. Felsefeci, sezgiden aldığı itkiyle kavramlara yönelmeli ve kavramlarla uğraşırken sezgiyi kaybettiği anda tekrar sezgiye dönmelidir. Buradan anlaşılacağı üzere Bergson sezgiyi bir yöntem olarak kullanır. Sezgi asla bir duyguya karşılık gelmez. Tam tersine sezgi bir düşünmedir ve mutlak bilgiye ulaşmanın yegane yoludur. Sezgiden gelen bilgi genelleştirildiğinde, hem düşünce hem de günlük yaşam bundan faydalanacak ve aydınlanacaktır. Felsefe, yalnızca felsefecilere ait bir alan değildir çünkü felsefe, *sub specie durationis* algılamaktır ve her birey, her

şeyi bu şekilde kavrama çabasına girebilir. Her şeyi somut süre görünüşü altında kavramak ta ancak sezgi ile olanaklıdır.

Aslında, sezgisel düzeyde, *sub specie durationis* bir yaşam ve madde görünüşü altında bir yaşam arasında fark yoktur çünkü kalın ve esnek bir şimdi ile anlık bir şimdi arasında sezgisel farklılıklar bulunmaz. Kalın ve esnek bir şimdi evrimleşen bir şimdidir, sürekli değişen, yaratıma ve yeniliğe açık olan ve hem geçmişi hem geleceği içeren bir şimdidir. Anlık bir şimdi ise geçip gitmiş zamana odaklandığı için yeniliğe ve yaratıma açık olmayan bir şimdiyi ifade eder. Ancak sezgisel düzeyde gerçekten de bu iki şimdi anlayışı arasında farklar olup olmadığı tartışılır. Clifford Williams'ın "A Bergsonian Approach to A- and B- Time" (A- ve B- Zamana Bergsoncu bir Yaklaşım) adlı makalesindeki akıl yürütme biçimini kullanarak bu iki şimdi anlayışı arasında sezgisel farkların olmadığını iddia etmekteyim. Williams'ın iddiasına göre, A- ve B- zaman kuramlarını Bergsoncu sezgi bağlamında ele alırsak ayırt edemeyiz ve eğer iki zaman kuramını bu şekilde birbirinden ayıramazsak başka hiç bir şekilde ayıramayız. İki kuram arasında farklılıklar olup olmadığını bulabilmek için Williams, bu iki zaman anlayışı arasında deneysel farklılıklar olup olmadığını sorar ve ikisini de aynı şekilde deneyimlediğimizi göstermeye çalışır. Buradan yola çıkarak ben de aslında Bergson'un iki şimdi anlayışı arasında ve de homojen zaman ile somut süre arasında sezgisel düzeyde farklılıklar olmadığını iddia etmekteyim. Yalnızca farklı kavranışları olan tek bir gerçek zaman anlayışı vardır. Buna göre, örneğin, bilimsel zaman anlayışı, zaman kavramının deneysel düzeyden çıkarılıp analiz düzeyine getirilmiş halidir. Aynı şekilde,

sub specie durationis bir yaşam ve madde görünüşü altında bir yaşam arasında da sezgisel düzeyde farklılık yoktur. Sonuncusu, zaman sezgisinin unutulduğu ve her şeyin akıl temelinde kavrandığı anlamına gelir. Bu yüzdendir ki Bergson zihnin alışkanlıklarından kurtulmamızı ve sezgi yetimizin olduğunu hatırlamamızı önerir. Zaman sezgisi bizi gözlerimizin önünde oluşan gerçekliğin bir parçası yapar. Bu durum karşısında şimdi kavramını kalın ve esnek olarak ifade ederiz. Sezgi içerisinde, her şey sürekli olarak yeniden başlayan bir şimdidedir. Bir başka deyişle, sürekli akış ve oluşum içerisindeki dünya olarak dünyayı, sezgi ile kavrayabiliriz. Dünyayı oluşum içerisinde kavramak, bize yaşam gücüne katıldığımızı hissettirir ve sonuç olarak ta yaşamlarımıza neşe ve güç getirir. Bu metafizik dünya kavrayışı Bergsoncu bir yaşam felsefesinin olanağını gösterir.

Hadot'nun insan durumu paradoksunu Bergsoncu kavramları kullanarak iki çıkarım yoluyla ifade ettiğimizde, iki çıkarımın sonuçlarının biçimsel bir çelişkiye yol açmadığı ve dolayısıyla mantıksal anlamda bir paradoks elde etmediğimizi görürüz:

İlk Çıkarım:

- I. Zorunludur ki bir kimse en çok özgürlük derecesine ancak ve ancak esas ben temelinde bir yaşama ulaştığı zaman ulaşır.
- II. Zorunludur ki bir kimsenin zihnin alışkanlıklarını çokca giderebilmesi için ancak ve ancak en çok özgürlük derecesini başarmış olması gerekir.
- III. Olasıdır ki herkes zihnin alışkanlıklarını giderebilir.

Sonuç: Olasıdır ki herkes esas ben temelinde bir yaşama ulaşabilir.

İkinci Çıkarım:

I. Zorunludur ki bir kimse en çok özgürlük derecesine ancak ve ancak esas ben temelinde bir yaşama ulaştığı zaman ulaşır.

II. Zorunludur ki bir kimsenin zihnin alışkanlıklarını çokca giderebilmesi için ancak ve ancak en çok özgürlük derecesini başarmış olması gerekir.

(3') Olasıdır ki herkes zihnin alışkanlıklarını gideremez.

Sonuç: Olasıdır ki herkes esas ben temelinde bir yaşama ulaşamaz.

İki çıkarımın ilk iki öncülü aynıdır. Dolayısıyla, üçüncü öncüllerdeki fark bizi farklı sonuçlara götürmektedir. Bergson'un felsefesine göre öncül (3) ve öncül (3') kabul edilebilirdir. Öncül (3) kabul edilebilirdir çünkü Bergson'un amacı herkesin zihnin alışkanlıklarını gidermesini gösterebilmektir. Bir başka deyişle, zihnin alışkanlıklarını gidermek bir seçimdir. Bu akıl yürütme yönünü değiştirebildiğimizde olanaklıdır ki bu aynı zamanda dikkatin yer değiştirmiş olmasını da gerektirir ve paradoksun fenomenolojik tarafını ortaya koyar. Zihnin alışkanlıklarını gidermenin bir olanaklılık içerdiği kabul edilirse, gerekli olan zihnin sürekli bir çabasıdır. Bu sebeple, bir kimsenin esas ben temelinde bir yaşama ulaşması olanaklıdır.

Öncül (3') de kabul edilebilirdir. Zihnin alışkanlıklarını çokca giderebilmesi olanaklı ancak zorunlu değildir. Bir başka deyişle, herkes için zihnin alışkanlıklarını gidermesi zorunlu değildir. Herkes akıl yürütme

yönünü değiştiremez ve dolayısıyla, bir kimse hiç bir zaman için akıl yürütme yönünü değiştirip değiştiremediğinden ve bu yüzden de esas ben temelinde bir yaşama ulaşip ulaşmadığından emin olamaz. Zihnin alışkanlıklarını gidermeyi seçmek gerçek bir seçim değildir. Buna ek olarak, insan akıl üzerinden evrimleşmiş olduğu için, ister istemez mutlak anlamda çözümlenebilir olanaklı olamayabilecek bazı zihinsel alışkanlıkları edinmiştir. Akıl, bir kimsenin esas ben temelinde bir yaşama ulaşip ulaşamayacağına belirlenmesinde en büyük engeli oluşturmaktadır. Bu aynı zamanda paradoksun dirimsel yönünü ortaya koyar.

Burada elde edilen her ne kadar mantıksal bir paradoks değilse de, iddiam şudur ki, bu iki çıkarımın geçerliliğini ve iki sonucu da kabul eden bir kimse kendisini derin bir karışıklık içerisinde bulacaktır: ilk çıkarımın sonucu olan esas ben temelinde bir yaşama ulaşmanın olanaklılığı, bireyi zihinsel alışkanlıklarını giderme çabasıyla vazgeçmemesine zorlayacaktır. Diğer taraftan, ikinci çıkarımın sonucu olan esas ben temelinde bir yaşama ulaşmasının asla olanaklı olamayabileceği, onu zihinsel alışkanlıklarını giderme yolunda engellerle karşılaştığında çabalarının boşuna olduğu şüphesine sürükleyecektir.

Bu değerlendirmeler doğrultusunda, bu paradoksun bir yaşam paradoksu (ya da varoluşçu çelişki) olduğunu ve bireyin bu paradoksal durum karşısında kendi varoluşsal duruşunu belirlemekten başka bir çözümü olmadığını iddia etmekteyim. Bu aynı zamanda paradoksun gerçek bir yaşam felsefesine ve ara bölgelere dönüşmesini ifade eder. Bu yüzden

diyebilirim ki, insan durumu paradoksu incelemelerimiz, paradoksun varoluşu tarafı ile birlikte tamamlanmaktadır.

Chapter Three

VITA

Demet Kurtoğlu Taşdelen was born in Ankara on October 25, 1972. She received her B. S. degree in Philosophy from the Middle East Technical University in June 1995. She received her Master degree in Philosophy from the Middle East Technical University in January 1999. She was a research assistant in the department of philosophy of the Middle East Technical University from 1995 to 2003. Her main areas of study are contemporary French philosophy, philosophy of time, aesthetics and intuitionism.

