Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy

Pli is edited and produced by members of the Graduate School of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Warwick.

Volume 15. Lives of the Real: Bergsonian Perspectives

ISBN 1 897646 11 9
ISSN 1367-3769
© 2004 Pli, individual contributions © their authors, unless otherwise stated.

Editorial board 2003/4:

Wahida Khandker
Scott Revers
Brian Smith
Henry Somers-Hall
Michael Vaughan

This issue edited by Wahida Khandker.

Contributions, Orders, Subscriptions, Inquiries:

Pli, The Warwick Journal of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL UK

Email: pli_journal@hotmail.com
Website: www.warwick.ac.uk/philosophy/pli_journal/

Cover design by zago design inc: www.zagodesign.com

Contents

Lives of the Real: Bergsonian Perspectives

Intuition and Sympathy in Bergson.
DAVID LAPOUJADE 1

Duration, Rhythm, Present.
MARIA LAKKA 18

The 'Zigzags of a Doctrine': Bergson, Deleuze, and the Question of Experience.
SUZANNE GUERLAC 34

On Certain Transitory Themes That Allow the Passage from Duration to the Intuition of Duration.
MARGARITA KARKAYANNI 54

An 'Applied Rationalism' of Time: A Reinvestigation of the Relationship Between Bachelard and Bergson-Deleuze.
ANDREW AITKEN 76

Bergson, Kant, and the Evolution of Metaphysics.
WAHIDA KHANDKER 103

The Rule of Dichotomy: Bergson's Genetics of Matter.
JOHN MULLARKEY 125

Nature from the Perspective of Immanence.
ROBIN DURIE 144

Varia

Time, Space, Forced Movement, and the Death-Drive: Reading Proust with Deleuze.
KEITH ANSELL PEARSON 159

Revulsion is not Without its Subject: Kant, Lacan, Žižek, and the Symptom of Subjectivity.
ADRIAN JOHNSTON 199

Reviews

Architectural Philosophy.
JAMES WILLIAMS 229

Nietzsche's Philosophy.
KEITH ANSELL PEARSON 233

Acknowledgements

The paper by Andrew Aitken derives from a one-day workshop held at the University of Warwick on 6th June 2003, entitled 'Bergson and Contemporary Thought', organized by Wahida Khandker.

The paper by John Mullarkey was originally presented at the Collegium Phaenomenologicum, which took place in Citta di Castella, Umbria, Italy on 27th July 1999.

The paper by Robin Durie derives from a one-day workshop held at the University of Warwick on 30th May 2003, entitled 'Merleau-Ponty and the Philosophy of Nature', organized by Miguel Beistegui and the Centre for Research in Philosophy and Literature.

We would like to thank Keith Ansell Pearson for generously contributing his time and work to this volume.

Pli 15 (2004), 1-17

Intuition and Sympathy in Bergson.

DAVID LAPOUJADE

The philosopher neither obeys nor commands but strives to sympathize.
(Henri Bergson)

What is signified by the term 'sympathy' that Bergson raises on the subject of intuition? It belongs to that group of general and undefined terms which seem to obscure, rather than clarify, the Bergsonian method. Commentators rarely draw upon it except to reduce its impact. The term 'sympathy' would merely be employed to illustrate the act or the 'series of intuitive acts' that themselves establish a rigorous method. With this we are quickly brought to the conclusion that intuition is only conceived rigorously (as method) if it stops being conceived as sympathy, a vague notion marred by psychology.[1] Sympathy would only prove to be its ground by virtue of pedagogy or psychology - in short, as a substitute for intuition.

We know, however, that Bergson constantly returns to the point at which intuition and sympathy seem to be confused with one another: 'We call intuition here the *sympathy* by which one is transported into the interior of an object in order to coincide with what there is unique and

1 One could say that the most significant efforts of rereading Bergson over the past decades have attempted to free him from a supposed psychologism masking a fecundity. One can see there a reaction to the Sartrean and Marxist interpretations which recognize in Bergson a philosophy burdened by psychologism and spiritualism. This concerns the essential role played from then on by *Matière et mémoire* [*Matter and Memory*, trans. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer, New York: Zone Books, 1991; henceforth referred to as MM] and a relative silence on *Les Deux Sources* [*The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*]. Examples of this tendency are two texts of the 1960's, Bento prado, *Présence et champ transcendental*, OLMS; and Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme*, PUF.

consequently inexpressible in it'.[2] Similarly, aesthetic intuition is replaced 'back within the object by a kind of sympathy'.[3] What is more, intuition is defined as a 'spiritual sympathy' with that which is 'more internal' to reality.[4] Here, sympathy seems to be more than an illustration of intuition or a vague psychological correlate. Rather, it appears to be an indispensable methodological complement. It is that which allows the passage 'to the interior' of realities, to grasp them from 'the inside'. Yet what does it mean to 'pass to the interior', to grasp from 'the inside'? What does one gain in precision and rigour? More importantly, if Bergson identifies these terms with one another why does he return specifically to sympathy? In what way does sympathy stand out from 'intuitive acts', properly speaking? Does it have a distinct methodological status?

Bergson begins with rather vague indications: intuition is an effort, a prolonged effort that calls for an assiduous frequentation with the object:

> For one does not obtain from reality an intuition, that is to say, a spiritual sympathy with its innermost quality if one has not gained its confidence by a long comradeship with its superficial manifestations. And it is not a question simply of assimilating the outstanding facts; it is necessary to accumulate and fuse such an enormous mass of them that one may be assured, in this fusion, of neutralizing by one another all the preconceived and premature ideas observers may have deposited unknowingly in their observations.[5]

2 *La Pensée et le mouvant* [henceforth referred to as PM], PUF, p. 181 [*The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison, New York: Citadel Press, 1992, p. 161].

3 *L'Evolution créatrice*, PUF, p.178 [*Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell, New York: Dover, 1998, p. 177]. On the relation between sympathy and the aesthetic one could equally consult *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, PUF, pp.10-14 [*Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F. L. Pogson, New York: Dover, 2001, pp. 11-19].

4 PM, p. 226 [*The Creative Mind*, p. 200].

5 *Ibid.* This extract alludes to the long period separating the composition of each of Bergson's texts. It is a period establishing this 'sympathetic' relation. There needs to be a *memory* of the object equally carrying all of the hypotheses, directions of work, errors, paths that have covered the object in such a way that it becomes a kind of palimpsest of our efforts to constitute it intuitively. The term 'long comradeship' in relation to sympathy appears from the *Essai* onwards.

Certainly, one can suppose that this only applies in the case of the preparatory conditions that remain empirical. But what is essential is already at play at this level. Reality is constituted as a continuous whole that possesses an internal unity ('fusion' of the 'mass'). Now, the whole only owes it nature to a certain memory that assures the internal continuity of which it is made. In other words, this long frequentation permits the proper 'leap' to the intuitive act that Bergson specifies as neither synthesis nor recollection. In what, then, does this leap consist? It is not only the mind, by its own efforts, installing itself 'at once' in the element of duration, but equally in that of *meaning*.[6] The duration of this reality is not without memory nor without a type of 'consciousness' characterized as 'intention' or 'direction' constitutive of its meaning. Thus at the conclusion of this preparatory work, this reality *becomes real duration* and, at the same time, expresses an 'intention', a 'direction' that constitutes it as virtual consciousness. That which belongs specifically to the work of intuition is the grasping of this reality in terms of duration, but that which belongs exclusively to sympathy is the grasping of an intention internal to this duration. It may even be that the conception of duration as memory can only be understood through the intermediary of this act of sympathy, and it is this to which we now turn.

Intuition is concentrated exclusively upon totalities: the vital, the material, the social, the personal, etc. This amounts to saying that intuition circulates across the whole universe (monism) and through its different levels (pluralism). Bergson meanwhile affirms that intuition is the 'direct vision of the mind by the mind', that it concentrates exclusively 'upon mind'.[7] Bergson insists on this point: never is intuition anything other than a 'reflection' of mind upon itself.[8] In other words, there is no intuition of

6 We know that Bergson often resorts to this term to indicate the difference of nature that goes beyond intuition through its 'leap'. Thus the intuitive access to matter: 'Our eyes are closed to the primordial and fundamental act of perception - the act, constituting pure perception, whereby we place ourselves in the very heart of things', MM, p. 70 [*Matter and Memory*, p. 67]. The same applies to the accessing of memory, pp.149-150 [p. 135]: 'But the truth is that we shall never reach the past unless we frankly place ourselves within it'. It is again the case for the universe of meaning or of ideas, p.129 [p. 116]: 'So [...] the hearer places himself at once in the midst of the corresponding ideas...' We will return to this text later. Cf. equally, PM, p. 210 [p. 187].

7 PM, p. 42 [p. 42].

8 'Intuition is what attains the spirit, duration, pure change', PM, p. 29 [p. 33]. Cf. equally, p. 40 [p. 41]: 'Quite different is the metaphysics that we place side by side

the material, of the vital, of the social *as such*. How then can intuition open itself up to different levels of reality and reach such an extension? It is here that sympathy intervenes. Again, in a somewhat abstract manner, one can define sympathy as a movement through which each of these realities becomes 'mind'. Yet how can such a transformation be possible? One wonders how mind can enter 'into sympathy' with itself or with another mind. Bergson frequently invokes a type of psychological endosmosis, the reciprocal penetration of minds. He provides an example in *La Pensée et le mouvant* where he attempts to draw out the fundamental intuition of Berkeley, beyond the theses effectively laid down in language. He returns to a primordial *intention* of which the work will consequently be the indirect expression. At this level, sympathy is presented as the movement by which we take it upon ourselves to return to a purely spiritual intention, immanent to the whole (here, the work of Berkeley), as its integral.

This movement checks itself with each change of level. Is this not indeed the same movement that is produced when we descend to the vital level? One endeavours to take hold of the primordial intention of life, beyond the varieties of living forms for such is the sense of the concept of the '*élan*'. The '*élan*' is not merely destined to describe life as 'the outpouring of unforeseeable novelty'; it is firstly that which enables the grasping of the *continuous whole of the vital as mind or consciousness*. In other words, the vital stops being external to the sphere of mind, which explains that intuition can then take it for its 'object', in accordance with its definition since we are dealing with the relation between the mind and one of its levels. Or rather, thanks to sympathy, life becomes 'subject' for the metaphysical (in terms of mind or consciousness), whilst it remains 'object' for science (in terms of physico-chemical material). Here, sympathy plays an essential role: it singles out the spiritual 'intention' of the vital thereby permitting it to be constituted in the tendency-subject inside of metaphysics, rendering intuition accessible in the same stroke.

Yet if one can attribute an intention to life, to single out the spiritual '*élan*' that animates it, can one proceed in the same way with matter? How is the spiritual element of matter to be extracted which, by definition,

with science. Granting to science the power of explaining matter by the mere force of intelligence, it reserves mind for itself'. Moreover, Bergson says that it is an 'intimate knowledge of the mind by the mind', PM, 216, n2 [notes to text not included in the English translation] or a 'reflection of the mind on the mind', PM, p. 226 [p. 199].

is without spirituality? Here, again, the concept of intuition by itself would not allow us to understand this extension, unless a 'sympathy' with matter was established. What does it consist of at this level? It is defined by the institution of a *community of movements*. The spiritual element of matter is movement in terms of an indivisible reality. Mind 'sympathizes' with matter in as much as it grasps it, not as a thing or mass, but as pure movement; from that moment on, the continuum of matter becomes mind or consciousness (in terms of 'pure perception'). This is the central theme of the first chapter of *Matière et mémoire*: a matter reduced to movement but raised, at the same time, to the status of consciousness[9]. In this sense we can say that the '*élan*' is to the vital universe what the 'image' or 'pure perception' is to the material universe: the mark of our sympathy.

But the answer remains incomplete, for strictly speaking is there anything properly spiritual within movement? Is it the image? Pure perception? Nothing will be of benefit here as these terms presuppose what is in question: the image certainly defines itself as pure perception or as a present of movement, but how is such a definition possible? It is here that intuition needs to be reintroduced in its 'fundamental' sense: 'to think intuitively is to think in duration'.[10] That which constitutes the 'mind' of matter is its duration. '...We place consciousness at the heart of things for the very reason that we credit them with a time that endures'.[11] Duration is the spiritual element of the material (and because of this, of the vital and the social also). This is why science can get to movement yet without being able to extract the essence (mobility), for it does not think 'in duration'. Now duration initially signifies conservation. There is duration as soon as there is an instant, and yet brief though it is, which retain what is transferred from the previous instant (even if only for an immediate retransmission); so that what could be theoretically thought as a 'memory' should instead be thought effectively as a forgetting that 'enables' material movement to continue without end (communication).

> We can bestow upon this memory just what is needed to make the connection; it will be, if we like, this very connection, a mere continuing of the before into the immediate after with a

9 'No doubt also the material universe itself, defined as the totality of images, is a kind of consciousness...', MM, p. 264 [p. 235]. Cf. equally, pp. 35-36 [pp. 37-39].

10 PM, p. 30 [p. 34].

11 *Durée et simultanéité*, PUF, p. 62 [*Duration and Simultaneity*, trans. Leon Jacobson, ed. Robin Durie, London: Clinamen, 1999, p. 33. Henceforth DS].

> perpetually renewed forgetfulness of what is not the immediately prior moment.[12]

What is important here is that matter cannot be thought without the intervention of a kind of memory (forgetting) or consciousness (the unconscious). This is the ultimate limit of sympathy, the point at which memory becomes an immense unconscious forgetting. Matter is an impeded consciousness, an aborted memory. Intuition, thought 'in duration', could not establish this without sympathy whose function is to grant the fundamental Bergsonian identity: duration = memory = mind [*esprit*].[13]

We wanted to distinguish sympathy as such but we are redirected to intuition as its ground. Moreover, if duration is immediately 'memory' and if memory is immediately 'consciousness', if these terms culminate in identifying themselves, why maintain a special status for sympathy? Is intuition unable to draw its own conclusions from duration to consciousness? Does it not know one and the same continuum of reality equally named duration, memory or consciousness depending on the context? In this case there would seem to be no need to turn to sympathy. Yet this is only true when mind possesses a 'direct vision' of itself in accordance with the definitions of intuition given above. As soon as it apprehends other realities the relation becomes necessarily indirect. And it is here that there is a need for the extension of sympathy, for sympathy is anything but a fusion without distance that would crudely assimilate it to an intuitive act. It relies, on the contrary, upon reasoning by analogy.[14] This is one of its fundamental differences with intuition. It has the same rigour as a classical analogy, even though it does not establish its reasoning on the same principles.

12 *Ibid.*

13 'To tell the truth, it is impossible to distinguish between the duration, however short it may be, that separates two instants and a memory that connects them, because duration is essentially a continuation of what no longer exists into what does exist', *Ibid.*

14 *L'Energie spirituelle*, PUF, p. 6-7 [*Mind-Energy*, trans. H. Wildon Carr, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975, pp. 9-10]: 'Reasoning by analogy never gives more than a probability; yet there are numerous cases in which that probability is so high that it amounts to practical certainty. Let us then follow the thread of the analogy and inquire how far consciousness extends, and where it stops'. Cf. equally, *L'Evolution créatrice*, pp. 256-8 [pp. 255-8]. One finds here the probabilistic method of 'lines of fact'.

We know that the classical analogy is defined as proportion, an identity of relations so to speak (A/B = C/D) where the function consists of establishing a resemblance between two differing terms. One already finds this with Plato: the analogical structure of proportion remains static.

> We contrive to find resemblances between things in spite of their diversity, and to take a stable view of them in spite of their instability [...]. All this is the work of man.[15]

Analogy only becomes dynamic with the introduction of an Idea, towards which the terms orientate themselves spiritually in proportion to their resemblance to it (participation), 'running, as it were, after themselves, to coincide with the immutability of the Ideas'.[16] In other words, the introduction of an Idea converts the static structure into a dynamic series even if it means losing its initial analogical character.[17] In the same way we move from a science of measurement (*métrétiké*) to a science of harmony, transforming the analogy into a form of sympathy or friendship (*philia*)[18]. The passage from static analogy to dynamic series therefore marks the passage from geometrical science to philosophy itself as the dialectic of Ideas.

But of what type is the Bergsonian analogy? It is rigorously the inverse in that it does not ground itself upon fixed terms, but upon movements. With Bergson, there is only analogy between movements and tendencies

15 *Les Deux sources de la morale et de la religion*, PUF, pp. 256-257 [*The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977, p. 242].

16 *Ibid.*, p. 257 [p. 242].

17 We find a perfect illustration of this difference in books VI and VII of Plato's *Republic*. The passage states that the 'line' illustrates the first type of analogy (the structuration of differences in a common resemblance of relations) whereas the Allegory of the Cave illustrates the second type of analogy. The Idea of the Good (absent in terms of the dynamic principle of the preceding moment) orientates all terms according to its pre-eminence, a series whose narrative expresses the dynamism.

18 Cf. the important text of *Gorgias*, 508a: 'The scholars, Callicles, affirm that the sky and the earth, gods and men are bound together by friendship (*philian*), the respect of order, moderation (*sophrosuné*)and justice, and for this reason, they call the universe the order of things, rather than the disorder or dissoluteness. You are not careful, I believe, despite your science, and you forget that geometrical equality (*isotès géométriké*) is all powerful among the gods as among men. You are of the opinion that it takes effort to prevail over others: you neglect geometry'.

where it is thus no longer structured by a measurement since movement 'is not measurable and the business of science is to measure'.[19] No longer does science rise towards philosophy. On the contrary, it is the metaphysician alone who can, from the start and without the aid of any science, resort to reasoning by analogy, where he alone reaches movement itself. Perhaps it was the early tendency of differential calculus to measure these dynamisms yet it was condemned to think in symbolic terms through the subsistent geometry it carried.[20] If Bergsonian analogy were an analogy between tendencies this would mean that it structured not so much the similar but the common. No longer does it work through an exterior *resemblance* between relations, but through an interior *communication* between tendencies or movements.[21] How is such a reversal possible? It is because from now on, the Idea will no longer be exterior to the terms that it organizes. Not only does it pass through them, but it also constitutes their interiority in the form of an 'intention'. Each tendency is the actualization of its Idea that is just as easily the 'pure memory' from which it proceeds.[22] It is in this sense that tendency is subject: instead of being separated from it, it possesses its principle of development (in itself). This is why, moreover, the ultimate development of tendency in Bergson consists of returning to the 'original source' from which it came.

19 DS, p. 39 [p. 22].

20 Cf. *Essai sur les données immédiates*, PUF, p. 89 [pp. 119-20]. Cf. equally, on differential calculus and its essential relation to intuition, PM, pp. 214-15 [pp. 190-1].

21 Cf. the passage of great importance for our discussion: 'But, the metaphysician obtains this direct, inner, and sure perception, only from motions that he himself performs. Only these can he guarantee as real acts, absolute motions. Indeed, in the case of motions performed by other living creatures, it is not by virtue of a direct perception, but by sympathy, by reason of analogy that he gives them the status of independent realities. And concerning the motions of matter in general he can say nothing except that there probably are internal changes, analogous or not to efforts, which occur we know not where and which are brought before our eyes, like our own acts, by the reciprocal displacement of bodies in space', DS, p. 39 [p. 22]. Here, 'probably' alludes to the probabilism of reasoning by analogy.

22 Rare but essential texts by Bergson define memory as both intention and idea. On memory as idea, cf. MM, p. 140 [p. 125]: 'We have said that ideas - pure recollections summoned from the depths of memory - develop into memory-images more and more capable of inserting themselves into the motor diagram'. On memory as intention, Bergson evokes, p. 143 n1 [pp. 256-7, n77], 'the intention of the memory' and p.145 [p. 130]: 'Between the intention, which is what we call the pure memory...'. These last texts – as well as others – call into question the commonly held idea of a memory that is inactive and passive by nature.

Tendency returns towards its principle as it does towards that which is the most internal and the most spiritual[23]. Such is fundamental 'proportion' in Bergson: the opening of the future is proportionate to the quantity of the past that has inserted itself in the action of the present. It is something Platonic, as Deleuze asserts: the Idea as reminiscence or 'pure memory'.

Yet if sympathy rests upon an indirect reasoning, how can one associate it with intuition? For its part, can intuition be anything other than the 'direct vision' that defines it? How can Bergson continue to think of them in quasi-synonymous terms? One needs to take a moment to return to reasoning by analogy. Analogy comes into play only between our own interior movements and those of the universe in general. It is a movement of projection. We firstly uncover ourselves intuitively as spiritual, vital, material through a series of 'dives' into ourselves:

> ...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 essence 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.[24]

Here, we recognize the movement of intuition, but also the ground of analogy. Analogy always establishes itself dynamically between our proper tendencies intuitively perceived and those of the universe (social, vital, material, etc.) projectively concluded. We are analogous to the universe (intuition), and inversely, the universe is our analogue (sympathy).[25]

Here, Bergson denies demonstrating anthropomorphism. Sympathy is not the auxiliary role of the 'myth-making function' [*fonction fabulatrice*], it is not the universe endowed with a movement, a memory, even an

23 On the role of aspiration as a return towards the original see the article by A. Bouaniche 'L'originaire et l'original, l'unité de l'origine, dans *Les Deux sources de la morale et de la religion*', in *Annales bergsoniennes*, I, PUF, pp. 143-170.

24 PM, p. 137 [pp. 124-5]. Cf. equally, pp. 27-29 [pp. 32-34].

25 Cf. *Mélanges*, PUF, p. 774: 'Now, one of the objectives of *Creative Evolution* is to show that the Whole [*le Tout*] is, on the contrary, of the same nature as the Self, and that one takes hold of this by descending more and more completely into one's self'.

altered human consciousness. It is, on the contrary, man who, by virtue of intuition, comes into 'contact' with these movements, these memories, these non-human consciousnesses deep within him. Deep within man, there is nothing human.[26] It is because intuition reaches the non-human tendencies in man that it reciprocally gives the impression of humanizing the non-human. Yet it first needed to search the depths of Man for the non-human tendencies that constitute him. This is why intuition calls for such long, stubborn work: it needs to be carried to the limits of human experience, at times inferior, at times superior, to get to the pure planes of the material, the vital, the social, the personal, the spiritual across which man is composed.[27] Our 'human' condition with its common sense, its intelligence, all the combinations it has constructed to act upon matter, in its entirety, thwarts our perception of these planes integrally. This is why the integral can only be constructed artificially. It needs, indeed, to reconstitute 'with the infinitely small elements which we thus perceive of the real curve, the curve stretching out into the darkness behind them'.[28]

It is Kant's error not to have noticed that the conditions of possibility he offered were themselves conditioned by 'sources' more obscure, more distant, only accessible to an intuition calling for a disavowal of science and the operative conditions to which Kant remained attached. The subject is matter, life, society, mind, before being the knowing subject. These totalities constitute the essential discovery of intuition in the hope that it will dive to a greater or lesser depth in the same ocean.[29] It is Man who has to humanize, to personalize, these non-human totalities that traverse him at different heights, in accordance with its different levels of tension. The anthropological level is trapped between greater continuous realities, inferior or superior to it, that contract and condense in entering the human

26 One of the most renowned aspects on intuition is to be found in MM, p.205 [p. 184]: 'But there is a last enterprise that might be undertaken. It would be to seek experience at its source, or rather above that decisive *turn* where, taking a bias in the direction of our utility, it becomes properly *human* experience'.

27 Even personality, considered in duration, is not human. It is necessary to distinguish between the two uses of the word in Bergson. At times it is employed to indicate the event where, at each instant, it is our personality as a whole that inserts itself into the present, yet this is done without one being aware of the intention or the mind. At other times, on the contrary, it is employed to point out free acts where the personality grasps itself as a profound call, vocation, or destiny, that is to say, as 'intention'.

28 MM, p. 206 [p. 185].

29 PM, p. 225 [p. 199].

form.[30] In Bergson, Man is humanization, or rather humanization itself perpetually oscillates between dehumanization and super-humanization according to the different levels at which it is grasped and the different tendencies acting upon him.

Does this help us better understand why Bergson calls 'sympathy' reasoning by analogy? We would say that classical analogy has for its function the introduction of resemblance into that which differs, with a primacy accorded to the similar. Apparently, Bergsonian sympathy does not proceed otherwise. It consists in finding what has 'mind' or 'consciousness' within a given reality, determining therefore what it has in common with us. But this is only possible through intuition determining beforehand what we have in common with its realities. Primacy is in reality accorded to alterity: it is because the other is within us that we can project it outside us in the form of 'consciousness' or 'intention'. *That which we project is our own alterity.* If this alterity does not seem strange to us (although, every time we discover it, it as if it were 'original' and, as such, a reality that we have previously ignored within us, before accessing it intuitively) it is by virtue of the sympathy that we have instituted with ourselves, and that has acquainted us with these alterities deep within us. Analogy appears to go from an 'other' (within us) to 'another' (outside us) in order to situate them on a common plane. Sympathy is thus the projection of a prior introjection.[31] This is why, definitively, it concerns an internal communication and not an external resemblance.

Additionally, one can specify what needs to be heeded in Bergson's use of external and internal. Recall that sympathy is not merely sympathy for others, but also already for one's self, in that it is true that we must pass into ourselves.[32]

> We are internal to ourselves, and our personality is what we should know best. Yet such is not the case; our mind is as if it

30 Bergson asserts that the intuitive method permits us 'to affirm the existence of objects both inferior and superior to us, though nevertheless in a certain sense internal to us', PM, p. 206 [p. 184].

31 We believe that what needs to be understood is the phrase cited above: 'Philosophical intuition is this contact, philosophy this *élan*'; this amounts to saying that philosophy proceeds via intuition yet only develops via sympathy. It is never only the *analogue* of intuition whose ineffable character Bergson tirelessly repeats.

32 'With no other thing can we sympathize intellectually, or if you like, spiritually. But one thing is sure: we sympathize with ourselves', PM, p. 182 [pp. 162-3].

> were in a strange land, whereas matter is familiar to it and in it the mind is at home. [33]

One notices that the notions of 'internal' and 'external' do not bear witness to an ontological difference. There is no more of the external world than there is of the internal world. In all strictness, one should not really speak of the 'internal world' when we can stay external to ourselves. Similarly, one should not speak of the 'external world', but of a perception that produces the world as external. It is a perception external to itself that posits the world as external (and which renders us external to ourselves). Inversely, it is a perception internal to itself that enables the passing into the world called 'external': it tends to identify itself with duration in that it is conserved in-itself. Rarely has the word 'in-itself' carried such a sense in Bergson, since it allows one to attribute to things a genuine interiority. The in-itself no longer designates the way in which things will never be 'for us' but the way in which, on the contrary, things will be very much within us. It is within us that they are still in-themselves, owing to the fact that we need to surface from ourselves.[34] One knows that the internal and the external should not designate worlds, but divergent tendencies (tension and extension) that articulate themselves in *both* 'worlds'.

We are beginning to see more accurately the fundamental movement of sympathy, but also that of intuition.[35] Each one can now have a distinct

33 PM, p. 41 [p. 41].

34 Cf the two affirmations of MM, p. 72 [p. 69] '...the sensible qualities of matter would be known *in themselves*, from within and not from without, could we but disengage them from that particular rhythm of duration which characterizes our consciousness'; and further on, p. 79 [p. 75]: '... in pure perception we are actually placed outside ourselves; we touch the reality of the object in an immediate intuition'.

35 In his remarkable explications of sympathy, Brahami shows that the relation of sympathy in Hume is already of an analogical nature ('Sympathie et individualité dans la philosophie politique de David Hume', *Revue philosophique*, No. 2, 1992, p.214). Analogy appears to found itself upon a 'projection of the self outside of the self', it 're-enacts in me the passion of the other'. Yet, in his *Introduction au* Traité de la nature humaine *de David Hume*, PUF, 2003, Brahami specifies that 'we love ourselves [...] through the same sympathy through which we love others' (p.178). In other words, the relation one institutes with one's self is through grasping one's self as 'other'. Our 'self' is no more so than the other with which we have the more intense sympathy – hence the initial and final primacy of alterity in its relation to sympathy. It is in this way that one can understand the passage where Bergson invokes a sympathy of self for itself: '...we sympathize with ourselves', PM, p. 182 [p. 163]. It would appear that Brahami's analyses furnish the material for a revival of a theory of the other.

definition: intuition is that through which we enter into contact with others within our selves (the material, the vital, the social, etc.), while sympathy is that through which one projects one's interiority onto the other ('direction', 'intention', 'consciousness' - which are just as much the projection of one's internal alterity). If mind can become matter (intuition), then matter can become mind (sympathy). If mind can become life, then life can become mind. If the social can become mind, then mind can become the social. If mind can become the person, then the person can become mind. Here, we are in keeping with the definition of intuition as 'a direct vision of mind by mind'. What 'mind' sees within itself are the diverse durations of matter, of life, of society, etc. Symmetrically, sympathy 'sees' within matter, life, society, a 'consciousness', an 'intention', that are the manifestation of the plasticity of mind according to its different levels of tension. Yet, is this double movement not the sign that we are trapped in a kind of *circle*, an hypothesis reinforced by the perfect symmetry that plays one off against the other? Is not the possibility of identifying them, of rendering them almost as synonyms, to be found within the fact that they reciprocally presuppose one another?

Only through a detour are we able to respond to this objection. We said that Bergson poses an identity: duration = memory = mind [*esprit*]. But, until now, we have hardly inserted the specific role of memory into this process. Now, how can we not see within this double movement the illustration of one of Bergson's most profound analyses concerning attentive recognition? How can we not see in analogical reason the instauration not of a circle but of a 'circuit' comparable to that of intellectual effort in *Matière et mémoire*, as with *L'Energie spirituelle*? One can even say that the leap from intuition and *élan* of sympathy breaks circles all the more so since it affirms the profundity of their 'circuits'. Attentive recognition, explains Bergson, 'is a kind of *circuit* in which the external object yields to us deeper and deeper parts of itself, as our memory adopts a correspondingly higher degree of tension in order to project recollections toward it'.[36] Here, it is not a question of repeating Bergson's analysis but simply of recognizing that this 'symmetry' between ideas confuses itself with the analogical work of sympathy. This search for symmetry consists, indeed of returning to the intention situated 'behind' the external object, to constitute its interiority. But, here again,

36 MM, pp. 128-129 [p. 116].

this analogical work of sympathy is preceded by the ensemble of intuitive acts that flow vertically, one might say, in order to determine the 'height' at which symmetry establishes itself. This work of intuition then permits the 'projection' towards the external object and coils in it a 'virtual object' that overlaps it and determines its meaning. Here is where the proper work of analogy is accomplished. What is the virtual object situated behind the object other than, in reality, its *virtual subject*, that is to say, its 'consciousness' or its 'intention', its 'direction'? The circuit of recognition stems from an idea to an idea, by way of symmetry, a spiritual analogical effort.

In the above passage there is not merely the question of recognition, but also that of *meaning*. From this point of view it would not be wrong to say that all of Bergson's texts that are dedicated to recognition are equally dedicated to the ideality of meaning. To recognize is at the same time to understand, to interpret. It is in this sense that *memory is mind*. We know that there are two types of memory. Memory-contraction has the *qualification* of material movements as its function: 'Our memory solidifies into sensible qualities the continuous flow of things'.[37] But what is the function of memory-recollection? It has a parallel function of *signifying* the spiritual movements that actualize themselves within matter (here, sonorous matter). We said above that the 'leap' within duration is equally a leap within the element of meaning, and the theory of memory-recollection needs to be read *in parallel* as a theory of signification. If, moreover, Bergson is able to criticize language as an arbitrary 'cutting' instrument, it is because with memory-recollection he already lays down a theory of meaning freed from the relative spatiality of language. The mind keeps with the apparent discontinuities of language for it re-establishes on another plane, the spiritual or ideal continuity with language as its actualization:

> ...I can indeed understand your speech if I start from a thought analogous to your own and follow its windings by the aid of verbal images which are so many signposts that show me the way from time to time.[38]

37 MM, p. 236 [p. 210].

38 MM, p. 139 [p. 125]. There is limited space for us to invoke the other side of recognition that follows a 'motor diagram' and that calls for a sympathy with the motor order.

The actuality of the verbal images is fringed by a virtual object immanent to it, in the sense that it does not cease to be displaced 'vertically' as a spiritual cursor, projected by a memory that has become mind. Yet this virtual object becomes 'subject' or 'tendency' while it provides a direction or expresses an intention. Here, the intention is not founded directly upon the explicit intention of the speaker (if not, then how does one thwart lies? If, however, the lie is possible, it is uniquely because one reconstructs the intention by a synthesis of actual terms instead of proceeding upon the intuitive or sympathetic plane). Recognition of the intention is not founded upon what the speaker says, but upon the source from which his utterances flow: its source or 'the more and more distant conditions with which [the enunciated sound] forms one system'.[39] One does not observe the enunciations but the 'dispositions' which they come from. The entirety of this process of projection constitutes reasoning by analogy as it relates movement back to an 'idea' or to a pitch of common 'tones', in short, to the same level of duration.

Of course, all these remarks return us to the general element of duration and to the monism of Bergson. We know that with *Durée et simultanéité* Bergson develops the hypothesis of a unique duration, a universal Time, inside of which coexist variable durations or 'fluxes'. The coexistence of durations is not possible save by their integration inside a duration that contains them. On this point we have Deleuze's profound explanation:

> ...the two fluxes could never be said to be coexistent or simultaneous if they were not contained within a third one. The flight of the bird and my own duration are only simultaneous insofar as my own duration divides in two and is reflected in another that contains it at the same time as it contains the flight of the bird. [...] It is in this sense that my duration essentially has the power to disclose other durations, to encompass the others, and to encompass itself ad infinitum.[40]

39 MM, p. 115 [p. 105].

40 Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme*, PUF, p.81 [*Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, New York: Zone Books, 1991, p. 80]. Deleuze constantly insists on the internal division of duration to better present Bergsonism as a 'philosophy of difference', as was the aim with the key text 'La conception de la différence chez Bergson', in *L'Île déserte et autres textes*, Minuit, 2002, pp. 43-72.

Deleuze specifies that this unique duration does not divide itself without there being a change of nature, where there is the possibility of a *division* of fluxes as much as distinct durations. Going further, duration, indeed, would not encompass itself – showing what there is *in common* between fluxes – if it were not for reasoning by analogy. It is for Bergson a reasoning that is 'barely conscious', yet it is one that permits the thinking of a monism of time.

> They are really multiple consciousnesses sprung from ours, similar to ours, which we entrust with forging a chain across the immensity of the universe and with attesting, through the identity of their inner durations and the contiguity of their outer experiences, the singleness of an impersonal time.[41]

Thus it is only intuition that can put me into contact with durations other than my own, revealing that I am not merely internal duration, but also *élan vital*, material movement, or voluntary effort. However, it is only sympathy that can propagate or project this alterity across the entire universe to reclaim it paradoxically in a monism, testifying to the prodigious plasticity of the mind and the extension of its *circuits of recognition*. In all respects, sympathy appears as the indispensable complement to intuition.

It is through sympathy that life and matter become *mind* whereas it is through intuition that mind becomes *duration*. One can say of memory that it is just as easily the *mind becoming duration* (intuition) and that it is *duration becoming mind* (sympathy) on the condition that one does not confuse these two operations. Intuition remains primary, yet receives from sympathy the extension enabling it to be deployed as a general method. In this way we understand what Bergson wants to say when he sees within sympathy the means to enter 'into the interior' of realities. It is also the means of laying out a philosophy true to intuition. One could even say that sympathy gives access to the essence of each considered totality: the mobility of the material, the *élan* of the vital, the obligation of the social, the aspiration of the personal, etc.; yet it needs first the leap of thought 'in

41 DS, p.59-60 [pp. 31-2]. The passage begins: 'But if we had to decide the question, we would, in our present state of knowledge, favour the hypothesis of a physical time that is one and universal. This is only a hypothesis, but it is based upon an argument by analogy…'. In considering his project, one can understand why Deleuze neglects this passage that is, nevertheless, essential to understand the monism of duration in Bergson.

duration' to initiate this access to essences. In other words, sympathy receives its condition from intuition while intuition receives its extension and generality from sympathy. It is through this alone that the whole artifice of Bergsonian method comes into effect.

Translated by David Reggio[*]

* Editor's note: We would like to thank David Lapoujade for revisions made to this translation.

Pli 15 (2004), 18-33

Duration, Rhythm, Present.

MARIA LAKKA

I. Introduction

The novelty of Bergson's contribution to the philosophical tradition lies in the creation of the concept of duration and the temporalisation of experience. Although duration is the founding idea and a recurrent notion throughout his writings, it undergoes variation, which prevents it from being captured in a single definition. These differential accounts do not so much contradict each other as enrich this notion by giving us duration in its nuances. But if a concept has nuances, this implies a novel account of the concept, which is no longer a fixed or static entity, but a mobile one undergoing qualitative changes, a sensuous concept, which endures in time as well.

Duration, which is essentially memory, consciousness, and freedom, should be distinguished from both the recollection-image and pure time. Although it is the condition of the former and at the same time partakes of, or frees, the latter, it is nevertheless coincident with neither. The memory-image is created in a double movement of translation and rotation: the first consists of a leap into 'the past in general', or better onto a particular level of this past, where the whole co-exists in a certain degree of contraction and relaxation. This past however, in all its levels, is imageless; it is pure time or, rather, a certain rhythm of time, and this is why it is only virtual. The second movement of rotation concerns the actualisation of a part of the virtual plane into an image. The image is a contribution of the present rather than of the past; if it remains a memory-image rather than a representation, it is because it retains the virtuality of

where it was sought and emerged from in the first place.[1] Consequently, the memory-image is a mixture of the past and the present, of the virtual and the actual; it is an actuality marked by a persistent virtuality. Duration is prior to the image and is only what gives the image, but it is itself without image.

Duration also differs from pure time and this is a harder distinction to maintain, mainly because Bergson himself describes it as pure memory and as the survival of the past in itself, in time. My point however, concerns the distinction between an ontological past and duration. The former, which is motionless and pre-existent, acknowledges no past, present or future; it is pure time, eternity or an eternal instant; not a flow of time but a-temporal time. Duration, on the other hand, is defined as the preservation (or prolongation) of the whole past in the present. If in the discussion of duration there is already mention of 'present' and 'past', even if this is in order to establish their continuity, duration cannot be identical with pure time from the beginning. In my view, we should ascribe a greater significance to Bergson's expression rather than considering it simply, and in the first instance, as a convention of language, the need to express oneself. Rather, duration signifies a movement *in-between* a pure past and the present; it is dynamic becoming.[2] Moreover, pure time, in its being motionless, cannot account for the intensive differential of duration as a 'movement of contraction and relaxation'. Consequently, instead of ignoring the problem by identifying duration with pure time as such, I consider it more fruitful to state the problem, and thereby opening it to the question of *how* duration frees pure time.

Informed by this problem, and starting from the Bergsonian definition of duration as the preservation and prolongation of the past in the present, in this essay, I will try to show *how* duration is prolonged into the present. I will argue that it is *conserved* as and, at the same time, *becomes* the rhythm of being. And it is because of this that duration is not so much

1 Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, translated by N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1991), pp. 133-134. Henceforth cited as [*MM*].

2 One may argue that by distinguishing the past and the present I am spatialising time, which is precisely what Bergson is arguing against with the notion of duration. However, the distinction is first made by Bergson himself. Moreover, if I localise duration, this is in the temporal in-between of pure time and remembering. The in-between is not so much a space but its rupture, intensive space. It is heterogeneity introduced in a spatial homogeneity by temporal depth.

about the past but is all the more interesting for the present, while at the same time redefining the present by reuniting a spatialised time in a whole. In the first part, I will show that the present both doubles itself and endures as the most contracted degree of the past. This is a paradoxical proposition, but it positions Bergson in-between all dualistic philosophical traditions. In the following part, I will try to show that the Bergsonian insistence on the past cannot be grasped without considering its idiosyncratic mode of existence as virtual repetitions of the whole; duration is the rhythm of a whole and is poly-rhythmic, but only implicitly in the latter case. In the last part, I will argue that for duration to be a continuous creation in the present, we need to account for the force of the future, which creates the suspensive power of rhythm.

II. Duration and the doubling of the present

In all his work, Bergson makes himself the adversary to the main philosophical traditions that maintain the reductionism of a vulgar dualism, whether it is realism or idealism. In *Matter and Memory,* his critique relates to the problem of perception, and implicitly concerns the whole relation of matter and spirit. Both realism and idealism begin from the dissociation of matter (the extended substance) and consciousness (the unextended or inner). Both philosophical doctrines conceive perception as forming an *idea* of the object, and it therefore occurs in the inner world of the subject rather than in the object. In this view, perception is unextended and *representational.*[3] The problem that arises, however, is how to bridge the gap between the mental and the physical, how to grant the correctness of the representation in relation to the represented. In other words if the possibility of representing equally entails the possibility of *mis*representing,[4] and since we do not have access to the thing itself in

3 "If we now look closely at the two doctrines, we shall discover in them a common postulate, which we may formulate thus: *perception has a wholly speculative interest; it is pure knowledge.*" [*MM* p. 28] As opposed to these views, pure perception for Bergson has no theoretical interest but only practical interest; it is oriented towards action. The same is also true of Kant. For the Bergsonian critique of realism and idealism see, pp. 26-28, of materialism and idealism, p. 181, and of empiricism and dogmatism, p. 183.

4 Descartes gives the example of the chiliagon and claims that I can understand that it is a figure of a thousand sides just as the triangle is a figure of three sides; but I do not imagine the thousand sides in the same way, or see them as presented to me. That is, although I can think of the figure I cannot imagine (and the same would go for the idea of it which I have when I perceive such a figure) its proper representation, since our ideas of sensation or imagination are not capable of that form and degree of complexity. Thus ideas, in Descartes' system, permit of indeterminacy both with regard to their own properties and relations to other ideas, and to properties of the object, which they represent. In F. C. T. Moore: *Bergson: Thinking Backwards*, (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 20.

order to test our representations, how can we assert that what we know of the world is indeed the world and that we are not the victims of systematic illusions?

Bergson avoids the problem of doubting the correspondence of the world with our knowledge of it by considering from the start perception as extended. Perception takes place in the object rather than in us, and there is therefore a difference *in degree* but not a difference in kind between our perception of matter and matter itself [*MM* p. 71]. The problem, however, is not resolved but only transferred; for by considering perception as extended, he does not renounce the existence of the unextended altogether. This latter now involves the nature and function of memory. Pure perception differs *in kind* not from the external world but from pure memory; the former as a function of the body alone is only actual and interested because it is oriented towards action, while the latter is wholly virtual and disinterested, as the life of the spirit. However, if perception and memory differ in kind, how is it possible for a perception to recall a memory? How could we grant the communication between the two if the former draws solely upon the homogeneous while the latter alone is the source of every heterogeneity?[5] And what is more, how can a perception become a recollection, if the abyss of a difference in nature separates the two?

5 Deleuze argues that, in Bergson, intuition is developed as a method, rather than a feeling, an inspiration or a disorderly sympathy, and he also gives us its constitutive rules. Experience only gives us composites as *facts*, which we are called to divide in terms of their pure tendencies, as the articulations of the real; only tendencies are pure but they only exist *in principle*. In operating this division, we are led to recognise not only that there is a difference in kind between duration and space, but that it is "duration, which 'tends' for its part to take on or bear all the differences in kind (because it is endowed with the power of qualitatively varying with itself), and space, which never presents anything but differences of degree (since it is quantitative homogeneity). There is thus not a difference in kind between the two halves of the division; the qualitative difference is entirely on one side." Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), p. 31. Henceforth cited as [*B*].

Bergson complicates matters further by establishing the relation of the present and the past in two contradictory ways. On the one hand, the *leap* from the present into the past marks the discontinuity between an active perception and an inactive memory. In another movement however, which goes from the past to the present, he establishes their continuity when claiming, in the diagram of the inverted cone, that the present is only the most contracted *degree* of the past. It is this argument of continuity, which also sustains the definition of duration as the preservation and conservation of the past in the present. However, before that, we first need to resolve the meaning of the contradiction.

According to the common psychological view of memory, the past is caught between two presents: the present that it was, of which it is the past, and the present that is, in relation to which it is now past. Similarly, we think that the past is only constituted after the old present has been replaced by a new present. Deleuze, however, rightly questions these assumptions in the following way:

> How would a new present come about if the old present did not pass at the same time that it *is* present? How would any present whatsoever pass, if it were not past *at the same time* as present? The past would never be constituted if it *had not been* constituted first of all, at the same time that it was present. There is here, as it were, a fundamental position of time and also the most profound paradox of memory: The past is "contemporaneous" with the present that it *has been* [*B* p. 58].[6]

What Deleuze, following Bergson, is describing here is a *schism* in the present: the present is indeed actual perception but at the same time, at a more profound level, it is memory. If the present was not passing at the same time as it is present, if *in* the present that is, there was not implicated a *has been* of the present, the present would not pass. There could only be distinct instants, a spatial series of discrete multiplicities taking place simultaneously. We are therefore led to recognise a dual aspect of the present for there to be succession and time. This inactive present, the

6 The contemporaneous, rather than successive, existence of present and past is explicitly stated by Bergson: "I hold that the *formation of recollection is never posterior to the formation of perception; it is contemporaneous with it*". Henri Bergson, *Mind-Energy*, translated by H. Wildon Carr (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1944), p. 157.

passing present, is the condition of the *temporalisation* of an active present, which would otherwise remain only spatial. The present is doubling itself at the same time as constituting itself;[7] it is also an Other to itself; it is not only objective and actual but also subjective and virtual.

A present moment can become past only because it is already passing in its being present; in fact, it is present only fugitively.[8] Similarly, a perception can become memory because it is already doubled as a memory at the same time as being a perception. For what is to perceive but to contract in a synthetic, enduring instance a multiplicity of tiny vibrations? In this case, there is no longer a difference in kind between perception and memory, but instead, perception can be said to be the most contracted degree of a memory. It is not contradictory to argue that, on the one hand the present doubles itself, and thus to establish a duality in the present, and on the other, to claim that it (or perception) is the most contracted degree of the past (or memory). This is indeed the first paradox of Bergsonian time, but its point is to show that the present is the explication of the past. The movement of explication is an irreversible movement, and its only meaning can be that there is continuity from the past to the present but discontinuity from the present to the past.

If the present is only the most contracted degree of the past, is everything then becoming past? It is the aim of this essay to show that everything is implicated in the past, which is becoming in the present. But in order to argue this, we first need to show what the mode of existence of the past is.

III. The mode of existence of the past

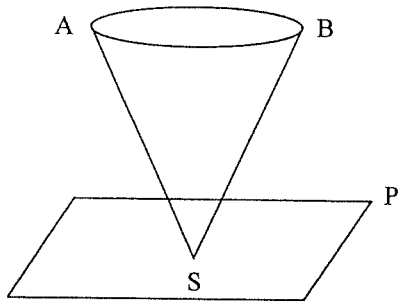
The paradox of the contemporeneity of the past with the present that has been, or what we described as the doubling of the present, only gives us the passing present as an effect; but in itself, it is not the sufficient cause.

7 An extreme version or disturbance of this doubling would be paramnesia or 'the recollection of the present'. Alain Vinson, '*Paramnésie et Katamnèse: Réflexions sur la notion bergsonienne de souvenir du présent*', in *Archives de Philosophie* 53, 1990, pp. 3-29.

8 The present is fugitive like Baudelaire's beauty; "*fugitive beauté!*" of a passer-by. But also without reference: the beautiful is always fugitive. Or maybe it is the other way around? It is only the fugitive which is beautiful. I am indebted to Kostas Koukouzelis for this idea.

For Deleuze, "the active synthesis of memory may well be founded upon the (empirical) passive synthesis of habit, but on the other hand it can be grounded only by another (transcendental) passive synthesis which is peculiar to memory itself."[9] The succession of presents does not suffice to constitute the past; for the past and its memory to be something other than the former present and the perception of a representation, we have to suppose a being of an *a priori* past, or a past in general, as a pure element of *passeity*, which forms the *reason* for the passing present and memory.[10]

Bergson gives us the diagrammatic representation of memory and experience in the figure of an inverted cone, described as follows:



> If I represent by a cone SAB, the totality of the recollections accumulated in my memory, the base AB, situated in the past, remains motionless, while the summit S, which indicates at all times my present, moves forward unceasingly, and unceasingly also touches the moving plane P of my actual representation of the universe [*MM* p. 152].

9 Gilles Deleuze: *Difference and Repetition*, translated by Paul Patton (London: The Athlone Press, 1994), p. 81. Henceforth cited as [*DR*].

10 The notion of *reason* is distinguished both from causality, and from the empirical condition (the foundation); it is rather the *transcendental condition* (the ground). On the distinction of the foundation and the ground, Deleuze writes: "The foundation concerns the soil: it shows how something is established upon this soil, how it occupies and possesses it; whereas the ground comes rather from the sky, it goes from the summit to the foundations, and measures the possessor and the soil against one another according to a title of ownership." [*DR* p. 79]

This pure or ontological past bears a paradoxical kind of existence: it *is*, but without ever having been present, it *pre-exists* every present, posed as already there. It serves as the ground for memory but is itself never represented in it. Although we only represent our former presents (active synthesis of memory), it is there, presupposed, and a-subjective. Although it has never been present, Bergson presupposes it, in order to sustain the heterogeneity of memory from perception and to grant a place for the heterogeneous in experience.

Even though we can extend the lines SA and SB ad infinitum the plane of the pure past is and 'remains motionless'. It is not itself a dimension of time but is what sustains the paradoxes of time: by being posed as already pre-existent, it also causes the contemporaneity of the past with the present that has been. This has one final consequence: the *co-existence* of the whole past with itself. In the interval of the present occupied by the sensori-motor mechanism of the body, as the recipient of stimuli from things and the restorer of action to them as our response, and a pure past of the totality of memories, "there is room [...] for a thousand repetitions of our psychical life, figured by as many sections as A'B', A''B'', etc..., of the same cone" [*MM* p. 162]. In each of the planes, the *whole* past co-exists with itself but in different degrees of tension, contracted towards spirit or relaxed towards matter. Bergson here takes a step backwards from *Time and Free Will*; there, he introduced for the first time the notion of duration as the pure temporal form of succession and the power of novelty. In this work, it is space, as opposed to duration, which alone furnishes us with co-existences and matter, which is the locus of repetition. However, what I will attempt to show is that his revised account of duration does not contradict the earlier one but rather sounds its depth; duration is only apparently succession while, more profoundly, it is *intensive* co-existence.

Let us, however, examine the nature of this co-existence more closely. The planes of the cone are not constituted by the distinct periods of the past, as in a chronological order. If that were the case, by cutting the cone we would have a part of the past corresponding to a certain degree of temporal length. However, if by dividing the past we can only have parts of it, then time would function in a similar way to space. If the whole of the past in duration consists of the totality of its actual elements, then duration is a multiplicity of the quantitative order, whose division brings forth differences in degree. But time or duration is not a dimension of

space, it is what differs in kind from it and generates all qualitative difference. Therefore the nature and mode of co-existence have to be otherwise.

The planes of the cone are planes of the whole of the past. Every plane is the repetition of the whole in different degrees of contraction and relaxation. The difference between the planes is not a difference in the *content* of the planes, since each one bears the (same) whole. Rather, it is the difference in the degree of tension. This latter difference, however, does not signify merely a quantitative difference in the being of the past, but a different *way* of being of the past. The degree of contraction and dilation does not alter the quantities of the content; it alters the movement, which gives the content, and therefore produces a different rhythm. It does not cause the difference of something, externally, but primarily *differentiates itself*, internally.[11]

Duration was indeed described by Bergson as simple and indivisible but in a particular, idiosyncratic way. As Deleuze rightly points out: "[F]or Bergson, duration was not simply the indivisible, nor the nonmeasurable. Rather, it was that which divided only by changing in kind, that which was susceptible to measurement only by varying its metrical principle at each stage of the division" [*B* p. 40]. The division of the cone remains a possible division because it is constituted by a multiplicity of layers of the whole past; every act of remembering is a division of the whole, as a leap in a certain plane. The division is only formal and does not concern the content of the past; it is however, *intensively formal.*

Rhythm is like an intensive envelope, which we can narrow or expand and thus, without altering the elements in it, we create shorter or longer curves of time, which produce a difference in the whole. Every division, every quantitative differentiation gives simultaneously the qualitative

11 Deleuze argues that Bergson's novelty amounts to the conception of vital difference as internal difference, which has to be distinguished from earlier philosophical accounts of difference as contradiction, alterity, negation. Difference as internal differentiation crystallizes with the notion of duration, which "is simple, indivisible, pure. [...] [T]he simple does not divide itself, *it differentiates itself.* Self-differentiation is the very essence of the simple or the movement of difference." Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's conception of difference", in *The New Bergson*, ed. John Mullarkey (Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 49. Internal difference is not *only* internal; it is *primarily* internal, both the *reason* of itself as well as the *cause* of all external differences.

difference of the whole.[12] Rhythm therefore is not dependent upon the elements themselves but on the intensities, the differentials produced between them, and which cannot be reduced to the relation of pre-existing elements. The double movement of contraction and relaxation is a *differential movement* of intensity before being a contraction and relaxation of *elements* of the past.

This differential movement is the presupposition for the emergence of elements, which only anticipate it in the actualisation of the recollection image. Elements, as the contents of our recollection, are not added upon duration but are formed in the explication of the virtual memory of duration in an actual memory-image, in a second movement of rotation. They constitute the matter given by the relaxation of intensity. This movement of explication does not actualise all the virtual in the representation of the past, but a certain aspect of it, in the direction given by the present. The remainder however, is neither lost nor perished, submitting itself to the laws of entropy; without being identical to the image, or being given *by* the image actually, it gives itself *in* the image virtually; it subsists as that peculiar aura, which animates the image into a memory.

If the memory-image actualises only a part of the virtual memory, are we going back to a partial relation with the whole, which we renounced earlier? Between the actualised memory of recollection and the virtual memory of duration the former explicates a part of the latter, but only if and on condition that it bears the whole implicitly. If we now return to the question of the formal division of duration, we see that Bergson offers us a novel account of form as rhythm. Form is not spatial but temporal, not what we commonly consider as given by the image, but what only gives the image, not a constituted extensive but a constituting intensive, constituting itself as well as extensities and qualities (contents).

Since duration is movement, it seems more accurate to talk about repetition of planes rather than their co-existence (an apparently static term). It furnishes us, however, with a novel account of repetition, of the

12 One may argue that this claim shows the illusion of qualitative differences and maintains that all difference is quantitative. We will not directly deny that, but only if we accept it at a profounder level. Every difference is indeed quantitative but it is intensive quantity, rather than extensive. Which means that it implicates time and therefore it gives qualitative differences in its explication in space. Thus at the end, the notion of intensive quantity does not quantify differences but rather the contrary: it qualifies even differences that appear quantitative.

profounder nature of repetition of difference, rather than a repetition of the same. It is not a repetition of something different (an aspect of the past), nor simply a different repetition. It is not a repetition of elements but a repetition of themes as rhythms of the whole; not the repetition of contraction nor of its relaxation but the repetition of their differential movement created in-between. Moreover, what differentiates rhythm as productive repetition from reproductive metre is the possibility of the former *implicating in a dynamic unity a multiplicity of durations.* The rhythm of my duration is One whole, and at the same time it envelops poly-rhythms. However, until this point we have only shown how it envelops them, how it bears them implicitly, i.e. virtually. What we need to show now is how duration is also becoming, how it is becoming poly-rhythmic and becoming difference. This is how it not only concerns a past which *is*, but a past which *creates* itself and acts in the present.

IV. Future: rhythm suspended

We have described duration as a unity, which bears, encompasses and envelops a multiplicity, a virtual, poly-rhythmic whole. The difference between a whole and totality is that while the latter consists simply of the sum of its parts and refers to space only, the former is excessive in relation to such addition because it implicates us in time. In a totality, every difference in degree remains only that, while in the whole, every difference in degree produces a qualitative difference in the whole, and makes it change in kind. Moreover, it is not only that each phenomenon (*in*)forms the whole qualitatively but that it is also (*in*)formed by it in its turn. Every element of the past is not something already given, like a present that was, but it becomes in its implication in the whole of duration. Every individual past is implicated in a process of becoming, which is duration, and which makes it a process of becoming as well.

Deleuze says that the whole, as opposed to a set or ensemble, is the Open, or that which prevents each set from closing in on itself, like a thread which traverses through sets, transmitting a duration to them and thus allowing their communication and their integration with the whole and infinity.[13] Duration is not *something* (the past) but the process of the

13 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: The Athlone Press, 2001), pp. 16-17.

becoming of the past in the present. But what is it that keeps duration open and allows for its becoming?

In *Creative Evolution,* Bergson puts forward a definition of duration not only as the persistence but also as the *prolongation* of the past in the present, actual and acting.[14] This latter formulation points to the dynamic and transformative character of duration; the entire past not only subsists but also becomes anew in the present, it is *created* in the present. For the present to pass, we had to invent a heterogeneous past, an element of *passeity*, which made the past contemporaneous with the present that has been. But for the past to be created in the present, the addition of a passing present is not enough, for creation is a leap. If duration is not only the being but also the creation of the past in the present, we have to think of it as something more than a synthesis of the past.

In the first chapter of *Matter and Memory*, Bergson had dissociated the present from the past, where the former, occupied by the action of my body, was defined as actual and interested, while the latter alone, as the life of the spirit, inactive and disinterested, was the only bearer of virtuality. Later on, however, he would reconcile the dualism by arguing that the present is only the most contracted degree of the past. In a following stage though, he questioned the existence of the present itself. The crucial question now becomes what is the present?

> [W]hat I call "my present" has one foot in my past and another in my future. In my past, first, because "the moment in which I am speaking is already far from me"; in my future, next, because this moment is impending over the future: it is to the future that I am tending, and could I fix this indivisible present, this infinitesimal element of the curve of time, it is the direction of the future that it would indicate. The psychical state, then, that I call "my present", must be both a perception of the immediate past and a determination of the immediate future [*MM* p. 138].

The schism of the present, therefore, does not only concern its passing into the past but also its advance into the future. The present itself is less; it is like an interval between the immediate past and the immediate future. Bergson is hollowing out the present not in order to annihilate it into an

14 Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, authorised translation by Arthur Mitchell (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1998), pp. 15, 17.

absence but in order to disclose its profounder layers, where the past in its most contracted degree is pervaded by the force of the future. The Bergsonian idea of the present as sensori-motor does not instantiate the present in a plane of action; on the contrary, it attributes a duration to it, which not only swallows it into the past but also opens it into the future.

As a result, the present is indeed the most contracted degree of the past in duration, but duration does not close in on itself at the point of the present. On the contrary, this most contracted degree forms an interstice of time, a fracture permeated by the force of the future. Bergson did not theorise the time of the future, and Deleuze undertook this task through the study of Nietzsche and the eternal return, as the tormented, almost violent, empty form of time.[15] This time of the future, "the straight line" as an empty form, does not play the role of a container, as a more primordial time; it is rather "the universal ungrounding", the formless abyss at the heart of every form.

Duration is a whole, but only on condition that it is cracked. The crack inherent in duration is both what threatens to dissolve it but also what alone sustains it by opening it into a future. Were it not for this crack, duration would remain a closed past, a past that *is* with no possibility of *becoming*. But despite all the insistence Bergson places on the past, he is nevertheless a philosopher who aspires to creation as freedom. The past is both what determines us *and* is the condition of our freedom.

> [L]iving with an intenser life, contracting, by its [consciousness's] memory of the immediate experience, a growing number of external moments in its present duration, it becomes more capable of creating acts of which the inner indetermination, spread over as large a multiplicity of the moments of matter as you please, will pass the more easily through the meshes of necessity [*MM* p. 249].

15 For the third synthesis of time, "time out of joint" in the eternal return, see *DR* pp. 88-91. In this essay, I do not intend to develop the time of the future any further. My intention is not to show whether Bergson omitted to take account of a different order of time. The argument is rather the reverse, namely, that the notion of duration does not concern only the survival of the past, as is commonly interpreted, but also implicates the future, in order to become in the present. Bergson therefore had, although only implicitly, accounted for the force of the future, and Deleuze explicated this idea.

It is indeed this contraction of a greater past that offers us the firmer *hold* in the present; but in order to be an act of *creation* in the present, it also requires the force of the future. This force is like the suspensive power of rhythm, the interval introduced for and introducing the appearance of a new rhythm, which is both developing itself heterogeneously, enveloping the whole and remaining enveloped in it, both heterogeneous and continuous. It is because of this interval that rhythm may develop the multiplicity of rhythms that it envelops.

This development of a different rhythm is like a movement of actualisation of the virtual. The virtual does not become actualised according to an order of similarity, in a relation of the original to the copy, but through lines of dissociation and differentiation. These lines explicate a different tendency of the virtual in the actuals they produce. And although these latter are embodiments of novelty, freed from the necessity of resemblance, they are not so much autonomous products as echoes of the whole. This is not simply because they were generated by it but also because it resonates in them. Like a rhythm (a luminous wave or a musical wave or the waves of the sea), which is integrated into a greater rhythm, not only because it was *unfolded* by it, but mainly because it is still *enfolding* it.

In the movement from the enveloped to its development (from the virtual to the actual, or from the enfolded to the unfolded), there are three instances: the enveloped, which is only implicit and belongs to the time of the past; the developed, which is the explicit, the finished product and refers to the active present; and finally, the enveloping as the inactive present and the enduring past, the becoming of duration in the present.

Creation does not belong to the future; it is the incessant becoming of duration in the present. It is action, what keeps duration open. However, action, before being a deed, it is an opening to the future. Were it not for the future, duration would remain only a contraction of the past, a synthesis, qualitatively changing but incapable of re-creating itself in the present. It would envelop a multiplicity of rhythms, but these would always remain implicit in it. The description of duration as a movement of contraction *and* relaxation means that it not only envelops these rhythms but is also enveloping them, as well as itself, in a process of becoming. The straight line of the future fractures the synthesis of the past, bringing the infinitesimal interval, a mediating rupture between contraction and relaxation. The significance of the Bergsonian idea of duration lies

precisely in that it bridges heterogeneity and continuity by contracting the one into the other and relaxing the other(s) over the one.

V. Conclusion

The past is not in the past. It is in the present. It subsists, it persists, it is. I do not remember the past, I create it; and the depth of contraction affords the density of relaxation. I bear the whole of the past in my present existence, whether I remember it or not. The form of the subsistence of the past is not the image of my memory but the rhythm of duration. Although my remembering, or not remembering, of the past may not affect its survival in the present, it does affect the dynamism of its movement, that is, it does not reduce the whole but alters the liveliness of its rhythm.

In the diagram of the cone, duration was represented as the repetition of the whole past in different degrees of contraction and relaxation, where the present was the most contracted degree of the past. The present does not only bear the whole of the past contracted in it, but the present itself *is* this contraction. The present can be active because at a more profound level it is inactive (although not passive). I do not so much contract the past, rather, I am the product of its contraction, and similarly, I do not bear duration but I am a (poly-rhythmic) duration.

Although in *Matter and Memory* Bergson insisted upon the disinterestedness of memory and the virtuality of duration, in *Creative Evolution,* he defined it as abiding into the present, actual and acting. The two formulations are not contradictory but illuminate duration from different perspectives. What would it mean for duration to be and act in the present? What happens, if we condense its temporal depth in the surface of the present?

Duration gives us spirit in its most contracted degree and matter in its most relaxed. In my present therefore, my consciousness is the most contracted degree of my duration and my body is the most relaxed. My body and my consciousness are neither independent of one another nor is the one reflected upon the other, rather they are different degrees of tension, different rhythms of my duration. However, not only in its manifestation in consciousness, but also in that of the body, duration remains virtual. It does not appear spatially in the properties of the body

but only in its tropisms, in its rhythms of expressiveness, marking the singularity of *a* body.[16] And in between the two, it appears and repeats itself in a multiplicity of ways, which consist in the singular *tropos* or *rhythm of being.* The action of the present is grounded upon its inactivity, but at the same time, tropos (*τρόπος*) only manifests itself in action, marking their intensive co-existence in a unity.

What is the present? It is indeed action but only apparently so, at the level of its surface. It is duration, however, which gives the present as well as its depth. In this profounder present, there is no present anymore but the continuous and heterogeneous rhythm of duration, which conserves the past and is becoming in the present because it is suspended by the future. Duration therefore implicates the dimensions of time in a singular rhythm of the whole. If the body cuts space and time by installing its presence/present and opening up a past and a future, duration then reunites this spatialised time, or more precisely, it reconciles *us* (the agents of spatialisation) with the whole of time that we are.[17]

16 The tropisms of the body, as the virtuality of the body, do not bring back dualism. This bodily consciousness sustains a *de jure* dualism and a *de facto* dynamic monism.

17 One may argue that the reading of Bergson I presented in this essay, primarily concerns Deleuze rather than Bergson. I fully acknowledge the Deleuzian influence and inspiration. We should also, however, acknowledge that Deleuze was profoundly inspired by Bergson. What I attempted to do here was a reversal of movement, not in order to redeem the authentic Bergson, who is a subsistent virtuality that does not need me, but rather in order to put forth another reading of Bergson and to activate his virtuality. Duchamp had defined the difference between the artist's intentions and the realised work as "the art coefficient"; it is this difference that accounts for art. The same applies to philosophy, as the art of "creating concepts" (Deleuze). I may not have stayed faithful to Bergson himself, but I hope that I have been faithful to his spirit.

* I want to thank Celia Lury and Margarita Karkayanni for reading and commenting upon this essay. To Kostas I am indebted.

Pli 15 (2004), 34-53

The 'Zigzags of a Doctrine': Bergson, Deleuze, and the Question of Experience.

SUZANNE GUERLAC

Although it has been some time since Deleuze called for a 'return' to Bergson in 1966, people have begun reading Bergson again, even elaborating the figure of a 'new Bergson'.[1] But to what extent has the return to Bergson been oriented, unwittingly, by intellectual pressures specific to the Parisian discursive field associated with the intellectual debates of the 1960's that concerned structuralism and post-structuralism? Put another way, how can we read Bergson after post-structuralism, without either giving into its specific pressures or reverting to a naïve elaboration of immediacy, thereby inventing yet another Bergsonism, like those that so thoroughly covered over the writing of Bergson that the texts themselves became quite invisible – until Deleuze reopened them.

In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze presents Bergsonian intuition as a method. He stresses that in its 'methodological' understanding, intuition 'already presupposes *duration*,'[2] and he concludes that 'intuition ... consists in thinking in terms of *duration*'.[3] This formulation separates duration from intuition. It implies that duration is to be understood as a concept (although the printed italics render the status of the term somewhat

1 Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone books, 1991) p. 115. (Originally published as *Le Bergsonisme*, PUF,1966). Subsequent references will be given in the text and will refer to the English edition. See also *The New Bergson*, edited by John Mullarkey (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

2 He supports this assertion with the following quotes from Bergson: 'These conclusions on the subject of duration were, it seemed to me, decisive. Step by step they lead me to raise intuition to the level of a philosophical method ... The theory of intuition ... only became clear to me long afterwards' (Deleuze, p. 13).

3 Ibid.

mysterious) and that intuition involves thinking – thinking according to this presupposed notion of duration. This is a gesture entirely compatible with the French intellectual climate of the 1960's when *Bergsonism* was first published in Paris. This, after all, was the decade that saw the rise of structuralist and post-structuralist thought that actively repudiated the inheritance of phenomenology within the context of a broader critique of humanism. It was in this spirit that Levi-Strauss had appealed to the methods of synchronic linguistics. To introduce readers to Bergson in this intellectual climate, it was necessary to establish a firm line of defense against the charge of being 'phenomenological'. This is just what Deleuze does in the opening pages of his essay. Any attack along these lines is neutralized from the start when intuition is characterized as a method and separated from the *experience* of duration which has been implicitly abstracted as a concept according to which one might think.

With this pre-emptive strike behind him, Deleuze proceeds to explicate major features of Bergson's thought: the importance of distinctions between difference in kind and difference in degree, the diagnosis of badly stated problems, and the difference between posing questions in relation to time and posing them in relation to space.

He returns to the question of intuition in his conclusion:

> Bergson saw intuition not as an appeal to the ineffable, a participation in a feeling or a lived identification, but as a true method. This method sets out, first, to determine the conditions of problems, that is to say, to expose false problems or wrongly posed problems, and to discover the variables under which a given problem must be stated as such. The means used by intuition are, on the one hand, a cutting up or division of reality into a given domain, according to lines of different natures and, on the other hand, an intersection of lines, which are taken from various domains and which converge. It is this complex linear operation, consisting in a cutting up according to articulations and an intersecting according to convergences, which leads to the proper posing of a problem, in such a way that the solution itself depends on it (pp. 115-16).

This portrayal of Bergson's thought accords nicely with the structuralist/post-structuralist discursive formation. Deleuze specifically erases elements of Bergson's thought or writing that might be vulnerable

to a structuralist critique of humanism, and of phenomenology. Terms such as 'feeling' and 'lived identification' are negated in a fundamentally formal gesture that emphasizes method and critique: the critique of badly stated problems, for example. The 'complex linear operation, consisting in a cutting up according to articulations and an intersecting according to convergences that lead to the proper posing of a problem' recalls the general strategy of Althusser's rereading of Marx and his definition of *problématique*. Deleuze is not inaccurate, he simply leaves out a certain dimension of Bergson's text. Whereas Deleuze speaks of 'articulations' and 'convergences' in the abstract, Bergson speaks of 'les articulations *du réel*' and of 'les ondulations *du réel*' (emphases added). Deleuze's presentation of Bergson elides any notion of experience, or of *les données immédiates*.[4] 'If a little structuralism leads away from the concrete, a lot of structuralism leads back to it,' wrote Levi -Strauss.[5] We could say that Deleuze's reading of Bergson displays just a little structuralism.

It is one symptom of the problem at hand, and of its complexity, that the word 'experience' is hard to find in *L'Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, the text in which Bergson first presents the notion of duration. All sorts of other terms take its place: *états de conscience*, *faits internes*, *actes libres*, *sensations*, *l'activité vivante du moi*, as well as verbs such as *aimer* and *hair*. The word 'experience', to my knowledge, does not appear until the conclusion of the *Essai* where we find this striking sentence: 'All determinism will thus be refuted by experience, but any definition of freedom will justify determinism'.[6] I would argue that a notion of experience (so out of fashion since Derrida, since Foucault, since Lacan) plays a crucial role in Bergson's thinking. The fact that the

4 It is interesting that Bergson's phrase 'articulations du réel' finds its way into the earlier essay by Deleuze, published in 1956 in *Les Etudes Bergsoniennes* (recently reprinted, under the English title 'Bergson's conception of difference' in *The New Bergson*). In that essay the emphasis on 'method' is less pronounced and, although the notion of experience is not mentioned as such, it is not specifically excluded as it is in the passage from *Bergsonism* just cited which bears the imprint of the sixties.

5 Cited in Marcel Hénaff, *Claude Levi Strauss and the Making of Structural Anthropology*, tr. Mary Baker (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) p. 7.

6 'Tout déterminisme sera donc réfuté par l'expérience, mais toute définition de la liberté donnera raison au déterminisme,' Bergson, *Oeuvres* (Paris: Presse Universitaires de France, 1959), p. 150. All subsequent references to Bergson will refer to this edition and will be given in the text (translations are my own).

word itself rarely appears is not an indication of its irrelevance or inappropriateness. It is rather a sign of its importance. For, as Bergson makes clear in the *Essai*, experience in the strong sense, i.e., in the sense linked to freedom in the sentence just cited, rarely occurs ('les actes libres sont rares,' Bergson, p. 110). It is usually blocked by modes of symbolic representation such as language (and the word 'experience' falls into this trap) which cover over the activities of the *moi profonde* like so many dead leaves floating on a pond.[7] The agency of experience is immobilized by a 'second self' imposed by the requirements of social life and mediated through language and other forms of symbolic representation. Language produces what Bergson calls 'a crushing [*écrasement*] of immediate consciousness' (p. 87). Experience in the strong sense of *l'acte libre* involves *contact* (contact with duration, with *faits internes*, with the concrete self in action, etc). It requires effort, just as intuition does ('Pour retrouver ce moi fondamental,' Bergson writes, '... un effort vigoureux d'analyse est nécessaire,' p. 85). We could say that, like intuition, contact (or experience) is a philosophical act, not an everyday matter. What happens if we reintroduce the energies of contact (or experience) back into our reading of Bergson? How does this gesture square with - or perhaps reinvent - a notion of the 'transgression of philosophy' that Foucault so readily ascribed to Bataille[8], and that Deleuze implicity attributes to Bergson as anti-philosopher?

7 Speaking of the alienated 'second self,' which is a function of language and cliché, Bergson writes: 'Il s'en faut d'ailleurs que toutes nos idées s'incorporent ainsi à la masse de nos états de conscience. Beaucoup flottent à la surface, comme les feuilles mortes sur l'eau d'un étang. Nous entendons par là que notre esprit, lorsqu'elle pense, les retrouve toujours dans une espèce d'immobilité, comme si elles lui étaient extérieures. De ce nombre sont les idées que nous recevons toutes faites,' Bergson, p. 90.

8 In the structuralist/post-structuralist context, only Bataille can be heard to use the word experience, most notably in *L'Expérience intérieure*, a meditation on transgression, *le nonsavoir*, language and poetry. Bataille was championed by Sollers and Kristeva in the context of *Tel Quel* and annointed by Foucault in his essay 'Préface à la transgression' (*Critique*, 1963, pp. 195-196) which credited Bataille with a 'transgression of philosophy' and suggested that henceforth 'transgression' would replace the Hegelian term 'contradiction.' Only Bataille, founder of the review *Acéphale*, can insist on *inner experience* without being relegated to the domain of 'psychology.' I have argued in *Literary Polemics* that the post-structuralist reading of Bataille tended to suppress the experiential aspect of the sacred (crucial, for example, in connection with the *philosopheme* of sacrifice) and suggested a link between Bataille and Bergson .

*

In his presentation of what he calls the 'theory' of Bergsonian intuition, is it possible that Deleuze himself poses the question of intuition badly? Does he perhaps unwittingly fall into the kind of misreading that Bergson exposes in the *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* – i.e., the tendency to substitute the framework of the outer world in the thinking of an inner experience? In other words, does he substitute for the experience of intuition the representation of it?

In the Conclusion of the *Essai,* Bergson follows precisely the path of argument Deleuze has identified with the *method* of Bergsonian intuition. He summarizes the argument of the *Essai* through a rigorous critique of concepts, one that precisely makes the distinctions Deleuze underscores as fundamental to Bergson's philosophical practice. He differentiates between differences in degree and differences in kind, he analyses badly posed questions, and then reposes these questions in terms of time, not space. Bergson performs all of these operations neatly in this Conclusion in the course of a critique of the three philosophical concepts that have been the subject of his essay: intensity, duration and voluntary determination.[9] These are of course the three ideas that Bergson has discussed in each of the chapters of the *Essai:* intensity in chapter one, duration in chapter two, and freedom or voluntary determination in chapter three. He summarizes the argument he has made in each case, only here he explicitly situates his critique of concepts with reference to the Kantian conceptual framework which he proceeds to turn inside out. Let us follow this development one term at a time.

Intensity. When we consider sensation, there are two sides to experience. Or, as Bergson puts it, the concept 'intensity' has two faces: it is quality for inner consciousness and quantity when we attach it to its external cause and describe it as we describe external things which present themselves in space. *Multiplicity* is also a double notion, or what Bergson calls a 'bastard concept'. On the one hand we associate multiplicity with quantity, with numbers which presuppose a homogeneous space in which units can be juxtaposed and lined up to be counted. Bergson calls this 'distinct multiplicity'. But then, as chapter two of the *Essai* elaborates,

9 'Intensité, durée, determination volontaire, voilà les trois idées qu'il s'agissait d'épurer, en les débarassant de tout ce qu'elles doivent à l'intrusion du monde sensible, et, pour tout dire, de l'obsession de l'espace' (p. 168).

there is the multiplicity of consciousness in which states of mind overlap, merge with one another and add together dynamically, forming a qualitative or 'confused' multiplicity, one whose dynamic elements are inseparable from one another. When we consider things in the world, Bergson argues, we rely on the notion of distinct multiplicity and its correlate, number. Conversely, when we consider inner experience, we should forget about the 'objective' horizon and be careful *not* to consider inner states as distinct and separate from one another, as things which can be measured and counted, or which have causes that can be explained. For here there is no sameness, only difference.

Finally, we arrive at the concept of duration: 'What is duration within us? A qualitative multiplicity, which bears no relation to number; an organic development which is nevertheless not a growing quantity; a pure heterogeneity in the heart of which there are no distinct qualities. In short, the moments of internal duration are not exterior to one another' (p. 148). Bergson can only speak of internal duration here, or what he calls 'duration within us'. As we have just seen, he emphasizes what it is not. But is duration, like the preceding two ideas, also two-sided? Is there an external face of duration?

Many commentators propose a progressive development of Bergson's thought from a psychological framework in the early work to an ontological one in the later work. Deleuze goes so far as to suggest that, as Bergson's thinking advances, 'the immediate data (*les données immédiates*) are surpassed' (p. 76). He argues that Bergson begins to shift away from the *Essai*'s psychological framework in *Matière et mémoire* where 'material things partake directly of duration' (p. 76), and Bergson proposes a ' radical plurality of durations' (p. 76). With *L'Evolution créatrice* duration becomes an ontological principle; Bergson abandons the psychological perspective with the elaboration of the *élan vital.* A more recent study spells out the implications of this narrative. It represents the *Essai,* as an early, 'naïve' work and suggests that in his more 'mature' thought Bergson abandons 'the parochial privileging of consciousness that distinguishes *TFW*' as well as 'the rigid dualism between duration and space'. [10] In fact, this author claims, Bergson 'radically alter[s] most of the

10 TFW of course stands for *Time and Free Will*, the English title of the *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience.* As I feel this translation changes the sense of the French title, I refer to this work as the *Essai.*

views contained in [the *Essai*]'.[11] He implies that to take the *Essai* seriously is to risk falling into 'hollow' and 'superficial' readings of Bergson, and to miss the philosopher's progression from naïve psychologism to the respectably ontological (p. 54) philosophy we encounter in *L'Evolution créatrice.*[12] If this text gives the impression that the *Essai* is a philosophical embarrassment from which we need to take our distance, this can only be because it links duration and intuition to modalities of contact or experience. To this extent it follows the path opened up by Deleuze who, as we have seen, crossed out the notions of 'feeling' or 'lived identification' in favour of the more formal concept, method. The readiness with which commentators dismiss the *Essai* and argue for its *dépassement* is surprising, given that Bergson specifically refutes any teleology or direct linear development of his thinking, preferring to speak instead of 'the zigzags' of his doctrine' (p. 1348).[13]

Let us return to the Conclusion to the *Essai*, since perhaps the narrative of *dépassement* emerges from a hasty reading of the text, and a misconstrual of the passage from the *Essai* to *Matière et mémoire.* The first thing we notice is that what distinguishes Bergson's discussion of duration from his discussion of the other two terms (intensity and multiplicity) is his insistent emphasis on the way we speak about it. He argues that when we speak of time as something that can be measured and cut up into distinct units like space, it becomes a hybrid concept - 'the hybrid idea of a measurable time, which is space in that it is homogeneity and duration to the extent that it is succession, that is, at bottom the contradictory idea of succession in simultaneity' (p. 149). The

11 John Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy,* (Notre Dame, Indiana; University of Notre Dame Press, 2000) p. 100.

12 Mullarkey laments what he calls 'a popular and superficial interpretation of Bergsonism as a philosophy of time which opposes an extraspatial subjective experience of inner *durée* to a deterministic spatial universe lying outside the mind.' This 'hollow reading' of Bergson, he adds, is based on the *Essai*, Bergson's first work, whereas 'his later writings will radically alter most of the views contained in it' (p. 100.) He continues: 'we will try to subvert the stereotype of Bergsonism through a close reading of Bergson's whole corpus' (p. 100).

13 Bergson also writes of the philosopher: 'ainsi, de théorie en théorie,se rectifiant alors qu'il croyait se compléter, il n'a fait autre chose, par une complication qui appelait la complication et par des développements juxtaposés à des développements, que de rendre avec une approximation croissante la simplicité de son intuition originelle' (p. 1347).

conventional concept of time - in other words the word 'time' - carries this contradiction.

The way in which we speak of things has strategic importance. For example, the hybrid nature of the concept 'time' works to the advantage of science. For when science considers things in the world it dissociates the two elements of extension and duration and considers only the former. Science, Bergson writes,

> dissociates these two elements, extension and duration, when it undertakes the in-depth study of external things. We believe we have proved that from duration it only retains simultaneity, and from movement itself it only retains the position of the moving thing [*le mobile*], which is to say immobility. The dissociation operates very clearly to the advantage of space. (p. 149)

Bergson calls for the same kind of dissociation to be made in reverse to the advantage of duration (which is also to say, of course, to the advantage of philosophy):

> We need then to perform the dissociation again, this time to the advantage of duration, when we study inner phenomena, not the inner phenomena in a completed state, no doubt, nor after discursive intelligence has separated them and spread them out in a homogeneous milieu in order to account for them, but the inner phenomena *as they occur* [*en voie de formation*] (emphasis added) and as they constitute, through their mutual interpenetration, the continuous development of a free person. Duration, thus returned to its original purity, will appear as an entirely qualitative multiplicity, an absolute heterogeneity of elements, which come to melt into [*se fondre*] one another. (p. 149)

It is this 'purified' concept of duration that Bergson situates exclusively in relation to 'inner phenomena.' The guiding opposition is of course between animate and inanimate registers, and it is this distinction that the heuristic divide between inside and outside serves in the *Essai.*

Bergson is keenly aware of frames and framing.[14] The *Essai* contests the authority of objectivity and to this extent challenges the discourse of Kantian epistemology.[15] In order to elaborate a concept of time as *alteration* (as Deleuze puts it) - a radical time of invention, or a *force* of time - it is necessary for Bergson first to extract the concept 'time' from the Kantian discursive framework. Since the word 'time' carries the hybrid concept of space-time, it is impossible to think or speak 'from the perspective of time, not space' without first operating on the word 'time' itself. It is the work of the *Essai* to radically scrape away the Kantian presuppositions from the word 'time' and to translate what is left over into the word duration. To the extent that Kant's 'transcendental aesthetic' attaches the valences of inside and outside to time and space respectively, one could say that Bergson strategically retains this framework in the *Essai* in order to transvalue - or, as he puts it, ' purify' - the notion of time. If we consider this dualism as a matter of strategic framing, one that allows something like a deconstruction of the discourse of Kant, then we do not need to take the dualism as absolute.

The inside/outside framework has led commentators such as Mullarkey to conclude that Bergson held (in his early thought) that there is only one duration and only one space. But perhaps we could say that this question (the question of what is) is not yet addressed in the *Essai* whose task was to delimit a certain field – a field of contact or experience and of the temporality of duration. *Matière et mémoire* will complicate the heuristic limit between inside and outside through the appeal to the body, to memory and to affect. If the *Essai*'s critique of concepts (and most especially of the concept 'time') enables duration to be thought, *Matière et mémoire* could be said to actualize it discursively, to render it dynamic, by putting it into action in the operations of perception, memory and dream. But in order to perform the translation from time to duration - in order to let duration emerge - it was necessary to provisionally quarantine space.

Both the question of the dualism between space and duration, and the question of experience or contact that I am attempting to raise, are inseparable from the issue of language. It becomes necessary for Bergson

14 He speaks, to cite just one example, of 'breaking the frames of language (*briser les cadres du langage*),'p. 89.

15 See Alexis Philonenko, *Bergson ou de la philosophie rigoureuse* (Paris, Editions du Cerf, 1994).

to ask both why duration has remained hidden within the discourse of philosophy and why the *experience* of duration is not more common. The answer is that language imposes a spatial framework on thought and on experience in a way that undermines the possibility of contact. The problem then is the confusion of 'true duration with its symbol' (p. 152). It is a social imperative for ordinary thinking and experience, as for ordinary language, to operate within a spatial framework.

In order to 'purify' the concept of duration, to extract it, as it were, from the hybrid category 'time,' it is necessary to negate it entirely as a concept – in other words to remove it from language. This has been the work of the *Essai* which insists on the radical incompatibility between duration and language. In the passage cited above from the Conclusion, in which Bergson appears to categorically deny the possibility of duration in the 'outer', or inanimate, realm, we see upon rereading that it is actually a question of the *presentation* of this concept: 'One must therefore *not say* that external things endure, but rather that there is some inexplicable reason why we cannot consider them at successive moments of our duration without affirming that they have changed'.[16] It is a question of performing what Bergson calls a 'necessary dissociation' of the two sides of concepts (and of experience). It is a question of pursuing the work of critique of concepts to the limit, the work which, as Deleuze has pointed out, is directed by the method of Bergson's philosophical practice. It is not, at this point, a matter of explicating the truth of space in itself, but rather of promoting awareness of what happens when we speak and how language affects the ways in which we experience the world.

It is up to the philosopher (or the artist), then, to remind us of the difference between space and duration and to refute the claims of determinism. But the philosopher too runs up against the alienating effect of language which forces us out of ourselves into mere representations of ourselves. This renders it supremely difficult for the philosopher to convey duration, which, with much effort, s/he has been able to contact. The philosopher faces the problem of the discursive presentation of what lies outside the framework of language. Duration must be delimited negatively – by a fundamental refusal of homogeneity, or space. Otherwise the 'hybrid' concept of time would become invasive like a weed.

16 'Il ne faut donc pas *dire* que les choses extérieures durent...' (p. 1480, my emphasis).

These are precisely issues to which Bergson returns in the short essay published in *La Pensée et le mouvant* entitled 'L'Intuition philosophique'. It is interesting to note that in *La Pensée et le mouvant*, published after *l'Evolution créatrice* (in 1934),[17] Bergson makes frequent references to the *Essai*, and, as we shall see momentarily, reintroduces a heuristic divide between inside and outside precisely in relation to the question of the difference between philosophical intuition and its presentation. Clearly, for Bergson the thinking of the *Essai* is not *dépassé*.

But this is not the only respect in which 'L'Intuition philosophique' challenges Deleuze's reading of Bergson. Deleuze rightly insists on the force of Bergson's critique of negation. He goes so far as to state that 'the heart of Bergson's project is to think differences in kind independently of all forms of negation' (p. 46). This is a point Deleuze elaborates more fully in the 1956 essay where he distinguishes Bergsonian differentiation from Hegelian contradiction.[18] But does Deleuze overstate the case? Bergson does present a critique of the negative in relation to the concepts of disorder and nonbeing in 'Le Possible et le réel' (*La pensée et le mouvant*) but in the following essay, 'L'intuition philosophique', he emphasizes the negative power of intuition itself. He calls it' the power of negation immanent to intuition [la puissance de négation immanente à l'intuition]' (p. 1349):

> What a strange force this intuitive power of negation is! How is it that it has not attracted the attention of historians of philosophy? Is it not evident that the first step of the philosopher, when his thought is still finding its way, is to definitively reject certain things? Later, he may alter what he affirms; he will never alter what he negates. And if he alters what he affirms this will still be by virtue of the power of negation immanent to the intuition or to its image. (p. 1848)

In Bergson's account of the process of philosophical presentation the demarcation of inside and outside, so prominent in the *Essai,* comes back

17 Some of the essays, notably 'L'Intuition philosophique', of which I will speak further, were composed earlier (around 1911). The fact that they were included in the collection published in 1934, however, indicates they were not considered 'depassés.'

18 As already indicated, this is a gesture Foucault will repeat in relation to Bataille (and the notion of transgression) in 'Préface à la Transgression'.

into play. This is what Bergson has to say about the philosopher's actual practice:

> Leaving the curve of his thought to follow the linear tangent, he moves outside himself [extérieur à lui-même]. He returns to himself when he returns to the intuition. From these departures and these returns are made the zigzags of a doctrine which 'develops,' that is to say which loses itself, finds itself again and corrects itself indefinitely. (p. 1348)

How does the philosopher fall outside himself (*de[venir] extérieur à lui-même*)? By losing contact with the intuition itself in the tangential and linear task of elaborating it discursively. The intuition and its presentation are distinguished according to an opposition between inside and outside. Bergson writes here that the intuition itself (*l'intuition même*) '*attains* pure change [*atteint* le changement pur]' (p. 1357, my emphasis). This is the moment of contact, or of experience, in the strong sense.[19] To convey this contact to others - to write - it is necessary to *ressaisir* the intuition and to turn it out into discursive thought. This passage to lucidity[20] occurs through what we could call media of expression: 'to grasp the intuition again [reassaisir] there are two means of expression, the concept and the image' (p. 1357).[21] This doubleness is not a conceptual one - not even one between the conceptual and the non-conceptual. It is a question of difference in tension. We have an image when 'the system tightens up [se resserre], when it is pushed back towards the intuition from which it descends' (p. 1357). The intuition occurs thus 'in extension in the doctrine' and 'in tension [en tension]' in the image (p. 1357). In either case (concept or image) the presentation of the intuition introduces a moment of translation as the philosopher confronts the task of giving

19 According to the *Petit Robert* Dictionary *atteindre* signifies 'parvenir à toucher,' which carries a dual register of physical touching and affective touching associated with the words *ébranler, émouvoir* and *troubler*. Bergson identifies free action with the experience of duration when he writes: 'agir librement, c'est se replacer dans la pure durée' (p. 152).

20 The *saisir* of *ressaisir* both repeats *atteindre* as a mode of contact and adds the meaning of 'se mettre en mesure de comprendre, de connaître' (according to the *Petit Robert*).

21 More precisely, the image is not a mode of symbolic representation. The image, Bergson writes, 'si elle n'est pas l'intuition même, s'en rapproche beaucoup plus que l'expression conceptuelle, nécessairement symbolique, à laquelle l'intuition doit se recourir pour fournir des 'explications' (p. 1347).

concrete form to his or her thought.[22] And here Bergson warns against the gesture Deleuze makes when he identifies intuition with method: 'one would be strangely mistaken to take for a constitutive element of the doctrine what is in fact merely a means of expression' (p. 1349). The intuition itself occurs on the level of contact. It is a question of 'making direct contact again [...] with this even more subtle thing which is intuition itself' (p. 1356).

Bergson also uses the term contact when it is a question of the reader's attempt to grasp the philosopher's intuition once it is written, with the help of the mediating image [*image médiatrice*]. This is an image the *reader* invents to call forth a figure of the philosopher's intuition from his or her text or speech. This formulation presents a variant of the account Bergson gives of the practice of reading.[23] Much more remains to be said about the *image médiatrice* and its apparently essential operation in relation to the experience Bergson calls 'immediate' intuition. I can only suggest here that this image might well be read together with the presentation of things as images in the opening pages of *Matière et mémoire*, and with the actualization of pure memory into memory-image in the event of attentive recognition, which is also to say in the event of the perception of whatever lies outside. For in attentive recognition perception implies the actualization of pure memory as memory-image. Recognition, however, operates in such a way that this image becomes constitutive of the perception itself. Perception (which is construed on a model of action) can never be anchored solely in presence.[24]

What I am trying to suggest is that the 'outside' evoked in the *Essai* should not be simplified, as I believe it is in readings which subscribe to an easy narrative of *dépassement* from the psychological register to the ontological one. The outside, in *Matière et mémoire*, is image. The perceived outside is itself constituted with the supplementary contribution of the memory image, just as the reader must contribute an image for the words of a sentence and the interpreter of a philosophical text must supply an image to the language of concepts in order to gain proximity to the

22 'L'image médiatrice,' Bergson writes 'traduit l'intuition simple' (p. 1348).

23 Memory is first introduced in *Matière et* mémoire in connection with an activity of reading.

24 I stress this point because this is the term Derrida consistently invokes in his critique of metaphysics in general and of the phenomenology of Husserl in particular.

intuition that provides the core of the philosopher's thought.[25] There is a certain work that the image does. It enlarges (*grossit*) the concept, opening it up to various meanings, and, at the same time, renders it more concrete.[26]

**

Could we say, then, that intuition itself is virtual? Just as pure memory must be actualized with the aid of an incipient perception which 'calls to' it (*fait appel*), inviting a concrete image to form, so the intuition must be 'captée,' as Bergson puts it - seized like a bird in flight at the limit between the ineffable and the quicksand of language. Perhaps intuition occurs *en droit* like pure memory, and the push toward actualization comes from the force of fundamental refusal, from the power of negation immanent to intuition. Bergson describes intuition as a force (a *centre de force*) that yields an impulsion which in turn yields an *élan* (p. 1357). He characterizes this force of intuition as 'less a vision than a contact,' adding, 'this contact has furnished an impulsion, this impulsion a movement' (p. 1361). He compares this movement to a *tourbilllon.* 'Philosophical intuition is this contact,' he writes, 'philosophy is this *élan*' (p. 1361). But does not the force of the intuition belong to what Bergson earlier called the 'singular intuitive force of negation'? This is an intuitive force that precipitates into an image, an image that concretizes intuition in a first step toward the exposition of the intuition in discursive language. Virtual, the intuition would occur *en droit*, authorized by the force of negation immanent to the intuition. It would require the concretization of an image to be fully actualized, that is, to be *saisi* at all, not simply to be presented in a *re-saisir*. This would imply that something like an act of writing, on the one hand, or reading, on the other, would be required for the actualization of the philosophical intuition. Writing would involve the movement from image to concept, and reading would return the conceptual presentation back into image in an attempt to concretize the

25 This is of course the point of departure for the theories of the celebrated literary critic Georges Poulet.

26 This is something different from the work of metaphor, which implies the association of two terms already constituted. It is in this sense that the surrealist image is carefully distinguished by Breton from the metaphorical image as defined by the poet Reverdy.

philosophical thought and to make it meaningful. Reading involves a second order contact, since the meaning of the words must come from the ensemble of the sentence; words are not to be understood according to already given meanings and then strung together to yield sense. Meaning 'is less something thought [*une chose pensée*] than a movement, a direction (p. 1358).[27] The presentation of the intuition would be a step in this movement, one which recapitulates the moment of the captation of the intuition into image, or, in other words, *la ressaisit.*

Where are we then, with respect to experience? This is hardly a trivial question, for if what is principally at stake in the *Essai* is a refutation of determinism, this, as Bergson concludes in that text, can only be refuted by *experience* - 'All determinism will thus be refuted by experience, but any definition of freedom will justify determinism.'[28] What this implies is that a notion of experience carries with it the weight of the question of freedom. According to Bergson, this is an issue that philosophy (in the conventional sense of a rigorous intellectual discourse) can never resolve. What might it mean for the question of determinism if experience itself were virtual? In order to even approach such a question it is necessary to enter into the question of experience instead of refusing it, and to consider experience itself in terms of intensities - tensions, contractions and expansions. The issue then becomes one of modalities of interaction and of temporal rhythms. Is it contradictory to hold that experience is contact for Bergson, and also that it might be considered virtual? Not really, if we think in relation to time, space. For from this perspective contact would occur precisely as the incipient limit of actualization.[29]

In the concluding pages of the *Essai* Bergson argues that the great mistake of Kant was to think that one could attain the absolute only by becoming free of time, that is, only in the noumenal realm. Bergson repeats this complaint in 'L'Intuition philosophique'.[30] To reach the

27 In accordance with the French word *sens* which means both 'meaning' and 'direction.'

28 Although 'L'Intuition philosophique' speaks of two aspects of experience, one which takes the form of 'des faits qui se juxtaposent à des faits, qui se répètent à peu près' and the other that occurs 'sous forme d'une pénétration réciproque qui est pure durée, réfractaire à la loi et à la mesure' (p. 1361), in the *Essai* Bergson clearly alludes to the second of these, the experience of duration.

29 This, I believe, is what Bergson's discussion of the mediating image in 'L'Intuition philosophique' suggests.

30 There he writes that 'l'erreur de Kant' was to preclude the possibility of intuition in the realm of sensation. 'Car il n'est pas nécessaire, pour aller à l'intuition, de se transporter hors du domaine des sens et de la conscience. L'erreur de Kant fut de le croire' (p. 1364).

absolute, he suggests, it is enough to go deeper into time, instead of trying to escape from it. Bergson stands Kant on his head, then, because he displaces the question of free agency from what he calls the 'noumenal heights' of Kant's moral philosophy to the 'depths' of immediate sensual experience. As he puts it in 'L'Intuition philosophique':

> *L'esprit* that one will have brought back to real duration will already live from intuitive life and its knowledge of things will already be philosophy. Instead of a discontinuity of moments that would replace one another in an infinitely divided time, it will perceive the fluidity of real time that flows indivisibly ... it will grasp one self-same change ... no more inert states, no more dead things. (p. 1364)

A poet who seems to have grasped this lesson well, and to have appreciated a notion of contact as mode of invention, is Paul Valéry who, in a short prose poem entitled 'Nage' evokes what he calls *l'excès du réel* [the excess of the real]:

> I seem to find myself again and to recognize myself when I return to this universal water ... to throw oneself into the mass and the movement, action to the extreme [*jusqu'aux extrêmes*] and from the neck to the toes ... here the whole body gives itself, takes itself back, conceives of itself, expends itself and wants to exhaust all its possibilities ... It become mad with life and with its free movement [*libre motilité*] ... my body becomes the direct instrument of my spirit [*esprit*] ... the author of all its ideas ... Excess of the real [*excès du réel*]. Caresses are knowledge [*les caresses sont connaissance*]. The lover's acts would be models of the artist's work [*les actes de l'amant seraient les modèles de l'oeuvre*]. (C1 pp. 1090-1091, my translation).

This poem is inserted in an essay entitled ' La Crise de l'esprit', an essay which concerns the question of time - or, more precisely, of regimes of time as structures of modernity. In the course of this essay that analyses the ways in which an accelerated regime of time invades modern life, Valéry makes the surprising remark that what is missing in this context is

precisely time – what he calls 'inner leisure [le loisir intérieur]'. He names this relation to time (which is also a modality of contact) *la vacance bienfaisante*, where the word *vacance* is to be taken in the old sense of the word which signifies not only emptiness but also *loisir*. It is a question, then, of what we might call *free time*. It is a vacation in a double sense – a vacation from what Bergson has called the 'hybrid' concept of time and all its imperatives, and also an entry into the depths of the emptiness of time 'that essential inner peace of the depths of being, that priceless absence, during which the most delicate elements of life become refreshed ... a sort of rest in absence' (C1 pp. 1068-9, my translation). In the spirit of Bergson, Valéry evokes a notion of time as a paradoxical plenitude of absence. This is not a privative sense of absence but rather a notion of absence as excess - *l'excès du réel* - attained in a mode of contact enabled by the *libre motilité* of the body.

***

In 1966 Deleuze called for a radical return to Bergson, a return that would be marked by reinvention, not repetition. 'A "return to Bergson",' he wrote 'does not only mean a renewed admiration for a great philosopher but a renewal or an extension of his project today, in relation to the transformations of life and society, in parallel with the transformations of science' (p. 115). But which inheritence - which reading - of Bergson most interestingly renews and extends his project today?

In *New Philosophy for New Media* Mark Hansen advocates a reading of Bergson that emphasizes embodiment, affect and even something like experience, in opposition to the Deleuzian reading, which, he argues, tends toward disembodiment and the 'post human'.[31] Hansen's discussion implicitly casts the issue of humanism, and its critique, in a new light. The post-war critique of humanism addressed itself to an Enlightenment conception that identified the human with rationality. This humanism can be said to have been reserved for one race[32], and to culminate in the harnessing of rationality in technologies of work and of death by Hitler

31 Mark B.N. Hansen, *New Philosophies for New Media* (Cambridge, Mass; MIT Press, 2004). Subsequent references to this work will be given in the text, marked MH.

32 I am alluding to the writings of Gobineau and Renan in particular.

and Stalin. For the generation of Derrida, Foucault, Althusser and Deleuze it was a question of unmasking this humanism as ideology. Recent developments in the field of artificial intelligence, however, suggest that the human is being outstripped by the machine when it comes to this sort of rationality which no longer constitutes a definitive characteristic of the human. Developments in new digital media, as Mark Hansen points out, occur in a world of technologies in which data are 'unencumbered by any need to differentiate into concrete media types, or, in other words to adapt [themselves] to the constraints of human perceptual ratios'.[33] Furthermore, 'by evoking disembodiment or the lack of any experience whatsoever' (MH, p. 20) they cast the question of experience in a new light. In opposition to Deleuze and Kittler, Hansen's project is 'to correlat[e] the esthetics of new media with a strong theory of embodiment' (MH, p. 3). He derives this (in part) from a reading of Bergson that emphasizes embodiment and affect.[34] Hansen argues that 'affective affection or affectivity is precisely what differentiates today's sensorimotor body from the one that Deleuze hastily dismisses' (MH, p. 7). In this context, the 'human' gets recast as a 'reaffirmation of the affective body' (p. 20).[35] Hansen characterizes the 'Bergsonist vocation' he attributes to leading artists in new media as a 'potential ... to expand the *experiential* grasp of the embodied human being' (MH, p. 16, my emphasis). For Hansen, then, contra Deleuze, a 'return to Bergson' marks a 'reaffirmation of the affective body'.

As I have tried to show in this essay, there are a number of implicit prohibitions that pressure the current return to Bergson: prohibitions concerning notions of immediacy, of experience, of contact - all of which belong to the structuralist/post-structuralist horizon of the critique of the subject. But of what subject? The subject in question was principally a subject of knowledge. It referred to a consciousness that was either a subject of representation (a Kantian subject), a Hegelian subject of conciousness as negativity, or a phenomenological subject that included a

33 Hansen cites Kittler, p. 2.

34 Hansen studies the work of new media artist who explore in their work 'the potential for new media to expand the experiential grasp of the embodied human being'. His discussion of affect and embodiment emphasizes features of what I have been calling *contact*. (I discovered his study only after the body of this essay was composed).

35 This brings us much closer to notions of the animal and to Bergson's fundamental distinction between animate and inanimate.

transcendental subject (Husserl). To what extent do these prohibitions pertain to the Bergsonian picture of the body as centre of action and indeterminacy, and of the subject as the subject of affect, and *to this extent*, of free action?

Instead of having the post-structuralist prohibitions weigh upon the return to Bergson unconsciously (in the reception of the work of Deleuze) or by explicit formation (as seems to be the case for Kittler) it would be interesting to explore the proximities and radical differences between Bergson and, for example, Derrida. Although the issues pertaining to Derrida's critique of phenomenology may seem old at this point, it would be interesting to bring out clearly the limits of that critique as it pertains to Bergson. And it would be revealing, I believe, to explore what the two thinkers have in common: not only a deconstructive critique of metaphysics as a philosophy of presence, a critique of the language of representation and a concern with temporality but also, and perhaps most interestingly today, an acute awareness of the intimate relation between thinking and writing, and a brilliant performance on the level of writing strategies. For this is the question that, in a new form, returns with the issue of new media and the embodiment of information.

The question of writing as embodiment (and of all the related issues that concern the proximity of literature to philosophy) can be enriched by reading Bergsonian intuition not as method but as contact. To explore a Bergsonian notion of experience as contact that at once refuses discursive presentation[36], and requires the actualizing mediation of the image and various modes of translation, provides an interesting way to take up again, and carry forward, the reflections upon writing engaged in by Derrida, as well as the engagement with the question of the real, addressed by Deleuze and raised differently in the context of new media. Repositioning the question of the subject in terms of the human defined through affect (instead of reason) opens up new readings of Bergson's texts. And it is through this direct contact with the thought of Bergson that we might continue to think the virtual as Hansen characterizes it: 'that capacity, so fundamental to human existence, to be in excess of one's actual state' (MH, p. 51). Bergson's radical notion of experience as contact and as force, which implies actualization as invention, suggests a point of

36 The philosopher's intuition, Bergson writes, is 'si extraordinairement simple que le philosophe n'a jamais réussi à le dire [so extraordinarily simple that the philosopher has never succeeded in saying it]' (p. 1317).

departure for an elaboration of the force of time that would let us begin to think the 'ontological' question concretely. In any case, one thing is for sure; the most promising return to Bergson will involve sustained contact with Bergson's texts in acts of careful reading.

Pli 15 (2004), 54-75

On Certain Transitory Themes That Allow the Passage from Duration to the Intuition of Duration.

MARGARITA KARKAYANNI

One of the most striking characteristics of Bergson's philosophy of time is the 'inseparability between the theory of knowledge and the theory of life.'[1] This unity however, consistently with the rest of Bergson's philosophy, is not to be thought as a unity of absorption, such as the devouring of difference by immanence, or reflection by immediacy. In his *Introduction to Metaphysics,* Bergson, defines the method which is particular to philosophy as one of intuition and distinguishes it from science. Experience, according to Bergson, presents itself to us in two different modes: through the measurement and discovery of relations between facts and through pure duration 'refractory to law and measurement'[2]. The role of philosophical intuition is to inquire into the second of these two aspects of experience. Intuition is coincidence and inner sympathy with the object of its research, but since it delves into experience as depth and endurance, this 'coincidence' of intuition is an extremely difficult thought. The difficulty but also the great delight of Bergsonian intuition arises from the fact that enduring experience is never given and completed but is always in a process of creation; it is always in transition.

1 H. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911, p. xiii.

2 H. Bergson, *Creative Mind,* New York: First Carol Publishing Group, 1992, p. 124.

The living unity between knowledge and life refers to this coincidence with the creative process; it is a kind of unity in which intuition is neither absorbed in the movement of life, nor life reduced to a static equivalence of total expression. A fully elaborated study of this living unity between knowledge and life would involve the presentation of the entire evolution of Bergsonian thought. In this text, we will focus on the conditions of the formation of the problem of life (and consequently of the problem of knowledge as well) through the Bergsonian idea of time (duration). In accordance with this task, we will illustrate those themes proper to Bergsonian time that give to this inseparability of life and knowledge its dynamic and transitive character.

When Bergson decided initially to study methodically the 'time that passes', or to retrieve a time lost both to science and to evolutionary philosophy, he did not foresee that time would invade philosophy itself and necessitate a change in or even a violence against the normal workings of thought. The retrieval of time, therefore, if it wants to be consistent with itself, must break with the philosophical tradition that understands method as a 'way towards' the desired object of inquiry, as a mediation between the thinker and the thought, or an impassable barrier between the philosopher and integral experience. Moreover, as Jankélévitch remarks[3], a philosophy of time cannot be cast as a mere propadeutic to thought, since in this case it would be eternally preliminary and thus out of time.

Although the philosophy of time necessitates the contemporaneity of both research and the object of research, a contact or even a coincidence with its object, it is as far from an 'easy' empiricism, that draws its conclusion from the immediacy of the senses, as it is from intellectualism. The contemporaneity and immediacy of Bergsonian knowledge is a constant effort: like life itself it constantly creates new ways of approaching experience.

The inseparability of the 'method' from the object is expressed in many ways in the works of Bergson. There is however, one expression that seems to hold for Bergson a privileged position since it comprises most of the other manifestations. Both in his 'Stating of Problems' (1923) and in a letter answering Hoffding's critique of his work (1915), Bergson, insists that the centre of his philosophy and the most distinctive contribution of his work consists in the intuition of duration. He then

3 Cf. V. Jankélévitch, *Henri Bergson*, Paris: PUF, 1959, p. 5.

almost immediately adds that this intuition of duration demands a great effort from the spirit (*esprit*), the rupture of many categories (*cadres*), something like a new method of thought. Although intuition can penetrate or even coincide with the absolute, as we mentioned before, it can do so only because the absolute (or the object) is neither something given nor appropriated. It is rather a coincidence with the incommensurable itself, the object (i.e., duration or life) being always in a state of becoming (a process of completion but never a completed state). The precision of intuition as a philosophical method is inseparable from this constantly renewed effort and difficulty of creating new means of approach for every new problem.

As if to attest to the interpenetration between the method and its object, Bergsonian intuition first appeared as a conscious philosophical method with the discussion of the psycho-physical problem in Bergson's *Matter and Memory* (1896). Nevertheless, the idea of duration was already formulated in Bergson's first work *Time and Free Will: Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (1889) where it was defined as the privilege of immediate consciousness or interiority, in contrast with which external things did not seem to endure. While intuition in *Matter and Memory* is rooted in the double immediacy of both matter and spirit, duration, at least in its initial form in *Time and Free Will*, seems to require that there be an impassable abyss between the psychic and the physical, quality and quantity, time and space. The seemingly philological problem of the consistency or the continuity of Bergson's early works, masks a real philosophical problem, that of the intuition of duration.

Moreover, the passage from duration to its intuition is a central problem in the most divergent interpretations of Bergson's works: a divergence that reflects the evolution and incorporation of Bergsonian inspiration into different and original philosophies.

The problem of the intuition of duration is animated in Deleuze's presentation of a rigorous Bergsonism that is held as far as possible from the accusation of 'spiritualism'. The intrigue of the transition from a purely psychological duration to a psycho-physical intuition of duration, informs to a great extent Deleuze's interpretation of Bergson in 'Bergson's Conception of Difference' (1956) and in *Bergsonism* (1966). Deleuze regarded the passage from the initial formulation of duration of *Time and Free Will* to the theory of pure memory in *Matter and Memory*, as a shift from a psychological to an ontological duration or memory; an ontology of

the *being* of time, which although it came after the original duration, in reality renders it possible for duration to express its own nature. Moreover, if initial duration is mainly defined by temporal succession, it can only be succession because it is primarily virtual coexistence.[4] The need to assure the conservation of time accounts for the importance of Bergson's theory of pure memory. Duration, for Deleuze, is the exaltation of difference: an internal difference that exceeds all binary thought.[5] Both the bond and the passage from the method or the theory of knowledge (understood as the differences of nature)[6] and the theory of being (ontology as the nature of difference)[7] are due to the internal character of difference. The initial duration however, introduces extrinsic elements to this internal difference by differentiating itself from space, by wanting to retain its purity. Deleuze arrives at the conclusion that '...If duration differs from itself, that from which it differs is still duration.'[8]

Psychological duration cannot dispel the phantom of spatiality and detach the idea of difference from contradiction, alterity and negation - all of which imply the existence of void or distance according to Deleuze. Duration can become truly internal difference only if the problem of the ontological origin of space is addressed. In other words, duration has to find itself in matter as well. So long as duration remains tied to consciousness and to the psychological self, it remains half or even 'intuitive' in the common sense of the word. In a strange reversal, Deleuze implies that it is really consciousness and not space (consciousness implying here the persistence of space) that denatures duration. The problem of consciousness together with that of dualism can only be expressed properly after duration has become ontological, that is, the impassive and unconscious preservation of the past in the form of a cosmic memory.

In contrast to Deleuze's monism of time that takes the form of virtual ontology and immanent difference, Jankélévitch insists on the primacy of duration's transitive and successive character. In his *Henri Bergson*

4 Cf. G. Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. H. Tomlinson & B. Habberjam, New York: Zone Books, 1991, p. 60.
5 For Deleuze's interpretation of duration as difference, cf. 'Bergson's Conception of Difference', trans. M. McMahon, in J. Mullarkey (ed.), *The New Bergson*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.
6 Cf. Deleuze, 1999, op.cit., p. 45.
7 Cf. Deleuze, 1999, op.cit., p. 45.
8 Deleuze, 1999, op.cit., p. 49.

(1931), Jankélévitch, portrays this movement from inner duration towards the double immediacy of matter and spirit, as a work of succession. Although for Jankélévitch there cannot be an intuition of duration without the double immanence of succession and of coexistence[9], he shows how the immanence of coexistence takes its particular character from the temporal immanence. If memory conserves the past, then this is a creative and transitive conservation; time is not a recipient of recollections.[10] Time is for Jankélévitch radical mutation; the 'transubstantiation' of becoming that transports the whole of being into another being, opposing thereby any principle of identity.[11]

For Jankélévitch the transition from a volatile duration that perishes under any ordinary act of knowledge to an intuition of duration is conceived as an internalisation of difference, but this time of difference thought as a necessary and therefore tragic contradiction. In Jankélévitch's reading, it is succession that overflows the limits of immediate consciousness and discovers itself in things as well. The contradiction is internal to duration because now the superficial opposition between duration and space proves to have organic roots within becoming itself: duration as the double immediacy of both spirit and matter bears also the pure past (or given memory/ *mémoire donnée*) and the material present. Both the being of the past and the instantaneity of the present seem to fall from the transitive and continuous movement of becoming, negating in this way the primacy of succession.

The transition from *Time and Free Will* to *Matter and Memory* is conceived as a deepening of the Bergsonian insight, but also as an attenuation of the difficulty of the problem of knowledge for a temporal philosophy. Although consciousness as the double immediacy of matter and memory has finally succeeded in realising itself both as subject and object of its knowledge, it seems to carry the prejudices of an already

9 In French, '*immanence temporelle*' and '*immanence de coexistence*'. This double immanence constitutes, according to Jankélévitch, the method of Bergsonism and is expressed by the term '*Totalités Organiques*'. Jankélévitch's 'Organic Totalities' manifest the double nature of Bergsonian time (understood both in terms of duration and of life) that is ever changing (i.e., being always different with itself like a living organism) but at the same time always integral (i.e., a totality). Jankélévitch's term '*Totalites Organiques*' has to be dissociated from any biological interpretation, since it is a term that emerges out of the contrast between living beings and mechanisms.

10 Cf. Jankélévitch, 1959, op.cit., pp. 7, 8.

11 Jankélévitch, 1959, op.cit., p. 58.

unfolded past and projects them onto an anticipation of the immediate future. For Jankélévitch this ontological memory that Deleuze seems to cherish poses the greatest danger; it threatens the immanent becoming of the initial duration with an all-extrinsic transcendence.

In terms of our initial problem – i.e., the relation between the theory of knowledge and that of life - Jankélévitch observes an inherent lack of rhythm in the double polarity of memory (i.e., both its anticipatory and given character): memory is either too early (i.e., the anticipatory useful memory) or too late (i.e., the pure memory that lives imprisoned in its dream).[12] This memory obstructs the immanence of knowledge in the real. Spirit in the form of memory lacks the compass that would allow any truly experimental relation with the real; it has either to fix the flow of things or to anticipate them. The intuition of duration really appears for Jankélévitch when the spirit recovers its wonder and its experimental relation with the real in Bergson's philosophy of life in *Creative Evolution* (1907), and finally in the concept of love in *Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1932).

Levinas' appreciation of the problem of knowledge is in proximity to this transitive interpretation of duration. For Levinas the transitivity of duration is understood as 'the transcendence of the relation with someone, with an Other'[13]. For Levinas duration as the irreversible interval (lapse), or the lived experience of a profound time, has to be dissociated from any activity or will of the self but not from all consciousness[14]. Duration thought as the diachrony of time alludes to a non-intentional and non-reflexive consciousness that precedes and underlies representational/reflective consciousness, but is not substituted by the latter. This contrapuntal consciousness as Levinas calls it, constantly puts in question the primacy or even the positing of the Cogito. Lived time is the very intelligibility of the meaningful exactly because it puts into question 'pure knowledge' as the primacy of presence. The 'dia-' of dia-chrony or the incompressible lapse of duration problematises the positing of the 'I' and in this way self-consciousness becomes a bad consciousness: it retains the knowledge that its positing is a usurpation of somebody's place. The truly revolutionary idea of Bergson's philosophy for Levinas is

12 Cf. Jankélévitch, op.cit., p.130.

13 Emmanuel Levinas, *Is it Righteous to Be? Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas*, Jill Robbins (ed.), California: Stanford, 1991, p. 201.

14 Cf. Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre Nous: Thinking of the Other*, London: Athlone Press, 1998, p.143.

this insurmountable and irreducible duration and not so much the intuition of duration that is still somehow confined in a dialectics of vision and presence. The inseparability of the theory of knowledge and the theory of life therefore, is exactly this experience of lived and profound time that escapes 'the stranglehold of presence'[15]and becomes a non-appropriative intelligibility based on the passive synthesis of the lapse.

More than anything else a parallel reading of Deleuze, Jankélévitch and Levinas, reveals the crucial character of the interval itself, of what happens 'in between' duration and memory, space and matter. That is, a time that breaks the definitive contours of the concepts but gives back to them the direction of their movement.

The question about the nature of interiority and exteriority emerges in relation to the elucidation of the dynamic character of the intuition of duration. More specifically, the question now is whether the terms interiority and exteriority are not entirely transformed by the initial formulation of duration, positing in this way the psycho-physical problem in completely new terms. Moreover, it seems that the crucial problem is not that of the pre-eminence of succession over conservation (prolongation) and the reverse, but rather the way they might come together in an non-compromised manner: not as reconciliation but as a kind of creativity that might awaken exactly through the incommensurability between succession and preservation.

The *quality* of the conservation of time is intimated by Jankélévitch as we saw above, but it becomes a central problem of the contemporary discussion of Bergson's philosophy, through the contributions of Ansell Pearson's 'depth of time',[16] or the eternalisation and revival of the past in art, and Worms' inquiry into a type of synthesis that does not contradict the passage of time[17]. Here we will inquire into the quality of this intriguing coexistence of succession and prolongation.

In relation to this second problem we will examine the relationship between the irreversibility of succession and the particular kind of synthesis that characterises the prolongation of the past into the present by the immediate consciousness. Since the relationship between succession

15 Emmanuel Levinas, 1991, op. cit., p. 268.
16 Cf. K. Ansell Pearson, *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual: Bergson and the Time of Life*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 167-205.
17 Cf. F. Worms, '*La Conception Bergsonienne du Temps*', in *Philosophie*, vol. 54, Paris: Minuit, 1997.

and prolongation is not necessarily one of pre-eminence, we could reverse the question and see whether duration is not exactly confined in immediate consciousness, but rather that consciousness itself is enlarged and transformed so radically through its encounter with duration that it can become coextensive with memory and life itself.[18] In other words whether Bergson has not redefined the idea of the 'psychological' itself in such a way that he opens the possibility of building up a cosmology as an 'inverse psychology.'

The idol of distance

With regard to the first problem, that of interiority and exteriority, there is an insistent image of duration that cannot be *contained* any more by consciousness and overflows into external things. Bergson is himself responsible for this mental image, since in *Time and Free Will*, he constantly uses the terms 'inner' and 'outer' in order to distinguish between duration and space. Duration is thus described as being 'made up of moments inside one another'[19], immediate consciousness as the inner self, etc. At the same time, Bergson insists that although duration is an interpenetration of psychic states, those states as internal to each other do not have relations of container and contained and in this sense they melt into each other. Likewise duration is interiority without *being inside* something that is external in relation to it. In his lectures on metaphysics given at the Lycee Henri-IV in 1893 - in the period between *Time and Free Will* and *Matter and Memory* - Bergson decries the use of the words 'interiority' and 'exteriority' in relation to duration since 'inner' and 'outer' make sense only in space.[20] Bergson recognises however that it is almost impossible to avoid spatial images (so closely linked with vision in the first place), since our language cannot work without such images or without space. As it transpires from both *Time and Free Will* and the lectures, Bergson was mainly opposed to the reduction of a qualitative difference between interiority and exteriority to a nominal difference.

One of the most important tasks of duration, in *Time and Free Will,* is to de-relativise the internal and the external. There is not an inner self or

18 Cf. Bergson, *L'Energie Spirituelle*, in *Oeuvres*, Paris: PUF, 1959, pp. 820, 821.
19 Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 3 (One of many examples).
20 Cf. Bergson, *Cours II*, Paris: PUF, 1992.

an inner duration, which is inner because it is in relation to something that is external to it. As Deleuze notes, duration has gathered all the difference and interiority to itself, while space is pure repetition and exteriority. Interiority and exteriority are qualitatively different. This qualitative difference often takes the form of an absolute separation between the intensive and the extensive, quality and quantity. At first sight, the rigorous character of this separation seems to inform the problem of the passage from a purely psychic duration to a psycho-physical intuition of duration. In other words, how can duration become an intelligible as well as a felt reality without conceding to a distorting and compromising expression?

Such a problem however does not manifest itself, at least not in these terms, in Bergson's *Time and Free Will.* Instead what transpires from the critique both of intensities and of symbolic (mediated) consciousness, is that the critique is already an expression of the irreconcilable and non-compromised character of duration. Bergson's critique is set at many different but interrelated levels. It is important however to find the most fundamental and subtlest target of the Bergsonian critique. Without this elucidation both the nature of the separation between the inner and the outer will remain obscure and duration itself will become an ineffective and problematic idea that has to be overcome and reformed by Bergson's later philosophy, thus introducing an idea of linear progress to his thought.

The conclusion of *Time and Free Will* reveals the subtle target of the Bergsonian critique. This critique is not exhausted in the display of the gross inconsistencies of modern psychology and psychophysics that try to form extensities out of intensities, or to make naïve abstractions of a commonsensical representational consciousness that masks duration under its interest for the normative and superficial side of sociability. Already during the first two chapters of *Time and Free Will*, Bergson had intimated that beyond the crude abstractions and generalisations of empirical psychology and the commonsensical views of space, lies Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*: a critique that is both transgressed and presupposed by modern psychology. The recovery of and response to the real conditions of the Kantian critique underlie constantly Bergson's separation of the internal and the external.

Bergson criticises Kant in the conclusion of *Time and Free Will*, for distinguishing between the outside and the inside in terms of time and

space, exactly because Kant conceives both time and space as two homogeneous media and the whole distinction between the inner and the outer becomes relative.

> 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: thus are supposed to arise on the one hand the phenomenal self – a self which consciousness perceives - and on the other, external objects. Time and space on this view would not be any more in us than outside us; the very distinction of outside and inside would be the work of time and space.[21]

The confusion between real time and its homogeneous symbol, this relativisation of interiority and exteriority, is both the strength and the weakness of Kant's philosophy. Through this relativisation of the distinction Kant was able to show how the mind can actively create truth, how the understanding can be the author of experience and how this experience that is organised by the understanding can be objective. The relativity of the distinction has consequences for the whole of the first *Critique* and not just for the Transcendental Aesthetic. Bergson suggests how this relativisation of interiority and exteriority allows the deduction of the concepts of the understanding and therefore shows how the conditioned meets the terms of the condition; how the subjective constitution of our mind acquires objective validity. On the other hand, this empowerment of the understanding, in order to remain critical, necessitates the building of an absolute barrier between phenomena and things in themselves. Thus although Kant was 'led to believe that the same states can recur in the depths of consciousness, just as the same physical phenomena are repeated in space,'[22] he did not abandon the whole of the real to determinism.

By defining the distinction between heterogeneity and homogeneity in terms of noumena and phenomena, Kant safeguarded freedom and morality and at the same time advanced a kind of philosophy that was in accordance with modern science. Bergson nevertheless holds, both in *Time and Free Will* and later in *Creative Evolution*, that in reality Kant

21 H. Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, Montana: Kessinger Publishing Company, 1910, pp. 233, 234.
22 H. Bergson, op.cit., p. 232.

did not build a philosophy that *completed* modern science but rather gave a philosophical justification to science, sacrificing in this way positive metaphysics. Although Kant defined time by succession and space by simultaneity, by turning both time and space to two homogeneous media indifferent to what fills them, he arrived at this endosmosed and contradictory idea of homogenised time, i.e., the idea of a succession in simultaneity that science uses. For Bergson this distinction is in reality a distinction drawn from the point of view of space.

> ...the same separation will have to be made again, but this time to the advantage of duration, when inner phenomena are studied,- not inner phenomena once developed...or after the discursive reason has separated them and set them out in a homogeneous medium in order to understand them, but inner phenomena in their developing, and in so far as they make up, by their interpenetration, the continuous evolution of a free person.[23]

Whereas the spatial distinction is ineffective and relative, the temporal distinction is absolute because duration cannot project itself into space or borrow a conceptual language without distorting itself entirely. This necessary distortion can be deflected only through the preservation of the difference. Bergson's attack against dynamism and libertarianism is related to this fading of difference. Space on the other hand can only be enriched through such a fading. Bergson shows in his ingenious analysis of number that it would be impossible to accomplish the operation of addition or even to have the concept of a distinct multiplicity of simultaneous units in space without such a compromise between duration and space.

One of the greatest illusions produced by the spatial distinction is the illusion of reversibility. As Bergson indicates in the passage quoted above, it is impossible to start with space or the symbolical and homogenised time and deduce from them the nature of real time. We cannot derive succession from permanence, becoming from being and time from the present. Duration as internal difference therefore, is also an irreversible difference.

23 H. Bergson, op.cit., p. 229.

Bergson's positive metaphysics is thus derived from this irreversible difference introduced by duration. Through this irreversible and qualitative difference between interiority and exteriority Bergson opens the way for an immediate experience of both subject and object. Immediate consciousness is both the subject and the object of its observation; both spontaneous and reflective. The immediate experience of the whole of the self (and not just the phenomenal self) at first seems to forbid any relation with external objectivity, but in reality it opens the way for a relation between the subject and the object, which is a relation between the part and the whole, that is, a knowledge of the object that is partial but not relative. Bergson gives us a definition of the 'subjective' and the 'objective' in *Time and Free Will*, which is very close to this partial but absolute knowledge of experience that he later develops with his idea of intuition.

> In fact, we apply the term subjective to what seems to be completely and adequately known, and the term objective to what is known in such a way that a constantly increasing number of new impressions could be substituted for the idea which we actually have of it.[24]

The first step towards the recovery of integral experience is the dispelling of the phantom of spatiality that inheres in the self, in consciousness, and builds an opaque filter of seemingly insoluble problems. As we mentioned before, such a dispelling is not a matter of correcting common sense, but of discovering the deeper expression and the organic roots of these problems within philosophy itself.

Returning therefore to Bergson's reading of Kant, we will try to see in what sense Kant's synthetic unity of apperception became an obstacle for a temporal understanding of experience. In his lectures on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, dating a few years after the publication of *Time and Free Will,* Bergson acknowledges that the Kantian philosophy is the exodus from ancient thought. This exit from ancient thought, which for Bergson also comprises the critique of modern dogmatism as well, is achieved both by Kant's positive view of formal time as a time that unites experience instead of dispersing it, and through Kant's crucial distinction between the matter and the form of our consciousness; a distinction that really functions not only in the realm of understanding but in that of sensibility

24 H. Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, op.cit., p. 83.

as well. By giving to sensibility a relative independence and to receptivity in general a relatively active character, Kant, succeeded in departing from a kind of metaphysics that posed sensibility as an obstacle to knowledge. Moreover, through the understanding's spontaneity, Kant shows that truth is really the active work of the understanding and not a transcendent object passively received by the mind as in ancient philosophy.[25] This active but not arbitrary formation of truth is developed in Kant's Transcendental Deduction (both A and B), where Kant shows that both the object as appearance is merely in us: objective validity is in reality issued by the original synthetic unity of apperception to which the unity of the object corresponds. At the same time this novel kind of truth is not arbitrary because this unitary and transcendental consciousness does not pretend to create its matter: it receives its matter from intuition but it can yield knowledge only by organising it.

However, this spontaneity and independence of the Kantian mind involves for Bergson a great paradox which was already discussed by Kant, and consists in the limitation of our knowledge of the self only as a phenomenon and as the organising activity, but at the same time being ignorant of the nature of what is organised, i.e., of the matter of knowledge. Bergson recognises that such ignorance is necessary for maintaining a critical position. Kant very cautiously distances himself from an absolute interpretation of the understanding's spontaneity and of the power of the synthetic unity of apperception: such unity is both original, i.e., its synthesis is presupposed by any subsequent analysis but at the same time it is an act of synthesis of an already existing manifold and not just a positing of self-consciousness which spontaneously creates its matter as soon as it thinks it.

In his lecture on the idea of 'Matter', given in 1893[26], Bergson offers us a refutation of idealism very close to the Kantian refutation. Berkeley's idealism, by denying the reality of the external world, is also denying the possibility of 'community' between the different intelligences (common knowledge and perception) and independence (i.e., a reality independent from our spirit). The Kantian critique proves that in reality we cannot have community without independence, but the problem for Bergson is one of placing independence, or exteriority, in a transcendent realm beyond the grasp of experience; a problem that arose from the primacy

25 Cf. H. Bergson, *Cours III,* Paris: PUF, 1995, pp.168,169.
26 Cf. H. Bergson, *Cours II,* Paris: PUF, 1992.

that Kant gave to the idea of community, or to the above mentioned spatial distinction between succession and simultaneity. Furthermore, this exigency of community is fulfilled by the impersonal character of the synthetic unity of apperception. For Bergson, it is this original synthesis that resembles to the abstract unity of modern science: a unity that presupposes a dispersed multiplicity that the mind has to unify in order to be able to think it.

The immediate experience of inner duration shows us the possibility of another type of synthesis that is both intimate and general, and opens the way for an inner view of matter as well as spirit and a new non-compromised unity between the 'psychic' and the 'physical', without falling back to a pre-critical position. Bergson's insistence on the immediate knowledge of the self is not a return to a Cartesian type of idealism, despite the absolute difference that the latter drew between the inextensive (intuitive) and extensive (mechanistic) realms, the evidence of the latter (i.e., the extended universe) depending on the immediate consciousness of the former (i.e., the thinking subject). Instead Bergson's temporal distinction protects the independence of extended things. The famous passage from *Time and Free Will* that refers to the incomprehensible reason that makes us think that external things endure, and in general the denial of such endurance to exteriority, is also an affirmation of their independence, that is, the irreducibility of the external universe into our own duration.

Duration as continuous multiplicity can dispense with an all-extrinsic and impersonal unification because it is already a living (moving) unity. Moreover, duration as irreversible difference is not a static difference that simply separates between interiority and exteriority in order to maintain its purity, but most fundamentally it gives us an insight into the genesis of the representational (and utilitarian) consciousness and in this way dispels its obstacles. In reality it is this spatialised homogeneous consciousness that hinders a non-compromised meeting between the 'psychic' and the 'physical' and a novel way of seeing matter. As Bergson writes in *Matter and Memory*:

> [T]here is room, between metaphysical dogmatism, on the one hand, and critical philosophy, on the other hand, for a doctrine which regards homogeneous space and time as principles of division and of solidification introduced into the real, with a

> view to action and not with a view to knowledge, which attributes to things a real duration and a real extensity, and which, in the end, sees the source of all difficulty no longer in that duration and in that extensity (which really belong to things and are directly manifest to the mind), but in the homogeneous space and time which we stretch beneath them in order to divide the continuous, to fix the becoming, and provide our activity with points to which it can be applied.[27]

Already in *Time and Free Will*, there is an implicit dissociation between the mechanistic (deterministic) view of matter that can only work on inert matter and a living matter (living bodies) to which the law of the conservation of energy cannot apply without the acceptance of the absurd hypothesis that a living being can turn backwards, i.e., reverse the course of its life.[28] Nevertheless, the inquiry into the inner nature of matter, i.e., a matter that is prior to any distance or fixity imposed by the exigencies of our action, as well as a full theory of intuition, cannot take place without Bergson's renewed view of movement (or absolute mobility) that first appears in the accompanying text of *Time and Free Will*, entitled *On Aristotle's idea of Place.*[29] Even there the theory of matter is intimated and prepared but not yet fully elaborated. The double immediacy of spirit (memory) and matter, or intuition, is inseparable from the inquiry on a new type of mediation that does not only refract but is also the real centre of convergence between matter and spirit: i.e., the living body as the temporal interval that allows consciousness and matter to come together.

Since however, the object of this text is to attend to the genesis of the problem of the intuition of duration and not to intuition as such, we will inquire into the nature of the temporal interval itself and its relation to immediate consciousness.

27 Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory,* trans. N.M. Paul & W.S. Palmer, New York: Zone Books, 1991, p. 212.
28 Cf. Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 153.
29 Published and translated from Latin in H. Bergson, *Mélanges,* Paris: PUF, 1972.

Return as nostalgia

Levinas in his essay *From the One to the Other* offers us a profound insight into the nature of Bergsonian duration as irreversibility. He wrests duration from the 'banal formula'[30], that opposes duration as becoming to all philosophies of being. The point is to find out the direction of such becoming, the nature of the multiplicity and even its mood. Through a pertinent reading of Plotinus and the latter's influence in the philosophical evolution of the west, Levinas shows us why Bergson's idea of a *positive* time constitutes such a great revolution in philosophy.

In Plotinus, the emanation from the One (absolute unity or pure light) towards intelligence or 'νους' (also translated as intuitive knowledge), exemplifies both the idea of time as fall and the idea of the theoretical (contemplation, θεωρια) defined primarily by its nostalgia for the lost unity. Intelligence for Plotinus is the first expression of multiplicity, of a differentiated unity defined also as beauty.[31] Although intelligence itself is a virtual and intensive multiplicity[32], it is also the beginning of the dispersal of being; a gradual development, an increasing differentiation and an unavoidable weakening of the pure light that takes place in the creative process triggered by this initial and shy duality of the seeing and the seen of intelligence.

In Plotinus however, the One remains transcendent and the soul is able to feel its presence or return by exceeding intelligence, through an ec-static movement; by an exodus from itself. While the Plotinian philosophy remains mystical in its aspiration and retains this distinction between the movement of loss and the return, modern philosophy has separated itself from mysticism and has renounced the transcendence of the One. In this way, modern philosophy, according to Levinas, has tried to assimilate knowledge to presence; it is an assimilation that has only succeeded fully in the philosophy of Hegel, but that is one of its primary concerns from Descartes onwards.[33]

30 Cf. *Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas*, op.cit., p. 200.
31 Cf. Plotinus, *Ennead* V, 8.
32 Cf. Plotinus, *Ennead* VI, 7.
33 Levinas, *Entre Nous,* op.cit., p. 136.

For Levinas this mutual absorption between knowledge and presence is one of the most problematic aspects of this modern preference for immanence; an immanent becoming that constantly strives for unity.

> Henri Bergson, who, for the first time in the history of ideas, tried to think time outside that failure of eternity, designates the fate of that notion in philosophy as that of a becoming, construed as a privation of eternity.[34]

Apart from the *mood* of irreversibility (duration) there is also a *quality* of immanence and transcendence that emerges out of this primacy of the temporal. Levinas' interpretation of duration as the 'transcendence of a relation with an other', refers to a new type of transcendence; a non-spatial transcendence where exteriority (as the exodus from the subject and the possibility of a philosophy that is not an egology) is not an exteriority of distance.[35]

While irreversible duration departs from this contagious nostalgia, there is a type of conversion in Bergson's thought that seems to be very close to the Plotinian insight: i.e., the idea of immediate knowledge. It is almost a commonplace to stress the hierarchical architecture between the three main Plotinian hypostases: the One (Good), the Intellect, and the Soul. While the emanative movement (procession) tends to crystallise in such a discontinuous hierarchy, the movement of conversion or return, breaks down the hierarchy and dispels the mediations and borders between the hypostases. In this way conversion introduces another type of knowledge of the One, which seems very close to the immediacy of the Bergsonian intuition. The Plotinian conversion is also an immersion into the depths of the self, or an abstraction from utility and endless mediations of discursive reason (λογισμος). Moreover, as Ansell Pearson notes, the Plotinian One is beyond essence and separate from its gifts[36]; but it is also a living presence with which the soul comes into immediate contact in the

34 Levinas, op.cit., p. 138.

35 It is interesting to note the proximity, or almost intellectual sympathy between Levinas and Jankélévitch on their interpretation of the irreversibility of the interval as that which happens in the 'in between' between the 'me' and the 'you'; as the meaningfulness of time that takes place beyond (in-between) the words of the poem. Jankélévitch, however, calls this transitory 'in between', temporal immanence.

36 Cf. Ansell Pearson, 2002, op.cit., p. 103.

process of introspection. The Plotinian presence, which is an eternity that thrives from life seems to challenge the Bergsonian critique of eternity as an all-extrinsic and dead unity, but it also gives us a valuable insight into the way in which immediate consciousness and duration relate. Moreover, it is an insight that comes to complete Bergson's criticism of Kant and shows how Bergson's thinking of duration came to overflow the impasse between Plotinian mysticism and Kantian criticism.[37]

Plotinus was, according to Bergson, the first psychologist and his theory of the psyche (soul) and personality influenced immensely the whole philosophical tradition until Kant. Plotinus' theory of the psyche distances him from the rest of Greek philosophy and challenges Bergson's general view of the primacy and externality of a transcendent object of truth in ancient thought. In terms of procession or emanation the Plotinian Good is external and transcendent, but when the individual soul converts from outer reality to its interiority, it becomes immanent to the Good. The Good is thus not omnipresent in the sense of a common and abstract truth, but an outpouring of tenderness, life, and colour.[38]

Bergson draws some parallels between Plotinus and Kant, but what is most significant here are rather the differences between the two philosophers, which again are due to the particular position of the soul in the Plotinian philosophy. 'Whereas Kant', Bergson writes, 'supposed both time and space as a priori forms of our intuition, Plotinus showed us the way in which both time and space were engendered.'[39] Plotinus, moreover, was able to give us both a genealogy of time and of space and to explain the way in which the absolute (One or pure presence) was dispersed into materiality, through his idea of the soul and the central place he gave to this soul in his philosophy. The soul for Plotinus is the 'flying bridge'[40] that unites the intelligible reality with the sensible, or even most importantly the soul is the creative principle that develops the

37 Bergson had a great admiration for the Alexandrian philosopher: even a quick glance at Bergson's *Cours sur Plotin* shows his great influence on Bergson's theory of memory, the famous cone of memory in *Matter and Memory* being a reversal of the Plotinian cone, or the whole theory of the tension and relaxation of matter in the *Creative Evolution* that is attributed to Plotinus by Bergson himself.

38 Cf. Plotinus, *Ennead*, VI, 9, 'On the Good', where Plotinus shows how the beauty of intelligence is cold and dead without the grace of the One.

39 Bergson, *Cours IV*, Paris: PUF, 1995, p. 47 (My translation).

40 An expression borrowed from Jankélévitch's *Sur la Dialectique*, Paris: Cerf, 1998.

intensive and concentrated potency (δυναμις)[41] of the first principle into the material universe.

This creativity of the Plotinian soul and its double nature[42] - both as cosmic soul that inheres in the eternal and as the individual soul that falls into the magical bonds of matter - give to introspection an immense importance. Through introspection we can participate in the creation of the material universe, which is not created by the self, but to which the self corresponds. Moreover, the soul in its ascending movement of conversion can return to the primal principle (the One) and assimilate itself into the eternal presence; it can have an immediate experience of the absolute. This ascending movement is the famous Plotinian 'ecstasis' or the assimilation into the absolute. The eternal presence of the One or the Good is omnipresent; it is both transcendent and present. In order to convert towards this presence the soul or the self has to become totally passive; its only effort being the conversion from externality and procession in time to its own interiority. Furthermore, this conversion is achieved through a loss of consciousness –consciousness being always the introduction of a duality and of a mediation that hinders the immediate contact with the primal principle.

In contrast to Kant's formal time that gives unity to experience, the Plotinian time is creative but it always signifies dispersal, fall and weakening. Similarly, consciousness for Plotinus is always a reminder of loss and a symptom of the dispersal. While Kant's formal unity achieved through apperception (self-consciousness) refracts the living unity that inheres in the realm of noumena, for Plotinus immediate unity which comes with ecstasis is a living unity spreading warmth and light over its offspring, but also absorbing their independence.

The Bergsonian duration and its relation with immediate consciousness come to overflow the impasse of dispersed (nostalgic) time. The immediate consciousness does not need to synthesise its matter, because it is already a living and moving unity or in other words a continuous

41 We translate here δυναμις (*dynamis*) as potency and not as potential, which is the usual translation, because in Plotinus *dynamis* is differentiated from *dynamei* (potentially) and refers to the creative and intensive power of the One and not to the potentiality of matter.

42 Plotinus has devoted the whole of *Ennead* IV, 9 to the discussion of the unity of the individual souls in the cosmic soul that has generated the sensible universe.

multiplicity. As Frederic Worms[43] remarks, the prime role of consciousness is to prolong the past into the 'present'; a necessary prolongation without which succession would not endure. The immediate consciousness, however, is not a consciousness *of* succession, but rather another kind of reflection that does not involve distance, doubling, or mirroring. The immediate consciousness constantly digests new elements that come from sensations (matter of consciousness) through an organisation[44] in depth that alters it entirely. Immediate consciousness therefore does not find its unity in the recognition (and repetition) of its immediate past but rather in its continuous alteration; it is as much organised by its matter as matter is organised by it. From the point of view of duration growth is immanent alteration. Immediate consciousness places itself beyond the dilemma of a passive self that attains the absolute, and an active phenomenal self (consciousness) that remains perpetually external and ignorant of its matter. Bergson just like Plotinus shows us how we can have an inner view of matter or even a correspondence between consciousness and the material universe that finds its utmost expression in *Creative Evolution*, when duration has become immanent to the universe, but also in his essay 'Philosophical Intuition':

> There would not be place for two ways of knowing, philosophy and science, if experience did not present itself to us under two different aspects [...]. In both cases, experience signifies consciousness; but in the first case, consciousness unfolds outward and externalizes itself in relation to itself [...]; in the second, it turns back within itself, it takes possession of itself and develops in depth. In thus probing its own depth does it penetrate more deeply into the interior of matter, of life, of reality in general? One could dispute this if consciousness had been superadded to matter as an accident; but I believe I have shown that such a hypothesis [...] is absurd or false [...]. [T]he matter and life which fill the world are equally within us.[45]

It seems then that Bergson, just like Plotinus, has effaced the limits of the self, but in Bergson this immediate knowledge and coincidence with the

43 Cf. Frederic Worms, op.cit., p. 76.

44 'Organisation' here is not used in the sense of ordering or determination but rather in the sense of a living organism that endures both by being open to its environment and by being flexible.

45 Bergson, *Creative Mind,* op.cit., p. 124.

absolute is never present; it bears on a consciousness that awakens through the incommensurability of the past with the present; it is an intuition or coincidence with an absolute that is never achieved, never given, but always in the making. The assymetry between the virtual and its actualisation[46] also suggests the ambivalence of the coincidence: both precise but by nature interminable. In this sense, the Bergsonian intuition is an activity but an activity without an actor and something that is acted upon. It is rather something like the free act: a type of creativity that is not imprisoned in its own creation like Prometheus, but a maturing and fructification that irrupts the surface of the present with an unpredictable advance.

In Plotinus the self is inadequate in relation to the soul, or rather, the self has too much: it is a mixture of the being of presence with the temporal non-being of materiality. In order thus to regain the immediacy of presence we have to subtract, to abandon something. In this sense the Plotinian creativity which is inseparable from the return or conversion, is a passive creativity, hostile to all evolution. The art that expresses best the Plotinian introspection is sculpture. Plotinus' phrase, 'do not cease to sculpt your own statue', is not chosen accidentally: sculpture works by subtracting until it arrives at the perfect form.

Bergson's idea of freedom on the other hand, is exactly the gathering of the whole of the soul; a soul which, like a melody, changes character with every new note, but this change does not come abruptly in dissonance: retrospectively, it seems to be a necessary advance and a necessary turn. The idea of freedom is the expression of the constant difference of succession and the synthesis of immediate consciousness. It is an affirmative freedom and not a liberation from external constraints. The Bergsonian freedom comes in the interval, in the 'in between' of freedom as irradiating presence and freedom as absolute beginning and autonomy; it is a freedom that inheres in the obscurity of the *sui generis* synthesis of the past or ipseity.

This freedom that rejoices in the infinite regress and admits of degrees, is a freedom that is most intimate but does not belong to the self, since it *is* the self. Freedom is also the 'flying bridge' between duration and memory: it necessitates a separate inquiry that will examine it as it is in

46 Cf. Ansell Pearson, 2002, op.cit., p. 100, where this assymetry becomes one of the fundamental differences between the Plotinian eminence and Bergsonian immanent difference.

itself and not only as the integrity of our character which is expressed at moments of crisis in the form of the free act. Moreover, through this freedom that admits of degrees, matter ceases to be equivalent to space but expresses its own rhythm and movement which our own duration might contract, but cannot reduce to inertness: the different colours and qualities of matter manifest its stimulating and resisting nature that takes such importance in Bergson's cosmology.

The non-equivalence of the Bergsonian time finds its best expression in Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, where the slow accumulation and resistance of matter have become one with the contracting movement of the creative *élan*. Thus the inseparability between life and its knowledge is also the incommensurability between the creative effort of the *élan* that constantly overcomes itself in its generosity: sometimes it wills more than it actually succeeds, but in any case it spends itself lavishly and inconsiderably. Consciousness, that helps intuition to gain disinterestedness and become an intimate knowledge of life without being absorbed into the movement of life, awakens in these temporal intervals between the past and the present, the effort and the work, actions and reactions. Likewise intuition as the intelligibility of life and duration can adopt their movement, but by nature it can never achieve full expression of its object in terms of concepts. It is true that Bergson advanced the idea of flexible concepts that could adapt themselves to the object instead of determining the object. But does not *flexible* here indicate the unfinished and inadequate character of the concept, manifested by the colourful fringe around its contours, that exactly reminds us that intuition's immediacy is also a fertile aporia?

Pli 15 (2004), 76-102

An 'Applied Rationalism' of Time: A Reinvestigation of the Relationship Between Bachelard and Bergson-Deleuze.

ANDREW AITKEN

To look at Bachelard's relationship to Bergson we have to first be alive to the danger of oversimplifying in favour of clarity. Simplification is tempting, however, as the difficult questions raised by such an investigation enter into the heart of philosophies of affirmation, plenitude and intensive relations, or of negation, dialectics and mathematical realism, questions of being and nothingness, theory and experimentation. The only conclusion which can be established for certain is that it is not as simple as an 'either/or' choice, as dualisms and negation enter Bergson's philosophy whilst for Bachelard intuition, becoming, and immanence are fundamental principles of his philosophy of change, realization, *topo-analysis* and bi-certitude. He speaks in *Applied Rationalism*[1] of finding the elements of a truly materialist doubt, which has more reality than the formal doubt developed by the Cartesian philosophy. Overall he also criticizes the subject-centered philosophy of Husserl's idealism whilst, however, appreciating Husserl's assertion of the difference in kind between the sensual field of empiricism and the ontological field of materialism, so that mathematical technique is not out of place in a corpuscular materialist ontology. This is very much akin to Bergson's identification of the impure mixtures within either pure idealism, or pure materialism, shown in the common error in the history of philosophy of idealizing the senses and materializing memory. Our starting point must be time or becoming, not spatial divisions. Bachelard's philosophy is

1 Gaston Bachelard, *Le rationalisme appliqué* (Paris: PUF, 1949; 5th edition 1975).

distinctly synthetic and *a posteriori*. Bachelard says that we must not repeat with Schopenhauer, 'the world is my representation', but instead say with modern science, 'the world is my verification'; for Bergson, "rather than speaking of things (like realism), or of representations (like idealism), Bergson prefers the term image which encompasses things and representations"[2]. It is between the 'thing' and the 'representation'. For there is only a difference in degree, not in nature, between *being* and *being consciously perceived*. This revolutionary opposition to old-fashioned dualism is present in Bachelard in the dual influence of Bergson and Husserl in the evolution of his works. For it is with Bachelard's phenomeno-technique, or noumenology, that he implicitly realizes the phenomenological implications of the Bergsonian coincidence of subject and object in pure perception. As Thibaudet illustrates, Bergson's innovation is that all possible objects are interpreted, not as objects, but as the world. Whilst Bergson in *Creative Evolution* demonstrates matter as constituted by the mind, mirrored in the tenet of technique in Bachelard's applied rationalist non-Cartesian philosophy.

Bachelard has spoken of duration's attraction to him, and in defining himself against it, in the spirit of his dialectics, the instant often adopts duration's methodological properties. The greatest disservice to Bachelard, and the debate in general, is done by focusing solely on his two works on time – *The Intuition of the Instant*[3], a concise work of 1932, and his work of 1936 *The Dialectic of Duration*[4] both seeing Bachelard at his most fiercely polemical. This is due to the fact that he his trying to define his relationship to his greatest philosophical influence, mimicking the polemics of other great philosophical relations (e.g. Heidegger to Husserl, Marx to Hegel), with admiration and disavowal dealt in equal measure in the search for originality and rectification. Indeed for the best insight into his thinking on time, we need to look to his other works. Not to do this also does Bergson a disservice as such a critique focuses on the conjecture surrounding Bergson's weaknesses within *Duration and Simultaneity*, and

2 Victor Goldschmidt, 'Cours de Victor Goldschmidt sur le premier chapitre de *Matière et Mémoire* (1960), in F. Worms, ed., *Annales Bergsoniennes I: Bergson dans le Siècle* (Paris: PUF, 2002), p.78.

3 Gaston Bachelard, *L'intuition de l'instant: étude sur La Siloë de Gaston Roupnel* (Paris: Gonthier, 1966; 1st edition, Stock, 1932).

4 Gaston Bachelard, *La dialectique de la durée* (Paris: Boivin, 1936), translated as *The Dialectic of Duration*, by Mary McAllester Jones (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2000).

fails to appreciate the work's continuity within his oeuvres, and the resulting overall symmetry with Bachelard on questions of subjectivity and the corruption of the scientific mind (with the mutual emphasis on the profundity of the internal over the false light of the external, and above all the common critique of naïve realism). Although clearly we must investigate here Bergson's weak point on relativity theory, it is my contention, one that can also be found in Marie Cariou's excellent 1995 work *Bergson et Bachelard*, that there is a great deal of symbiosis in the best of both philosophies. Indeed Cariou notes at one point: "It is amusing to find in the reverie of *The Intuition of the Instant*, that the Bachelardian critique utilizes some typically Bergsonian arguments against Bergson"[5], those arguments being the opposing of fabrication to creation. I speak of 'applied rationalism' in my title, for it is my belief that it is in Bachelard's main works on the philosophy of science, and in his poetic works that this symbiosis in seeking a new and more profound approach to ontology can be found. For when we examine the methodological aspirations, and topological innovations of both philosophies, and the revolutionary critiques inaugurated there, we see another philosophical lineage emerge, the alternate lineage named by Foucault in his introduction to Canguilhem's *The Normal and the Pathological*, clearly sparked by Bachelard's reaction to Bergson. Let me quote Cariou:

> The trial of analytical intelligence or the psychoanalysis of objective knowledge hoped for the same outcome: a report on the connivance of the scientist and the philosopher, in the facilitating of closed systems.[6]

For as Bachelard says in 1929:

> We have tried to show that the Newtonian system constitutes a body of explication closed on itself, animated by the deductive ideal of a finished geometry. On the contrary, the richness of inference of the Einsteinian discipline cannot fail to touch the attention.[7]

And a further Cariou quotation:

5 Marie Cariou, *Bergson et Bachelard* (Paris: PUF, 1995), p.35.
6 Ibid., p.12.
7 Gaston Bachelard, *La Valeur inductive de la Relativité* (Paris: Vrin, 1929), p.51.

> Against the blinkers and fractures of a degenerated reason, they propose a cult – and a culture – not of the irrational but of the surrational. But what one surpasses in order to know this cannot be ignored, to be a surrationalist one first must be truly rationalist, and to be a surrealist one first must be truly realist.[8]

Most importantly Bachelard had in fact examined Bergson's concept of the virtual in his very first work *Essay on Approximate Knowledge*[9], of 1927, affirming the importance of qualitative multiplicity, and materialist technique. It is with this analysis that I shall end my paper, that is, with the temporal continuum created by Bachelard's phenomeno-technique, as body is given to thought with the actualization of the work of the virtual in the mathematical, the implicit generating process of scientific thought in materializing technique.

I

Bergson certainly produced the more sophisticated philosophy of time, a philosophy apparently not understood in its profundity by Bachelard, as Robinet and Barreau have suggested. However the wider ontology to which it was integral contrarily seems to have been endorsed often by Bachelard. In *The Formation of the Scientific Mind* Bachelard says:

> To show the revolutionary character of this complexity, we could look again at all the themes of biological evolution and study them simply from the standpoint of the relations of the internal to the external. We would see that, as Bergson has so well shown, immediate and local reflexes are gradually complicated as evolution goes on, being extended in space and suspended in time.[10]

8 Cariou, *Bergson et Bachelard*, p.110.
9 Gaston Bachelard, *Essai sur la connaissance approchée* (Paris: Vrin, 1928).
10 Gaston Bachelard, *La formation de l'esprit scientifique. Contribution à une psychanalyse de la connaissance objective* (Paris: Vrin, 1938), translated by Mary McAllester Jones as, *The Formation of the Scientific Mind* (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2002), p.247.

It seems, indeed, that with *The Poetics of Space*[11], in Bachelard's innovative discussion of the dialectics of inside and outside, there is fertile ground for a comparison with Bergson. Indeed, P. Quillet has seen the Bachelardian imagination as corresponding to Bergsonian intuition. But on the question of time Bachelard appears to be ensnared within conventional concepts and the time of the scientist, traps he escapes elsewhere. Part of the explanation for this is his sharp division between the scientific and the poetic, a duality that can be observed in Bergson with the scientific and the mystical but without the clear methodological consequences. Bachelard affirms science's right to neglect in order to operate. The impure mixtures and badly analysed composites arise here as a common ground but with a difference in outcome. Bachelard wants to purge science of its valorizations in immediate knowledge apprehension, just as Bergson sees the forgetting of the qualitative in scientific knowledge. Both are cases of errors in science that have the same result but are dealt with in profoundly different ways by the two philosophers. Bergson starts with a total conceptual revolution and physiological redefinition, with a philosophy of life so far neglected by philosophies corrupted by the habits of the intellect, to such an extent that for his philosophy he may suggest an overcoming even of death. Bachelard inaugurates a division which he accompanies with a genealogy of epistemological obstacles, and an exploration of reverie. This division had however a scientific inspiration, beginning in 1938 with the increasing prominence of psychoanalysis in his epistemological methodology, seeking clarity in the rational by tracing the attachments to valorized objects in the subconscious. From the perspective of science he suggests great potential for Bergson's philosophy, provided it can be illustrated by a more concretely scientific philosophy such as that of Paul Renaud. He states:

> Do we need to observe, in passing, how important the ideas of Paul Renaud would become if one could combine them with Bergson's theory of the opposition of matter and the vital urge? ... Substance would thus appear as the deficiency of operation, matter as the failure of function....[12]

11 Gaston Bachelard, *La poétique de l'espace* (Paris: PUF, 1957), translated by Maria Jolas as, *The Poetics of Space* (New York: Orion Press, 1964).

12 Gaston Bachelard, *La philosophie du non. Essai d'une philosophie du nouvel esprit scientifique* (Paris: PUF, 1940), translated by G. C. Waterston as *The Philosophy of No* (New York: Orion Press, 1968), p.71.

In his 1951 work he clarifies: "Philosophy of science must follow the actual work of scientific thought. It must disregard the too general themes of former philosophies"[13]. But what he describes as the vegetal continuous time of *Creative Evolution* he sees as unaware of the instantaneous human time of Lautremont, and oblivious to the genetic temporal role of error, such as that of Michelson - which permitted the institution of the dialectic between classical mechanics and relativist mechanics. Bachelard sees the conventional view of error, in a Bergsonian sense as a false separation from a natural dialectic, or as Bergson would say, as a cutting out of duration. ("The act of rectification rubs out the singularities attached to the error"[14]). Now this clearly is there in Bergson's philosophy; the concept of scientific discovery is simply not focused upon in a historical sense, but his ontology certainly accounts for this specific case. It is my aim here to show that the specific ontology of *Creative Evolution* does indeed exactly demonstrate Bachelard's concerns and philosophical revolutions. The pure forms or "dead heads" of the idealist transcendental philosophical topology, as Marx recognized, and Bergson exemplified, are shorn in both philosophies, in favour of philosophies of becoming. As Bachelard states, in *The Philosophy of No*:

> Chemical substance, which the realist used to like to take as an example of stable and well-defined matter, really interests the chemist only if he puts it into reaction with some other matter. But if one puts substances into reaction and if one wishes to derive the maximum instruction from that experiment is it not the *reaction* that has to be considered? Immediately a *becoming* defines itself underneath being.[15]

Some pages later we find:

> Chemical *becoming* has long been neglected by classical chemistry. The primary preoccupation has been with

13 Gaston Bachelard, *L'activité rationaliste de la physique contemporaine* (Paris: PUF, 1951), extract translated by Joseph J. Kockelmans in *Phenomenology and the Natural Sciences* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), pp.336-7.

14 Bachelard, *Le rationalisme appliqué*, p.48.

15 Bachelard, *The Philosophy of No*, p.56.

> substances, which is to say with the point of departure and the point of arrival of chemical trajectories.[16]

Here we have another connection point with Bergson through his critique of the finalism of Aristotle and Galileo, which is supposedly surpassed by modern science, but which is however, still prevalent through its conception of time, evolving out of finalism and spatial localization. In addition to a look at the finalism of Galileo in his 1951 work on contemporary physics, part of Bachelard's *Philosophy of No* is a non-Aristotelian logic, necessary for these entirely Bergsonian reasons:

> The object which could be stabilized, the immobile object, the thing at rest, formed the domain of verification for Aristotelian logic. But other objects now present themselves to human thought, and they are not stabilizable and they would have, at rest, no properties, and, as a result, no conceptual definition.[17]

Whereas in *Applied Rationalism*, Bachelard refers to the lack of symmetry between error and truth, and the consequent inadequacy of any purely logical and formal system for science, which must be concretized according to contingency, that is, a philosophy of relations or bi-dimensionality. Wave mechanics, as usual for Bachelard, provides an illustrative tool, as a cartography of two dimensions. In his philosophy of science Bergson identifies the need for the true metaphysician to be a radical empiricist and for the radical empiricist to be a metaphysician, thus Bachelard sees empiricism as completing rationalism. For a true philosophy of becoming cannot prejudice its diffusion of perception, as an *a priori* philosophy of intentionality might, as Bachelard sees it. Knowledge is synthetic, specific and coherently pluralist, discursive and intersubjective; matter is an index not a cause. Although Bergson produces more revolutionary re-conceptualizations, Bachelard's *Philosophy of No* has the same noble aim, in the face of the inadequacy of contemporary thought in dealing adequately with the findings of its own science. Both philosophers want a metaphysics defined fluidly according to fine intuition by the specific properties of its object, not a general system to which our understanding of the object must bend. Such a system sets up the irrational dualisms of metaphysics, irrational because as

16 Ibid., p.70.
17 Ibid., p.95.

Bachelard sees it rationalism and empiricism are complementary. As Bergson says in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*:

> The simple concepts, therefore, not only have the disadvantage of dividing the concrete unity of the object by so many symbolical expressions; they also divide philosophy into distinct schools, each of which reserves its place, chooses its chips, and begins with the others a game that will never end. Either metaphysics is only this game of ideas, or else, if it is a serious occupation of the mind, it must transcend concepts to arrive at intuition.[18]

He goes on to say further on:

> Empiricists and rationalists alike are in this case dupes of the same illusion. Both take the *partial notions* for *real parts*, thus confusing the point of view of analysis and that of intuition, science and metaphysics.[19]

And in *Matter and Memory* he continues:

> In this way also we shall plainly see what position we ought to take up between idealism and realism, which are both condemned to see in matter only a construction or a reconstruction executed by the mind.[20]

Bergson identifies as erroneous the myth which perpetuates the polar positions of metaphysics, i.e., where memory and perception differ only in intensity when they differ in kind. It is perception which differs in degree from matter. This conclusion proposes just the sort of applied rationalism or technical materialism that Bachelard speaks of. However, Bachelard is guided in this matter through the revolutions of modern science, whilst Bergson can claim to have intuited a revolution through a coherent philosophical development. Such a difference in foundations sees Bachelard often differ in detail from Bergson; rhythmic duration which is

18 Henri Bergson, 'Introduction à la métaphysique' (1903) translated by Mabelle L. Andison in *The Creative Mind* (New York: Citadel Press, 1992), p.168.
19 Ibid., p.172.
20 Henri Bergson, *Matière et mémoire* (1896) translated by N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer as *Matter and Memory* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), p.69.

a normatively derived prediction for Bachelard, is but a superficial intellectual analysis for Bergson.

II

Although Bachelard often speaks disparagingly of Bergson's conceptions of intellect and intuition, within his philosophy there is much to ally him with Bergson. The key question which at first appears to delineate the two thinkers is Bachelard's constant affirmation of the formative, though not descriptive, potential of mathematics, cemented by the figure of Einstein as the watershed of the *new scientific mind.* Indeed Bachelard distinguished fine intuition from coarse intuition by its utilization of an intensive mathematical method of second approximation. Although the concept of the epistemological break expressly meant that what Einstein realized in 1905 was no simple reconstruction of pieces of previous science, but was entirely new, i.e., an intuition, this new science was realized following the psychoanalysis of rationality by modern mathematics. However Bergson drew his philosophical topology for duration from Riemann, and he attempts to show us that Riemann and Einstein rather demonstrate his philosophical treatise, as advancements of intuition over intellect, concerned with overcoming the unnatural fixity of the spatializing intellect of classical science. Modern mathematics represented something more in tune with duration unlike the Euclidian, Cartesian and Newtonian positions previously:

> Modern mathematics is precisely an effort to substitute for the *ready-made* what is in a process of *becoming*, to follow the growth of magnitudes, to seize movement no longer from outside and in its manifest result, but from within and in its tendency towards change, in short, to adopt the mobile continuity of the pattern of things.[21]

Indeed as Bachelard shows, mathematics can provide an example of an ability to check the habits of the intellect and perform an epistemological purification:

21 Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, p.190.

> A mathematical mind that understands the ellipse to be a particular instance of curves of the second degree is certainly far less in thrall to a particular image.[22]

For Bachelard rigour is the psychoanalysis of intuition, and algebraic thought is the psychoanalysis of geometrical thought. Earlier in *The New Scientific Spirit* he had expressed a realism prescient of *Bergsonism*:

> In a reasonably clear-cut manner, mathematical realism (in its various functional roles) sooner or later operates to *give body* to pure thought; realism gives mathematical ideas psychological permanence; it parallels the spiritual activity.[23]

Mathematics represents a key component of intuition, because the innovations of the nineteenth century represented just such a dissolution of the objectification of space and the fixing of duration, and enabled a philosophy and science closer to the nature of duration. As Bachelard says:

> Put simply, algebra contains all relations and nothing but relations. The 'equivalence' of different geometries is defined in terms of relations, and it is as relations that geometries have reality not by reference to any object.[24]

Mathematical objects were now thought of according to rigorously considered functional roles, point and line no longer having concrete reality. "Mathematical thought comes into its own with the appearance of such ideas as transformation, correspondence, and varied application"[25]. Science was to some extent able to distance itself from the diagnosis of Bergson, with the work of Heisenberg and others, as Bachelard says: "microphysical epistemology is not 'thing-oriented'...Indeed, it is no longer possible to regard the electrically charged particles of which all matter is composed as true solids".[26] And further:

22 Bachelard, *The Formation of the Scientific Mind*, p.234.
23 Gaston Bachelard, *Le nouvel esprit scientifique* (Paris: Alcan, 1934), translated by Arthur Goldhammer as *The New Scientific Spirit* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), p.5.
24 Ibid., p.29.
25 Ibid., p.25.
26 Ibid., p.39.

> Microphysics treats experimentation differently. It does not allow a distinction to be made between what is real now and what will be real at some time in the future. Only things in action can be described... It is impossible to separate a photon from its ray, as 'thing-oriented'... The photon is plainly a thing-in-motion.[27]

For Bachelard: "Einstein's equation is thus more than an equation of transformation, it is an ontological equation. It obliges us to ascribe *existence* to radiation as much as to particles, to motion as much as to matter"[28]. Also fundamentally Heisenberg had shown with his uncertainty principle the lack of transcendental objectivity for the scientist and indeed his immersion in an immanent plane of mutual becoming:

> In order to locate the position of an electron, one has to shine upon it a beam of photons. But the collision between a photon and an electron changes the location of the electron as well as the frequency of the photon. In microphysics there is no method of observation that doesn't interact in some way with the observed object. There is an unavoidable interference between method of measurement and object.[29]

The uncertainty relation provides a central methodological principle for all scientific work, but as Bachelard shows it is of great importance for breaking down the problems associated with the pre-scientific mind's methodological prejudice and confusion. For the pre-scientific mind in Bachelard we can often read the intellect in Bergson, as his characterization of classical science receives some support from the consequent revolutions in modern science. Manuel DeLanda demonstrates that science has progressed since Bergson's diagnosis, finding examples of Deleuzian scientific research taking place. Indeed Louis de Broglie identified within Bergson's own lifetime the profundity of his concepts for contemporary science, which was further fleshed out philosophically by Milič Čapek. Bachelard shows us, as Bergson had, but also Husserl, that philosophical concepts could be revolutionized by the mathematical proofs of non-Euclidian geometry, which could perhaps resolve to some extent some of the structurally conceived aporias of the philosophical subject.

27 Ibid., p.64.
28 Ibid., p.72.
29 Ibid., p.122.

III

The frustration for any debate arises from the fundamental philosophical problem of 'nothingness', of discontinuity and lacunae in duration. These objections Bachelard raises equally in his poetic and in his scientific works, which is problematic as they raise importantly different questions about duration, not all of which we have time to address adequately here. However it is his mathematical reverie which motivates his main disagreement with Bergson's continuity. In microphysics, Bachelard says:

> Time acts through repetition more than through duration. A moment's reflection is enough to convince us of the fact that in the selective decomposition of phosgene, the temporal complexity is of an entirely different order from, say, the action of light on an explosive mixture of chlorine and hydrogen (as it was understood in the nineteenth century). Light is an excellent 'rhythmic agent' for probing the space-time complex of matter.[30]

What is continuous throughout both works is the opposite way in which Bachelard views the instant to Bergson. It is often more or less equivalent in philosophical weight and function to duration and it 'is' for the same reasons. Bachelard sees duration as a perceptual habit of the unconscious, the human mind having a predisposition to view things in this way, which must be corrected by his form of fine intuition, for the reality of scientific and poetic life is that of the rhythmic multiplicity of the instant. The question is whether we can overlook the deliberate terminological opposition on Bachelard's part, due to the conceptual equivalence on the level of philosophical significance in a philosophy of becoming and immanence. We need not answer this here, but it seems that in many past cases the answer would be 'no', an answer which must be judged as hasty when regarding the development of Bachelard's philosophy after his confrontation with Bergson. It certainly could be said that Bachelard presents us with a Bergsonism turned on its head, where matter is mystical. After the emphasis that Bergson placed on an affirmative philosophy where even death is overcome and 'nothingness' is a false concept, Bachelard subsequently presents us with a *philosophy of no*,

30 Ibid., pp.78-9.

where all of Bergson's philosophical method is redoubled with the affirmative turned to the negative. Although Bachelard maintains in 1957 that the *philosophy of no* is not a philosophy of negation but, rather, only of consolidation and expansion, this is a watering down of the emphasis of his position in *the Dialectic of Duration*, where negation is the nebula out of which real positive judgment is formed. Bachelard sees *Creative Evolution* as an unremitting success story, whereas for him it is through failure, error and misfortune that the greatest discoveries are made. This is not the only reason why for him pragmatism is an erroneous philosophy, because he sees it as relying on immediate knowledge apprehension, whereas it is through second approximation that science approaches objective knowledge. He also reaffirms the conceptual necessity of 'nothingness' as the limit concept of annihilation, a limit which is a functional necessity. Cariou notes, however, that Bachelard spends 150 pages in *the Philosophy of No* saying what Bergson manages to say in half a page in *Philosophical Intuition*. Bergson says:

> What a strange force this intuitive power of negation is! How is it that the historians of philosophy have not been more greatly struck by it? Is it not obvious that the first step the philosopher takes, when his thought is still faltering and there is nothing definite in his doctrine, is to reject things definitively? Later he will be able to make changes in what he affirms; he will vary only slightly what he denies.[31]

Although intuition first says 'no', Cariou sees Bergson as devalorizing the idea of negation, and its causal habits, whilst he also performs a rigorous critique of positivism and Comte's Platonism. Comte remains crucial for Bachelard, however, in conceiving truth as normatively conceived through a constantly rewritten history of *recurrence*. But with regard to the history of philosophy, which Bergson speaks of, Cariou says: "The bachelardian negation is much more concrete and also much more radical".[32] For Bachelard, negation is necessary through its functional qualities in a realist mathematical logic born out in the presence of rhythm or wave-frequency as a means of actualizing the world through scientific technique. He programmatically states:

31 Henri Bergson, 'L'intuition philosophique' (1911), translated in *The Creative Mind*, p.110.

32 Cariou, *Bergson et Bachelard*, p.52.

> We wish therefore to develop a discontinuous Bergsonism, showing the need to arithmetize Bergsonian duration so as to give it more fluidity, more numbers, and also more accuracy in the correspondence the phenomena of thought exhibit between themselves and the quantum characteristics of reality.[33]

Cariou notes that although Bergson's reproach to science for the exclusion of time applies to classical chemistry, in modern science notably photochemistry, the complex reality and the dynamic character of substance has been affirmed, as well as the mixture of matter and energy without either of the two terms being posited over the other. The energy is real, and the substance is not more real than the energy.[34] A motif in Bachelard's thinking is discursivity, with dialectic and rhythm as the necessary pulse of knowledge (matter and life); since where Bergson needs the *élan vital*, Bachelard needs at all levels of being a perpetual rhythm and dialectic. For him fullness cannot be clarified without emptiness. Indeed, Bachelard identifies the permanence of the will to live in Bergson as comparable to Schopenhauer, whom he sees as valorizing the concept of life, a naïve flaw he also critiques in Herder and Émile Boutroux, because when it comes to science and epistemology such a valorizing tendency endangers objectivity, and must be psychoanalysed. Although Bachelard recognizes the intuition of becoming as entirely correct, in duration he sees this as valorized. For him the richness of becoming is exaggerated in exactly the same way that naïve realism exaggerates the richness of substance. "Duration is the stroboscopic aspect of a general change; it is the separation of fluid elements from stable ones".[35] The mathematical reality of the world is due to the rhythmic nature of the world as the energy of vibration, requiring a dialectical oscillation within any understanding of real time. Bachelard says:

> It is now one of the most important principles of modern physics that matter is transformed into wave radiation and that conversely, wave radiation is transformed into matter… This amounts to saying that like radiation, matter must have wave and rhythmic characteristics… It is not just sensitive to rhythms but it *exists*, in the fullest sense of the term, on the level of

33 Bachelard, *The Dialectic of Duration*, p.29.

34 Cariou, *Bergson et Bachelard*, p.53.

35 Bachelard, *The Dialectic of Duration*, p.78.

> rhythm. The time in which matter develops some of its fragile manifestations is a time that undulates like a wave, that has but one uniform way of being: the regularity of its frequency.[36]

The rhythm of the universe at the infinitesimal level of corpuscular vibration is moreover affirmed in Bergson:

> But this is just the question: do real movements present merely differences in quantity, or are they not quality itself, vibrating, so to speak internally, and beating time for its own existence through an often incalculable number of moments.[37]

This truly qualitative vibration is affirmed by Bachelard through Riemann and Heisenberg. The main difference between them, it seems, is that the infinitely small, vibratory rhythms are imperceptible such that they do not impinge on an empirical continuity for Bergson; for Bachelard, as a mathematical realist, truth is seen in the imperceptible or infinitely small.

However, to a large extent Bachelard does neglect the elegance of Bergson's creation of concepts as more consistent with the world, an elegance which he doesn't fail to appreciate when he says: "Before Bergson, the equation of being and becoming had never been so well established".[38] Also, Bachelard elaborates elsewhere, many times, how he regards Bergson's profound thesis on change rather than movement. For example, in his 1951 work *The Rationalist Activity of Contemporary Physics*, he says:

> One can say, indeed, how good it is that some points of view of the dynamic philosophy of Bergson are founded less on an explicit study of the notion of movement but more on an ontology of the being of change.[39]

But he does not take the next step promoted by his thesis of intensive change, of intrinsically rather than extrinsically defined dualisms separated by differences in degree. Although he certainly alludes to it here

36 Ibid., pp.136-7.
37 Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p.202.
38 Bachelard, *The Dialectic of Duration*, p.24.
39 Gaston Bachelard, *L'activité rationaliste de la physique contemporaine* (Paris: PUF, 1951, 1977 edition), p.75.

as having a potential for science, he still sustains the notion of dialectic, of change through negation.

> It seems to us indeed what the power is of the easy schematic of the duality of points of view found in the traditional distinctions of some philosophers: bergsonism attempts an enriched comprehension of the experience of movement – contemporary science looks for a multiplied extension of this notion. Bergsonism has a profundity of intuition, in associating exterior images with our intimate experience of dynamic being – in wave mechanics a quantified development of induction has a very large scope, an induction which extends and dialecticizes the principles of classical science.[40]

But, as Cariou points out:

> The Bergsonian duality is not indeed the opposition of two contraries, for example matter and spirit, but is in an internal contradiction of the same reality: the spirit (intelligence) against the spirit (intuition) the memory (habit) against the memory (image) the self (superficial) against the self (profound), etc., and when one understands the root of the contradiction one can reach the reconciliation. But this is always by intuition. The reconciliation is of a metaphysical nature. It implies a hierarchy because the two forms of spirit are not of the same worth: the true intelligence is intuition. The true memory is the image. The true self is the profound one, etc. All the rest is not a correct expression, but reflects false light.[41]

Bachelard is more content in his creation of concepts to use the principle of *the philosophy of no* of expanding on previous knowledge through negation, and to continue the tradition of neo-Kantianism of his teacher Léon Brunschvicg, expanding upon an idealist rationalism into a dialectical, materialist rationalism. For science is his model, in its reflection of the real and the rational as one:

> It is in this founding on the synthesis of algebrism and of scientific experience which one can correctly design the

40 Ibid.
41 Cariou, *Bergson et Bachelard*, p.27.

> rationalist renewal which implies the doctrines of Einstein. Demonstrating that neo-kantian aspect. That has not escaped Léon Brunschvicg who writes: 'The progress on Kant (realized by the new doctrines) is to have transposed the *a priori* synthesis of a plan of intuition in the plan of intelligence, and it is decisive for the passage of physics.[42]

But a new age of science inspires for Bachelard a new philosophy of applied rationalism, explicitly against any purely transcendental philosophy or fixed a priori reasoning. Functional a priori reasoning susceptible to reform is established by modern science in the nature of the proposals of Lorentz and achievements of Einstein synthesized in precise electromagnetic experiments. With Brunschvicg and Jean Cavaillès, Bachelard affirms the problem of ensembles as a new resolutely synthetic a priori. Brunschvicg saw with Bachelard, that the root of objectivity was not the object.

> Take the centre of force, in a spatial character, that objectivity is not started by a contact with the object, but its merged first with the geometric plan of our action, with a motor diagram or again, in changing slightly an expression of M. Brunschvicg, with a trace-image. More than consciousness of a generality, the objectivation is a method of conscious generalization.[43]

For Brunschvicg relativity theory had a great philosophical beauty. Bachelard's applied rationalism is derived from Brunschvicg's metaphysical *doublets* (*nombre nombrant, nombre nombré*), as Bachelard describes them, which are in turn a renewal of Spinoza's *natura naturans, natura naturata*, enabling the very contemporary removal of foundations modelled on relativity theory's removal of the observer. "Absolute reason and absolute reality are two philosophically useless concepts".[44] As Michel Vadée says of Bachelard's rationalism: "All concepts are reformable, all theories rectifiable. Rationalism is an activity of permanent reform".[45]

42 Gaston Bachelard, 'La Dialectique Philosophique des Notions de la Relativité', in posthumous collection, *L'engagement rationaliste* (Paris: PUF, 1972), p.128.
43 Bachelard, *La valeur inductive de la relativité*, p.253.
44 Bachelard, 'La Philosophie de Léon Brunschvicg', in *L'engagement rationaliste*, p.174.
45 Michel Vadée, *Gaston Bachelard ou Le Nouvel Idéalisme Épistémologique* (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1975), p.220.

As Cariou points out Bergson's portrayal of science is often a crude characterization in keeping with science as stereotyped by philosophy, one which really only applies to Euclidian geometry, Lavoisian Chemistry, or Cartesian physics. Therefore Bachelard's modelling of philosophy on modern science is a positive one. His dialectical bi-certitude in moving from theory to experiment, without a prejudice of either subject or object, is in keeping with the new scientific mind begun in 1905 by Einstein. It is Bergson's reluctance to draw such conclusions for science from his philosophy which gives him the solipsistic problem of *Duration and Simultaneity*. For Bachelard, Einstein invokes new possibilities for rationalism in his discovery of the algebraic homogeneity of energy and mass, he sees it as a discovery of the mathematical origin, of the rationalist origin of modern science. So it is in the conceptual history of the ontological relations of mass and energy that a properly rationalist philosophy must investigate, with relativist mathematics in a central role in establishing this new ontology of energy. But Bergson does not create by negating, or expanding upon, or tinkering with old conceptualizations; he establishes a Copernican revolution in philosophy to match Einstein's in science. Bachelard, on the other hand, remains tied to the neo-Kantian and Husserlian architecture preoccupied with a transcendental scientific purity to correct the naïve blunderings of the 'natural attitude'(although he sees in Kant no Copernican revolution at all, which contrarily for him came with Eddington, who prepared the Einsteinian revolution of idealism). Matter is not a cause but an index. Bachelard's philosophy develops a 'non-' rather than an 'anti-' psychologism, and it is solely synthetic, a pure phenomenology or noumenology.

IV

Bachelard often speaks of the necessity of a philosophy of 'why not?', for negation must also be psychoanalysed, and this seems to be the rebuttal we must give Bachelard concerning a philosophy of plenitude. The latter does recognize discontinuity in duration through Bergson's conception of multiplicity and tendency, the actual and the virtual, and the complexity of evolution, and more importantly manages a conceptual revolution within a coherent philosophy of non-formal, non-abstract, intrinsically defined intensive relations. For, at stake is Bergsonism itself, in the boldness of

philosophy as a process of creating new concepts more appropriate to life, and quite contrary to Bachelard's comments, concepts which are the opposite of unconscious valorizations caught up in the immediacy of intuition. For Bergson, with the human being simply being a specific evolutionary contingency of the complexification of matter, perception is unable to retain its valorized subjective exclusivity, differing only in degree from matter. In *Matter and Memory* Bergson expresses many Bachelardian concerns over the valorization of matter:

> Each attribute which you take away from matter widens the interval between representation and its object... Above all, how are we to imagine a relation between a thing and its image, between matter and thought, since each of these terms possesses, by definition, only that which is lacking in the other?[46]

That is why for Bergson an objective physical ontology would involve pure intuition and that means a limiting of the influence of pure memory:

> If it is memory above all that lends to perception its subjective character, the philosophy of matter must aim, in the first instance, we said, at eliminating the contributions of memory.[47]

These are thoughts which should issue from any psychoanalysis of objective knowledge, as they surely do in Deleuze. But for Bachelard the refuge between pure memory and pure perception, that is fine intuition, is mathematics, which results in an almost atomistic, fine or approximate, intuition of matter's corpuscular texture. Mathematics is the starting point of certainty, and matter is a mystical rational construction to be divested of its mythologized weight of certainty in the subconscious. Thus atoms, however, only prevail in chemistry's study of substances, whilst corpuscules are prevalent in physics, due to its nature as a study of causes. The corpuscule as infinitely small is studied in the techniques of the power of energy. The infinitely small for Bachelard should inform a philosophy of matter as energy, a rational materialism of energy or *inter-materialism* (between impure facts and ideal values), which he names a phenomeno-technique, or a phenomenology of matter.

46 Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p.40.
47 Ibid., p.73.

> Phenomeno-technique *extends* phenomenology. A concept becomes scientific in so far as it becomes a technique, in so far as it is accompanied by a technique that realizes.[48]

For Bachelard this means a refinement of the valorizations of realist atomism by a corpuscular philosophy, rooted in mathematics' capabilities in the infinitesimal, posed against Bergson's empirical immediate perception of intuition: "In particular, contemporary physics' corpuscules are not as a homogeneous philosophy of atomism. But have a philosophical pluralism which is veritably new".[49] Bachelard sees atomism in its earliest incarnations as representing the naïve realism he is attempting to evade, whilst one cannot separate the rational and the experimental in a corpuscular philosophy of applied rationalism. As in its later rationalist developments atomism becomes a guiding concept in Bachelard's philosophy within modern physics: "One is well-founded from now on... to speak of the atom of Bohr in the same style where one speaks of a surface of Riemann"[50]. De Broglie shows Bohr as enlarging the axiomatic atomism of the applied rationalist, as also for Bachelard there is an intuition of this atomism in Boscovich passing through Cauchy et al. With a focus on Hannequin and Lasswitz, Bachelard looks for the nuances of a new, naturalized metaphysics or applied rationalism – the atom as more than a hypothesis of reason or form of sensibility. But the question is: How close is the corpuscular to Bergson who, as we know, wrote his first work on Lucretius in 1883? Bergson saw Lucretius as prescient of evolutionism, and the concept of time in Darwin, indeed of a life or bio-philosophy. Although Bachelard uses the corpuscular as a refutation of Bergson's perception of the solely geometrical in science, affirming modern physics' understanding of the dynamic quality of the real, within *The Rationalist Activity of Contemporary Physics*, he follows the corpuscular with an elaboration of how the vital concept of energy informs contemporary thought. This book could be read as (almost) in total a proposal to certain Bergsonians that contemporary physics is always a conceptual ally, rather than adversary, e.g., philosophically in nuclear physics, within which all geometry is banished, making the very conceptual advancements Bergson calls for. He states:

48 Bachelard, *The Formation of the Scientific Mind*, p.70.
49 Bachelard, *L'activité rationaliste de la physique contemporaine*, p.176.
50 Gaston Bachelard, *Les intuitions atomistiques (essai de classification)* (Paris: Boivin, 1933), p.147.

> Nuclear physics is uniquely, essentially, an energetics. The concept of energy is so present, it is in all domains, a first concept.[51]

Bachelard accompanies the importance of the corpuscule with the concept of the wave, and in doing so refines any interpretation of his dialectics as a conventional logic of opposites, it is a dialectic instead modelled on science and therefore focused on the internal nuances of realization. For Bachelard in this later 1951 work the purely logical notion of pseudo-contraries serves no use at all; his dialectics must be measured by their possibility of realization. He particularly refers to the need to dispense with the old philosophical dualisms of the one and the multiple, the discontinuous and the continuous, the real and the probable. The corpuscule and the wave were realized together in the integration of Einstein's studies of light and optics; as also in the science of electronics, and the work of Jean Perrin in affirming the material reality of the electron in considering the mechanical actions of an electrical corpuscule. This leads to the crucial ontological question posed by Louis de Broglie "if the light corpuscule obeys the laws of the wave, why does the electrical corpuscule not also obey the wave laws?"[52]

There is no ontological parallelism, demonstrating the lack of efficacy for any overarching system, and the need for an intensive philosophy of science specific to the object's actual relations. To what extent this philosophy of regional rationalism coheres with Bergson's temporal model of the virtual and the actual, in its critical difference from externally separated contraries, (for an appropriate philosophy) is unclear, but it can at least be said to be reminiscent of its methodological aspirations. In particular, if we re-invoke the model of perception, mathematics, and memory and the planes of actualization, this is a model which could be used to illustrate Bachelard's concept of technique: the mathematical containing virtual aspects of memory as well as actualized aspects of perception. That Bachelard's dialectic was never merely formal or transcendental logic is proven here, because any logical dialectic seems to seep away as his philosophy envelops the discoveries of modern science as he tries to materialize a rationalist philosophy, a move noticeable from his highly mathematical first work. In his 1953 last scientific work he maintains his strong position against idealism and realism: "The work of

51 Bachelard, *L'activité rationaliste de la physique contemporaine*, p.201.
52 Ibid., p.267.

ideality masks, by the false satisfaction of symbolic thought, the failures of real experience".[53] His materialization of rationalism is achieved through the technical properties of mathematics, and as he says in *Applied Rationalism*:

> Philosophy would follow in detail the life of scientific thought, understanding the extraordinary coupling of Necessity and Dialectic.[54]

His study of de Broglie and the thesis of wave phenomena direct him to a philosophy of multiplicity or material dialectic by the time of the three works beginning in 1949, whilst his adherence to Lobachevsky, Gauss and Riemann had been an overriding concern since the first work of 1927, indeed for much longer as (like Bergson) he was trained as a mathematician. For Bachelard his scientific and philosophical concerns remained consistent, although he had not always before seen modern mathematics as inferring a necessary move away from purely rational limit concepts of negation into the applied rationalism he first speaks of in 1940. But when he considers some of the ontological questions raised by some of the new discoveries in contemporary physics anew in 1949, the path of his philosophy hinted at in his own break of 1938-40 is brought to fruition. These were concepts Bergson had neither the time nor the vigour to consider as they arose at the end of his life, but at the beginning of Bachelard's publications. From the very beginning Bachelard was keen to insist that of two dialectics he saw inaugurated within the same century, that of Hegel and Lobachevsky, his own dialectic owed everything to the latter.

The question of quality, measurement, and mathematics was a constant philosophical concern for Bachelard, he had not only worked on multiplicity in his 1927/8 *Essay on Approximate Knowledge*, he had also closely studied the concept of the virtual as elaborated in Bergson's 'The Possible and the Real' first published as a paper in 1921, whilst his accompanying thesis of 1928 was on the qualitative measurement of heat. However at that time on these questions he finely separated himself from Bergson, once again due to his profoundly rational or mathematical focus,

53 Gaston Bachelard, *Le matérialisme rationnel* (Paris: PUF, 1953, 2nd Quadrige edition 2000), p.59.
54 Bachelard, *Le rationalisme appliqué*, p.11.

as his main thesis was a polemic against the immediate knowledge apprehension of *Time and Free Will*. He says here:

> One passes from psychological probability to mathematical probability, as one passes from projective geometry to metric geometry.[55]

He saw inexhaustible multiplicity as justifying a plan to regard the concept of order as one fundamentally derived from number and size, from the finite and the infinite, whilst approximate thought can be a stranger to the idea of quantity and size. Bachelard speaks of two terrains long subjugated by order, physics and mathematics - the surrational can now enter these terrains with qualitative multiplicity, and a technical method of approximation, no longer governed by extrinsically defined order. "Without doubt the understanding, most of all of quality, goes to adapt very easily to the research of approximation".[56] In the last chapters Bachelard tackles the great philosophical problems, raised by *Time and Free Will*, of contingency and determinism, truth and reality, objectivity and freedom, but it is in the affirmation of the formative mathematical potential of the qualitative that we can see an important originary affinity with Bergson. In most of his works he affirms the instant, disorder and discontinuity, as inversions of Bergson's revolutionarily affirmative philosophy, but in his technical materialism evolving from early works such as *Atomistic Intuitions*, which develops atomistic technique, he appears to be approaching a similar conception of the virtual as he formulates a materialist rationalism modelled on the relations in science, a philosophy rationally immanent to and rationally constituting material relations. He even speaks in *Applied Rationalism* of the identical process of knowing and teaching as virtual, that which the mind gives itself. Whilst in 1927 he had favoured a more transcendental mathematical calculus of probability, even here the mathematical works intuitively against the generalizing of scientific laws, seeking a relationship governed by the specific properties of the object of enquiry. For after dealing with the mathematical and psychological in Chapter Eight: 'Induction, Correlation and Probability', he turns to its realization in 'Knowledge and Technique – Approximate Realization'. Technique recognizes the radical

55 Gaston Bachelard, *Essai sur la connaissance approchée* (Paris: Vrin, 1928, 3rd edition 1969), p.142.
56 Ibid., p.44.

difference in a world of perpetual becoming, and hence returns, through just the anexact rigour of which Deleuze speaks, an immanence to the object by approximating its properties of relation and becoming.

> The progressive mathematization of technique corresponds therefore to an occasional aesthetic which is given true force by the forms residing more and more in being rationally appropriate to matter and action.[57]

Philosophy is all relations, no longer point and line but a corpuscular and wave energetics. If we are favourable to Bachelard's refined position of realization in his mathematical evolution of applied rationalism, we might say that it points to a resolution with Bergson on the temporal question, if perhaps not yet on the nuances of scientific method and consciousness, as he is consistently against the immediacy he sees in Bergson's intuition in favour of secondary subjective approximation. He quotes from Bertrand Russell: "Intuition sees nothing of the infinitely small".[58] Bachelard wants to correct this idea he has of intuition as a purely empirical first glance. However, it was not until his last three works on epistemology that he realized, in the revolutionary terms of Kant and Bergson, his reorientation of philosophy, with idealism and realism representing impure mixtures mistaking differences in kind for differences in degree. For Bachelard there are only differences in degree between empiricism and rationalism, based as they are on nuances within the mind. The differences in kind lay between the scientific and the poetic, the mathematical and the material. An intoxication of the rational, a forgetting of number, is required to imagine matter, whilst a purity of the rational is required to realize arithmetic in science. Pre-science had not made this distinction, an example of this being the split in chemical investigations as alchemy developed in an idealist climate, while pre-chemistry prepared a scientific materialism. This was not fully realized, according to Bachelard, in the philosophy of Pierre Duhem who gives credence to the arithmetical valorization of groups of four, according to the four elements, humours etc. in medieval thought, which he formalizes in algebra.

Bachelard identifies science's creative rigour as redefining the grounds that philosophy must operate within; from Einstein onwards, philosophy

57 Ibid., pp.157-8.
58 Ibid., p.172, quoted from B. Russell, *Essai sur les fondements de la géométrie*, translated from the English by Cadenat, 1901, p.239.

must learn the new ontological concepts. For Bachelard, Brunschvicg accounted for this where Bergson did not, although this may only be a fair criticism of *Duration and Simultaneity*. A non-Kantianism must be developed based on the principles of the new scientific mind of Riemann, Einstein and Heisenberg. We find the same ontology preserved across Bachelard's work; there is simply a difference of application and approach. This is because the mathematical starting point has the same phenomenological structure as the poetic, where the mystical can be reached. For Bachelard the mystical is the material. Only number is apodictic in Bachelard's non-Cartesian philosophy. Which is why poetics involves a study of the imagination of matter, where according to him even the rhythmic time of life must be forgotten. Would that not be to find duration? The answer is no, since it still retains a fragmentary quality as the poetic moment, freed from what he terms horizontal time. For it is only with the vertical poetic instant that this realm can be touched in an elemental reverie, with a momentary glimpse of a subconscious genesis, in the very coarse immediacy he seeks to eliminate from science. Clearly this verticality shows Bachelard's phenomenological inspiration; it is the verticality of a rationalist seeking a pure reduction in the instant. Essence is only functional for Bachelard. Although his non-Cartesianism guards against abstract method, synthesis and application are everything.

For both philosophers becoming is the founding surrational principle. From here Bachelard asserts an applied rationalism in which science materializes the rational; mathematics is the constant virtual becoming actual in science. As in the wider philosophical sense Bachelard seeks to concretize phenomenology in phenomeno-technique, a phenomenology not only immanent to becoming, but one which realizes the rational and the material in a work of double intentionality. The object is given equal ability to mould the philosophical topology as an index in the epistemological profile, which is built on the philosophical beauty of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. In Bachelard's rational materialism, phenomeno-technique achieves immanence by transforming phenomenology into a noumenology, which is governed by the epistemological profile.

> It is from that relation that one can well call noumenological that it must develop a sort of diphenomenology which presents itself, in certain cases, like a corpuscular phenomenology and in other cases like a wave phenomenology.[59]

So it is that Bergson is continued, through the current of Spinozists in French thought, taking knowledge and its prejudices as an object, with a method of material phenomenology incorporating the genealogical power of psychoanalysis. This is a far wider legacy than most imagine, once the trajectory is taken through Bachelard as well as Deleuze. For as Deleuze says: "So that if philosophy is amenable to mathematical treatment, this is because mathematics finds its usual limitations overcome in philosophy [...].Thus demonstrations, says Spinoza, are the eyes through which the mind sees".[60] J. -C. Margolin sees Bachelard in a way which indeed inaugurates him into the French tradition of which Deleuze can be a part: as a figure of anti-philosophy, presenting us with a sort of Socrates of philosophy, who rejects Descartes and Berkley, Kant and Hegel, Heidegger and Sartre, the line of 'sophists' of contemporary thought, and the conventional philosophical tradition. However as Vadée points out this is a tricky position to defend for the man who embraced all past philosophy, even if polemically, and this is perhaps at the crux of Bachelard's awkward relationship with Bergson-Deleuze. His absorption of rationalism is total, but refined and subverted. Does this applied or sur-rationalism make Bachelard a revolutionary philosopher in the mould of Bergson and Deleuze? Is a philosophy of no enough? On the crucial question of quantum theory, it certainly seems to fulfil its intention. Modelled on science, what, other than applied rationalism, can account for the possibility of quantum computers for example? On the other hand the aporias of mathematics and quantum mechanics are yet to be accounted for. Even for Bachelard, Einstein cannot be the last word or break, and the necessary rupture that any further revolution would mean may take us to a non-Bachelardian Bergsonism for philosophy, an eclipse of topological philosophy obsessed with its own polarities. Louis De Broglie, one of the strongest influences on Bachelard's refined position in his later works tells us:

In spite of the undeniable and admirable light which it brings to bear for us on many questions, relativity theory has not succeeded in interpreting

59 Bachelard, *L'activité rationaliste de la physique contemporaine*, p.280.

60 Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* (Paris: Minuit, 1968), translated by Martin Joughin as *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), p.22.

phenomena in which quanta intervene; and in order to do so it was necessary to develop theories stranger than that of relativity. Today, it is certain that quantum theories penetrate into more profound strata of reality than all previous theories. The theory of relativity itself now appears to us as simply a macroscopic and statistical view of phenomena: it describes things approximately and in bulk and does not descend profoundly enough into the detailed description of elementary processes to allow us to perceive quantum discontinuities there. It is quantum physics, whose most advanced form is wave mechanics, which has enabled us to penetrate into the mysteries of elementary processes and to take account of the discontinuities bound up with the existence of the quantum of action. The question is thus posed whether this new physics will not better accord with certain of Bergson's ideas than did the relativistic doctrine... If Bergson could have studied quantum theory in detail, he would doubtless have observed with joy that in the image of the evolution of the physical world which it offers us, at each instant nature is described as if hesitating between a multiplicity of possibilities, and he would doubtless have repeated, as in *The Creative Mind*, that "time is this very hesitation or it is nothing".[61]

So it is here that Bachelard and Bergson show their fundamental convergence, with scientific becoming, and an intuition of radical difference in the infinitely small. Bachelard's applied rationalism is not a philosophy which begins; it is not foundational, it is modelled on science as a phenomenology. It is a philosophy which continues, which is becoming. The differences between these two thinkers are not just orientated in mathematics and perception. The differences are also situated within an ethical contrast in the place of the concept of the human. Bachelard's idealistic reveries identify what Mikel Dufrenne underlines as the intelligibly absurd or inhuman character of the real. For Bachelard it is the flaw of the perspective of *Creative Evolution* that it embraces the vegetal and inhuman quality of the real, whereas Nietzsche and Lautremont are praised for their ascensional energies, exposing the power of the surrational instant.

61 Louis de Broglie, *Physique et Microphysique* (1947), an essay translated in P.A.Y. Gunter, ed. *Bergson and the Evolution of Modern Physics* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1969), pp. 51 & 57.

Pli 14 (2003), 103-124

Bergson, Kant, and the Evolution of Metaphysics.

WAHIDA KHANDKER

> [T]he understanding, whose role is to operate on stable elements, can seek stability either in relations or in things. In so far as it works on relational concepts, it ends in *scientific* symbolism. In so far as it operates on concepts of things, it ends in *metaphysical* symbolism. But in either case the arrangement comes from it. It would willingly believe itself independent. Rather than recognizing at once what it owes to the deep intuition of reality, it is exposed to what is only seen in all its work, to an artificial arrangement of symbols. With the result that if one keeps to the letter of what metaphysicians and scholars say, as well as to the content of what they do, one might believe that the first have dug a deep tunnel under reality, while the others have thrown over it an elegant bridge, but that the moving river of things passes between these two works of art without touching them.[1]

Introduction

The opening quotation of this essay, taken from Bergson's 1903 essay 'Introduction to Metaphysics', describes the relation between science and

1 Henri Bergson, 'Introduction to Metaphysics' in *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Citadel Press, 1992), pp194-5; Bergson, *Œuvres* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), pp. 1426-7.

metaphysics in terms of their mutual incapacity for accounting for the real movements of 'nature', owing to the tendency of the intellect (or understanding) firstly to attach static representations or symbols to real objects, and secondly to take the resulting system of symbols for reality itself. This double operation of the understanding, claims Bergson, is not simply an error; it is the very function of human intelligence, insofar as it is directed towards the manipulation of 'matter', in order to impose a structure onto reality that complements its needs. Bergson attributes the most extreme example of the separation of science and metaphysics to Kant, for whom metaphysics, if it claims to be the study of 'nature in itself', becomes 'empty speculation'. In fact, and as far as Bergson is concerned, what Kant comes to call 'metaphysics' is nothing more than a reformed Platonism: 'Universal mathematics is what the world of Ideas becomes when one assumes that the Idea consists in a relation or a law, and no longer in a thing'.[2] Essentially, then, Bergson is defining science in terms of its institution of *laws* (whether universal or physical), in comparison to which metaphysics is deemed impossible. Therefore, when Bergson defines metaphysics (in the same 1903 essay) as 'the science that claims to dispense with symbols'[3], his statement can be read broadly as a challenge to the parameters set by Kant for philosophical enquiry. The dissatisfaction in Bergson's writings with the diminished position in which Kant had left metaphysics[4] in relation to positive science is particularly evident in his rejection of a number of methodological traits of the Critical Philosophy, the most significant of which is the reliance on the antinomic presentation of philosophical problems.

The present essay will begin to approach the problem of Bergson's own methodology with an examination of his use of the 'image' of an *élan vital*, in addressing the reach and validity of both mechanistic and teleological explanations for the evolution of living organisms. I will be paying particular attention to the necessity of replacing 'concepts' with 'images', a move that defines the Bergsonian rejection of the limits placed

2 Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, p. 196; *Œuvres*, pp. 1428-9.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 162; *Œuvres*, p. 1396.

4 Metaphysics is refined, by Kant, into a classification of the concepts/categories constituting the conditions of *possible*, not actual, experience, that is, if 'the actual' refers to 'things in themselves' as opposed, one might say, to things 'for us'. Obviously, seen from *within* Kant's system, the difference between possible and actual in this respect is essentially dissolved. I maintain it here as an acknowledgement of the alternative accounts (both prior and subsequent to Kant) of the same distinction.

on the cognitive capacity of human subjects in the Kantian scheme. On a general level, the principal problem concerns the fate of metaphysics as a 'legitimate' form of enquiry (it is, says Kant, an isolated speculative science that 'has not yet had the good fortune to enter upon the secure path of a science'[5]). In more specific terms, constituting the second main problem that I will be discussing (a problem that both Kant and Bergson focus on), what is at issue is the capacity of the human intellect to acquire direct knowledge of living processes and 'nature' in general (i.e., the material universe).[6] Given our apparent *in*capacity to think evolution 'in itself', the emergence of an *élan vital* at the centre of Bergson's work (from *Creative Evolution* (1907) onwards) responds to the need to account for our tendency to think nature teleologically, without making that notion of teleology relative to our mode of reflection. In short, it remains an attempt to legitimate metaphysics, whilst also ensuring its separation and independence from the scientific study of relations or laws of nature.

The first half of this essay (sections One and Two) is intended to give an overview of the Bergsonian ambition for a metaphysics based on 'intuitive' knowledge, the emphasis being placed on the precise constitution of both subjectivity and objectivity operating at the base of all knowledge in general. Section Three will provide a summary of Kant's discussion of the place of teleological judgement in relation to 'the natural sciences', in the course of which he identifies a set of key problems that Bergson will confront in *Creative Evolution*. I will also begin to look at the scope of Bergson's idiosyncratic usage of an 'image' of an *élan* (as a

5 Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), Bxiv.

6 This particular analysis of both the Kantian and Bergsonian approaches to this second problem takes its starting point from the original problematic that inspired both thinkers to examine and modify the teleological consideration of natural phenomena, i.e., from the desire to reconcile differences between empirical and rationalist descriptions of experience. The two philosophers' 'solutions' thus become necessarily incompatible given their radically different accounts of experience, despite the fact that both problematize and transform conventional divisions between, and definitions of, 'subject' and 'object' (Kantianism by basing objectivity in the subject; Bergsonism by deriving subjectivity from objects or, as Bergson reconfigures them, from 'images'). Bergson's approach is foregrounded in the present essay as one part of a wider engagement with 'Bergsonism' and the trend towards 'radical empiricism' (which 'marginalizes' the subject), a trend continued, expanded, and complicated by, for example, William James, A. N. Whitehead, and Gilles Deleuze. 'Marginalizing' the Kantian account simply reflects the focus of this project as a whole.

kind of methodological tool) in some response to the problematic application of determinate limits to human cognition. Given Kant's cautious deployment of a mere analogy of causality in the study of purposes in empirical nature, the question remains as to whether Bergson's alternative privileging of an image, rather than a concept, of a 'vital principle' in the examination of living processes, provides metaphysics with adequate means for describing 'creative evolutionism'. How does the Bergsonian approach grant the human understanding more than the apparently *negative* form of cognition gained in reflective judgement?

(i) Concept and image

In this first section I wish to approach the question of what Bergson's precise configuration of 'metaphysics' entails, with particular reference to the last chapter of *Creative Evolution* and the essay 'Introduction to Metaphysics'. The identification of the fundamental irreconcilability between empiricist and rationalist (and materialist and idealist) theories of 'nature', and what constitutes human experience in general, lies at the heart of both the Kantian and Bergsonian attempts to re-define metaphysical enquiry. This similarity in 'inspiration', which is an acknowledgement, by both thinkers, of a number of obstacles to freeing philosophy from the charge of providing only 'relative' knowledge, nevertheless leads to two very distinct conclusions about the reach and limits of human cognition and experience.

Bergson's division between the two kinds of knowledge, that is, 'absolute' and 'relative', is intended to demonstrate the natural inclination of human cognition to 'descend' from immediate to (conceptually) mediated experience. In the last chapter of *Creative Evolution*, Bergson discusses the history of this division in terms of the progression from 'ancient' (Plato, Aristotle) to 'modern' (Galileo, Kepler) conceptions of science and metaphysics. The one 'illusion', he claims, that dominates these otherwise radically different approaches to the scientific and philosophical pursuits of knowledge, is what he calls the 'cinematographical' mechanism of thought, a mechanism characterized by the tendency to reduce, for example, an *actual* indivisible movement into a series of possible or *virtual* points. Bergson, in *Creative Evolution*,

presents, as an illustration of this tendency, the evolutionary courses that living organisms take over time, and the reduction of these to distinct moments in the history of developing species. Now, this somewhat simplified retrospect on the history of metaphysics and the 'natural sciences', is less concerned with the contributions of specific advances in biology (e.g., in genetics, embryology, etc.) than it is with an attempt to expose the 'unconscious metaphysics' operating at the base of any scientific theory that explains evolutionary change in terms of a series of isolable 'jumps' between species or types (referring, of course, to the insufficiencies of mechanistic and teleological explanations of evolution which I shall discuss in the next section).[7]

The desire to extricate philosophy from the position of a merely 'relative' form of knowledge, prompts, in Kant's case, a radical reconfiguration of the definition of 'experience' with its corresponding re-evaluation of the nature of the relation between subject and object. This, of course, refers to Kant's 'Copernican Revolution', a move prompted by the repeated abortive attempts throughout the history of philosophy to ground metaphysics in the assumption that *all knowledge must conform to objects.*[8] The reversal of this hierarchy (of object over passive subject), endowing subjectivity with the power to construct the very world constituting the whole of its 'possible experience' was, for Kant, the only means by which he could ensure philosophy a measure of certainty (i.e., its a priori conditions), even if the price of this certainty was the inability to possess any knowledge of the world in its *actuality*. Experience of such actuality would be reserved for a super-human intuitive intelligence, able to unify in an *immediate* act of cognition what, for us, is the work of distinct faculties: sensible intuition (which gives us actuality without concepts) and understanding (providing concepts for the possible experience of an object).[9] In other words, Kant could only guarantee for philosophy a claim to 'a priori' (/absolute) knowledge, by insisting that the

7 It is Bergson's contention that, despite the apparent independence that the sciences have achieved from philosophy, scientific study nevertheless rests on a set of 'unconsciously' assumed, and thus hitherto unchallenged, metaphysical divisions (e.g., the ideas of order/disorder, of 'nothingness', and of the linearity of time). Bergson, 'Introduction II' in *The Creative Mind*, pp. 66-7; *Œuvres*, pp. 1308.

8 'If intuition must conform to the constitution of the objects, I do not see how we could know anything of the latter *a priori*; but if the object (as object of the senses) must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, I have no difficulty in conceiving such a possibility'. Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Bxvi-xvii.

'pure' concepts of the understanding be restricted to their *immanent* use (i.e., to objects given in experience), whilst concepts of reason (transcendent ideas, beyond experience) would allow the mind the consolation that it had a 'supersensible vocation' by which it could transcend its own limits, if only negatively in reflective judgement.[10] The whole of cognition itself would be made *relative* to the mental faculties, such that it attained an immanently 'absolute' form of knowledge provided it kept one eye on its limiting conditions. In this way, metaphysics is transformed into a search for the concepts/ideas that condition experience, a search that qualifies it as a 'science'.

When Bergson responds to the same problems, again with the emphasis on reworking what we understand to be the form of subjective experience, he has the additional task of overcoming the barrier erected by the Critical Philosophy between the human subject and 'things-in-themselves'. A lengthy, but rather vague, definition of what Bergson means by absolute and relative knowledge is given at the beginning of 'Introduction to Metaphysics', referring to the movement of an object in space:

> I perceive it differently according to the point of view from which I look at it, whether from that of mobility or immobility. I express it differently, furthermore as I relate it to the system of axes or reference points, that is to say, according to the symbols by which I translate it. And I call it *relative* for this double reason: in either case, I place myself outside the object itself. When I speak of an absolute movement, it means that I attribute to the mobile an inner being and, as it were, states of soul; it also means that I am in harmony with these states and enter into them by an effort of imagination [...]. [W]hat I feel will depend neither on the point of view I adopt toward the object, since I am in the object itself, nor on the symbols by which I translate it, since I have renounced all translation in order to possess the original.[11]

9 'But our entire distinction between the merely possible and the actual rests on this: in saying that a thing is possible we are positing only the presentation of it with respect to our concept and to our thinking ability in general; but in saying that a thing is actual we are positing the thing itself [*an sich selbst*] (apart from that concept). Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1987), § 76 [p. 285].

10 Judgements of the sublime and teleological judgements both come under this category.

Given that Bergson, like Kant, wishes to avoid putting forward a merely relative notion of philosophical enquiry (one that would result if he adhered to a purely empirical account of the act of cognition), whilst also expressing an aversion to the institution of 'pure ideas' (a recurrent tendency in philosophy, according to Bergson, extending from Plato to Kant), in the division he draws between absolute and relative knowledge he is careful not to deny to the mind the possibility of overcoming its own limits. He would have to explain experience in way that did not imprison it within the (logical) structure of the mental faculties, and to do this would involve describing the mind in terms of its *natural tendency* rather than a set of necessary conditions. It is this description in terms of tendencies that guides Bergson's definitions of science and metaphysics. Now, although science is defined by its association with *relative* knowledge, and metaphysics by an aspiration for *absolute* knowledge, both disciplines, insofar as they construct conceptual schemes, have the capacity to reduce reality to the systems that serve only as *translations* of its mobility. To clarify the distinction between science and metaphysics, I will now focus on an examination of what Bergson means by 'relative knowledge'.

(ii) Scientific mind

'Science', in its broadest definition, serves, according to Bergson, as the principal example of a disciplined pursuit of knowledge that displays the 'natural'[12] tendency of human intelligence to 'freeze' and divide a reality that is essentially mobile and continuous. According to the description quoted above (from 'Introduction to Metaphysics'), relative knowledge makes no specific claims about the object 'in itself', but instead merely

11 Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, p. 159; *Œuvres*, pp. 1393-4.

12 The reference to this tendency as 'natural' is derived from Bergson's account of ordinary perception, and hence of ordinary knowledge, as oriented towards (useful) action. This orientation is manifested in the projection of spatial dimensions (immobility) onto a mobile reality. On the relation between perception, space, and matter, see Bergson's use of a theory of 'pure perception' in Chapter One of *Matter and Memory*.

builds around it a system of relational concepts through which our experience of the object is 'refracted'. So far, this seems to be merely a reiteration of the limits that Kant draws for cognition. There is, however, a significant departure from the Kantian model, and for this it is necessary to refer to Bergson's earlier work, *Matter and Memory*, which contains his fullest account of the nature of perception and objectivity, providing the groundwork for his later identification of the work of the intellect, in *Creative Evolution*, in terms of a 'cinematographical mechanism'.

There are three essential points that guide the Bergsonian perspective on the history of philosophy: (1) the alignment of natural perception or ordinary knowledge with scientific knowledge and the intellect in general; (2) a description of this ordinary knowledge based on the perception of 'images'; and (3) the tendency by the intellect to think mobility according to the 'cinematographical illusion'. In a passage from 'Introduction to Metaphysics' Bergson summarizes the first point (i.e., the connection between perception and scientific thought) with the assertion that

> the highways traced by our senses across the continuity of the real are those along which science will travel, that perception is a science in the process of being born, science an adult perception, and that ordinary knowledge and scientific knowledge, both destined to prepare our action upon things, are necessarily two visions of a kind, although of unequal precision and range....[13]

(1) What does it mean to describe perception as 'a science in the process of being born'? In *Matter and Memory* one of Bergson's aims is to provide an account of conscious perception that reconnects the subject with the material world, or 'things-in-themselves', to use the Kantian term. The same problem that provoked the Kantian version of the 'Copernican Revolution', that is, the desire to ground experience in a priori principles, is manifested in Bergson's work in the account he gives of perception as a process subordinated to practical utility or action. In this subordination to the necessities of *action*, our perceptions of the world are no longer simply relative to the structure of our cognitive faculties (which would cut us off from the world), but have some substantial or material basis; we have the potential to experience objects that exist independently of what we may perceive as useful to us at any one time.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 126; *Œuvres*, p. 1363.

This world of 'potentialities' takes the form of an 'aggregate of images'. 'Image', here, replaces what in purely materialist/empiricist terms would be called a 'thing', and what in idealist/rationalist terms might be referred to as an idea or representation. The mediating position that 'the image' takes between the materialist and idealist terms is primarily aimed at addressing the problem of how our ideas can conform to material objects, without reducing one to the other, as Kant had found it necessary to do. Thus, on the one hand, Kant draws a line of demarcation between things in themselves and their appearances constituted by the pure intuitions and concepts provided by our cognitive faculties. This means that our knowledge is primarily based on concepts and pure forms of intuition, without forcing us to claim that the world in itself is composed of those forms (a charge that Kant levels at Plato, for example). Only an understanding based on 'real sensibility'[14] could claim to have perception and knowledge of things in themselves (i.e., of the whole before the parts of the 'sensible manifold'), instead of a knowledge, such as ours, mediated by the structure of the cognitive faculties. Whereas, on the other hand, Bergson *is* allowing for an experience of the world in itself by prioritizing sensibility/intuition (pure heterogeneity, continuity, flux) that is only retroactively divided into a succession of instants. In this case, the division between sensible intuition and concept is no longer one of the conditioned and its condition, but of *lived* movement/time and *thought* movement/time (i.e., pure immediacy and mediated experience).

(2) An 'image' is the intermediary between this lived movement (the complete coincidence of subject and object exemplified, in *Matter and Memory*, in the account of 'pure perception') and the thought of that movement (the retrospective attempt to analyse it or, literally, to break it down). In the Bergsonian scheme the perceiving body itself is described as an image, and establishes or individuates itself apart from all other images, as a 'centre of real action'. It is simply this establishment of this 'privileged image' that constitutes the separation of the subject and its object, of the perceiver and the perceived. Without this 'active' perception, the subject or body, as an image, is merely co-extensive with the rest of the material universe.[15] The point to bear in mind here is the

14 What Kant also calls an 'intuitive understanding' that is capable of knowing things prior to their conceptualization.

15 This is, in the widest sense, what Bergson means by 'intuition', that is, the complete coincidence of subject and object. The problem, of course, is that ordinary knowledge requires the separation of the two enacted in perception; it is

way in which Bergson draws an equivalence between perceiving an object and acting on it. Perception is merely the virtual visualization of an act to be executed, the only difference being the degree of immediate contact that the subject has with that object. This notion of perception, insofar as it is composed of images, is not yet conceptualization (which would make it systematic), but it is also no longer immediate intuition, since perception cuts out from the moving reality only those aspects of it that 'interest' the perceiving subject, a process that results in the formation of 'virtual objects' (also called 'virtual images'). In short, perception marks the transition from the heterogeneity and immediacy of intuition to the construction of a virtual image that projects the course of a possible action. A system of concepts is then constructed as a description of actions already executed or actions to be performed, or, in other words, as a system of laws that designate the regularity of nature. Concepts are merely fixed points or 'stations' that symbolize the designated (but not necessarily 'original') function or purpose of an object of experience. Thus it is no longer the case that the intuition of an object in itself is impossible, but simply that it is a characteristic error of science (such as that formulated by Kant) to ignore the gap between *living* and *thinking* movement and, more importantly, to raise concepts that merely *express* the thought of mobility to the status of the conditions of possible experience.

The idea of a mediating 'image' composed of a multiplicity of pure perceptions, as scientific knowledge in its nascent state, is particularly striking when applied to how we perceive and conceive of different examples of movement:

> Let us consider a very simple act, like that of lifting the arm. Where should we be if we had to imagine beforehand all the elementary contractions and tensions this act involves, or even to perceive them, one by one, as they are accomplished? But the mind is carried immediately to the end, that is to say, to the schematic and simplified vision of the act supposed accomplished. [...] The intellect, then, only represents to the activity ends to attain, that is to say, points of rest. And, from one end attained to another end attained, from one rest to another rest, our activity is carried by a series of leaps, during

the challenge of the metaphysician to think beyond the confines of utilitarian perception.

> which our consciousness is turned away as much as possible from the movement going on, to regard only the anticipated image of the movement accomplished.[16]

Given that it is a characteristic feature of perception and action to cut out from the heterogeneity of a movement what is most useful to it, that is, the point at which that movement is to be completed, then it would serve no purpose to linger on (i.e., contemplate) the heterogeneous quality of that perceived or acted movement. In order to perceive, to act, or to quantify such a movement, all that is required is the projection of a series of points, or 'virtual stops', through which the movement passes.

The identity between perception and action can be summarized as the central contrast with Kant's scheme in which the conditions of possible experience are given priority. Instead of these conditions, Bergson places at the centre of experience the necessities of practical action. We only shape matter insofar as we wish to act upon it, a relation that allows us the possibility of an experience of the real beyond the structures we impose on it. Thus it is Bergson's claim that every perceived moment or 'instant' is in fact composed of a multiplicity of instants *contracted* into a 'mean image', around which we then construct our conceptions of the real. That is, our ordinary knowledge of things is both a *subtraction* from what is in fact a much richer reality, and a superimposition onto that reality of forms or symbols. On this model, both the individuation of the acting subject and the *subtractive*, rather than determinative, nature of our perception of an otherwise heterogeneous 'whole', arise from the demands of practical utility which is essentially the need to analyse matter in a way that allows us to manipulate it.

(3) The third and final aspect of Bergson's 'critique' of the human understanding, which is the characterization of the tendency described above to apprehend reality as a series of virtual stopping points is what Bergson refers to as the cinematographical illusion. It has two main features that Bergson shows to be inherent in established mechanistic and teleological conceptions of evolutionary change.

Firstly, time, insofar as it is considered decomposable into a series of immobile states, is spatially determined. If a change or movement in time can be reduced to a juxtaposition of isolable instants, then time has no role

16 Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Dover, 1998), pp. 299-300; *Œuvres*, p. 748.

to play other than that of an indifferent medium within which the series of points is arranged side by side. Time itself is indistinguishable from the course in space that a mobile object passes through; movement therefore suffers the same paradoxical status as Zeno's arrow that is at rest at each of the points of its trajectory. Time is spatial. The second consequence of the cinematographical illusion is that our ability to decompose and recompose at will an evolutionary progression precludes the possibility of 'creation' or true novelty. I want to explain this second feature by contrasting two possible ways of defining 'scientific' attitudes to time:

(a) Time is precisely the juxtaposition of instants described above. Creation of the new is no more than the rearrangement and recomposition of pre-existing elements. Thus concepts describe reality accurately. Evolutionary development can be described in purely mechanistic terms, and science can give us an absolute form of knowledge.

(b) We only tend to view time and change in this way, because science is relative to the conceptual structure that defines our understanding. Therefore, we can only view nature through those concepts. Again, change can only be perceived as a recomposition of old elements, but these elements merely refer to our own concepts. It is possible that evolution is pure creativity, but we can never make this thought intelligible.

Bergson incorporates both definitions into his own account of the nature of time or duration in experience. The first merely expresses the consequences of thinking according to the cinematographical illusion, and the second encapsulates his reading of Kant, in which the insufficiency of conceptual knowledge is remedied by the acknowledgement of the limits of the understanding. Both also deny the reality of time (in any non-spatial sense), and it was the aim of the preceding section to demonstrate this basis of concepts in spatialized time. Against this spatialized time, Bergson points to an alternative notion of *duration*:

> Let childhood, adolescence, maturity and old age be given as integral parts of the evolution [of a man], they become *real stops*, and we can no longer conceive how evolution is possible, for rests placed beside rests will never be equivalent to a movement. How, with what is made, can we reconstitute what is being made? How, for instance, from childhood once posited as a *thing*, shall we pass to adolescence, when, by the hypothesis, childhood only is given?[17]

The notion of time/duration that we require for *living* beings should be able to account for the fact that each moment of an evolutionary progression bleeds into the one before it and the one subsequent to it:

> What is properly vital in growing old is the insensible, infinitely graduated, continuance of the change of form. Now this change is undoubtedly accompanied by phenomena of organic destruction: to these, and to these alone, will a mechanistic explanation of ageing be confined. It will note the facts of sclerosis, the gradual accumulation of residual substances, the growing hypertrophy of the protoplasm of the cell. But under these visible effects an inner cause lies hidden. The evolution of the living being, like that of the embryo, implies a continual recording of duration, a persistence of the past in the present, and so an appearance, at least, of organic memory.[18]

Concepts, which are static determinations of isolated instants are therefore inadequate to this task. The consequence of this for Bergson is that he is forced to seek the tools for examining real change in time (i.e., real becoming), not in concepts, but in *images* through which we perceive or experience pure movement.

(iii) Teleological judgement: cognition by analogy

In the first part of this essay, I wanted to show how Bergson's particular model of perception and its relation to the kinds of cognition that we can have through science and metaphysics, no longer subordinated such cognition to the determination provided by a set of transcendental conditions. In doing so, the aim was to demonstrate the central role of 'images' in Bergson's work, and the mediating position that they occupy between actual intuition (or intuition of actuality) and knowledge structured according to concepts. I now wish to focus on an examination

17 *Ibid.*, p. 312; *Œuvres*, pp. 758-9.
18 *Ibid.*, p. 19; *Œuvres*, p. 510.

of the 'origin' of the term *'élan vital'*, and how it can to be understood as an 'image' rather than a concept of the movement of evolutionary change. It is one that is central to both Bergson's reconfiguration of teleology and, ultimately, to his definition of metaphysical enquiry in general.

Bergson's discussion of the opposition between mechanism and teleology (/finalism), as explanatory frameworks for the understanding of organic evolution, refers specifically to the mechanistic evolutionism of Herbert Spencer and a breed of 'radical finalism' exemplified by the Leibnizian appeal to a theory of pre-established harmony, but I will instead be using Kant's critique of this opposition. Given that Bergson's theory of perception defines itself against the Kantian account of experience, and that Kant's definitions of pure (transcendental) and empirical natural science are interdependent (the second of which incorporates teleological judgement), it is evident that Bergson must reject what Kant sees as the special role that teleology has in 'investigations' of empirical nature. However, there are a number of key problems that Kant confronts in his Critique of Teleological Judgement that are equally relevant to Bergson's examination of the range and limitations of evolutionary theory. This is due to the fact that Bergson is himself rethinking the role of teleology, advocating its application in a revised form, and, most importantly for our purposes, placing a vital principle (of sorts), the *élan vital*, at its centre.

In the dialectic of teleological judgement, based on the conflict between mechanistic and teleological conceptions of causality in nature, Kant seeks to remedy the individual inadequacies of the two ways of understanding nature through their reconciliation within a system of enquiry that provides each with a clear cognitive status. In the case of teleological judgement, the challenge is to determine why we might judge certain 'products of nature', a living organism, for example, according to a particular 'end'. This kind of judgement forms the basis for an understanding of nature in terms of evolutionary processes, but has no ground in experience since the judgement that the organism (or part of it) is 'designed' to work towards a particular end requires that we have access to the original cause of that product. The problem with such a judgement is that it is only within the bounds of pure natural science, concerned only with the conditions of possibility of the objects of our own experience, that we can have determinate concepts of 'nature'. The question thus becomes how we can plausibly think 'empirical' nature

(which is organized independently of our possible experience) in terms of 'purposes', and yet remain within the bounds of our possible experience.

It is Kant's discussion of the way we conceive of 'natural purposes' that creates the 'antinomy' of teleological judgement, constituting a need to reconcile the fact that we judge nature in terms of mechanical processes (perfectly compatible with the limits of our understanding) and yet also necessarily refer to purposes or ends as if they were a real feature of empirical nature.

The first of the two principal characteristics required for a thing to be considered a natural purpose is the necessity that the possibility of its parts is dependent on their relation to the whole. In other words, the concept or idea of the whole of the object is what must determine its existence and form. Now, this characteristic alone does not ensure that the product is any more than a mere work of art (broadly, a manufactured object), since it is equally applicable to a work of art that it is produced in accordance with a concept of the whole by a 'rational cause', that is itself distinct from the 'matter' of its product.[19] Thus, the second required characteristic is that 'the parts of the thing combine into the unity of a whole because they are reciprocally cause and effect of their form'.[20] A natural purpose (e.g., a living organism) is distinguished from a work of art (e.g., a watch) by the reciprocal determination of the parts forming the idea of the whole, whereas the work of art would depend merely on the idea as its sole cause, external to, and independent of, the whole. The key distinction, then, rests on the fact that although both 'products' are organized, it is only the 'natural purpose' that is self-organizing.[21]

There is already, in this elementary definition of natural organization, an appeal to a 'cause' other than our own. Kant demonstrates the limitations on our capacity to cognise the ability of nature to produce organized beings through the inadequacy of the analogical representations that are available to us, and that determine the very conceptions we can have of these organized beings as natural purposes. As illustrated by the

19 Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, § 65 [p. 252].

20 *Ibid.*

21 'Hence an organized being is not a mere machine. For a machine has only *motive* force. But an organized being has within it *formative* force, and a formative force that this being imparts to the kinds of matter that lack it (thereby organizing them). This force is therefore a formative force that propagates itself – a force that a mere ability [of one thing] to move [another] (i.e., mechanism) cannot explain.' *Ibid.* [p. 253].

contrasts drawn between artificial and natural objects, an 'analogue of art' must be rejected insofar as it requires us to posit an artist as a rational being apart from the thing produced, which would be inadequate for the explanation of the self-organizing capacity of that object. Also to be rejected is the hylozoistic endowment of life to matter itself (applying, in this case, an 'analogue of life' to the organized product), which for Kant is simply contradictory given that the very definition of matter he is operating with characterizes matter in terms of inertia (or 'lifelessness').[22] Hence, a hylozoistic explanation fails, in Kant's view, to provide an adequate account of natural organization in terms of final causes.

It is Kant's conclusion that the only means for us to judge a thing to be a natural purpose is to conceive of it using

> a remote analogy with our own causality in terms of purposes generally, to guide our investigation of organized objects and to meditate regarding their supreme basis – meditation not for the sake of gaining knowledge either of nature or of that original basis of nature, but rather for the sake of [assisting] that same practical power in us [viz., our reason] by analogy with which we were considering the cause of the purposiveness in organized objects.[23]

Kant is making two points in this passage that I want to focus on. Firstly, that we must assume (without making the claim that we cognize) a supersensible basis of nature (i.e., nature in itself). Secondly, that the 'analogy with our own causality' does not offer us knowledge of 'conditioned nature' (which would be the object of pure natural science concerned with the universal laws of nature), but constitutes the only available method for us to make sense of the 'infinite diversity' of empirical nature. By making this analogy, we are thinking the particular rules of nature as if they were universal laws, according to which our understanding is then able to organize our experience of objects of nature. In restricting this kind of thought to reflective judgement, Kant is ensuring both that nature in itself can still be thought of as existing independently of the concepts of our particular understanding, and that our concepts can make 'coherent experience out of material that to us is so full of confusion

22 *Ibid.* [p. 254].
23 *Ibid.* [p. 255].

(though actually it is only infinitely diverse and beyond our ability to grasp [it]).'[24]

The presupposition of a supersensible nature that we cannot cognize leaves open the possibility that empirical nature could in fact be fully explained in purely mechanistic terms. The problem with thinking things of nature purely mechanistically lies in the fact that mechanism requires that we have the ability to think a natural thing from the diversity of its parts to the unity of the whole. Kant shows how, even in the case of a single organ, such as an eye, it is the character of our understanding to think of it in terms of its purpose, that is, sight (subordinating the eye to a concept of its function). That is, whenever we ask: 'What is it?', we necessarily ask 'What is it meant to be?'[25] This, Kant says, is the consequence of possessing a discursive understanding (that proceeds from concepts to empirical intuitions). It would only be possible to know (instead of merely speculating or theorizing) whether objects actually operated mechanistically if we possessed an intuitive understanding (one that proceeds from intuitions to concepts). For this reason, Kant approaches a reconciliation of the mechanistic and teleological principles through a reiteration of the need to acknowledge the limits of the human cognitive capacity. In other words, it is necessary to state that it is due to the nature of these cognitive powers (insofar as experience is always guided by 'supreme principles of reason') that we are unable to form a concept of how a world constructed according to purposes is possible, 'except by thinking of it as brought about by a supreme cause that acts intentionally.[26] Thus, on the one hand, the thought of the possibility of an intuitive understanding allows us to avoid the conclusion that the diversity of our intuition of nature (its particularity) is determined by the concepts of our understanding, a conclusion that would lead to pure idealism. On the other hand, we still need to be able to think that particularity in harmony with our universal concepts. To do this it is necessary to think the 'peculiarity' of our cognitive capacity, which is possible only if it is thought as relative to an intuitive understanding. Here, Kant's claim is simply that this intuitive understanding is negatively thought as possible by way of contrast with our own discursive understanding. This contrast indicates the mere possibility of thinking nature in itself, and is the basis

24 Second Introduction, *The Critique of Judgement*, V [p. 25].
25 First Introduction, *The Critique of Judgement*, X [p. 429].
26 *The Critique of Judgement*, § 75 [p. 281].

we have for using a reflective but not determinative teleological principle for thinking about the production of organized beings.

To summarize, having thus established that judgements about empirical laws of nature are governed by reflective principles only (determinative a priori principles being the legislators of all possible experience in general, for which nature is understood in terms of universal laws), the antinomy arises solely in the conflict between the 'maxims' that judgement supplies for itself in the 'investigation' of corporeal nature:

> Thesis: All production of material things and their forms must be judged to be possible in terms of merely mechanical laws
>
> Antithesis: Some products of material nature cannot be judged to be possible in terms of merely mechanical laws.[27]

Kant maintains the legitimacy of the second maxim (for judging nature teleologically) in two ways. Firstly, it is his contention that the two maxims would only be contradictory if converted into constitutive principles for determinative judgement, that is, if they are presented as a priori principles governing the universal laws of nature or the possibility of our experience of nature in general. (It would no longer be a case of investigating the empirical laws of material nature). Secondly, even with the restriction to reflective judgement (turned towards the operation of our cognitive powers), it is a problem for 'human reason' to think nature purely in terms of the mechanistic principle. By definition, it cannot cognise the 'inner basis' of nature (on its actuality) and hence it cannot reconcile natural organization with mechanism (even if the two are actually connected). The appeal to a principle of final causes is thus deemed a natural recourse for reflective judgement.[28]

(iv) *Élan vital*

Ultimately, Kant is making no claims about nature at all, since both mechanism and teleology could conceivably be actual features of nature, but our understanding cannot make this thought intelligible. What Bergson will ask is how a teleological account can be applied to nature 'in

27 *Ibid.*, § 70 [p. 267].
28 *Ibid.* [p. 268].

itself', (a) without depending on concepts and (b) in a way that allows for the possibility of real creativity in nature (implying an effective, rather than an indifferent, form of time). How, then, does Bergson's reconfiguration of a teleological principle overcome the obstacles identified and 'solved' by Kant, without employing similar means (and thereby inheriting similar restrictions)?

First of all, Bergson's rejection of 'radical mechanism' is made on the grounds that I pointed to at the end of section (i), i.e., because it operates with a concept of time that lacks efficacy. Mechanism, as he describes it, rests on our ability to possess knowledge of the various elements that make up material processes in nature, and to deduce from them the products of those processes. Physico-chemical descriptions of such processes are deemed adequate for their explanation. Bergson asserts that we must reject them since

> mechanistic explanations [...] hold good for the systems that our thought artificially detaches from the whole. But of the whole itself and of the systems which, within the whole, seem to take after it, we cannot admit *a priori* that they are mechanically explicable, for then time would be useless, and even unreal. 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*. On this hypothesis, past, present, and future would be open at a glance to a superhuman intellect capable of making the calculation.[29]

On the other hand, 'radical finalism', that is, teleology, is to be rejected due to its dependence on a pre-given concept of the whole (its 'cause'), which relies, once again, upon a conception of time that is useless. Time is merely the medium within which the product is unfolded according to its pre-established 'specifications'. For Bergson, if time does nothing, it *is* nothing.[30] This rejection of teleology is complicated by its isolation to a type of teleology that rests on a conception of an *internal* cause. By this is meant the artificial isolation of parts of an organism, and the application of a cause to each part. For example, Kant uses the example of the eye as an organ that we tend to describe in terms of its purpose, i.e., sight, without taking into account the functions of the other organs of the

29 Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 37; *Œuvres*, p. 526.
30 *Ibid.*, p. 39; *Œuvres*, p. 527.

animal. In such a case, it would be possible to subordinate the evolutionary history of the entire organism to the function of its eye. Attributing purposes to particular organs arbitrarily decides what constitutes an individual. Kant's solution, which Bergson also maintains, is to deny that human judgement has the capacity to individuate living organisms except for the sake of reflection.

What might be termed an *external cause*, however, is the element of teleology that Bergson retains. By this he means a *common impulsion*:

> In this sense each individual may be said to remain united with the totality of living beings by indivisible bonds. So it is of no use to try to restrict finality to the individuality of the living being. If there is finality in the world of life, it includes the whole of life in a single, indivisible embrace. This life common to all the living [...] is not so mathematically *one* that it cannot allow each being to become individualized to a certain degree. But it forms a single whole, nonetheless [...].[31]

This common impulsion, since it is no longer a concept of a particular form, is merely defined as the drive to accumulate potential energy and to release it in the creation of new forms along divergent lines of evolution. It does remain for this definition, however, to account for the prevalence of the various mechanistic and teleological explanations. In delineating the distinction that his revised teleology has from mechanism, Bergson employs yet another image (for the sake of illustration only): that of a hand moving through iron filings, in which the hand designates the impulsion, and the filings the material configurations produced residually to the hand's movement. Mechanism takes the material structures, represented by the iron filings, to be the result of a concatenation of physico-chemical processes particular to matter. Bergson's 'external cause', in opposition to this, is a pure movement indifferent to the particular material objects that its progression produces. The product is both dependent upon and yet incommensurable with its mode of production.

In this prioritization of an external finality, Bergson also attempts to overcome the problem of attributing human characteristics to a non-human process such as the evolution of life in general. Based on his

31 *Ibid.*, p. 43; *Œuvres*, p. 531.

criticism of spatialized time, he restores a notion of real duration to the account of evolution with the image of an *élan vital*, in place of a general concept of either the purpose of the process or the constitutive elements of it. His revised teleology rests not on a concept of a cause, but on an image of a tendency. This tendency of 'life' cannot be reduced to a concept of life that exists in opposition to a concept of matter. As Kant had pointed out, in his criticism of hylozoism, to have a preconceived notion of the characteristics of matter (namely, inertia) and to then attempt to imbue it with 'life', leads to contradiction.[32] Bergson's solution to this is to say that the materiality of a living organism cannot, strictly speaking, be isolated from its 'vitality', and that the description in terms of the interaction of *tendencies* avoids the characterization of life and matter as 'things', a characterization that naturally forces us to attempt to conceive of their possible separation as well as convergence. In addition to this, Bergson is making the broader claim that not only is the movement of evolution non-human, but that what we take as a human characteristic, that is, *consciousness*, is itself essentially non-human or 'impersonal'. Human 'consciousness' itself becomes an expression of the general 'aim' of evolution, that is, the accumulation and expenditure of potential energy in free, creative acts. Obviously, the last point is highly speculative, but it works in response to the theoretical shift of subjectivity, or the sovereignty of individual conscious, from the centre to the periphery of human activity.[33]

The significance of Bergson's general definition of metaphysics can thus be summarized in terms of the problems of 'the subject' and of the

32 'And yet we cannot even think of living matter [as postulated by one form of hylozoism] as possible. (The very concept of it involves a contradiction, since the essential character of matter is lifelessness, [in Latin] inertia). [...] [W]e certainly have no a priori insight into whether such matter is possible. But this means that our explanation can only move in a circle: we try to derive the natural purposiveness in organized beings from the life of matter, while yet we are familiar with this life only in organized beings and hence cannot form a concept of the possibility of this purposiveness unless we have experienced such beings. Hence hylozoism does not accomplish what it promises'. Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, § 73 [p. 276].

33 Cf. the account of consciousness in *Matter and Memory*, itself already involving the 'decentring' of subjectivity (by deriving 'subjective unity' from the multiplicity of 'images' that make up the material universe, rather than deriving the material order from the transcendental, organizing subject); and the account of 'consciousness' as an analogy for 'life' in *Creative Evolution*.

efficacy of Time. Categories of the understanding grounded in a unity of subjectivity become, for Bergson, 'evolved' categories of the intellect suited primarily for the manipulation of matter. The displacement of the subject as a unifying principle not only allows but also *requires* a 'creation' of concepts able to account for the side of reality that the intellect-guided categories leave untouched. In short, they must be adequate to a description of the '*life* of the real' ['*une* vie *du réel*'], a theory of life being synonymous with a theory of real, effective time or duration.[34] The introduction of an image of an *élan vital* to describe the 'durational' movement of evolution can itself be seen as an attempt by Bergson to extend the scope of his work beyond its meta-philosophical content. Thus *Creative Evolution* propounds not simply a theory and criticism of the symbolic nature of our forms of enquiry but also addresses the need to recapture the dynamic and creative nature of consciousness. In order to secure its independence from and validity in relation to the sciences, metaphysics must be able to describe this consciousness (one that partakes of the 'common impulsion' of life in general). In this way, a Bergsonian invention of new concepts or 'representations' would place the act of philosophizing closer to artistic composition (in its plurality and not its supposed relativity), rather than to scientific study where science is defined as an extension of ordinary knowledge oriented towards action.

> The truth is that our mind is able to follow the reverse procedure. It can be installed in the mobile reality, adopt its ceaselessly changing direction, in short, grasp it intuitively. But to do that, it must do itself violence, reverse the direction of the operation by which it ordinarily thinks, continually upsetting its categories, or rather, recasting them. In so doing, it will arrive at fluid concepts, capable of following reality in all its windings and of adopting the very movement of the inner life of things. Only in that way will a progressive philosophy be constituted, freed from the disputes which arise between the schools, capable of resolving problems naturally because it will be rid of the artificial terms chosen in stating them. *To philosophize means to reverse the normal direction of the workings of thought.*[35]

34 Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 343; *Œuvres*, p. 785.
35 Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, p. 190; *Œuvres*, pp. 1421-2.

Pli 14 (2003), 125-143

The Rule of Dichotomy: Bergson's Genetics of Matter.

JOHN MULLARKEY

Introduction

Husserl or Frege; culturalism or naturalism; scientism or anti-science? The recent history of philosophy seems at times to be no more than a set of rivalries which have remained all too familiar. That the thought of Henri Bergson is one that refuses to be read according to these traditional bifurcations has been both its greatest virtue and its greatest tragedy.[1] His ability to combine various diverse approaches – from psychologism to naturalism, from intuitionism to empiricism – has only left Bergson in an intellectual no-man's land. Attacked for his naturalism by phenomenological thinkers such as Sartre just as he was criticised by philosophical naturalists like Adolf Grünbaum for being too subjectivist, the habitual neglect of Bergsonian thought is just one consequence of the unilateral thinking that has marked our age. The interpretative history of Bergsonism is further testimony to this diversity of method in his work. Traditionally, there have been two ways of taking up Bergson's time-philosophy. The first emphasises its affinities with a naturalistic process philosophy (Whitehead's in particular); the second sees it in the light of the existentialists and phenomenologists who succeeded Bergson in France. Following the first line of interpretation, we find writers like Milic Capek, David Sipfle, and Gilles Deleuze; taking the opposite track

1 The few philosophers who do not fall so easily into this dichotomy but who remain popular – Nietzsche and Kierkegaard to mention two – are most often read, nevertheless, as if they do follow the recurrent battle lines.

are Jean Hyppolite, Vladimir Jankélévitch, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Emmanuel Levinas.[2]

One Bergsonian text where this opposed naturalism and subjectivism seem to be reconciled, however, is the study that brought such early and ultimately destructive fame to his work, *Creative Evolution.* It has been said that *Creative Evolution* marks a shift in Bergson's thought from a philosophy of human consciousness towards a 'super-phenomenology for life itself'.[3] One might dispute this point – the proto-phenomenology of Bergson's earlier work is noticeably absent from this book – but it is certainly true that this work is definitive in Bergson's own philosophical development because it represents the most general extension of his philosophy of time towards nature as a whole.[4] This last fact must be made clear from the outset: *Creative Evolution* posits a theory of time first and only second a philosophy of life: it is this temporal property of biological phenomena which draws Bergson towards this area.[5]

This can be clearly seen from the final pages of *Creative Evolution* where Bergson rebukes the mechanistic model of biological evolution propounded by Herbert Spencer, whose writings a generation earlier had made him the most popular evolutionist of his day, the Richard Dawkins of the Nineteenth-century. In particular, Bergson takes exception to what he calls Spencer's 'false evolutionism':[6]

> The cardinal error of Spencer is to take experience already allotted as given, whereas the true problem is to know how the allotment was worked [...]. A true evolutionism would propose to discover by what *modus vivendi*, gradually obtained, the intellect has adopted its plan of structure, and matter its mode of subdivision.[7]

Spencer does not follow a true genesis or evolution but is simply '*reconstructing evolution with fragments of the evolved.*' Such a reverse

2 See Čapek 1971; Sipfle 1969; Deleuze 1988; Hyppolite 1991b; Jankélévitch 1959; Merleau-Ponty 1960; Levinas 1987b.
3 Moore 1996, p.9.
4 The introduction to *CE* (p.xv n [*OE*, p.494n]) claims that what it takes from *TFW* are the notions of 'continuity and creation' – metaphysical ideas concerning time rather than appearances.
5 *TFW*, p.153 [*OE*, p.102].
6 *CE*, p.xiv [*OE*, p.493].
7 *CE*, p.389 [*OE*, pp.805-806].

engineering deals only with 'reality in its present form'. What Bergson sees here is the diametric opposite of his own theory of a *creative* evolution: a materialistic, mechanistic, reductive and deterministic picture resting on the two sins of retrospection and conformism: we can only adopt this view if we 'place ourselves in one of the points where evolution comes to a head [...] and it is this part that we declare representative of the whole.'[8] But this strategy simply removes what is *temporal* from evolution. The present is idolised, evolution having supposedly reached its best possible outcome in its current state. Likewise, the past is made into a fixed inevitability that could only have taken one direction: towards us. Finally, the future is abolished as there can be no genuine creation of novelty but only and ever the predetermined implementation of the one outcome made possible by the present. So what we have behind these two approaches to evolution are really two rival philosophies of time.

One hundred years on and we find Richard Dawkins maintaining the traditional approach of Herbert Spencer. He asserts that geneticists have to work in this retrospective manner, going backwards from the differing phenotypic traits of two adult animals which are known to differ in one gene, so that they can then posit the influence of that gene on those traits. By reconstructing evolution with '*fragments of the evolved*' the whole organism is atomised into traits and remanufactured in imagination with the assumption that nature works in the same way as human technology, that is, by associating parts into wholes (rather than dissociating whole processes into phase-parts). In Dawkins' view, however, the evolution of the animal *can* be predetermined in this most stark manner, with the metaphor of 'genetic space' allowing us to see each species' development localised within a multi-dimensional field of all possible genetic configurations. There is no novelty here: every possible future is mapped out in a storeroom of possibilities.[9] The temporality or creativity of evolution is eliminated. Most philosophy of biology since the 1930s has been assured of one thing: evolution is uncreative.

So why has a 'creative' evolution proved untenable? Perhaps because, as an exercise in philosophy of biology, Bergson's account in *Creative Evolution* was too inventive for its time. When the book first appeared,

8 *CE*, pp.385, 52 [*OE*, pp.802, 537].
9 See Richard Dawkins, *The Blindwatchmaker*, Harlow, Essex, Longman Scientific and Technical, 1986, pp.54-55, pp.66-67.

William James was taken aback by what he saw as its profuse originality, warning Bergson in a letter from 1907 that this work 'risks remaining in darkness for a hundred years'.[10] Bergson himself was well aware that its picture of life and its relationship with matter was weakened by a lack of corroborative evidence from contemporary biology. The axioms of any biological science in Bergson's day were tethered to a classical picture of matter with no place for a theory of life based on emergence or, in Bergson's terminology, 'the uninterrupted up-surge of novelty' which he also names 'duration'.

Indeed, essential to the theorisation of life in *Creative Evolution* is a rethinking of the nature of *matter* even before that of life. That the relationship between the two must lie at the heart of any understanding of biology is obvious: but behind that again, according to Bergson, must be one's understanding of matter *per se*. The problem is that the two – matter and life – cannot be understood in isolation from each other, so that getting our picture of either of them right entails getting it right for both together. What Bergson gives us in the third chapter of *Creative Evolution* is nothing less than a genesis of matter, an *élan matériel*: matter is given its own movement, its own duration. Matter does not lie as the uncreated creator of life as most reductionist accounts argue; rather, matter is created alongside life: the two are co-engendered, there is a genetics of matter alongside that of life. That is why certain new, non-reductive approaches to biology, which are only now appearing, make it finally possible for Bergson's process theory of life to find the corroborative evidence it initially lacked. That matter and life embody two forms of movement, as Bergson argues of order, is also central to the most radical approaches in biology today in the sciences of complexity.

Finally, this very *duality* of origin, of life and matter *together*, will help answer the resulting question of 'substance' (i.e., what is it that subtends both matter and life?). The answer is, according to Bergson, the very movement of duality or 'dichotomy' itself. The *élan* is not a substance so much as a principle of *dissociation, dichotomy* and internal division. Yet this internal dichotomy is not so much physical or even metaphysical as it is metatheoretical: if evolution has an end or objective, then it is to place itself at issue, to question whether to evolve or not.

10 Letter to Bergson from William James in 1907 in Henri Bergson, *Mélanges,* edited by André Robinet, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1972, p.725. Henceforth, *Mélanges* is abbreviated as *M.*

The Time of Life

In any ordinary sense of the term, evolution means 'change'.[11] And that is all there essentially is to Bergson's theory of life: a theory of time generalised. Bergson frequently describes biology in a temporal fashion, the living body being a '*register in which time is being inscribed.*'[12] Within evolutionary theory, of course, there have been constant struggles between those who would direct this phenomenon of change towards some or other end and those who would defiantly resist such a move. Yet, while we will discover that teleology is in fact present in even the most apparently mechanistic approaches to life, the most notable exemplars of finalism in biology have always been animism, orthogenesis, and vitalism. Bergson has been wrongly placed in the last of these three categories. Any reading of his time-philosophy will clearly see that the emphasis is always on the unforeseeable and indeterminate creation of novelty, and this is no less true in his application of that theory to evolution.

Essential to this philosophy is the realisation that every moment brings with it something 'radically new'.[13] This is opposed to a conception of time as simply a re-arrangement of the pre-existing, which is, in Bergson's opinion, its scientific definition.[14] On Bergson's very different understanding, however, time must be creative: if it isn't inventive, it isn't time at all. In real time each new moment is qualitatively different from the last and possesses, as Bergson puts it, 'an effective action and a reality of its own'.[15] Paradoxical though this may sound, there is a continuity of

11 Elliot Sober, *The Philosophy of Biology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993, p.1.

12 Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, London, Macmillan, 1911, p.17. Translated by Arthur Mitchell from *L'Evolution créatrice*, in *Oeuvres,* edited by André Robinet, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1959, pp.487-809. Future references to Bergson's works will be to the English translations with the pagination of *Oeuvres,* abbreviated as *OE*, in square brackets after the English pagination. *Creative Evolution* is abbreviated here as *CE*.

13 Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, New York, Philosophical Library, 1946, p.35 [*OE*, p.1276]. Translated by Mabelle L. Andison from *Le Pensée et le mouvant: Essais et conférences*, in *OE*, pp.1249-482. *Creative Mind* is abbreviated here as *CM*.

14 See *M*, p.766.

15 *CE*, p.361 [*OE*, p.784]; *CE*, p.17 [*OE*, p.508].

change, a heterogeneous continuity where 'everything changes and yet remains the same'.[16]

Contrary to this, the scientific definition of time consists of the 'elimination' of real change.[17] Scientific theory and method are predicated on an axiom of mechanism: the world is a machine that can be studied, quantified, predicted, and so somewhat controlled. Bergson has no quarrel with that assumption if it is necessary for the pursuit of scientific knowledge: it is the lack of an excuse for our philosophical confusion that both troubles him and stimulates his research. In absolute terms, the universe, both where it is living and inert, is indeterminate and open-ended.

Nevertheless, we still find eminent evolutionists characterising Bergson as a 'teleological' philosopher, who believes that 'evolutionary change necessarily proceeds along determined paths.'[18] This misrepresentation of his work is so prevalent than one is tempted simply to respond that Bergson is not a vitalist at all were it not that what is really at issue here is the meaning of the word 'vital'. Bergson does use the term *'élan vital'*, but the emphasis is on the first half of the term rather than the second, the vitality in question is a type of time, a type of organisation, rather than any mysterious notion of an *anima sensitiva*, vital fluid or *archeus*. It is noteworthy, in this respect, that the entry in *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* under 'vitalism' does not discuss Bergson's work, finding that more suitable for treatment in the context of his general metaphysics of time.[19] In his own survey of the contemporary literature in evolutionary theory, Bergson does of course discuss vitalism, but only to reject it, on account of its finalism. What he does admire is its heuristic virtues: it acts as a label for our ignorance, showing the insufficiency of mechanism in explaining life, while that mechanism itself simply 'invites us to ignore

16 Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1911, p.260 [*OE*, p.333]. Translated by Nancy Margaret Paul and W.Scott Palmer from *Matière et mémoire: Essai sur la relation du corps avec l'esprit*, in *OE*, pp.159-379.
17 See *M*, p.766.
18 René Thom, *Structural Stability and Morphogenesis: An Outline of a General Theory of Models*, trans. D.H. Fowler, Reading, Mass, W.A. Benjamin, 1975, p.159; Theodosius Dobzhanskey et al, *Evolution*, San Francisco, W.H. Freeman, 1977, p.503. If philosophers really did read scientific work as poorly as some scientists read their philosophy, then some of the criticisms made of the misappropriation of science by philosophers might begin to ring true.
19 See Morton Beckner, 'Vitalism', in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Volume VIII, New York, Macmillan and The Free Press, 1972, pp.253-6: p.255.

that ignorance'. This critical aspect of vitalism does have real value, but Bergson has no truck with any positive content that 'superposes on mechanism' some additional agency, such as the entelechy of Hans Driesch.[20]

Dissociation

'Life', Bergson writes, proceeds '*by dissociation and division*'. A living entity is not what has been composed from cells so much as what 'has made the cells by means of [a] dissociation'.[21] But in prioritising this 'dissociation' over association, what is in question is not what type of *thing* life is – a lot of little things coming together or one big thing breaking up. Rather, it is a question of what *mode of process* life constitutes. Bergson often uses the term 'organisation' instead of life, which is quite appropriate as 'organisation' connotes the residual effect of past actions accumulated within the present. Organisation is a type of movement rich with history. Bergson describes it as a continuous change of form linking the embryo with the adult organism, and even ageing is explained as the further development of the embryo.[22] The cell itself, in being formed by dissociation, is not the deposit of some great ethereal vitality from above, but one phase of a process whose temporality, rhythms or phases are essential to its nature. Life as such, on the other hand, when understood as a mode of organisation, is a capacity prior to, or the condition of possibility for, any organic form. The antecedent unity implicit in the concept of dissociation will itself be examined later when we look back to its ultimate origin; but certainly at a stage when cells and individual organisms are being formed, the generative unity in question is only relative. Any unity can itself be regarded as the product of an earlier dissociation, an ongoing creation formed through the cascading dissolution of earlier, provisional and relative unities. There is only the 'inexorable law', Bergson says, which dooms every living entity to eternal division and subdivision until it covers 'the widest possible extent in

20 *CE*, pp.45, 44n [*OE*, pp.531, 530n].
21 *CE*, p.94 [*OE*, p.571]; see also pp.106, 272 [*OE*, pp.581, 714]; *CE*, p.274 [*OE*, p.715].
22 *CE*, pp.19-20 [*OE*, pp.509-510].

space'. This continual '*bifurcation*' is not incidental, but lies at the heart of evolution.[23]

Consequently, Bergson would take issue with the image of the tree of life prevalent in many contemporary versions of evolutionary theory. As the strong version of this thesis goes, there is a single tree of life with all species branching off from what was originally one common ancestor.[24] This idea remains too Aristotelian and hierarchical for Bergson, for it pictures life as a successive linearity rather than as a network of coincident dissociations in every direction. Bergson's alternative image is of an explosion outward – with each exploded fragment itself generating a new explosion – rather than of growth upwards. Likewise, organisms should not be regarded as natural kinds but as collections or nexuses of different tendencies, for no species, genus or kingdom uniquely possesses any one characteristic. All vary primarily in their tendency to emphasise these common characters: as he advises, we should seek '*dynamic* definitions' in biological taxonomy.[25]

It follows that there is no '*life in general*' marching inexorably towards some goal but simply sporadic currents of life with real creation ongoing at all points along them. Evolution does not operate gradually by slowly accumulating minute changes mechanically until a new species is created. For Bergson, life is a continuum of heterogeneity, with each species being a sudden emergence of novelty and invention: 'discontinuous evolution ... proceeds by bounds, obtaining at each stopping-place a combination, perfect of its kind'.[26] This is not to claim that the constant creativity of evolution is harmonious or progressive (whatever that 'progress' might entail): disparity, disharmony and failure, Bergson writes, 'seems to be the rule, success exceptional and always imperfect.' Life is replete with 'deviations, arrests, set-backs' at both the level of bodily formation and the ecological integration of species. What unity and coherence there is, is

23 Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, London, Macmillan, 1911, p.65 [*OE*, p.102]. Translated by Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell from *Le Rire: Essai sur la signification du comique* in *OE*, pp.381-485; *CE*, p.57 [*OE*, p.541], translation altered.
24 See Sober, *The Philosophy of Biology*, p.7.
25 See *CE*, pp.112-113 [*OE*, p.586].
26 See *CE*, pp.27-28 [*OE*, pp.516]; Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, Notre Dame, Indiana, Notre Dame Press, 1977, p.127 [*OE*, p.1082]. Translated by R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton from *Les Deux sources de la morale et de la religion*, in *OE*, pp.979-1247. *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* is abbreviated here as *TSMR*.

again the product not of a movement towards unity, but the disintegration of one 'implied in this movement itself'.[27]

Metabiology

Admittedly, Bergson does present evidence for evolutionary convergence, taking as his example the independent evolution of light sensitivity in molluscs (an 'eye' of sorts) and vertebrates.[28] But he is not arguing for a teleology here so much as confirmation of some (strictly non-theological) anterior source of organisation, as against the accumulation of traits by pure chance being proposed by those mechanistic theories at the time he was writing. What this source will consist of, ultimately, will be a tension between two opposed forces or tendencies, an originating impulse that is already internally divided and perpetually divisive, a symmetry which is always already broken. This divisiveness is precisely what propels it forward and informs any point on its progress. Hence, it must always be regarded as a type of complex movement rather than a mysterious power. Any specific point on its path, any organism in other words, represents a forced accommodation between these opposed tendencies. Discovering what these tendencies are takes us into metatheoretical territory, for the two are self-referential: on the one side, the tendency towards having an end and so ceasing to create; on the other, the tendency towards never-ending creativity. 'Aims' and 'convergences' are admissible in Bergson's theory of life, but they must be understood at a second-order remove and dualistically. One aim is simply not to evolve at all but re-volve in a circle with a fixed nature; the other aim is aimlessness itself, continual invention. This internal contradiction fuels the motor of life's engine.

In other words, the evolution *to* continue evolving is not a teleology strictly speaking but, in a self-referential manner, an evolution that places itself at *issue*: an evolution that can either continue or fail to evolve further. This is represented in *Creative Evolution* primarily in its non-teleological conception of evolution. Having no objective *telos* for life makes Bergsonian evolutionism radically non-hierarchical. Just as *Time and Free Will* argued that grey is not a variation upon white, neither is Homo sapiens nor any other species a variation upon a transcendental

27 *CE*, pp.136, 109-110, 102 [*OE*, pp.129, 104, 96].
28 See *CE*, pp.64-72 [*OE*, pp.546-553].

theme. Nonetheless, there is a scale amongst the living, but only an immanent, self-referential one set by the respective capacity of each species to continue openly evolving – it concerns nothing else. It is sometimes phrased as the differing ability with which organisms accumulate and dissipate energy, with more mobile, explosive animals taking a stand over vegetable forms of life, the latter not having 'the same power to evolve'.[29]

In psychological terms *Creative Evolution* expresses this power as a kind of 'attention to life'. Indeed, attention to life can appear in *Creative Evolution* as nature's sole imperative. If there are any hierarchies to be found, then they are created immanently within life when each species falls into self-absorption and a disregard for 'almost all the rest of life'. The lower form of life is the species and individual who 'think only of themselves' behaving as if 'the general movement of life stopped at it instead of passing through it. It thinks only of itself, it lives only for itself.' Bergson also describes this disregard through which a hierarchy of the living is instituted as 'a partial sleep': whichever species manages to retain the greatest degree of wakefulness automatically attains superiority.[30]

The evolutionary scale does not ultimately concern rationality, complexity, or language *per se* (though these may be by-products of an underlying hierarchy). The hierarchy pertains to different levels of change and of openness to other forms of life. The creation of an unfounded hierarchy through self-absorption is symptomatic of a closure that consequently feeds back to form a *well-founded* hierarchy with, all else being equal, the self-absorbed species at the lowest point on the scale. This is the great irony of the little teleology posited by Bergson: it involves the ability (always at issue and never secure) to evolve towards further evolution.

One of the major sources of tension amongst contemporary evolutionists concerns the target of natural selection: does it operate for the benefit (or duplication) of the organism or its genes? Before the advent of genetic reductionism an earlier debate involved claims for selection amongst groups of organisms versus claims that selection acted on individual organisms alone. The advocates for group selection lost that argument to the individualists. Our interest now is with Bergson's

29 See *CE*, pp.265-6, 124 [*OE*, pp.708-709, 595].
30 *CE*, p.135 [*OE*, p.604]; *CE*, p.53 [*OE*, pp.537-538]; *CE*, p.268 [*OE*, p.711]; *CE*, pp.135-137, p.142 [*OE*, pp.604-605, p.610].

subversion of the whole notion of a unit of selection in evolutionary theory through his attempt to steer between outright externalism and internalism. In fact, whether one is branded an externalist or an internalist depends on which unit of selection one favours, and so where one locates the forces of selection. If the unit is the gene, then its environment comprises both its phenotype and extended phenotype as they extend outward to the benefit or detriment of the gene's chances of being duplicated. If it is the group, then the environment consists of an entirely different configuration where, what would seem external from the gene's perspective, will be internal from the group point of view.

Bergson attempts to follow an intermediate route between externalism and internalism by integrating these partial views into a larger, though thereby less definite, perspective. He does so not because he favours some new alternative unit of selection, but because the individuality of all such units is questionable. Both internalism and externalism wrongly place the emphasis on the part – irrespective of whether that part is the gene, organism, or group – rather than the whole, which is life. Certainly, the organism is not individual enough for Bergson. Its individuality is both relative and unstable, being decentred spatially, with 'elements composing the individual ... [having themselves] a certain individuality,' as well as temporally, with each organism being connected with its 'remotest ancestor' and 'all that descends from the ancestor in divergent directions'. This is not then to confer the prize on either the group above or the gene below. The issue of individuality – what is inside and what is outside – is not just undecideable in all directions, up and down, it is actually indeterminate for reasons which are intrinsic to life itself.

In a self-referential manner, one part of the motive force of life resides in the tendency to create isolated individuals. As Bergson puts it, life 'manifests a search for individuality, as if it strove to constitute systems naturally isolated, naturally closed'. Life in part concerns the *creation* of an inside and an outside and so cannot be explained in terms which take a particular inside and outside for granted. That this search is in vain, that life must incessantly move in an open direction without ever reaching closure, is the other part of the aforementioned motive force driving it. This is the one type of finality Bergson allows within the vital realm, one that involves the whole notion of life as such rather than any specific unit.[31] What little teleology there is in *Creative Evolution* is self-

31 *CE*, pp.45, 15 [*OE*, pp.531, 506-507].

referential: life is a movement evolving towards the ideal of perpetual evolution, and yet it is one with no guarantee against falling into a circle of bare repetition. In making evolution itself the 'issue' of life (in the logical and productive senses of that term), *Creative Evolution* incorporates the possibility of evolving to another *ideal*: that of a non-evolving state. Both the processes of organic life and of death are immanent to the *élan*. It is as much a theory of biology as it is a theory of 'metabiology', though in a fuller sense of that term than George Bernard Shaw intended when he used it in *Back to Methuselah*. Evolution becomes meta-evolution. In sum, Bergson's philosophy of life has as much metatheoretical import as it has biological significance.

The New Biology

As against the charge of vitalism, Bergson clearly believes that organised, living matter is made of entirely the same stuff as inert matter. He is thoroughly aware that there is no principle that might stop physics and chemistry from synthesising living matter from non-living matter.[32] What differentiates the two are modes of organisation, types of order or, in other words, movement. What is certainly not the same as living matter, however, are those 'artificial systems' cut out of inert matter by science:

> That life is a kind of mechanism I cordially agree. But is it the mechanism of parts artificially isolated within the whole of the universe, or is it the mechanism of the real whole? The real whole might well be, we conceive, an indivisible continuity. The systems we cut out within it would, properly speaking, not then be *parts* at all; they would be *partial views* of the whole.[33]

32 See Henri Bergson, *Mind-Energy: Lectures and Essays*, Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1975, p.26. Translated by H. Wildon Carr from *L'Energie Spirituelle: Essais et conférences* (1919), in *Oeuvres*, pp. 811-977. *Mind-Energy* is abbreviated here as *ME*. Experiments with 'pre-biotic synthesis' have shown that amino acids (the building blocks of proteins which are essential to life) are formed under wide ranging conditions utilising water, nitrogen, ammonia, hydrogen cynanide and methane, provided that there is a source of energy supplied such as an electric discharge. Nonetheless, how these proteins then contribute to the further development of life has not proved so susceptible to artificial recreation thus far.
33 *CE*, p.32 [*OE*, p.520].

The only material systems which are bereft of all genuine temporal qualities – allowing for perfect repetition, bidirectionality and quantification – are artificially closed or isolated systems, that is, ones which either do not exchange any matter with their environment (but do exchange energy) or exchange neither matter nor energy.[34] Bergson defines inert matter itself as the tendency to constitute closed systems, but the closure is never perfect and is only completed artificially by scientific theory: 'there is no reason, therefore, why a duration, and so a form of existence like our own, should not be attributed to the systems that science isolates, provided such systems are reintegrated into the Whole'. What is needed then is not some extramaterial principle but a new theory of matter: a dynamic materialism as far apart from classical materialism, Bergson hopes, as modern mathematics is from classical mathematics.[35]

The newly interconnected sciences of chaos (which look at the complex behaviour of simple phenomena) and complexity (which looks at the complex or simple behaviour of complex phenomena) appear at last to be providing Bergson with his long awaited new vision of matter and life. With regard to both we must point out that neither assume the existence of pure chaos or disorder: it is a deterministic chaos in question, 'where precise laws lead to apparently random behaviour which is in fact minutely organised'.[36] This tallies with Bergson's critique of disorder in *Creative Evolution* where he argues that there is no such thing as pure disorder, this notion being an illusion generated through a confusion between two different types of order: material (or geometric) and vital.[37] In the modern parlance, one might call the first 'deterministic chaos' and the second 'complexity'.

Between these two types of order, then, the sciences of chaos and complexity make the general point that life is comprised of 'complex non-linear dynamic systems with rich networks of interacting elements' which are attracted to 'settle dynamically at the edge of chaos'.[38] In other words, life is a dynamic phenomenon *par excellence*, a metastable transitory phase between frozen order and (deterministic) chaos. The echo of Bergson's theory of life to be heard in these new ideas is uncanny. Nearly

34 *CE*, pp.10-11 [*OE*, pp.502-503]; see also Coveney and Highfield, *The Arrow of Time*, pp.152-153.
35 *CE*, pp.12, 33-34 [*OE*, pp.503, 521-522].
36 Coveney and Highfield, *The Arrow of Time*, p.183.
37 See *CE*, pp.244-249 [*OE*, pp.691-696].
38 Goodwin 1994, p.169.

one hundred years ago he had characterised life as '*a reality which is making itself in a reality which is unmaking itself*'.[39] In his theory, these two realities, that of vital order and geometric order (deterministic chaos), border each other as two movements, and life (the vital order) lies always on the brink or edge of falling into the opposite form of order.

As to the features of this vital order, Bergson contrasts the evolution of artificially isolated systems with that of living systems. Whereas the former evolve algorithmically, living systems evolve chaotically, that is, they are not influenced at a time T by the previous moment T_{-1}, but by the whole of their history.[40] Instead of a linear progression, we have a non-linear creativity or radical novelty.[41] A present moment expresses the action of any amongst an infinity of possible influences from the past, a contraction, so to speak, of the past into the present. There are, however, no general laws for any one of these contractions: they are chaotic.

Traditionally, the choice for a philosophy of creative change has been between either an absolute creation *ex nihilo* (a concept Bergson rejects for reasons we cannot enter into here),[42] or falling back into thinking of the new as a rearrangement of the old, that is, of pre-existing entities. Novelty is simply a new combination of the elements, a shuffle of the cards, a quantitative event. Of course, this is precisely how the intellect operates according to Bergson. Its natural function is 'to bind like to like' as it can only understand the new as a variant of the old: the new must somehow be contained in the old.[43] Hence the mysterious quality of the phenomena of emergence which have made such an impact in the sciences of complexity. In certain schools of biology, emergence is regarded as the rule rather than the exception.[44] Concepts such as self-organisation, feedback, autocatalysis, and non-linear change facilitate the emergence of real novelty. Sexual reproduction, for instance, was understood on the older model of the selfish gene as essentially replication, with novelty just as an accidental error in self-copying, whereas in the new thinking it is seen as a genuinely creative event.[45] Niles Eldridge sees reproduction as a

39 *CE*, p.261 [*OE*, p.705].
40 This past is described as 'very long'; see *CE*, pp.21-22 [*OE*, p.511].
41 *CE*, pp.24, 30 [*OE*, pp.513, 518].
42 See John Mullarkey, 'Bergson's Method of Multiplicity', in *Metaphilosophy*, Volume XXVI (1995), pp.230-259.
43 *CE*, p.211 [*OE*, p.665].
44 Cohen and Stewart, *The Collapse of Chaos*, p.436.
45 Goodwin, *How the Leopard Changed its Spots*, p.163.

'more making': organisms make more of themselves rather than simply replicate.[46] Similarly, animal behaviour too is regarded as an emergent order that is not imposed by programming but generated through powers internal to collections of organisms.[47] These developments are part of a holistic approach to nature that no longer needs to rest more on impressionistic language than 'hard' evidence. The data from computer models, field research and laboratory experiments bear out a picture of laminated reality, with not one level wholly explaining the next. Attention is focused not on the fine details of isolated small-scale systems, as is the tendency for reductionists, but on phenomena at every level – micro, macro and cosmic – with a view to discovering 'large scale patterns, rules, meta-rules'.[48] Thus, the picture now appearing is of a material reality that comprises a plurality of independent levels of process. The ideas from Bergson's nascent biophilosophy, though necessarily vague and episodic, show the new relevance of his thought in the light of such work done by Stuart Kauffmann, Brian Goodwin and others.

The Genetics of Matter

If we were to continue to talk of two types of order and two types of movement, the impression would naturally arise that Bergson has simply redrawn the dualism of mind and space found in *Time and Free Will* on a cosmic scale. And yet *Creative Evolution* endeavours to naturalise space and mind in an expanded picture of duration. It is Bergson's belief that '*the more consciousness is intellectualized, the more is matter spatialized.*' According to this account, the only coherent hypothesis to explain the intellect's apparently adequate adaptation to the physical world – its covariances or correspondences – is to suppose that it has '*been brought about quite naturally, because it is the same inversion of the same movement which creates at once the intellectuality of mind and the materiality of things*'.[49] The same movement by which mind is homogenised into an intellect of 'distinct concepts' also forms concrete matter into a homogeneous, 'spatialised' collection of 'objects excluding

46 Eldridge, *Reinventing Darwin*, pp.180-181.
47 Goodwin, *How the Leopard Changed its Spots*, p.178.
48 Cohen and Stewart, *The Collapse of Chaos*, p.391.
49 *CE*, pp.199, 217 [*OE*, pp.656, 670]. The other hypotheses Bergson discusses are empiricism, idealism and pre-established harmony.

one another.'[50] Georges Canguilhem has described this as 'the formation of form ... correlative to the materialisation of matter'.[51] It could also be described as an inverted hylomorphism: our intellectual representation of the object stemming from becoming increasingly non-identical with it. But the crucial difference is that the duality of *hyle* and *morphe* is derivative and engendered.

The homogenisation of the matter into space and mind into distinct concepts consists in the one movement. Alongside evolutionary epistemology, therefore, we find an evolutionary physics. Just what this homogenisation begins with and operates on is described as 'a wider and higher form of existence' in one location, an 'initial force' elsewhere, and now requires a fuller examination.[52]

A further ambiguity in Bergson's work concerns whether or not matter is a coeternal but separate form from *life*, or whether these two are implied forms incubated within something else. Bergson can appear, at times, as an idealist allowing only consciousness any reality, with matter then becoming an illusory epiphenomenon – an impression which has also spurred others to extend the vitalist label to Bergson. This feeling stems in part from a confusing use of terminology. Matter is sometimes opposed to life, sometimes to 'spirit' or 'consciousness' and sometimes to the *élan vital* (the latter four being made equivalents). Alternatively, life is also regarded as primitive, holding matter and spirit as potential forms within itself. These issues clearly need to be negotiated with care, because where the confusion really arises is between the two moments of what we might term Bergson's 'genetic' dualism, between the moment of unity and the moment of duality.

In parts of *Creative Evolution* matter appears as a negative epiphenomenon when it is regarded as an 'arrest' of the 'action that generates form', or in other words, of life.[53] But other related texts clearly show that, while matter is indeed regarded as 'the inverse of consciousness', it remains wrong to think of either of them as derivative relative to each other. Rather, they are 'coexistent and interdependent' or 'complementary aspects of creation'. This interdependence of the two can be examined from the standpoint of paradox. Life, being dissociative in

50 *CE*, p.199 [*OE*, p.656]. See also, *MM*, p.239 [*OE*, p.319].
51 Canguilhem, p.206.
52 *CE*, p.197 [*OE*, p.653]; *M*, p.989.
53 *CE*, p.252 [*OE*, p.698].

the actual biological forms it takes, must divide if it is to create in any concrete, material reality. Materiality is regarded by Bergson not so much as a principle of individuation *per se* as of spatialisation and so what splits the *élan* into a stream of ramifying channels. Yet it is also said that what is creative about life *are* its acts of division; there never is a pure creativity without material division. In opposing the creativity of life, matter also ensures that creativity.

The way out of this paradox is through the introduction of different *types* of life into our reading: life as it is actualised in organic form, and life in its virtual potentiality as a type of organisation. Bergson's last major work, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, indicates this distinction with the nomenclature of 'nature' and 'life' respectively. Phenomena connected with 'the generative effort of life', are at the same time 'breaking with nature'. These two forms of vitality indicate two phases in a continuous evolution, from virtual to actual. Consequently, dissociation is produced by two phenomena: the resistance of matter to life *qua* virtual, as well as 'an unstable balance of tendencies' or 'duality' of tendency which this virtual life bears within itself and that is actualised as organic nature and inorganic matter.[54]

However, if we can by-pass our paradox by admitting different forms of life, actual and virtual, we cannot by-pass the corollary that follows from this: if there are two forms of life, there must also be two forms of matter: one actual form constituting the obstacles which resist life in its actuality, but also another virtual type, that takes the form of a 'tendency' within the virtual form of life. In other words, the actual forms of both life and matter are dissociated from each other and cause further dissociations, but the virtual forms are held together in a tension that is confusingly also called life or the *élan vital*. But this last could have equally been baptised the '*élan matériel*', and in fact *Creative Evolution* frequently describes matter too as a movement.[55] One could thus paint a mirror image of the Bergsonian stereotype – a Bergsonian materialism depicting life as merely matter turned against itself. Yet both pictures are partial points of view, for every inversion of a movement is nonetheless a movement all its own. Nothing can be described as the opposite of movement *per se*, for as Bergson admits, 'there never is real immobility, if we understand by that

54 *ME*, p.23 [*OE*, p.828]; *TSMR*, pp.255, 256, 52-54 [*OE*, pp.1192, 1193, 1018-1020]; *CE*, pp.103, 268 [*OE*, pp.578, 711].
55 See, for instance, *CE*, p.263 [*OE*, p.707].

an absence of movement'. Movement is reality itself, and what we call immobility is a certain state analogous to that produced when two trains move at the same speed and in the same direction on parallel tracks.[56]

Hence, neither matter nor life is prior to each other in time or ontological status – they are mutually dependent because they imply each other at a virtual level. When 'life' dissociates in its collision with matter, there is here a meeting between life in its virtual form (where matter and organic life are merely potential) with previously actualised forms of life. We might say that matter is external to organic life while being internal to life as a principle of organisation. Yet, we must remember that these virtualities are theoretical: as internal, the existence of a pure undissociated life with matter as its interior opponent is only an ideal. There is no pure creativity or inertia just as there are no pure virtualities or actualities in Bergsonian thought. These are not immobile states but phases of a movement. In actual form, matter is always external to life, but one might say that its condition of possibility is contained within life understood as a mode of organisation. It is by a feedback loop that the external form of matter acts on its own internal form (in the inherent tension of life) in order to actualise both more matter and organic life: a cosmic form of autocatalysis, one might say.

The careful commentators bear this out in their own readings of this difficult area of Bergson's thought. H. Wildon Carr – an early commentator – describes Bergson's picture of mind and matter as 'divergent tendencies' which point to 'an original and necessary dichotomy.'[57] But it is Eugene May who has definitively analysed this subject:

> it is better to say that Bergson includes *both* matter and spirit within the *élan vital* ... It does not precontain matter as a "seminal seed," for this would be to fall into the mechanistic view that "all is given." That is, it does not precontain matter *in its material existence*. Yet it does, in a very real sense, precontain matter in a virtual, unrealized state. This is brought out by Bergson when he teaches that matter comes into being as something actual or realized by passing from an "intensive" to an "extensive" state ... In other words, the *élan* precontains

56 See *CM*, p.143-4 [*OE*, p.1378].
57 H.W. Carr, 'Translator's Preface', in *ME*, pp.v-viii: p.vii.

> both consciousness and matter as interpenetrating virtualities, and it gives rise to both in the course of its actualization, in the course of giving rise to what is *other* than itself.[58]

Bergson is not simply a dualist in any usual sense of the term. The real crime of any monistic philosophy is simply that it is static. Most of the critical examinations of Bergson agree on this: his thought embraces a '*dynamic* monism' allowing for 'qualitative *diversity*'; he is neither a monist nor a dualist alone: the 'infrastructure' of his philosophy is at once 'dualist and unitary'.[59] H. Wildon Carr mentions 'divergent tendencies' in Bergsonism rather than any dualism but, whatever the formulation, in each case it is a question of a process of dualisation over static dualism or monism.[60] In his own words, what Bergson advocates are dualities according to a 'law of dichotomy'. By this he understands a universal principle of bifurcation which explains how every unity is provisional and practical, being destined to fragment for the simple reason that life, as we learnt, is understood as a reciprocal interpenetration of opposed forces held together in unstable tension.[61] This constant dichotomization (without subsequent Hegelian mediation, we must add) is the driving force of reality. Biological evolution is a movement with a self-referential teleology; that is, it evolves towards the ideal of perpetual evolution. Yet, in making evolution itself the 'issue' of life (in the logical and productive senses of that term), *Creative Evolution* also incorporates the possibility of evolving to another *ideal*: that of a non-evolving state. Both the processes of organic life and of death are immanent to the *élan*. It is as much a theory of biology as it is a theory of 'metabiology'.

58 William E. May, 'The Reality of Matter in the Metaphysics of Bergson', in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Volume X (1970), pp.611-642: p.634.
59 Čapek 1971, p.193; Čapek 1987, p.132; Mourélos 1964, p.90.
60 Carr 1975, p.vii.
61 See *TSMR*, pp.296ff [*OE*, pp.1227ff].

Pli 14 (2003), 144-158

Nature from the Perspective of Immanence.*

ROBIN DURIE

It is easy to lose the sense of Merleau-Ponty's courses on *Nature* in the detail of the extended discussions of thinkers from the history of philosophy or contemporary scientific problematics. That is why it is necessary to return again to the remarkable lines with which he introduces the First Course of 1956-57. The Greek etymology of 'nature' – i.e., *φύω* – 'alludes to the vegetal,'[1] while its Latin root encompasses the notions of birth and life. Nature is, therefore, from the first distinct from base matter, from inanimate materiality, from what Husserl would call *die bloße sachen*. On the other hand, nature is distinct from human production, from human thought – from culture or *Geist*. Despite these distinctions from

* The following paper consists of a presentation given to the Workshop devoted to Merleau-Ponty's *La Nature*, held at the University of Warwick on Friday, 30th May, 2003. The Editors asked whether, given the extended discussion of Bergson contained in the presentation, I would be willing to submit the essay to this edition of *Pli*. This context accounts for why, in a collection of essays focusing on the work of Bergson, the current essay takes a text of Merleau-Ponty as its point of departure. On the day, the presentation was received as being overtly critical of Merleau-Ponty. I would therefore like to stress that I would not wish to undermine the project of an immanent ontology of nature, which I argue the lectures seek to attain. Rather, the force of the demonstration lies in the claim that Bergsonism may well provide a more appropriate resource for this project than Husserlian phenomenology. Within the context of this claim, the points of contention would be: (i) whether sensing and sensed are indeed mutually exclusive according to Husserl's phenomenological account of the lived body; and (ii) whether Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the flesh, to the extent that it is founded in Husserl's phenomenology of the lived body, remains bound to the specificity of that phenomenology. The initial impetus for the reading of Merleau-Ponty developed in this essay stems from Dorothea Olkowski's essay "A Psychoanalysis of Nature?" in Chiasmi International 2: Merleau-Ponty, From Nature to Ontology (Vrin, Mimesis, Univ. of Memphis, 2000), pp. 185-206.

1 Merleau-Ponty, *La Nature: Notes, Cours du Collège de France*, edited by Dominique Séglard (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1994), p. 19. All further page references in the body of the text are to this volume.

spirit and 'mere' materiality, however, Nature does not simply constitute a *separate* ontological region. For, on the one hand, nature is irreducibly material, while, on the other hand, it possesses a meaning, 'without this meaning being posited by thought: it is the autoproduction of meaning [*sens*].' [p. 19]

Thus, in opposition to the separatist dualism of Descartes, which has determined the course of modern philosophy, Merleau-Ponty from the outset appears to propose an ontological element which is both material and meaningful, and as such bears within itself the potential for being differentiated into the ontological realms of materiality on the one hand, and spirit on the other. Rather than beginning with separate ontological realms, and then seeking to determine how these realms might interact with, or relate to, one another, Merleau-Ponty's goal would be to start with Nature as the conjunction of these ontological realms which can then be differentiated from it.

But this point of departure reveals two fundamental questions: First, is nature anything other than, anything over and above, a simple collection of the merely material and the 'spiritual' – that is to say, is it anything other than the basic mixture of the two? Second, how are we to gain access to nature, how does nature disclose itself, if at all? In highlighting the difficulty of this second question, Merleau-Ponty discloses his attitude towards the first question, when he writes:

> Nature is an enigmatic object, an object that is not an object at all; it is not really set out in front of us. It is our soil – not what is in front of us, facing us, but rather, that which carries us. [p. 20]

Thus, Merleau-Ponty does not simply aim to conceive nature as something akin to a 'third' ontological realm, in which the separate realms of spirit and materiality can combine. Rather, he wishes to determine nature in a manner closer to that of Husserl's earth such that there is an ontological priority pertaining to Nature, which, in the final analysis, cannot help but make us think of Heidegger. But where, for Heidegger, Being of necessity will always remain beyond the grasp of philosophy, forever dissembling itself in the beings which present themselves to us, the stake upon which these lecture courses of Merleau-Ponty are waged is that of Nature's 'accessibility' – however enigmatic, however different from objects which are set in front of us, Nature, nevertheless, remains precisely 'natural.'

Thus, the ultimate significance of Merleau-Ponty's wager in these lecture courses is to accord to Nature all of the ontological priority that Heidegger accords to Being, while at same time withdrawing from it any status of transcendence. Merleau-Ponty thus seems, from the outset, to be seeking an *immanent ontology of nature*. The question which I wish to pose therefore is whether or not Merleau-Ponty's way of conceiving nature will allow him to achieve such an immanent ontology.

The difficulty confronting Merleau-Ponty with regard to the possibility of a conception of nature that would enable an immanent ontology is that his own phenomenological heritage cannot but compel him towards transcendence. We recall that Heidegger's ontological interrogation of Husserl's 'epistemological' conception of intentionality yields the discovery of the ontological grounds of intentionality in transcendence. Thus, Dasein experiences intentionally precisely because Dasein's being is transcending; and, Dasein is so transcendent because, ontologically, Dasein is temporal. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is Husserlian, and his ontology is Heideggerian. Inevitably, therefore, if he is indeed seeking an immanent ontology of nature, it is clear that Merleau-Ponty must, to a certain extent, depart from the phenomenological-ontological fold delimited by the thought of Husserl and Heidegger. Again, if this interpretation is correct, then it is not at all insignificant that Heidegger, while clearly a fundamental influence on Merleau-Ponty's thinking at this stage in his career, and specifically on the course of thought worked out in the lectures on *Nature*, nevertheless remains conspicuously absent from the detail of the discussions.

Husserl, on the contrary, does not. Might we infer, therefore, that Merleau-Ponty will turn to Husserl as a means of going beyond the transcendent ontology of Heidegger? And if so, is there really the wherewithal within Husserl's thought to enable Merleau-Ponty to achieve such a goal by this move? If we are tempted to conclude in the negative, then we may well find it significant that Merleau-Ponty has sought, in these lectures, to find resources for understanding nature from thinkers and disciplines for the most part conspicuously out with the phenomenological-ontological fold. But then, we are confronted by the following question – to what extent is Merleau-Ponty able to jettison his own phenomenological-ontological history in his recourse to these thinkers? Is his treatment of them ultimately compromised, thereby undermining his project from within? Can he allow their voices to resonate in the very way that would enable Merleau-Ponty to move beyond phenomenological-ontology towards an immanent ontology of nature?

We might be able to determine answers to these questions – in the absence of an extended analysis of his treatment of each thinker – by contrasting his recourse to Husserl, on the one hand, with his discussion of an explicitly anti-transcendental thinker, such as Bergson, on the other. In fact, just such an approach is licensed by Merleau-Ponty's own move in the lecture courses, by which he sets Husserl and Bergson in confrontation with each other in the context of a post-Schellingian, 'romantic' conception of nature.

There is not time in a short presentation to detail the groundwork that Merleau-Ponty undertakes in his successive discussions of Descartes, Kant and Schelling. I shall therefore make my excuses, and proceed directly to the discussion of Bergson. Now, Merleau-Ponty claims, at the outset of his discussion of Bergson, that Bergson's philosophy is a *Naturphilosophie* because of its absolute commitment to the 'intuition of a primordial ground [*fond*].' [p. 80] This claim is significant for our purposes precisely to the extent that it entails that, within Bergson's philosophy, there can indeed be an intuition of such a primordial ground. Indeed, it is the value accorded to intuition by Bergson which appears to inform the emphasis that Merleau-Ponty places on his characterisation of Bergson as a *positivist* philosopher. [p. 78] To be sure, this characterisation stems, as Merleau-Ponty makes clear, from Bergson's critique of negativity in general, and specifically from the negativity involved in such fundamental philosophical concepts as the possible, the nothing and disorder. [p. 78] Of equal importance, however, is the subsequent claim that Bergson's positivism is revealed by the effort, exhibited by his philosophy, 'to enter into contact with Being without the encumbrance of any negative idea.' [p. 79] The negativity involved in such ideas as the possible or disorder is the negativity of *absence* – possibility designates an idea of the real from which reality is absent, just as disorder is not so much a positive idea of chaos as an idea of order from which, so to speak, order is absent. In a similar way, we could say that there is an idea of being or nature which is equally characterised by absence, or negativity; it is the negativity of such an idea which is evoked by those who conceive of nature or being as transcendent – in either the Cartesian or Heideggerian senses. From this perspective, the significance of Merleau-Ponty's claim, for the purposes of my interpretation, lies in the

fact that he conjoins the notion of Being unencumbered by any negative idea with the presentation of Bergsonism as a philosophical methodology, namely, the method of intuition, by which thought is able to enter into direct contact with Being.

Despite the potential opening on to an elemental conception of nature which such a methodology appears to offer Bergsonism, however, it is evident that, for Merleau-Ponty, Bergson must be construed as having failed to grasp the opportunity. This failure is indicated by an apparent tension in Bergsonism towards which Merleau-Ponty gestures. Thus, on the one hand, there is in Bergsonism an idea of a primordial unity. [p. 80] On the other hand, however, this unity seems to give way to an apparent dualism, initially manifest in a distinction which lies at the heart of the perception of nature: 'to perceive is to enter into the thing, but to enter into the thing is to become Nature; yet if we were Nature, we would "discern" nothing of the thing.' [p. 80] Thus, while Bergsonism may be a philosophy of unity, it is, nevertheless, at the same time, a philosophy of 'non-coincidence.' In the final analysis, it will be this non-coincidence which marks the ultimate point of rupture between Bergsonism and Merleau-Ponty's attempt to develop an immanent ontology of nature; while it will be the discovery of a certain potential for coincidence exhibited in texts such as *Ideas II* and *The Crisis* that prompts Merleau-Ponty to return to Husserlian phenomenology. For it will be in the coincidence revealed by Husserl's phenomenology of kinaesthetic syntheses that Merleau-Ponty discerns an anticipation of the notion of 'intertwining,' which will, in turn, come to inform his own ontology of the chiasm in *The Visible and the Invisible.* Let us therefore briefly rehearse in turn Merleau-Ponty's presentation of the non-coincidence in Bergsonism and the coincidence in Husserlian phenomenology.

The principle underpinning Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of Bergson is revealed in a sentence which occurs near the beginning of the discussion. Merleau-Ponty justifies turning to Bergson in the wake of his discussion of Schelling because of the primordiality accorded to the notion of unity in Bergson's philosophy. Merleau-Ponty then describes the process of generation in Bergsonism, for instance from unity to diversity of species, as a 'native primordial unity [which is] broken [*rompue*] and expressed in what comes afterwards.' [p. 80] The key notion here is that of *breaking* – what must the unity be like such that it can be broken, and in what does the process of breaking itself consist?

The form of Merleau-Ponty's presentation indicates that Bergsonian nature is a unity expressed on the one hand as the 'aseity of the thing,' and on the other hand as life. In his discussion of the former, Merleau-Ponty is at pains to capture what is distinctive about the Bergsonian account of the perception of material nature, specifically working to render precisely what, in the account, distinguishes it from the traditional positions of realism and idealism. Focusing for the most part on the remarkable first chapter of *Matter and Memory*, Merleau-Ponty emphasises that, for Bergson, the notion of perceptual representation does not consist in the constitution of something like a photographic image, or, in the language of Descartes and Locke, an 'idea,' and in this way, Bergson effects the differentiation of his position from that of idealism. As Merleau-Ponty underscores, Bergson's theory of perception forms a part of his wider project, which seeks to dissolve the traditional metaphysical dualism of appearance and reality. Taken together, these two aspects of Bergsonism constitute the imperative of 'express[ing] the existence of the natural thing as something already there, which does not need to be perceived in order to be, and at the same time [of] affirm[ing] the natural unity of existence and appearance: our perception is in the very things.' [p. 81][2] It is this latter notion of perception being amongst the things that will lie at the heart of Merleau-Ponty's concern with whether coincidence or non-coincidence constitutes the principle of Bergsonism. On the one hand, to the extent to which perception consists in a *contact* with the things perceived, then there is a coincidence between perception and thing perceived, and hence a radical non-separation between appearance and reality. However, if this is granted to Bergson, then the question remains of what the difference is between thing and thing perceived – or, alternatively, to ask 'how perception appears to itself.' [p. 82] It is in the posing of this latter question that Bergsonism seeks to distinguish itself from naïve realism.

As is well known, Bergson responds to this question in a twofold way: On the one hand, he argues that the world consists in images. On this basis, the perceptual-image does not differ in kind to the thing-image. It is this argument which informs Merleau-Ponty's characterisation of Bergson as having consciously proposed a paradox, namely, that while the world of Being is anterior to the perception of that world, it remains the case that primordial Being is nevertheless only ever conceivable in relation to

2 Merleau-Ponty is referring to Bergson, *Œuvres*, ed. Andre Robinet (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), p. 192.

perception. [p. 83] On the other hand, Bergson argues that perception consists in a 'subtraction' from the thing perceived, rather than being other than the thing perceived, or an addition to the thing perceived, as is traditionally assumed; and in this way, he is able to argue that in fact, the difference between thing-image and perception-image is a difference of degree, rather than a difference in kind. Since, in my being, I am geared towards acting, and since, furthermore, only a small part of the world which currently surrounds me is relevant to any potential action I might make, perception tends to focus in on that part of my surrounding world which is potentially significant for any action I might seek to perform. The subtracting aspect of perception, therefore, consists in this process of 'focusing,' and it is in this way that perception consists in a 'putting-in-perspective [*mise en perspective*].' [p. 83] Thus, another way of conceiving the difference between perception-image and thing-image is to say that the former has a centre, and hence a perspective, while the latter does not, on the basis of which perspective, certain parts of the thing-image are non-actualised in the perception-image.

It is in this way, Merleau-Ponty concludes, that Bergson constitutes a 'common medium of Being and perception.' [p. 84] But for Merleau-Ponty, the question remains of whether there subsists a genuine *continuity* between thing-image and perception-image, between the ensemble of images lacking a perspective and the ensemble of images with a perspective relative to a centre, between 'pure perception' and perception determined within a specific zone of indeterminacy, perception 'intertwined' with duration and memory. Having introduced this concern, Merleau-Ponty immediately solidifies it into an overwhelming critical question: 'But if our perceptions are absolutely distinct from pure perception, how can they keep pure perception in themselves, and take root there?' [p. 85] The only answer that Merleau-Ponty can conceive is that, in fact, far from being primordial, Being, or the thing-image always already stood in need of the perception-image, to the extent that the perception-image gives content and contour to, and thereby articulates, the thing-image. But in this case, as Merleau-Ponty points out, there remains little, if anything, positive in the thing-image. [p. 85]

Now, of course, the position towards which this last formulation is beginning to gesture is much closer to that of the phenomenologists Husserl and Heidegger. It is a position which accords with Husserl's phenomenological demonstration that it is impossible to have an

experience which is not informed by intentional sense, and with Heidegger's demonstration that sensible intuition is founded on categorical intuition. To be sure, Merleau-Ponty's initial question would indeed be devastating for Bergsonism – it is simply not clear how memory-suffused perception could take root in pure perception if the two really were absolutely distinct. But this is just the problem in Merleau-Ponty's formulation – he has neither demonstrated that pure perception and memory-suffused perception are absolutely distinct, nor, indeed, would this be a position which Bergson would recognise as his own. Quite the contrary – the whole point of the demonstration that the nature of the difference between thing-image and perception-image is one of degree, rather than kind, is to establish that there is, precisely, no absolute difference between thing-image and perception-image, between Being and perception of Being.

Merleau-Ponty's discussion of Bergson appears to uncover a paradox at the heart of Bergsonism, a paradox to which Bergson himself does not respond adequately, and which, the rhythm of Merleau-Ponty's text suggests, can only be resolved adequately from within a position that accords with phenomenology. But the paradox on which this interpretation turns is a false paradox; indeed, in its falsity, it returns to the very sort of false problems towards the dissolution of which the whole thrust of Bergsonism is directed. Irrespective of Merleau-Ponty's failure to demonstrate adequately the existence of the paradox within Bergson's text, we need to determine why he has found himself investing in its existence. I believe the answer can be found in the way in which Merleau-Ponty construes the different natures of matter and life, for this is what underpins his presentation of the difference between thing-image and perception-image.

Here is Merleau-Ponty's first, albeit seemingly confused, characterisation of matter:

> There is in matter [something] like a presentiment of memory, because it is above the duration and does not need it to be: it is always the same, at all times. Here is the revelation of natural being. [p. 86]

And, going on to speak of the nature of the relation between Being and Nothingness – which is the trope that, on the surface, organises his discussion of Bergson – Merleau-Ponty writes that this relation consists in

a *mixture* [*mélange*]. [p. 86] Leaving aside for now the question of how that which is above, and not in need of, duration, can, in virtue of this situation, be said to bear a presentiment of memory, the most significant aspect of this characterisation is Merleau-Ponty's claim that matter is *at all times always the same*. Here then is the key – nature as matter and nature as life differ absolutely, according to Merleau-Ponty's presentation of Bergson, because the former remains at all times the same, whereas the latter perpetually changes. Since they differ absolutely in this way, then they can only ever form a mixture. Thus, we may surmise, the primordial unity of Being, as Merleau-Ponty would have Bergson present it, would be precisely this mixture of nature as matter and nature as life. In turn, the diversification of this unity would consist in a breaking, to the extent that what was mixed would come to be unmixed, separated or divided.

This is confirmed by Merleau-Ponty's discussion of nature as life in the context of *Creative Evolution*. Thus, Merleau-Ponty claims that Bergson 'defines the organism and life as a type of temporality and thereby places them outside of every comparison with a physical system.' [p. 88] Notice that already in this part of the discussion, Merleau-Ponty's rhetoric insists on the absolute exteriority of life to matter, thereby returning Bergson to an implicit correspondence with Cartesianism. Every step in Merleau-Ponty's representation of Bergson serves, therefore, to foist on Bergson an investment in the very notion of transcendence which, as we suggested at the outset, it is the aim of phenomenological ontology to reconstrue. In this case, the transcendence is represented as the difference between a physical system, which is non-creative and in which the present state is identical to its past, and an organism, which 'is never identical with its past, nor ever separated from it – it continues.' [p. 88] The fundamental oppositionality determining the nature of the relation between material nature and living nature for Merleau-Ponty is further evident when he claims that mater is constituted as a *negation* of life, and as such, an *obstacle* to life. [p. 91] Once again, therefore, Merleau-Ponty explicitly characterises the relation between living nature and material nature as a *mixture* [*mélange*], [p. 90] precisely because the two aspects of nature differ absolutely, and therefore must always remain separate.

The implicitly Cartesian notion of transcendence through which Merleau-Ponty filters his reading of Bergson then comes to be expressed explicitly, when he claims that 'the operation of life is ultimately attached to a principle of unity transcendent to the contingent manifestations of

life... life is conceived as a reality transcendent [to matter].' [p. 92] So, just as pure perception was conceived by Merleau-Ponty as transcending perception suffused with duration and memory, so pure life is conceived as transcending life mixed with matter. And, because the two aspects of nature are transcendent in this way, it follows as a consequence that if there is indeed a primordial unity of Nature prior to its diffraction into material nature and living nature, then that unity can of necessity only consist in a mixture, a mixture paralleled by the mixture that material nature and living nature form when they enter into relation, either as impure perception or as embodied organism.

But this is precisely what Bergson is not arguing. Nature as matter and nature as life are not absolutely transcendently opposed in the way that Merleau-Ponty represents. Moreover, the notion of breaking up the mixture, of separating out its constituent elements, is also antithetical to that which Bergson is seeking to describe. Two fundamental principles of Bergson's position need to be borne in mind – on the one hand, matter, just like life, is a tendency, and as such, must not be construed as being opposed to life; on the other hand, while matter does indeed co-exist with life in a mixture, this does not entail that matter and life formed a mixture within a primordial unity – rather, the generation of the material tendency consists in a differentiation, as I shall briefly discuss in concluding this presentation. For now, I want to underscore that what is significant about the position adumbrated in Merleau-Ponty's discussion of Bergson, as the preceding account has emphasised, is that any primordial conception of Being in Bergsonism is still bedevilled by the traditional, Cartesian determination of transcendence, and, moreover, that as a consequence of this, any unity between the two aspects of nature can only consist in a mixture of two opposed regions of being rather than a genuine unity. It is in opposition to just this position that the unity characterising the Husserlian conception of nature will be presented by Merleau-Ponty. In the context of this position, therefore, I am proposing a series of claims – first, that Merleau-Ponty has in fact misrepresented Bergson; second, that he has done so by imposing upon Bergson a Cartesian notion of transcendence; third, that Husserl will be represented as not succumbing to the same failures as Bergsonism, to the very extent that this Cartesian notion of transcendence is reconfigured within phenomenology; however, the fourth claim I wish to make is that, in fact, the notion of intertwining, which Merleau-Ponty retrieves from Husserl in order to inform his notion of flesh, remains determined by a principle of transcendence which is not,

in the final analysis, distinct from the Cartesian notion. Indeed, in concluding, I will briefly indicate that the very flaws that this notion retains, and which undermine the potential success of Merleau-Ponty's attempt to formulate an immanent ontology of nature, are in fact absent from an interpretation of Bergson which Merleau-Ponty's reading forecloses (forecloses, we might argue, because of his need to represent Bergson's flaws in such a way that they are resolved in Husserlian phenomenology).

Merleau-Ponty correctly represents a double movement pertaining to the natural in Husserl's thought, beginning with the movement of the methodological recourse to the reduction by which the phenomenologist is able to withdraw from the natural attitude; in turn, however, this movement has as its objective the uncovering of the true nature of the natural attitude, by which we are bound to the world. What this double movement reveals is a pre-reflexive *Weltthesis*, which Merleau-Ponty characterises in terms of an 'originary passivity' that can be reduced neither to Kantian receptivity nor habit, or secondary passivity. [p. 103] It is the role of such passive syntheses to undertake the 'preliminary work by which a preliminary thing is constituted, and which is of the order of the primordial.' [p. 103] Somewhere between active consciousness and Kantian receptivity, the preliminary work undertaken by originary passivity, Merleau-Ponty suggests, (in a formulation which will come to determine one of his most significant late essays, namely 'The Philosopher and his Shadow') 'plays the role of founding and founded.' [p. 103] In this later essay, Merleau-Ponty will push this notion of passivity as both founding and founded towards a notion of constitution, where constituting and constituted coincide ambiguously. Now, it must be stressed that this latter thesis would be anathema to Husserl, for whom the rigorous distinction between constituting and constituted amounts to nothing less than an axiom of phenomenology. One way or another, what remains significant for our current discussion is the fact that, whereas in his presentation of Bergson, Merleau-Ponty emphasised the ultimate separation between living and material nature, a separation that entailed as a consequence the fact that the two aspects of nature could form nothing other than a mixture, he is from the outset of his discussion of Husserl moving towards an interpretation of phenomenology in which the primordial phenomenological element consists in a quasi-duality. Founding and founded, constituting and constituted are not separate, do

not transcend one another, but are rather intertwined in such a way that one and the same element takes on, now this aspect, now the other.

The phenomenological demonstration of this ambiguous duplicity of passivity is first undertaken, as Merleau-Ponty demonstrates, in *Ideas II*. In the middle section of that remarkable text, Husserl shows how the nature of the givenness of the world in experience is indicative of the necessity that the experiencing subject be bodily incarnated. Of course, Bergson had been right to highlight the fact that perception is always perception from a perspective. What Husserl demonstrates is that this perspective is a consequence of my bodily being. Prior to actively constituting an object for experience, Husserl argues that three dimensions of passive synthesis are accomplished – first, the basic temporal syntheses that constitute a continuous temporal field of experience; second, the associative syntheses that constitute a continuous field of sense-data; and third, the kinaesthetic syntheses, that constitute, on the one hand, a continuous field which locates me within my body, and, on the other hand, on the basis of this bodily situatedness, the continuous field of the world within which I am bodily located. It is on the basis of these latter syntheses that the things of the world are given to me perspectivally, that the world is experienced as there in relation to me here.

Now, within Husserl's thought, the kinaesthetic syntheses have a dimension which is unique in phenomenology. For all the other forms of passive synthesis are ultimately determined by subsequent active syntheses; that is to say, the passive syntheses serve the purpose of making the active constitution of an object for experience possible. And, in one dimension, the kinaesthetic syntheses do achieve this – thus, touch sensations do indeed present the 'feel' of an object which can be actively constituted. But as is well known, these feeling sensations can also be lived through as such. When this is done, the experience can be of different qualities – for instance, the experience can be that of being felt; or, it can simply serve to locate sensations, such as warmth, either on the surface or the interior of the body. In these cases, the experiences are phenomenologically unique since no objectivity is given, nor is any active constitution of an objectivity founded upon them – they do not found a subsequent active constitution, but are rather complete in themselves. Equally, of course, they reveal the capacity of bodily flesh for being both active and passive. It is because of the former aspect of the passive kinaesthetic syntheses that Merleau-Ponty will be tempted to think of them

in terms of primordiality; while it is due to the latter aspect that he will conceive of this primordial element in terms of an intertwining, or coincidence, of activity and passivity, constituting and constituted, sensing and sensed, subject and object. [pp. 107-8] Most significantly, the phenomenological demonstration has revealed both that this element is the ground for my capacity for being related with things in the world, and that it is an element which, even as the ground of experience, is itself nevertheless available for experience as such, as opposed to something that transcends the possibility of experience.

But in this recourse to the sensibility of the flesh, is Merleau-Ponty able to ground the immanent ontology of nature which, I have argued, is the goal of these lectures? In truth, the criticisms which Merleau-Ponty levels against Bergson are more applicable to this notion of flesh. For does not the phenomenological demonstration make clear that my body is always *either* sensing *or* sensed, subject *or* object? I can never experience both feeling and felt simultaneously – the experience is always determined as one *or* the other. The two aspects are always mutually exclusive of one another. In this sense, would it not be correct to say that they in fact transcend one another? But if this were truly the case, then the genuine sense of the intertwining of the flesh would become clear – it would be, precisely, the *mixture* of which Merleau-Ponty speaks with respect to Bergson. And in that case, it would be correct to say, as Merleau-Ponty says of Bergson, that the determination of flesh as either sensing or sensed would consist in a breaking of the mixture, or indeed, as Merleau-Ponty says in *The Visible and the Invisible*, a *dehiscence* or separation/divergence [*écart*].

Does the all too brief discussion of the Husserlian notion of the Earth as ground do anything to disturb this argument? It would appear not. Indeed, one might be tempted to make use of an *argumento ex silentio*, since a discussion of Earth is largely lacking from 'The Philosopher and His Shadow,' a text clearly derived from the work being undertaken in the lectures on Nature, and one which maintains the discussions of the dual sensing and sensed of the flesh, based on the analyses of *Ideas II*. Moreover, the working notes appended to the text of *The Visible and the Invisible* indicate that at the end of his life, Merleau-Ponty preferred to speak of the 'flesh of the world,' and to identify Nature with the sensible and with flesh; and where the lectures speak of Earth in terms of the opening of an horizon, [p. 110] in *The Visible and the Invisible* Merleau-

Ponty identifies the flesh of the world with its interior and exterior horizons, a phrase which implicitly evokes the two horizons which Husserl had described as being passively constituted by the kinaesthetic syntheses. [cf. for instance, *VI* pp. 267, 271] The key, it seems to me, is not located in either the Earth or the flesh of the body a such – rather, what is significant is how both Earth and flesh 'function.' Understood from this perspective, both Earth and flesh are the ground of experience, are the grounds by which my experiences have a perspective (that is, a there relative to here), are never experienced as objects amongst other objects, but nevertheless are experienced. In this way, the privileging of flesh in the chapter entitled 'The Intertwining – The Chiasm' in *The Visible and the Invisible* remains of the utmost importance. There, Merleau-Ponty writes: 'The flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance. To designate it, we should need the old term "element," in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth and fire, that is, in the sense of a *general thing*, midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being. The flesh is in this sense an "element" of Being.' [*VI* p. 139]

If I am correct in claiming both that Merleau-Ponty has misrepresented Bergson on the one hand, and has failed to secure an immanent ontology of nature through his recourse to Husserl on the other, then what is the source of these lapses? I believe that the answer to this question is to be found in Merleau-Ponty's language, specifically, his ascription to Bergson of the notion of a 'breaking up of a mixture,' and, in his own account of the element of flesh, derived from Husserl's phenomenology of the living body, his use of the notions of 'dehiscence' and 'divergence/separation' [*écart*]. In other words, Merleau-Ponty is constrained in his thinking to understanding difference as *division*. But for Bergson, division is only one way of conceiving difference. It is the way that is appropriate to the multiplicity of homogeneity. However, the notion appropriate to the multiplicity of heterogeneity is that of *differentiation*. What is most significant for our purposes in Bergson's theory of distinctions is that differentiation and division are not simply opposed, just as matter and life do not constitute tendencies which are simply opposed. Rather, as I have argued elsewhere, homogeneity, and the principle of division by which it is characterised, is itself differentiated from the heterogeneous multiplicity. Indeed, it is the very same principle of differentiation which differentiates the heterogeneous multiplicity, and which differentiates the

homogeneous multiplicity *from* the heterogeneous multiplicity. This forms the basis for an argument that Bergson's ontology is governed both by a principle of difference and by a principle of univocity. In turn, it is these principles of difference and univocity which secure a Bergsonian immanent ontology, for there is no principle which occupies a position of transcendence within Bergson's ontology.

Pli 14 (2003), 159-198

Time, Space, Forced Movement, and the Death-Drive: Reading Proust with Deleuze.*

KEITH ANSELL PEARSON

> Proust does not in the least conceive change as a Bergsonian duration, but as a defection, a race to the grave (Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, p. 27; p. 18).
>
> *Sub specie aeterni.* A: 'You are moving away faster and faster from the living; soon they will strike your name from their rolls'. B: 'That is the only way to participate in the privilege of the dead'. A: 'What privilege is that?' B: 'To die no more'. (Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, section 262, 1882).

Introduction

Deleuze's reading of Proust's novel *À la recherche du temps perdu* in *Proust and Signs* (1964) is well-known for its claim that what constitutes its unity is not memory, including involuntary memory. In this respect he diverges from some prominent previous readings of the novel, such as those offered by Bataille, Beckett, and Blanchot. This demotion of memory is, in fact, prevalent throughout the extraordinary span of

* Although the ideas and readings developed in this essay are entirely of my own construction, I have benefited enormously from discussions with Keith Faulkner over the key topics covered in it and by the stimulation of his thinking. The essay was written for the purposes of a seminar in philosophy and literature on the theme of 'Space and Language in Proust and Kafka' which took place in Evora and Lisbon in July 2003 under the organization of Nuno Nabais. It is dedicated to Ana Anahory.

Deleuze's work. In *What is Philosophy?* (1991), for example, Deleuze insists that memory plays only a small part in art, adding 'even and especially in Proust' (*'La mémoire intervient peu dans l'art...'*) (*QP* p. 158; *WP?* p. 167). He cites Désormière's phrase 'I hate memory'. In his 1986 essay on the composer Pierre Boulez and Proust, where the phrase of Désormière is credited as such, he states that the finality of art resides, in a phrase he borrows from Bergson, in an 'enlarged perception' where this perception is enlarged 'to the limits of the universe' and which requires creating art in such a way that 'perception breaks with the identity to which memory rivets it'.[1] In *A Thousand Plateaus* he speaks of the 'redundancy' of the 'madeleine' and the dangers of falling into the *black hole* of involuntary memory (*MP* p. 228; *ATP* p. 186). Of course, we must recognize Deleuze's position on memory is an ambiguous one and he must be read carefully on the issue. The ambiguity consists in the fact that Deleuze thinks that whenever art appeals to memory it is, in fact, appealing to something else (in *What is Philosophy?* he calls this 'fabulation', another phrase he borrows from Bergson), and whenever we think we are producing memories we are, in fact, engaged in 'becomings'. Nevertheless, it is quite clear, and it is abundantly clear in his various readings of Proust, that Deleuze wishes to demote memory and with respect to both a thinking of art and of time. On art, for example, Deleuze writes in his essay on Boulez and Proust: 'According to Proust, even involuntary memory occupies a very restricted zone, which art exceeds on all sides, and which has only a conductive role'.[2] For Deleuze it is the present, not the past, that is at stake: 'We write not with childhood memories but through blocs of childhood that are the becoming-child of the present' (*QP?* p. 158; *WP?* p. 168). He begins the reading in *Proust and Signs* by claiming that 'The Search is oriented to the future, not to the past' (*PS* p. 10; p. 4).

Deleuze's reading of Proust is developed in concise form in his *Proust and Signs*, a text that he revised and extended in 1970 and continued to reshape after this point. In the original edition of this text one could claim

1 'Boulez, Proust, and Time: "Occupying without Counting"', *Angelaki*, 3: 2 (1998), pp. 69-74, p. 71. For Bergson see 'The Perception of Change' (1911), in *Œuvres* (Paris: PUF, 1959), pp. 1365-1392; *The Creative Mind*, trans. M. L. Andison (Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams, & Co., 1975), pp. 130-59.

2 Deleuze, 'Boulez, Proust, and Time', p. 71.

that he is being largely faithful to what he takes to be the meaning of the apprenticeship of the narrator that lies at the heart of the novel. He regards this as an apprenticeship in 'signs' and the progression of the novel consists in the realization that it is only in the superior signs of the work of art that non-Platonic 'essences' can be seen to be working on a fully individualizing level.[3] However, Proust is also put to work in the second chapter on 'Repetition for Itself' in *Difference and Repetition* (1968), in which Proust's great achievement is said to consist in having shown how it is possible to gain access to the pure past and to save it for ourselves (Bergson, Deleuze claims, merely demonstrated its existence). But we also know that in Deleuze this second synthesis of time is made to give way to a third synthesis of time, the pure empty form of time or time out of joint, which is associated with Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return. The fundamental concept at work here, however, is that of the death-instinct or drive and its implication in what Deleuze calls 'forced movement' (*mouvement forcé*).[4] This is also what is at stake in Deleuze's

3 In *Proust and Signs* Deleuze defines an essence as 'a difference, the absolute and ultimate Difference' (p. 53; p. 41). Such a difference, however, does not name a simple empirical difference between two things or objects since this is to subordinate difference to that which is always extrinsic and contingent. By definition for Deleuze 'internal' or 'immanent' difference, as unfolded in Proust's novel, especially in its thinking on art, must belong to a 'spiritual' order or realm. There is a connection with Platonism insofar as Proustian essences are more 'revealed' than they are 'created'. See also pp. 122-4; pp. 100-2. It is not until the later 1970 edition that Deleuze makes a concerted effort to distinguish the Proustian 'search' from Platonism, see *PS*, pp. 131ff.; pp. 108ff. Essence for Deleuze is not something individual but rather a *principle of individuation*: 'Essence, according to Proust, as we have tried to show...is not something seen but a kind of superior *viewpoint*, an irreducible viewpoint that signifies at once the birth of the world and the original character of a world' (p. 133; p. 110).

4 Freud's *der Todestrieb* was translated into English by James Strachey not as 'death-drive' but as 'death-instinct'. In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze refers to the 'Freudian conception *of de l'instinct de mort*'. Kristeva uses *'pulsion de mort'* and states that it is 'the most instinctual of all the drives', *Time and Sense*, p. 556; p. 326. The clue to Deleuze's choice is to be found in his definition of drives as bound excitations; this suggests that for him the death-instinct is the primary movement of life because it denotes unbound energy. For further insight into this issue see the study by Richard Boothby, *Death and Desire: psychoanalytic theory in Lacan's return to Freud* (New York & London: Routledge, 1991), note 1, p. 229 & pp. 29-30, pp. 69-70, pp. 71-2, pp. 83-4. On Boothby's reading the primary function of the death-drive in Freud is not biological: 'As a radical force of unbinding, the death drive must be interpreted psychologically. The death drive

reading of Proust in the second edition of *Proust and Signs* published in 1970. The aim of this paper is not to interrogate the nature of the different syntheses of time and the movement from the one to the other, but rather to focus on this question of the erotic character of memory and Deleuze's claim that in Proust the forced movement of thanatos serves to effect a break with eros. In exploring the figuration of a death-drive or instinct in Proust several arresting moments or episodes in the book are important: the celebrated Combray experience; the involuntary memory of the grandmother and the sudden realization that she is actually dead and which brings with it the *Idea* of death;[5] and the strange revelation of, and encounter with, the 'little piece of time in its pure state'.

designates the way the bound organization of the ego is traumatized by the pressure on it of unbound instinctual energies' (p. 84). In the index of names and texts that appears at the back of *DR* Deleuze makes reference to Lacan's *Ecrits* (published 1966) with the entry: 'difference and repetition in the unconscious, the death-instinct'. This should not be taken to mean, however, that Deleuze has adopted a Lacanian reading of Freud.

5 The death of Albertine is also important but cannot be treated here. This death assumes much more prominence in Kristeva's reading than it does in Deleuze's. For a helpful and incisive overview of the figuration of death in Proust's novel see Malcolm Bowie, *Proust Among the Stars* (London: Fontana, 1998), chapter VII, pp. 267-319. For his deft treatment of the death of Albertine see pp. 297ff. In this chapter Bowie makes a number of astute observations: not only is death everywhere on display in the final stages of the book, an equally deeper and more elusive terror constitutes the book's opening: 'The narrator's younger self hovers between sleep and waking, desiring darkness and recoiling from it too. His candle is already out, but he is woken from the sleep into which he has already fallen by the thought that it is time to blow out his light. Silence, loss, emptiness, departure, abandonment... these are the ideas that are kindled by the surrounding darkness. And the narrative voice itself, playing upon these youthful memories, hovers between utterance and extinction...This is consciousness feeding on the thought of its own destruction' (p. 269). Further on, Bowie notes that the novel '...conspires with violence and death; for long paragraphs, it has suffering, dread, outrage and, yes, panic running through it. The narrator schools himself in cruelty, and is prepared, when it comes to the effects of death-awareness upon the mind, and of illness and ageing upon the body, to cultivate excess'. The narrator of the novel '... is capable of philosophic calm, yet has a mania for emblems and mementoes of death' (pp. 308-9).

Deleuze on Proust and the Virtual

In his book of 1963, provocatively entitled *Proustian Space*, the Belgian critic Georges Poulet sought to mount a serious challenge to the common and widespread reading of Proust's novel as a book whose subject is taken to be Time and nothing but Time. We know that Proust always took umbrage at attempts to label him a 'Bergsonian' novelist.[6] Poulet begins his book by positioning Proust as profoundly un- or even anti-Bergson: 'If the thought of Bergson denounces and rejects the metamorphosis of time into space, Proust not only accomodates himself to it, but installs himself in it, carries it to extremes, and makes of it finally one of the principles of his art'.[7] In short, Poulet is contesting the legitimacy of Bergson's two multiplicities, the continuous and the discrete or the virtual and actual (or duration and space), a move which has more recently been taken up by Kristeva in her study of 1994 entitled *Time and Sense*.[8] Of course, Poulet does not mean by space 'intellectual space' but a distinctly and uniquely

6 For the necessary information see Jean-Yves Tadie, *Marcel Proust: A Life*, trans. E. Cameron (London: Penguin, 2001), pp. 127-9. The difference between Proust and Bergson cannot be said to revolve around the issue of involuntary memory since, as Roger Shattuck has recently argued, 'Despite Proust's statements to the contrary, the distinction between voluntary and involuntary memories is basic to Bergson's argument'. See R. Shattuck, *Proust's Way* (Middlesex: Penguin, 2000), p. 115. Spontaneous memory is explicitly named as 'involuntary' by Bergson in *Matter and Memory*. On this issue see also David Gross, 'Bergson, Proust, and the Revaluation of Memory', *International Philosophical Quarterly* (1985), 25: 4, pp. 369-80. Adorno speaks of Bergson as 'Proust's kinsman in more than spirit' and locates the rapport between the two in terms of a shared 'reaction to ready-made thought, to the pre-given and established cliché'. See T. W. Adorno, 'Short Commentaries on Proust', in *Notes to Literature: volume one*, trans. S. W. Nicholson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 174-84, pp. 175-6. For instructive insight see also Kristeva, *Time and Sense*, p. 534; p. 313: '...the Bergsonian imagination is similar to Proust's project because it deemphasizes "quantitative time" and favours a "qualitative time" that is experienced and felt, a pure interiority that is nonetheless transcendental. Even so, Proust's work can never be reduced to Bergson'.

7 G. Poulet, *Proustian Space*, trans. E. Coleman (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977), preface.

8 Kristeva, *Time and Sense*, p. 539; p. 316: '"Discrete multiplicities" are the essential components of memory'.

aesthetic kind of space. For Poulet, the narrator or hero of Proust's novel may well find himself lost in time, but he is also, equally profoundly, lost in space and the novel is as much a search for lost space as it is for lost time. Poulet is able to extract some highly instructive insights from this stress on the matter of space in Proust, and echoes of some of the moves he makes can be found in Deleuze's reading, especially the later edition of the book and the section on 'The Literary Machine'. This is what we might call the Proust of the fragment, the Proustian universe conceived as a non-organismic universe of fragments without unification or totality: 'The Proustian universe is a universe in pieces, of which the pieces contain other pieces, those also, in their turn, other pieces'.[9] For example, and as Poulet draws our attention to, there is the world of the painter Elstir, which appears at intervals in the novel and never in a continuous fashion and which exists in the form of a series of works scattered in his studio, in galleries, in particular collections, while the universe of the musician Vinteuil subsists, Proust writes, only in 'disjointed fragments, bursts of the scarlet fractures of an unknown festival of colour'.[10] Poulet locates in the

9 G. Poulet, *Proustian Space*, p. 39.

10 Ibid., Poulet is citing from the lengthy discussion of Vinteuil's music - the 'little phrase' of the sonata first encountered in the early part of the novel and now the new revelation of the septet - in 'The Captive', *RTP* 3, pp. 248ff.; *SLT* 3, pp. 250ff. The appeal to the narrator of an Elstir (a painter) or a Vinteuil (a musician) is that they are artists who are able to disclose to us individuating worlds of essences - essences that only art can create. New and other worlds cannot be discovered and explored simply by acquiring a pair of wings or a different respiratory system, for even if we did visit a Mars or a Venus we would still take with us the same senses and so clothe all that we would see in the same aspect as the things on Earth: 'The only true voyage of discovery, the only really rejuvenating experience, would be not to visit strange lands but to possess other eyes, to see the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others, to see the hundred universes that each of them sees, that each of them is; and this we can do with an Elstir, with a Vinteuil; with men like these we do really fly from star to star' (ibid., p. 258; pp. 259-60). Like other readers of the novel, Deleuze is intrigued by the role played in the novel by Vinteuil's 'little phrase' and the move from the sonata to the septet. In *Proust and Signs* he refers to them as conveying the movement of a difference and repetition, as when the narrator says: 'Meanwhile the septet, which had begun again, was moving towards its close; again and again one phrase or another from the sonata recurred, but altered each time, its rhythm and harmony different, the same and yet something else, as things recur in life...' (ibid., p. 259; p. 261; see Deleuze *PS*, pp. 51-2, pp. 62-3, p. 138; pp. 39-40, pp. 48-9, p. 114). For Deleuze's later treatment of music in Proust, including an innovative reworking of the

novel only a *discontinuity of essences*, a non-Spinozist world that affirms only the qualitative and the heterogeneous (a world without the unity of substance). It is also said to be a non-Bergsonian world of discontinuity: 'As soon as a thing manifests itself in its own quality, in its "essence", it reveals itself as different from all other things (and their essences). From it to the others there is no passage'.[11] If Proust's universe resembles a philosophical universe it is that of Leibniz's monadology. There is a great deal in this reading that finds an echo in, and a resonance with, Deleuze: the appreciation of the fragment, the construal of difference as internal difference, and reading the passages, tunnels, movements, and becomings of the novel in terms of a network of transversal communication. And there is also, of course, Deleuze's appreciation of a Leibnizianism in Proust - a Leibniz, however, without a preceding totality and pre-established harmony (*PS* pp. 53-4, pp. 195-6; pp. 41-2, pp. 163-4).

The difference, however, is that in addition to this quasi-Leibnizian reading of the novel Deleuze is keen to hold on to a reading of Proust as a novelist of time. For Deleuze if we do not grant an important role to time in the architectural construction of the novel we lose all sense of the apprenticeship undergone by the narrator or the hero.[12] This is an apprenticeship that in simple, but vital, terms takes time. As Deleuze writes concerning the apprenticeship in the book, 'What is important is

significance of the move from the sonata to the septet, see the essay entitled 'Boulez, Proust, and Time', *Angelaki*, 3: 2 (1998), pp. 69-74; see also G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *MP*, pp. 332-3, p. 392; *ATP*, pp. 271-2, p. 319, and *QP?*, p. 179; *WP?*, pp. 188-89. On the nature of the progression involved in the narrator's appreciation of Vinteuil's music see the discussion in Richard Bales' essay, 'Proust and the Fine Arts', in R. Bales (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Proust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 183-200, especially pp. 188-96. See also Kristeva, *Time and Sense*, pp. 377-80, pp. 474ff.; pp. 214-16, pp. 272 ff.; and, of course, the inspired treatment in Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. A. Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), pp. 149-55.

11 Ibid., p. 40.

12 For Deleuze it is important to appreciate that the 'Search' is not simply bound up with an effort of recall but, as *recherche*, is to be taken in the strong sense of the term, as one would speak of 'the search for truth' (*PS*, p. 9; p. 3). This point has recently been emphasized by Roger Shattuck, in part as a critique of Poulet's reading. See Shattuck, *Proust's Way*, p. 209.

that the hero does not know certain things at the start, gradually learns them, and finally receives an ultimate revelation' (*PS* p. 36; p. 26). It is an apprenticeship punctuated by a set of disappointments: the hero 'believes' certain things (such as the phantasms that surround love) and he suffers under illusions (that the meaning of a sign resides in its object, for example). The progression in the novel, however, is neither a logical or teleological one, there are regressions and oscillations everywhere, partial revelations are accompanied by laziness and anguish. For Deleuze the novel is best approached in terms of a complex *series*, and the 'fundamental idea' is that 'time forms different series and contains more dimensions than space'. The Search acquires its distinct rhythms not simply through 'the contributions and sedimentations of memory, but by a series of discontinuous disappointments and also by the means employed to overcome them within each series' (ibid.; see also pp. 106-7; pp. 86-7). And yet, Deleuze is as keen to show that the novel is not simply about time as he is to show that it is not a novel about memory; rather, both are placed in the service of the apprenticeship which is one in the revelations of art, which are revelations of true essences.

Let us begin to read for ourselves the encounter with 'pure time' that is unfolded and dramatized in the novel. The dramatic treatment in the novel of the *shock* of the past emerging in a new and brilliant way takes place in the context of the narrator's realization that the sensations afforded by sensuous signs, such as the uneven paving-stones, the stiffness of the napkin, and the taste of the madeleine, have no connection with what he had attempted to recall, with the aid of an undifferentiated memory, of the places attached to them, such as Venice, Balbec, and Combray. He comes to understand the reason why life is judged to be trivial although at certain moments or singular points it appears to us as beautiful. The reason is that we judge ordinarily 'on the evidence not of life itself but of those quite different images which preserve nothing of life - and therefore we judge it disparagingly' (*RTP* 3, p. 869; *SLT* 3, p. 902; compare also the initial reawakening of the past in *RTP* 1, pp. 44-5; *SLT* 1, pp. 47-8). The narrator is struck, through this involuntary return of the past, by the fact that life is not truly lived in the moments of its passing where we find ourselves too immersed in immediate enjoyments and social rituals and activities. The unanticipated experiences afforded by involuntary memory go beyond the realm of egotistical pleasures and cause us to doubt the reality and existence of our normal self. The contemplation of these 'fragments of existence withdrawn from Time',

although fugitive, provides the narrator with the only genuine pleasures he has known and which are deemed by him to be far superior to social pleasures or the pleasures of friendship. The narrator speaks of immobilizing time, of liberating fragments of time from their implication in a ceaseless flow, so as to have this comprehension of 'eternity' and the 'essence of things' (3, p. 876; p. 909). He comes to realize the nature of his vocation: to become a writer and produce literature. The fortuitous fashion of our encounter with the images which the sensations of involuntary memory bring into being vouchsafes for him their authenticity. The 'trueness of the past' that is brought back to life will never be found through either conscious perception or conscious recollection. The 'book' of reality will be made up of such 'impressions' and will devote itself to the task of extracting the 'truth' of each impression, 'however trivial its material, however faint its traces' (3, p. 880; p. 914). Through this process the mind will be led to 'a state of greater perfection and given a pure joy'. The 'impression' serves the writer in the same way the experiment serves the scientist. The difference between the writer and the scientist, however, is that whereas intelligence always precedes the experiment, for the writer intelligence always comes after the impression. For the narrator this means that the 'ideas formed by the pure intelligence have no more than a logical, a possible truth, they are arbitrarily chosen. The book whose hieroglyphs are patterns not traced by us is the only book that really belongs to us.' (ibid.).

For Deleuze the sign of an involuntary memory is necessarily an ambiguous sign of life, it has one foot in the pure past and one foot in the future, a future that can only be created through the death-instinct and the destruction of eros. Let us now read the presentation in the novel of a 'moment' and 'fragment' of the past. This takes place at almost midway-point in the final part of the novel, 'Time Regained':

> A moment of the past, did I say? (*Rien qu'un moment du passé?*) Was it not perhaps very much more: something that, common both to the past and the present, is much more essential than either of them? So often, in the course of my life, reality had disappointed me because at the instant (*moment*) when my senses perceived it my imagination, which was the only organ that I possessed for the enjoyment of beauty, could not apply itself to it, in virtue of that ineluctable law which ordains that we can only imagine what is absent. And now, suddenly, the

> effect of this harsh law had been neutralized, temporarily annulled, by a marvellous expedient of nature which had caused a sensation - the noise made both by the spoon and by the hammer, for instance - to be mirrored (*miroiter*) at one and the same time in the past, so that my imagination was permitted to savour it, and in the present, where the actual shock to my senses of the noise, the touch of the linen napkin, or whatever it might be, had added to the dreams of the imagination the concept of 'existence' which they usually lack, and through this subterfuge (*et grâce à ce subterfuge*) had made it possible for my being to secure, to isolate, to immobilize for the duration of a lightning flash (*la durée d'un éclair*) - what it normally never apprehends: a fragment of time in the pure state (*un peu de temps à l'état pur*). The being which had been reborn in me when with a sudden shudder of happiness I had heard the noise that was common to the spoon touching the plate and the hammer striking the wheel, or had felt, beneath my feet, the unevenness that was common to the paving-stones of the Guermantes courtyard and to those of the baptistry of St Mark's, this being is nourished only by the essence of things, in these alone does it find its sustenance and delight. In the observation of the present, where the senses cannot feed it with this food, it languishes, as it does in the consideration of a past made arid by the intellect or in the anticipation of a future which the will constructs with fragments of the present and the past, fragments whose reality it still further reduces by preserving of them only what is suitable for the utilitarian, narrowly human purpose for which it intends them. But let a noise or a scent, once heard or smelt, be heard or smelt again in the present and at the same time in the past, real without being actual, ideal without being abstract, and immediately the permanent and habitually concealed essence of things is liberated and our true self which seemed - had perhaps for long years seemed - to be dead but was not altogether dead, is awakened and reanimated as it receives the celestial nourishment that is brought to it. A minute freed from the order of time has re-created in us, to feel it, the man freed from the order of time. And one can understand that this man should have confidence in his joy, even if the simple taste of a madeleine does not seem logically to contain within it

> the reasons for this joy, one can understand that the word 'death' should have no meaning for him; situated outside time, why should he fear the future?
>
> But this species of optical illusion (*ce trompe-l'oeil*), which placed beside me a moment of the past that was incompatible with the present, could not last for long... (*RTP* 3, pp. 872-3; *SLT* 3, pp. 905-6) (translation slightly modified).[13]

We have to determine the nature of the experience that is being unfolded here: it is neither 'of' the past nor 'of' the present in any simple sense. It is an experience of time (in its pure state) that is outside of the empirical order of time and yet it is fully dependent on the passing and passage of time for its being. There is also the encounter with the virtual as that which is said to be 'real without being actual, ideal without being abstract' and which is taken by Deleuze to denote the being of the past in itself. What does the virtual reveal to us? What is its 'sense' or 'meaning'? What does it mean to be 'freed from the order of time'? The discovery of lost time enables the artist to give a 'new truth' to the times of life, including time past, and to find for every sign embedded in materiality a 'spiritual equivalent' (3, pp. 878-9; p. 912). The order of time the narrator refers to is clearly what we take to be normal empirical time, time that is linear and successive. [14] For Deleuze this order conceals a more complicated

13 Roger Shattuck translates the verb *miroiter* as 'flashes back and forth' and notes that it also means 'to glisten' and 'to shimmer'. He describes this passage as the most important one in the novel on memory, and explains the experience the narrator is describing, which is akin, Shattuck says, to a 'trick' or 'subterfuge', like having 'two probes in time the way we have two feet on the ground and two eyes watching space'. Moreover, what 'would otherwise be a meticulous analytic explanation is suddenly set in motion and brought to life by the verb *miroiter*...', so that the sensation of time 'becomes iridescent, like a soap bubble, like the plumage of certain birds, like an oil film on water. This enlarged double vision of the world projected in time embodies a parallax view: it provides a sense of depth resulting from a displacement of the observer'. See Shattuck, *Proust's Way*, p. 124.

14 As Blanchot observes, it is the concentration on the 'essential impressions' which place the 'pure and original' order of time at Proust's disposal, 'this distended, enormous, monstrous existence that time makes for everyone...'. He makes a further crucial observation: '...we see two complimentary consequences - and not, as previously believed, contradictory - that Proust draws from his experience. He finds in it the assurance that the being who endures survives the apparent death that each instant of time gives him, since the fortuitous meeting of the present with

transcendental form of time (the splitting of time in two directions), which, in turn, must also give way to a pure, empty form of time. Let us keep in mind the fact that Deleuze remains wedded to two main Proustian insights which he will pursue, more often than not, through a set of Bergsonian theses (as in the two volumes on cinema, or the essay on Boulez and Proust). First, that time - the force of time - is not ordinarily visible or perceptible (see *RTP* 1, p. 482; *SLT* 1, p. 520). The transcendental form of time is not ordinarily visible to us, which is why Deleuze comes up with an 'image' of time to make it thinkable (the crystal-image).[15] Second, and drawing on the closing lines of the novel,

an analogous past establishes the necessity for a link (that is what Proust understands when he speaks of being "outside of time", "freed from the order of time", that is to say freed from the death of time). Moreover, since the duration of the being in time is not a definitive loss, pure and simple, but existence, he forms the aim of finding this existence again as the irreducible impressions he was privileged to receive now allow him to imagine. (Thus he speaks of "isolating, immobilizing - for the length of time of a lightning-flash - what the *being* never apprehends: a little time in its pure state")'. See M. Blanchot, 'The Experience of Proust', in Blanchot, *Faux Pas*, trans. C. Mandell (California: Stanford University Press, 2001; original d.o.p. 1943), pp. 42-7, p. 45. See also the essay "Time and the Novel' in the same volume, pp. 248-52, where he outlines a reading of Virginia Woolf's novel *The Waves* in terms of time, with 'Time' constituting the novel's 'substance'. This is 'time' conceived not simply as a phenomenon that shows itself to human consciousness but as that which is 'the basis of all consciousness'. Each of the six characters of the novel provide an 'image of time'; it is the character of Rhoda, who, notes Blanchot, is like a 'sleepwalker of terror', and comes closest to what he calls the 'greatest reality of time', which for him is 'pure time' and 'empty time' (it is the time of the abyss).

15 See G. Deleuze, *Cinema 2: L'Image-Temps* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1985), pp. 108-9; *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (London: Athlone Press 1989), p. 81: 'What constitutes the crystal-image is the most fundamental operation of time: since the past is constituted not after the present that it was but at the same time, time has to split itself in two at each moment as present and past, which differ from each other in nature, or, what amounts to the same thing, it has to split the present in two heterogeneous directions, one of which is launched towards the future while the other falls into the past'. Deleuze goes on to note that it is Bergson who shows us that this splitting of time never goes right to the end, which accounts for the strange and bewildering exchange that takes place in the 'crystal' between the virtual and the actual (the virtual image of the past and the actual image of the present). The key Bergsonian insight for Deleuze is that time is not the interior in us but rather the opposite, it is the interiority in which we move, live, and change. On time that is neither empirical nor metaphysical but transcendental, see p. 355; p. 271.

that human beings occupy in time a more considerable place than the restricted one that is allotted to them in space (3, p. 1048; p. 1107).[16]

In the case of Proust's narrator we can refer to his criticism of the cinematograph: 'Some critics now liked to regard the novel as a sort of procession of things upon the screen of the cinematograph. This comparison was absurd. Nothing is further from what we have really perceived than the vision that the cinematograph presents' (3, pp. 882-3; p. 917). It is a few pages later in this final part of the novel that the narrator explains the nature of his objection:

> An hour is not merely an hour, it is a vase full of scents and sounds and projects and climates, and what we call reality is a certain connexion between these immediate sensations and the memories which envelop us simultaneously with them - a connexion that is suppressed in a simple cinematographic vision, which just because it professes to confine itself to the truth in fact departs widely from it... (ibid., p. 889; p. 924).

The cinematograph simply records reality and does so in accordance with the dictates of a limited empiricism or realism. The task of the writer by contrast is to *translate* reality. The task is to produce orders of truth through the acquisition of insight into the dimensions of time. On occasion we are apt to envisage and relate to people as puppets and entertain the thought that life is a grand puppet-show. The task of the writer, however, is to gain access to, and to expose, the multiple planes that lie behind the visible aspects of this puppet world, to know what gives 'force and depth' to it, and for this one must 'make a strenuous intellectual effort', to learn to study 'with one's eyes and with one's memory'. For the narrator the effort must be made to free ourselves from the 'illusions produced in us by the apparent sameness of space' (ibid., p. 926; p. 966). Life moves, contracts, grows, ages, and dies, and time is an 'abyss', but little of this is ordinarily perceived simply because the movements and forces of time are imperceptible and they cannot be penetrated by logical reasoning. We simply do not observe the dimension in which we move, live, die, act, and become.

16 See G. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, p. 56; p. 39; and., G. Deleuze, 'Boulez, Proust, and Time', p. 73.

Some key points are worth enumerating before we turn to examining Deleuze's treatment of the significance of the passage in the novel on the 'piece of time in its pure state'. Regarding the virtual: it is never for Deleuze a question of simply making an epistemological or ontological choice between the virtual and the actual, but rather of understanding the conditions under which the virtual is produced. In this case it is the production of a forced encounter with a particular movement of time, an encounter that necessarily forces thought to think as it encounters a curious optical effect.

Let me now outline how Deleuze reads the experience of Combray and the madeleine. We must not lose sight of the fact that Deleuze's first reading of this episode - he will read it again in *Difference and Repetition* and then the refrain of Combray will continue to make its appearance, as the sign of a dis-appearance or an event, in his later works right up to *What is Philosophy?*[17] - takes place in a chapter of *Proust and Signs* entitled 'The Secondary Role of Memory'. Memory is judged to be playing a secondary role in relation to the narrator's discovery of the superior nature of the signs of art. This for Deleuze is the meaning of the apprenticeship: it takes time but it is not an apprenticeship devoted to time; it is about the slow becoming of his vocation and the discovery of the revelations of art.

Deleuze begins with a question: 'At what level does the famous *involuntary* Memory intervene?' (*PS* p. 67; p. 53). It is clear for Deleuze that it intervenes in terms of a specific and special type of sign, namely a sensuous sign (such as the madeleine). A sensuous quality is apprehended as a sign and we undergo an imperative that forces us to seek its 'meaning'. It is involuntary memory, the memory solicited by the sign, which yields for us the meaning: thus Combray for the madeleine, Venice for the cobblestones, and so on. Of course not all sensuous signs are bound up with involuntary memory, some are connected with desire and imagination. Here, however, our focus is on involuntary memory and the truth of time it must ultimately reveal or give rise to.

Now, how do we explain that which so intrigues Proust's narrator, namely, the experience in which the past encroaches on the present and in such a manner that one is made to doubt whether we are in one or the

17 See G. Deleuze, *DR*, pp. 114-15, 160; pp. 84-5, p. 122; G. Deleuze & F. Guattari, *QP?*, pp. 158-9; *WP?*, pp. 167-8.

other? The madeleine experience is implicated in a reminiscence that cannot be resolved by the association of ideas or by the resources of voluntary memory, simply because it is an experience of a past that is not simply the past of a former present or of a past that is merely past in relation to our current present. It is truly disorientating. Deleuze poses a set of questions. Firstly, what is the source of the extraordinary joy that we feel in the present sensation (of the past coming back to life)? This is a joy that is so powerful it makes us indifferent to death. The episode of the grandmother is so important because here we have an experience of involuntary memory that does not bring joy - the joy of time lost or wasted being regained - but of terrible anguish and paralysis. So death cannot, ultimately, be a matter of indifference, but has to meet with a resolution. Secondly, how do we explain the lack of resemblance between the two sensations that are past and present? That is, how can we account for the fact that Combray rises up in this experience not as it was experienced in contiguity with a past sensation (the madeleine), but in a splendour and with a 'truth' that has no equivalent in empirical reality?

The experience cannot be explained on the level of voluntary memory, simply because this memory proceeds from an actual present to one that 'has been' (a present that once was present but which no longer is). The past of voluntary memory is doubly relative: relative to the present it has been and also to the present with regard to which it is now held or judged to be past. Voluntary memory can only recompose the past with a set of different presents. Voluntary memory proceeds by snapshots and gives us an experience of the past that is as 'shocking' and as tedious at-looking at photographs. It is an experience of the past devoid of animating life. What escapes voluntary memory, therefore, is 'the past's being *as past* (*l'être en soi du passé*) (*PS* p. 72; p. 57). The problem with this as a model of time is that it cannot explain its object, namely, time:

> ...if the present was not past at the same time as present, if the same moment did not coexist with itself as present *and* past, it would never pass, a new present would never could to replace this one. The past as it is in itself coexists with, and does not succeed, the present it has been (ibid., p. 73; p. 58).

In short, the past is formed at the same time as the present as in a virtual co-existence of the two. This is Bergson's insight into the experience of the formation of time as involving the co-existence of perception and

memory and serves to explain a range of phenomena from experiences of *déjà vu* or paramnesia to the fugitive existence of our memories. Bergson's fundamental claim is that memory does not come after a perception but is formed coterminously with it.[18] This account of time is complicated and difficult to grasp but it is essential we do so since it explains the very passing of time, of how time passes for us. It explains time beyond the horizon of presentism but also gives an account of the present in its presentness, and at the same time explains how it is possible for the past to exist on more than one level (as both a relative past and an absolute past; of course, the past is always psychological - the point of the idea of an *ontological* or non-empirical and virtual past is to show us the complicated and complex character of this psychology and to account for its actual operations).[19] On one level, therefore, the demands of conscious perception and voluntary memory establish a real succession; on another level, however, there is virtual coexistence. The past is experienced on more than one level, as both the passing of time and as that which is outside normal successive time, a little piece of time in its pure state. But this 'pure state' is also a complicated sign of life, it enjoys a double

18 See H. Bergson, 'Memory of the Present and False Recognition', *Œuvres*, pp. 897-930; *Mind-Energy*, trans. H. Wildon Carr (New York: Henry Holt, 1920), pp. 134-86.

19 Here I am referring to the move Deleuze argues that it is necessary to make in chapter three of *Bergsonism*, 'Memory as Virtual Coexistence', with regard to the past from psychology to ontology. He speaks of 'pure recollection' as having no psychological existence (since it is virtual, inactive, and unconscious) and of the need to make an ontological leap into the pure past so as to have the experience of the past in-itself and gain insight into how the virtual gets actualized. This entire move is poorly understood if it is thought that Deleuze is suggesting that there is an ethereal realm of virtuality existing in another dimension that is alien to, or divorced from, the psychological. The aim is rather to expand our understanding of psychology and to show that the virtual has specific conditions of production, genesis, and emergence (and destruction). For Deleuze, Bergson's great achievement lies precisely in demonstrating the independent existence of memory and the process of its actualization; in this way we are better able to comprehend the practical nature of the 'attention to life' that is necessary to ward off useless and dangerous memories. Any other conception of memory simply rests on an untenable conception of both the self and time, one in which the self would be at all times perfectly transparent to itself and identical with itself. See G. Deleuze, *Le Bergsonisme* (Paris: PUF, 1966), pp. 45-70; *Bergsonism*, trans. H. Tomlinson & B. Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), pp. 51-73.

existence, half outside of time (neither of the past nor of the present) and half in death (and hence in life).

The experience of Combray can be and must be further complicated: what is the past of Combray the narrator experiences? It is produced as that which is neither of the past nor of the present, that is, it exists only in this complicated state where virtual time is contingently and accidentally brought into existence.[20] How could the experience of a pure past (we have to understand this as precisely as possible) be anything else but a paradoxical experience of something new but which is in, or of, the past? An episode of involuntary memory seems to be based upon the resemblance between two sensations and two moments. But this would give us pure and simple identity. It would not give us the strange experience of time that is undergone in such cases. Deleuze writes:

> ...more profoundly, the resemblance refers us to a strict *identity* of a quality common to the two sensations or of a sensation common to the two moments, the present and the past. Thus the flavor: it seems that it contains a volume of duration that extends it through two moments at once. But, in its turn, the sensation, the identical quality, implies a relation with something *different*. The flavor of the madeleine has, in its volume, imprisoned and enveloped Combray. So long as we remain on the level of conscious perception, the madeleine has only an entirely external relation of contiguity with Combray. So long as we remain on the level of voluntary memory, Combray remains external to the madeleine, as the separable context of the past sensation. But this is characteristic of involuntary memory: it internalizes the context, it makes the

20 Here we can refer to the description given in the novel (*RTP* 1, p. 44; *SLT* 1, pp. 47-8). The narrator has just made reference to the Celtic belief that the souls whom we have lost and left behind are held captive in an inferior being such as an animal, a plant, or some inanimate object. When they are 'delivered by us, they have overcome death and return to share our life'. He continues: 'And so it is with our own past. It is a labour in vain to attempt to recapture it: all the efforts of our intellect must prove futile. The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of intellect, in some material object (in the sensation which that material object will give us) of which we have no inkling. And it depends on chance whether or not we come upon this object before we ourselves must die'.

past context inseparable from the present sensation (*PS* pp. 74-5; pp. 59-60).

Ultimately, of course, the experience is one of profound difference and not identity through relations of resemblance and contiguity: 'Combray rises up again in the present sensation in which its difference from the past sensation is internalized' (ibid., p. 75; p. 60). It is an internalized difference that has become *immanent* (or immanence produced). The reason why Combray rises up in a new form is because it is a past that is not relative to either the present that it once was or to a present in relation to which it is now held to be past. Deleuze calls this an experience of Combray 'not in its reality, but in its truth' and in its 'internalized difference' (it is a Combray made to appear not simply in terms of its external or contingent relations).

However, the truth and essence of Combray are limited. This is because we get only the differential truth of a place or a moment, a local essence (such as Combray, Balbec, Venice, etc.) as opposed to a fully individualized one. Involuntary memory serves as a principle of localization and not individuation (and which takes place only on the level of artistic essence).[21] It gives us an experience of time regained but in a limited form (the time we regain in it is the time we have lost or that we wasted). It gives us an 'instantaneous image of eternity' (ibid., p. 79; p. 63). The more profound time regained can only be realized in art since here we find spiritual life completely emancipated from a dependence on matter (ibid., p. 106; p. 87). The experience of the madeleine gives us an ideal reality that is not abstract (or is judged such only from the perspective of conscious perception and the needs of utilitarian-governed action), and this ideal reality is necessarily 'virtuality' and 'essence' incarnated in a form of memory. As such, it remains on the level of erotic investment and attachment. It is this which must be exposed and conquered. Transforming the memory of Combray into the *event* of

21 There are a number of reasons why Deleuze holds the essences of art to be superior to those found in the sensuous signs, such as the signs of involuntary memory. See Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, pp. 76-82; pp. 61-6. In essence, Deleuze's argument is that sensuous signs, unlike the signs of art, cannot separate themselves from external and contingent determinations. As such, they 'represent only the effort of life to prepare us for art and for the final revelation of art' (p. 81; p. 65). See also chapter four of the text, 'Essences and the Signs of Art', pp. 51-65; pp. 39-51.

Combray is one way in which Deleuze locates a 'becoming' in what we take to be experiences of memory.[22]

The experience of an involuntary memory produces a curious effect, the effect of the virtual: is it real? Is it a hallucination? How is the effect produced? Is it significant that the narrator goes on to speak of it as a species of 'optical illusion'? From what perspective, from what plane of existence, is it to be regarded as an optical illusion? It is vital we appreciate a key point with regard to Deleuze's configuration of the virtual, including virtual memory. It is this: for Deleuze the virtual is *not* an illusion. On the contrary, he seeks to give a reality to the virtual and argues that the virtual is not an illusion *so long as it remains the virtual*! Let us take the example of the pure past to demonstrate this point. The pure past is a past that 'perpetually differs from itself and whose universal mobility...causes the present to pass' (*DR* p. 135; p. 102). Take, for example, a virtual object (a part of a person or a place, a fetish or an object of love): this is never past either in relation to a new present or in relation to a present it once was. Rather, it 'is past as the contemporary of the present which it is, in a frozen present...' (ibid.). Virtual objects can only exist as fragments - as, moreover, fragments of themselves - because they are found *only as lost* and exist only as recovered. As Deleuze stresses, 'Loss or forgetting here are not determinations which must be overcome; rather, they refer to the objective nature of that which we recover, as lost, at the heart of forgetting' (ibid.). For Deleuze this provides the key to developing an adequate conception of repetition. Repetition does not operate from one present to another in a real series, say from a present to a former present which would assume the role of an ultimate or original term and that would always remain in place, so acting as a point and power of attraction. This would give us a brute or bare, material model of repetition with something like fixation, regression, trauma, or the primal scene, serving as the original element.

For Deleuze, in contrast, repetition knows *only* perpetual disguise and displacement. This is why he will take issue with Freud's figuration of the

22 On the event in Deleuze see *What is Philosophy?*: 'The event is immaterial, incorporeal, unlivable: pure *reserve*...it is the event that is a meanwhile [*un entre-temp*]: the meanwhile is not part of the eternal, but neither is it part of time - it belongs to becoming. The meanwhile, the event, is always a dead time; it is there where nothing takes place, an infinite awaiting that is already infinitely past, awaiting and reserve', *QP?*, p. 148, p. 149; *WP?*, p. 156, p. 158.

death-drive conceived as an involutionary return to inanimate matter (pure regression). Deleuze develops a completely different model of the 'real': the real is inseparable from the virtual. He asks us to consider a very simple question: conceive of two presents or two events, call them infantile and adult, and then ask, 'how can the former present act at a distance upon the present one and provide a model for it when all effectiveness is received retrospectively from the later present?' (*DR* p. 138; p. 104). Would not repetition come to subsist on this model solely as the illusory power of a solipsistic subject? His proposal is that we think of the becoming of the real, the succession of presents, and the movement from current presents to a former presents, as implicated in a virtual co-existence of perception and memory: 'Repetition is constituted not from one present to another, but between the two coexistent series that these presents form in function of the virtual object (object = x)' (ibid., p. 138; p. 105). He ends up overturning the model of regression by arguing that disguise and displacement cannot be explained by repression because repression is not primary; rather, death, forgetting, and repetition are what is primary: 'We do not repeat because we repress, we repress because we repeat' (ibid.). It not difficult to understand how all of this gets confused in much theorizing on repetition - as well as in our own heads - owing to the fact that the properly transcendental form of time is not normally perceptible to us. But it is this confusion which generates the erroneous view that the virtual can simply be dismissed as an 'illusion'; in truth, the contrary is the case and it is the pure past that denounces the illusion (of a perpetual or self-same present). The pure past assumes the form of an illusion only and precisely when it is conceived as a mythical former present (ibid., p. 145; p. 109). It is for this reason that Deleuze posits thanatos lying at the base of memory: it is opposed not to the 'truth' of the essences and events of involuntary memory but rather to their illusory erotic form (Combray treated as a former present, for example). The question continues to persist, however: might there still be too much eros in the discoveries and revelations of involuntary memory? From what place would we make such a judgement or appraisal?

In the original edition of *Proust and Signs* (1964) the time of involuntary memory, the time of the virtual or the pure past, is sacrificed in favour of the creation of true essences and which can only be produced in art (everything, Deleuze claims, is preparatory in Proust in relation to the ultimate revelations of art). I do not wish to pursue this here since my focus in this paper is not on Deleuze's doctrine of essences, which is at the

heart of the book and determines the reading of the various signs - of the world, of sense, of love, of art - but rather on time. In the later edition of the book (1970) Deleuze dramatizes this becoming of time in a section entitled 'The Three Machines'.[23] It is here we find the reasons for conceiving time as the forced movement of a certain death-instinct. This becomes fully clear when coupled with the presentation of the three syntheses of time and the re-working of the death-instinct carried out in *Difference and Repetition* (1968).

Interlude

Let us pause at this point in the investigation, however, to reflect on some of the hard lessons to be learned in the apprenticeship that is undergone by the narrator. The easiest lessons to be learned are those bound up with the worldly signs. This is owing to their shallowness or vacuity: for example, friendship (the hollowness of its conversations) and the fashions and habits of society and their flippant and constantly changing nature. Harder lessons come from experiences of love and death. Such sensuous signs contain an essential ambivalence since they sometimes bring joy and at other times only great pain. In the case of love its most painful signs

23 Deleuze's *Proust and Signs* was first published in 1964 and then republished several times throughout the 1970s. It is the 1970 expanded edition that first includes the added segment on 'The Literary Machine'. A further edition of the text was published in 1976 which included at the very end the piece written in 1973 and entitled 'Presence and Function of Madness: The Spider'. The common view of the successive revisions and additions of the text is that it becomes an increasingly postmodern reading of Proust with the *Bildungsroman* hero of the first 1964 edition becoming an absent character by the time of the text that is published in 1976. Perhaps the appellation of 'structuralist and poststructuralist' to the later reworkings of the text would be more accurate: witness, for example, the role played in the 1970 material by Eco's semiotics on the one hand and Guattari's notion of 'transversality' on the other. It is important to appreciate with regard to the first reading, however, and as Duncan Large has astutely pointed out, that he *Bildungsroman* of the Proustian protagonist and narrator is not that of *Wilhelm Meister*. Large suggests that Deleuze may have had in mind *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and draws our attention to the fact that Nietzsche's literary-philosophical puzzle ends with a discourse entitled 'Das Zeichen' ('The Sign'). See D. Large, *Nietzsche and Proust: A Comparative Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 57.

are connected to repetitions. Not only do we repeat our past loves, it is also the case that any present love repeats the moment of the dissolution and anticipates its own end (on the seriality and repetition of love see Proust, *RTP* 1, p. 372, pp. 626-7, p. 832, p. 894; *SLT* 1, p. 404, p. 674, p. 890, p. 955). It is a psychoanalytic error to suppose that the narrator simply repeats in his series of loves his initial or original love for his mother: 'it is true that our loves repeat our feelings for the mother, but the latter already repeats other loves, which we have not ourselves experienced' (*PS* p. 89; p. 72). The error is to suppose that the object can be treated as an ultimate or an original term and that it can be assigned a fixed place. But this is to lose sight of the fact that the object exists only as a *virtual* object.[24] This explains why our loves do not refer back in any simple or straightforward sense to our mother: 'it is simply that the mother occupies a certain place in relation to the virtual object in the series which constitute our present', and the object is subject to perpetual displacement and disguise (*DR* p. 139; p. 105). There is simply the 'object = x'. Love is not explicated by the ones we love or by the ephemeral states that govern the moments of being in love (Proust *RTP* 3, p. 897; *SLT* 3, pp. 933-34). Each love in our series of successive loves contributes a difference but one that is already contained 'in a primordial image that we unceasingly reproduce at different levels and repeat as the intelligible law of all our loves' (*PS* p. 85; p. 68). The transitions between our different loves find their law not in memory but in forgetting (Proust *RTP* 3, p. 904; *SLT* 3, p. 940). The identity of the beloved is governed by contingency. Our loves miscarry when they might perfectly well have succeeded had there been only the slightest difference in circumstances; the loves that are realized depend on extrinsic factors, occasions and circumstances (*PS* pp. 93-4; p. 76). Equally important are the lessons to be learned from giving

24 On the 'virtual object', see the important and precise treatment in Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 130-36; pp. 98-103. A number of points are worth noting: first, that virtual objects are incorporated in real objects and can correspond to part's of a subject's body, to another person, and to special objects such as toys and fetishes; second, that virtual objects belong essentially to the past, in particular the formation of the pure past (so virtual objects exist, says Deleuze, as 'shreds of pure past'); third, that these peculiar kinds of objects exist only as fragments of themselves in which they are 'found' only as 'lost' and they exist only as recovered; fourth, and perhaps most decisively, they are implicated in the amorous game and play of repetition. This means that thanatos or the death-drive is thoroughly *immanent* to the movements of repetition and to the displacement and disguise of the virtual object.

up on a spurious objectivist interpretation of things in the world (people and places): '...the reasons for loving never inhere in the person loved but refer to ghosts, to Third Parties, to Themes that are incarnated... according to complex laws' (*PS* p. 42; p. 31). The narrator must learn that avowal is not essential to love, since all our freedom will be lost 'if we give the object the benefit of the signs and significations that transcend it' (ibid.). To be faithful to love it is necessary to be harsh, cruel, and deceptive with those we love. The lover conceals the beloved: '...the lover lies no less than the beloved; he sequesters her, and also is careful not to avow his love to her, in order to remain a better guardian, a better jailer' (ibid., p. 97; p. 79). Sensuous signs present so many traps for us, inviting us to seek their meaning in the object that bears or emits them, in which 'the possibility of failure, the abandonment of interpretation, is like the worm in the fruit' (ibid., p. 43; p. 32). Joy can be had from all of this, from the lessons of life, love, and death, and it is a joy that resides in comprehension:

> ...the phenomena are always unhappy and particular, but the idea extracted from them is general and joyous. For love's repetition is not be separated from a law of progression by which we accede to a consciousness that transmutes our sufferings into joy. We realize that our sufferings do not depend on their object. They were 'tricks' or 'deceptions' we practised on ourselves, or better still, snares and coquetries of the Idea, gaities of Essence. There is something tragic about what is repeated but something comic in the repetition itself, and more profoundly, a joy of repetition understood or of the comprehension of its law. (ibid., p. 91; p. 74).[25]

But what of the shattering realization of the brute fact of death in an experience of involuntary memory? How can this be transmuted or made the subject of philosophical work? Can death be put to work like life and love? Let us now return to and recall the grandmother episode.

25 The narrator of the Search himself writes of 'the perception of truths' resulting in joy. Some of these truths come about as a result of quite trivial pleasures, and some of them can only be discovered in suffering (3, p. 899; p. 935). He also notes at one point that '...brief though our life may be, it is only while we are suffering that we see certain things which are at times hidden from us' (3, p. 897; p. 933).

> Upheaval of my entire being. On the first night, as I was suffering from cardiac fatigue, I bent down slowly and cautiously to take off my boots, trying to master my pain. But scarcely had I touched the topmost button than my chest swelled, filled with an unknown, a divine presence, I was shaken with sobs, tears streamed from my eyes. The being who had come to my rescue, saving me from barrenness of spirit, was the same, who, years before, in a moment of identical distress and loneliness, in a moment of when I had nothing left of myself, had come in and had restored me to myself, for that being was myself and something more than me (the container that is greater than the contained and was bringing it to me). I had just perceived, in my memory, stooping over my fatigue, the tender, preoccupied, disappointed face of my grandmother, as she had been on the first evening of our arrival, the face not of that grandmother whom I had been astonished and remorseful at having so little missed, and who had nothing in common with her save her name, but of my real grandmother, of whom, for the first time since the afternoon of her stroke in the Champs-Elysee, I now recaptured the living reality in a complete and involuntary recollection...it was only at that moment - more than a year after her burial, because of the anachronism which so often prevents the calendar of facts from corresponding to the calendar of feelings - that I became conscious that she was dead. I had often spoken about her since then, and thought of her also, but behind my words and thoughts, those of an ungrateful, selfish, cruel young man, there had never been anything that resembled my grandmother, because, in my frivolity, my love of pleasure, my familiarity with the spectacle of her ill-health, I retained within me only in a potential state the memory of what she had been. At any given moment, our total soul has only a more or less fictitious value, in spite of the rich inventory of its assets, for now some, now others are unrealizable, whether they are real riches or those of the imagination - in my own case, for example, not only of the ancient name of Guermantes but those,

> immeasurably graver, of the true memory of my grandmother. For with the perturbations of memory are linked the intermittences of the heart. It is, no doubt, the existence of our body, which we may compare to a vase enclosing our spiritual nature, that induces us to suppose that all our inner wealth, our past joys, all our sorrows, are perpetually in our possession. Perhaps it is equally inexact to suppose that they escape or return. In any case if they remain within us, for most of the time it is in an unknown region where they are of no use to us, and where even the most ordinary are crowded out by memories of a different kind, which preclude any simultaneous occurrence of them in our consciousness. But if the context of sensations in which they are preserved is recaptured, they acquire in turn the same power of expelling everything that is incompatible with them, of installing alone in us the self that originally lived them. Now, inasmuch as the self that I had just suddenly become once again had not existed since that evening long ago when my grandmother had undressed me after my arrival at Balbec, it was quite naturally, not at the end of the day that had just passed, of which that self knew nothing, but - as though Time were to consist of a series of different and parallel lines - without any solution of continuity, immediately after the first evening at Balbec long ago, that I clung to the minute in which my grandmother had stooped over me. The self that I then was, that had disappeared for so long, was once again so close to me that I seemed still to hear the words that had just been spoken, although they were now no more than a phantasm, as a man who is half awake thinks that he can still make out close by the sound of his receding dream. I was now solely the person who had sought a refuge in his grandmother's arms, had sought to obliterate the traces of his sorrow by smothering her with kisses, the person whom I had should have had as much difficulty in imagining when I was one or other of those that for some time past I had successively been as now I should have had in making the sterile effort to experience the desires and joys of one of those that for a time at least I no longer was. I remembered how, an hour before the moment when my grandmother had stooped in her dressing-gown to unfasten my boots, as I wandered along the stiflingly hot street, past the

> pastry-cook's, I had felt that I could never, in my need to feel her arms round me, live through the hour that I had still to spend without her. And now that this same need had reawakened, I knew that I might wait hour after hour, that she would never again be by my side. I had only just discovered this because I had only just, on feeling her for the first alive, real, making my heart swell to breaking-point, on finding her at last, learned that I had lost her for ever. Lost for ever: I could not understand, and I struggled to endure the anguish of this contradiction...as soon as I had relived that bliss, as though it were present, feeling it shot through by the certainty, throbbing like a recurrent pain, of an annihilation that had effaced my image of that tenderness, had destroyed that existence, retrospectively abolished our mutual predestination, made of my grandmother, at the moment when I had found her again as in a mirror, a mere stranger whom chance had allowed to spend a few years with me, as she might have done with anyone else, but to whom, before and after those years, I was and would be nothing. (*RTP* 2, pp. 755-8; *SLT* 2, pp. 783-5).

The painful realization of the full force of the grandmother's being-dead gives rise to an encounter with the *Idea* of death. This death seems to haunt life, to highlight the contingent nature of our affections and attachments, our loves, and to rob life of any enduring meaning or sense. How can thought work the Idea of death, supposing it can? There is no doubt that this episode presents the narrator of Proust's novel with a serious challenge. On the next page we read:

> ...I was determined not merely to suffer, but to respect the original form of my suffering as it had suddenly come upon me unawares, and I wanted to continue to feel it, following its own laws, whatever that contradiction of survival and annihilation, so strangely intertwined within me, returned. I did not know whether I should one day distil a grain of truth from this painful and for the moment incomprehensible impression, but I knew that if I ever did extract some truth from life, it could only be from such an impression and from none other, an impression at once so particular and so spontaneous, which had neither been traced by my intelligence nor attenuated by my pusillanimity,

> but which death itself, the sudden revelation of death, striking like a thunderbolt, had carved within me, along a supernatural and inhuman graph, in a double and mysterious furrow. (As for the state of forgetfulness of my grandmother in which I had been living until that moment, I could not even think of clinging to it to find some truth; since in itself it was nothing but a negation, a weakening of the faculty of thought incapable of recreating a real moment of life and obliged to substitute for it conventional and neutral images) (ibid.; pp. 759-60; pp. 786-7).

For Deleuze the key to producing an effective reading of this segment of the novel is to connect it with the phrase 'a little piece of time in its pure state'. In *Difference and Repetition* he proposes that the Proustian formula has a double referent: on one level it refers to the pure past, in the in-itself of time (passive noumenal synthesis, which still remains attached to eros), but on another level it refers to the 'pure and empty form of time', or the synthesis of the death-instinct (*DR* p. 160; p. 122). The encounter with, and exploration of, the pure past is erotic because it finds its basis in our need for attachment (to materiality, for example, such as a face or a place). As a power and a desire it holds the 'secret of an insistence in all our existence' (ibid., p. 115; p. 85). But it is not the last word or the final synthesis of time. In the 'note on the Proustian experiences' the claim that the fragment of time in its pure state refers to both the pure past and the empty form of time comes at the end of a long paragraph that connects the in-itself of Combray, an example of 'the object = x', with the ankle-boot and memory of the grandmother. Deleuze writes: 'Eros is constituted by the resonance, but overcomes itself in the direction of the death instinct which is constituted by the *amplitude of a forced movement*' (ibid., p. 160; p. 122, my emphasis). What is this 'forced movement'?[26]

For insight into this mode of movement we need to turn to the later edition of *Proust and Signs* with its added essay on the literary machine, especially the chapter on 'The Three Machines'. In the first edition of the book the grandmother episode is discussed but the challenge it poses to the question of 'Proust and philosophy' is not confronted. It takes place in the book's second chapter on 'Signs and Truth' at the point when Deleuze recognizes that sensuous signs can be both signs of alteration and

26 The category of 'forced movement' comes from Aristotle and features in his discussion of different kinds of movement, natural and unnatural. See Aristotle, 'The Physics', IV. 8 & VIII. 4.

disappearance: there is not only plenitude but also absence, the void of time lost forever. The episode of the boots and the memory of the grandmother is *in principle* no different from the madeleine or the cobblestones (*PS* pp. 29-30; pp. 19-20). And yet the experience of the former is shattering and puts the Proustian vision of the redemption of time to the test. How can the experience of irreparable loss be done philosophical justice? How can death be put to work? Surely there is only the certainty of death and nothingness? But it is here - the point in the book that haunts and hovers over Beckett's reading of the novel - that time will reveal one of its most essential truths, if not its *actual* truth. This is only made clear by Deleuze in his second reading of the episode in the later edition of the book. Time will be shown to be the 'truth' of this episode, the time of life as the time of the death-instinct and overcoming of the erotic effect of memory.

In the chapter entitled 'The Three Machines' Deleuze seeks to show that in Proust's novel there are only 'orders of truth' and no simple or single truth. The first two orders have already been touched upon. These are the orders of reminiscences and essences, of time regained through the *production* of lost time (for it is a paradox of lost time that it is produced as lost), and of general laws extracted from the encounter with the sensuous signs (signs of love, for example, which give way to the Idea of love). The third order is the order of universal alteration of death, including the Idea of death and the production of catastrophe. This is the order that constitutes the long denouement of the book, the ageing of the guests of Mme de Guermantes's salon, where we encounter sublime disguises and sublime senilities, the distortion of time in matter (distortion of features, the fragmentation of gestures, the loss of co-ordination of muscles, the formation of moss, lichen, and patches of mould on bodies, etc.).[27] All that exists is corroded and distorted by time. Time gives life and time gives death at one and the same time. In his essay on Proust, Beckett, writes appropriately of time as 'that double-headed monster of damnation and salvation',[28] and of the role played by time's 'poisonous ingenuity' in the 'science of affliction'.[29]

27 Proust's account of death in the closing stages of the novel finds an effective treatment in Bowie's chapter on 'Death' in his *Proust Among the Stars*, pp. 287ff.

28 S. Beckett, *Proust* (London: John Calder, 1999; first published 1931), p. 11.

29 Ibid., p. 15.

This final order, which is already encountered in the memory of the grandmother, presents an acute problem for the narrator and for readers of the novel. This final order fits into the other two orders and would seem to negate any principle of meaning or value. Is not death lurking away in each and every moment? When the narrator leans down to unbutton his boot everything begins exactly as in ecstasy, the expectation of the strange return with the present moment set in resonance with an earlier one. But very quickly this joy turns into an intolerable anguish as the pairing of the two moments breaks down and yields to a disappearance of the earlier one 'in a certainty of death and nothingness' (*PS* p. 189; p. 157). A reconciliation must be found and a contradiction solved between the third and the first two orders. It is insufficient to appeal to the narrator's recognition of the fact that he has in his life already died many times (on the duration of a life as a sequence of multiple 'juxtaposed but distinct' 'I's' see Proust, *RTP* 3, p. 943; *SLT* 3, p. 972), or the seriality of his loves which contain their own little deaths (the deaths between partial or virtual objects). For here in the third order we are presented with an 'idea of death' as that which 'uniformly imbues all fragments' and carries them 'toward a universal end' (ibid.). We seem to be confronted with the existential truism that death robs life of all meaning. But this insight or claim has to be shown to derive from an optical illusion or effect, just like the optical illusion and effect of the pure past. The contradiction is not resolved in the memory of the grandmother (and it is noticeable that Beckett produces no reading of this episode; he simply tells us his view that the section in which the episode takes place, the 'Intermittences of the Heart', is perhaps the greatest passage Proust ever wrote and then recounts it).[30] Whereas the first two orders ultimately prove productive in the apprenticeship of time and truth, the latter would seem to be absolutely catastrophic and unproductive. Hence Deleuze's question: 'Can we conceive a machine capable of extracting something from this kind of painful impression and of producing certain truths?' As long as we cannot, he says, then the work of art encounters the gravest objections.

Deleuze now seeks to show that this idea of death consists of a *certain effect of time*. The idea of death must lead to a truth of time being disclosed. What is the specific effect of time that produces the idea of death? Deleuze argues as follows. With two given states of the same

30 Ibid., p. 39.

person - the earlier that we remember, the present that we experience - the impression of ageing from one to the other has the effect of pushing the earlier moment into a remote, improbable past. It feels as if geological periods have intervened. The movement of time, from past to present, is 'doubled by a *forced movement of greater amplitude*', it sweeps away the two moments, stresses the gap between them, and pushes the past far back in time. It is quite different to the echo of resonance produced in the madeleine experience, because in this experience we are presented with an infinite dilation of time and not a contraction of it to a maximum degree as is the case with the former experience. This leads Deleuze to propose that the idea of death be treated 'less as a severance than an effect of mixture or confusion' in which the 'amplitude of the forced movement is as much taken up by the living as by the dead; all are dying, half dead, or racing to the grave' (*PS* p. 191; p. 159). This half-death, however, is also of significance in an unexpected way, a way that the narrator cannot understand and appreciate at the time of the experience of the involuntary memory of the grandmother and the shocking confrontation with the event of her death: '...at the heart of the excessive amplitude of the movement, we can describe men as monstrous beings', that is, as those who occupy in time a much more considerable place than the one reserved for them in space. When viewed under the optics of Time - a place of occupation without counting or measuring - human beings are transformed into giants, plunged into the years and periods remote from one another in time. Beckett was apposite in holding that with regard to the time of this life of human beings there is no other science than that of the science of affliction. He opened his essay by stating that Proust 'will refuse to measure the length and weight of man in terms of his body instead of in terms of his years'. [31] But how is it possible to surmount the objection or contradiction of death? Deleuze argues that death ceases to be an objection to the extent that it can be integrated into an 'order of production, thus giving it its place in the work of art' (*PS* p. 192; p. 160). More specifically, he writes: 'The forced movement of great amplitude is a machine that produces the effect of withdrawal or the idea of death'. The encounter with death is another way in which the force and sensation of time are disclosed and felt. The idea of death, therefore, necessarily requires, and relies upon, an optics and a perspectivism. It occupies a place within life. It is part of the *delay* or the 'meanwhile' that constitutes

31 Ibid., p. 12.

the 'event' that belongs neither to time nor to eternity. In this delay and 'meanwhile' we have *already* died and will die innumerable times. It is not, therefore, so much that the dead become distant from us as time goes by, but rather that we become distant from them: the dead die for us through our occupying a place within the forced movement of time. This might explain why at one point in *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze says that this delay is the pure form of time (*DR* p. 163; p. 124).

The idea of death is produced, it is produced by time and as an effect of time and, as such, it belongs to life, or to the time of life. In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze writes: '...so the second synthesis of time [the pure past] points beyond itself in the direction of a third synthesis which denounces the illusion of the in-itself as still a correlate of representation. The in-itself of the past and the repetition in reminiscence constitute a kind of "effect", like an optical effect, or rather the erotic effect of memory itself' (*DR* p. 119; p. 88). It is not necessary here to explore in detail the nature of this third synthesis, the pure empty form of time; we simply note Deleuze's acknowledgement of the curious 'effect' of memory. What is relevant to our investigation in this essay is the configuration Deleuze gives to the play between eros and thanatos. At one point Deleuze proposes to read 'time empty and out of joint' (time stripped of contents or independent of empirical determination) as 'precisely the death instinct', which, furthermore, does not 'enter into a cycle with Eros, but testifies to a completely different synthesis' (ibid., p. 147; p. 111). The correlation between eros and memory is replaced by one between 'a great amnesiac' and a 'death instinct desexualized and without love' (ibid.). Deleuze takes issue with Freud's positing of a death instinct existing prior to this desexualized energy. Freud did this for two reasons, according to Deleuze: first, because he allowed a dualistic and conflictual model to preside over his theory of drives, and second, he relied on a material model for his theory of repetition: '...determined as the...return of the living to inanimate matter, death has only an extrinsic, scientific, and objective definition' (ibid.). In contrast to this Deleuze proposes a very different conception of death, for example, as 'the last form of the problematic, the source of problems and questions' and as the 'non-being where every affirmation is nourished' (ibid., p. 148; p. 112). This means that death cannot 'appear in the objective model of an indifferent inanimate matter to which the living would "return"; *it is present in the living in the form of a subjective and differenciated experience endowed with its prototype. It is not a material state; on the contrary, having*

renounced all matter, it corresponds to a pure form - the empty form of time' (ibid.; my emphasis) Recall: for Deleuze there is no original term in the movement of difference and repetition. This is the error of the Freudian model: it reduces death to an objective determination of matter in which repetition finds its ultimate principle in an undifferentiated material model 'beyond the displacements and disguises of a secondary or opposed difference' (ibid., pp. 147-8; pp. 111-12). The structure of the unconscious is not conflictual or oppositional but rather 'questioning and problematizing'. And repetition is not a bare and brute power but woven from disguise and displacement and does not exist apart from its constitutive elements. Deleuze proposes, therefore, that we do not posit a death instinct that is distinguishable from eros either in terms of a difference in kind between two forces or by a difference in rhythm or amplitude between two movements. If this was the case then it would mean that difference would simply be given, and so would life. Thanatos is indistinguishable from the desexualization of eros, and 'there is no analytic difference between' the two. *There is*, however, a difference between the two and this difference is to be conceived as a difference in the synthesis of time: 'Thanatos stands for a synthesis of time quite unlike that of Eros' (ibid., p. 149; p. 113). The synthesis of time at play in the death-instinct is that of the empty form of time in which the libido 'loses all mnemic content' (ibid.) and, as such, it is built upon the remains and ruins of Eros.

Proust and the Death-Drive

I have sought to illuminate how Deleuze reads two key segments in Proust's novel, the little piece or fragment of time in its pure state and the grandmother episode. I have also sought to clarify the work that a notion like the virtual is doing in Deleuze's reading and to draw attention to his dramatic re-working of the death-drive. In his subsequent work Deleuze will continue to put to work this matrix of problems and concepts and to re-fashion the key episodes of Proust's novel. Thus, for example, the virtual, the death-drive, and the grandmother episode are all to be found at work in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), and new ways of reading Proust are developed in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980). In the latter Deleuze and Guattari insist that Proust's project was not to regain time or to force back

memories but rather one of becoming a 'master of speeds to the rhythm of his asthma' (*MP* p. 333; *ATP* p. 272). In the former Proust's novel is read as a 'schizoid work par excellence' (*AO* p. 51; p. 43) and as a 'great enterprise in schizoanalysis' (ibid., p. 380; p. 318). The Oedipus complex is said to be *virtual*; it is a 'reactional formation...a reaction to desiring-production' (ibid., p. 154; p. 129). In opposition to the problematic positing of a death-instinct or drive Deleuze and Guattari offer the (material) unconscious as both the model and the experience of death: 'Death then is part of the desiring-machine, a part that must itself be judged, evaluated in the functioning of the machine and the system of its energetic conversions, and not as an abstract principle' (ibid., p. 397; p. 332). Freud's death-drive is taken to be a transcendent principle caught up in a subjective system of representation of the ego, in which the essence of life is conceived in the form of death itself: '...this turning against life, is also the last way in which a depressive and exhausted libido can go on surviving, and dream that it is surviving' (ibid., p. 398; p. 333). In contrast to this, Deleuze and Guattari approach death as the most common of occurrences in the unconscious, taking place simply because 'it occurs in life and for life, in every passage or becoming, in every intensity as passage or becoming' (ibid., p. 394; p. 330). It is possible to speak of a 'model' of death because all the deaths that take place in the unconscious are explicable in terms of the 'cycle of desiring-machines'.[32] This play we find in *Anti-Oedipus*, involving a virtual Oedipus and a movement of libidinal (transversal) becoming, replicates the movement I have traced in *Proust and Signs* and *Difference and Repetition* from the virtuality of the past to the destruction of our erotic attachment to memory through the forced movement of the death-drive and the higher synthesis of time.

Deleuze's use and abuse of Proust for life thus differs markedly from an entire French (and not only French) tradition of reading Proust that traps him exclusively in a depressive cycle of nostalgia and mummification, spinning in the vertigo of the virtual and seeking refuge in the melancholia of lost time. For Beckett Proust's science of that of 'affliction', not schizoanalysis; for Bataille the project is one of attaining a state of total and pure dissatisfaction;[33] for Kristeva the project is one of a

32 The eternal return is read as 'the deterritorialized circuit of all the cycles of desire' (*AO* p. 396; p. 331).

33 G. Bataille, 'Digression of Marcel Proust and Poetry', *Inner Experience*, trans. L. A. Boldt (New York: SUNY Press, 1988), p. 145.

morbid (and erotically perverse) attachment to death and to the past, it is not a project that is concerned with 'life' or the future. The readings of both Deleuze and Kristeva, in fact, make the death-drive crucial to an encounter with Proust but they configure its role in strikingly different ways. For Deleuze it provides the means by which we can appreciate the extent to which the synthesis of time in Proust's novel is, ultimately, to be conceived as an attempt to overcome the erotic effect of memory. For Kristeva, by contrast, the task is to reveal the extent to which the erotic investment in the past is informed by and grounded in the death-drive.

Like Deleuze, Kristeva appreciates the extent to which time, in one sense, creates death or that death is an effect of time. It is time that '"prolongs" the dead by placing them in the gigantic space where they lived, a space that augments them, deepens them, even subsumes them. Hence they resemble monsters - deep monsters' (*TS* p. 151; p. 82). It is death - be it that of Albertine or the grandmother - that is always 'transformed into a memory, a trace, an impression, an act of writing' (ibid., p. 149; p. 81). Affects or sensations frozen in the past remain free of change and exist independently of the 'feeling, degraded world of the present' (ibid., p. 330; p. 188). It is these frozen images and sensations that feed the soul of the narrator. It is for these reasons that Kristeva reads Proust as a writer of space and not time:

> When faced with two inexorable forms of temporality - death (Albertine dies, desire dies) and change (inflicted on the body, like aging, or on society, like war) - and with the illusory rebirth of youth, the novel goes beyond the vagaries of linear time and recovers a sort of temporal anteriority. Hence, by avoiding time's two implacable imperatives - death and change, which are also imperatives of *desire*...what we might call a 'timeless time' locates a series of sensations on the margins of time, that is, in space. The recollection-sensation does away with time and replaces it with an eternity - the spatial eternity of a literary work that Proust compares to a cathedral (ibid., p. 332; p. 189).

For Kristeva the search for time is a search for 'volume' in which the drama of selves, their birth and death, creation and annihilation, can be transfigured and transformed. The narrator's desire is to slow time down to the point of complete arrest, to render time gigantic and monstrous, and

this requires an aesthetic reversal of self-surpassing time and the conquest of impersonal and inhuman duration: 'He slows down the impatience of "Being-in-advance-of-itself" by turning this achieved advance in the other direction. Proust's desire is a desire for the past. He covets not what is to come but what has already occurred and slowed down' (ibid., p. 530; p. 310). Think of the way in which the narrator lingers over his remarks on any present, always interrupting and expanding it, so 'preventing it from running ahead and reformulating itself as a project' (ibid.). It is not the case, however, that the Proustian narrator would simply subscribe to the Whiteheadian position that time as 'perpetually perishing' is the ultimate evil,[34] simply because the narrator is fully cognisant of the fact that the redemption of time from time is dependent on the very being, or becoming, of time itself. Kristeva acknowledges that 'pure time' - the enjoyment of the essence of things through living outside time - is something contingent on numerical and linear time (ibid., p. 540; p. 316). Moreover, she shows the extent to which Proust challenges and overturns the stress on time as a project and time as care or concern (as in Heidegger, of course):

> When being is understood as 'temporality' and 'concern', the *loss of time* has a pejorative connotation. In the narrative experience of temporality, however, lost time becomes the sine qua non condition for attaining the dispersion caused by the *grace* of the sense of time. The more time the narrative or imaginary *I* has to lose, the less it finds time to be precious in itself, for the *I* uses involuntary memory to represent temporality through style and characters. (ibid., p. 532; p. 312; my emphasis).[35]

In other words, the imaginary *enjoys* losing time, 'dispersing it, and redoing it within a discourse in formation'. Kristeva makes an important point about the autonomous nature of the time that is being created (through being lost, wasted, regained): 'Despite what one might think, the "image" that constitutes the imaginary is not a copy of an external object.

34 See A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (London: The Free Press, 1978), p. 340.

35 This 'grace' is named as such by Proust in the passage from 'Time Regained' on 'a piece of time in its pure state' but it is not captured as such in the translation of Scott Moncrieff et al.

The image...is *a discourse representing the construction.* It is a "vision" (ibid., p. 533; p. 312).

What the novel seeks to bring about and to effect is the removal of the narrative from temporal duration in order to put in its place the 'exhilaration of pure time':

> In this sense, Proust does not subscribe to the opposition Bergson sets up between pure subjective duration and an objective time that can be measured in spatio-temporal terms. In Proust's novel, lost time is immediately 'searched for' within a spatial imaginary and within the discontinuity of language, so that spatio-temporal continuity and its fragmentation are not an antithesis to pure time but its servant, the preferred means for attaining time regained (ibid., p. 340; p. 194).

The ultimate 'imaginary', therefore, is at work in Proust's novel and this imaginary is the destiny of the narrator's vocation: it is nothing other than time regained. Proust is not a mystic (who would consider the experience to be real), he is not a scholar (who would simply brush aside the experience), and he is not a philosopher (who would attempt to explain the experience away or to tower over it). This specific sense of this time regained Kristeva explicates as follows: 'Time regained is a proliferation of signs that graze that blinding region of fleeting, overabundant, and unbearable sensations and move toward the mute memory of cells that feel suffering and bliss' (ibid., p. 343; p. 196).

It is not that the narrator does not have a 'concern' with time or does not 'care' about it; it is rather that this concern is for him a *jouissance* or passion. When this 'point' is reached in the novel and the narrator's apprenticeship, then:

> ...the theme of anxiety, along with care, its counterpart, is hardened into violence that is both inflicted and experienced. Death is not a final destination, but a *death drive inherent in Being* (*une pulsion de mort intérieure a l'Être*), its constitutive intermittence, its indispensable lifeblood. In this sense sadomasochism is the inevitable counterpart to the imaginary, the hidden and necessary face of delicacy. In this respect, Sade was one of Proust's precursors (ibid., p. 533; p. 313).

On this reading, then, the death-drive is at one with the erotic investment of the powers of memory, it is placed in its service. Eros does not need to be overcome by the superior power of thanatos or a higher synthesis of time. The erotic attachments and investments of the Proustian narrator require death more than they require anything else. We might add: if in the construction of a work devoted to eternity the narrator is capable of attaining an 'indifference' towards death this is because death has been *incorporated*, it has been made the subject of control and regulation, even mastery. Jealousy, desire, madness, love, death, and so on, all find their authentic and eternal existence and 'truth' in the work of art.

It would appear that we are confronted with a straightforward clash between a psychoanalytic reading of Proust and a 'machinic' one. Deleuze's reading always stresses the movements at work in Proust's novel: a serial movement, a movement of time,[36] a movement of transversals, a movement of becomings (animal, woman, molecule, imperceptible). Movement here is machinic not simply because something is always being produced but rather because the processes of production that are at play in Proust's novel are ones governed by the absence of unity. What makes Proust a supremely modernist writer for Deleuze is the fact that he constructs an individuating world from out of fragments, in which its parts are produced as asymmetrical sections and exist as 'hermetically sealed boxes, noncommunicating vessels...in which there are gaps even between things that are contiguous, gaps that are affirmations, pieces of a puzzle belonging not to any one puzzle but to many...' (*AO* p. 51; pp. 42-3). The 'whole' of the novel is itself a production but it too is produced as a part alongside other parts, it does not serve to unify or totalize these parts. The psychoanalysis-inspired reading would refuse to see 'becomings' taking place in the novel and stress only the closed system of a supra-egotistical self.[37] This is a self that has fully

36 Time itself is a transversal: 'Time is precisely the transversal of all possible spaces, including the space of time' (*PS*, p. 157; p. 130).

37 The following passage provides ample evidence of such a closed system at work in the novel: 'Experience had taught me only too well the impossibility of attaining in the real world to what lay deep within myself; I knew that Lost Time was not to be found again on the piazza of St Mark's any more than I had found it again on my second visit to Balbec...I did not intend, then, to make yet another experiment in a direction which I had long known could lead nowhere. Impressions such as those to which I wished to give permanence could not but vanish at the touch of a direct enjoyment which had been powerless to engender them. The only way to savour

incorporated itself and that feeds not only on the idea of death but on the deaths the narrator stages, anticipates, and executes.[38] One can acknowledge that the psychoanalytic reading remains more faithful to Proust's project than the schizoanalytic reading and that it succeeds in drawing attention to the disturbing aspects of the narrator, including the depressive and melancholic attachment to lost time. For Deleuze, however, the aim of one's reading and creation of concepts is to remain faithful to, and become equal to, the event of life. For him philosophy cannot be restricted to the territory of subjectivity since subjectivity is a black hole. Deleuze too, then, but in a different way to Kristeva, is always a faithful reader of Proust.

---

them more fully was to try to get to know them more completely in the medium in which they existed, that is to say within myself...I had not known pleasure at Balbec any more than I had known pleasure when I lived with Albertine, for the pleasure of living with her had been perceptible to me only in retrospect. When I recapitulated the disappointments of my life as a lived life, disappointments which made me believe that its reality must reside elsewhere than in action, what I was doing was not merely to link different disappointments together in a purely fortuitous manner and in following the circumstances of my personal existence. I saw clearly that the disappointment of travel and the disappointment of love were not different disappointments at all but the varied aspects which are assumed, according to the particular circumstances which bring it into play, by our inherent powerlessness to realize ourselves in material enjoyment or in effective action' (Proust, *RTP* 3, p. 877; *SLT* 3, pp. 910-11).

38 As Bowie notes with respect to Albertine, 'Albertine is becalmed in the text, embalmed by it, lost beneath the glistening gaze of its abstractions. Nothing can happen, and no story can be told, as the mortician-narrator moves to and fro', *Proust Among the Stars*, p. 297. See also Kristeva, *Time and Sense*, pp. 326ff.; pp. 186ff. The difference between the Deleuzo-Guattarian and Kristevian readings perhaps crystallizes on the question of Albertine. In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari consider it stupid to ask the question: why did Proust make Albert Albertine? It is 'stupid' because it fails to see that there is a 'becoming-woman' (= a girl), as well as a 'becoming-child', everywhere in the novel, *MP*, p. 340; *ATP*. p. 277. Kristeva, by contrast, holds to the view that: 'Albertine is not Albert. Albertine can only be one man - the man who cannot escape himself, who knows other people only in himself, and who can reveal himself only if he merges with others - with men as well as women. This man is a flower in a bunch of amaranths, a gull in a flock of birds, a Gomorrhean, a budding girl... Who is this man? The narrator'. *Time and Sense*, p. 151; pp. 82-3.

> It is no longer a matter of saying: to create is to remember - but rather, to remember is to create, is *to reach that point where the associative chain breaks, leaps over the constituted individual, is transferred to the birth of an individuating world* (*PS* p. 134; p. 111).

List of Abbreviations Used

Proust

RTP *À la recherche du temps perdu* (Bibliotheque de la Pleiade: Gallimard, 1954), in three volumes.

SLT *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff & T. Kilmartin (London: Penguin, 1983), in three volumes. I have favoured the more literal translation *In Search of Lost Time*.

Deleuze

PS *Proust et les signes* (Paris: Quadrige/PUF, 1998); *Proust and Signs*, trans. R. Howard (London: Athlone Press, 2000).

DR *Différence et répétition* (Paris: PUF, 1968); *Difference and Repetition*, trans. P. Patton (London: Athlone Press, 1994).

Deleuze and Guattari

AO *L'Anti-Oedipe* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1972/1973); *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. R. Hurley et. al (London: Athlone Press, 1984).

MP *Mille plateaux* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1980).

ATP *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. B. Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988)

QP? *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1991).

WP? *What is Philosophy?*, trans. G. Burchell & H. Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994).

Kristeva

TS *Le temps sensible: Proust et l'expérience littéraire* (Gallimard, 1994); *Time and Sense: Proust and the Experience of Literature*, trans. R. Guberman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

Pli 14 (2003), 199-228

Revulsion is not Without its Subject: Kant, Lacan, Žižek, and the Symptom of Subjectivity.

ADRIAN JOHNSTON

Introduction

As early as his first book in English, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Slavoj Žižek, whose work is primarily situated at the interstices of philosophy and psychoanalysis, employs the language of psychoanalytic psychopathology in 'diagnosing' the shortcomings of the Kantian critical-transcendental framework. He repeatedly refers to Kant's thought as exhibiting features identical to patterns displayed by obsessional neurosis - 'what is at stake in Kant's "obsessional" economy is precisely the avoidance of the traumatic encounter of the Truth... it announces a desire to elude, at any price, an encounter with the Truth'.[1] Elsewhere, he states that, 'Kant, like a good, compulsive neurotic... sets up the network of the conditions of possible experience in order to make sure that the actual experience of the real, the encounter with the Thing, will never take place, so that everything the subject will effectively encounter will be the already gentrified-domesticated reality of representations'.[2] But, what is this horrible, terrifying 'Truth' that so frightens Kant as to push him into designing an incredibly sophisticated philosophical system as an elaborate defense mechanism for warding off a confrontation with it? What is the 'traumatic encounter' that Kant allegedly struggles with all his intellectual might to avoid? According to Žižek, the infamous noumenal-phenomenal distinction 'conceals a foreboding that perhaps this Thing is itself nothing

1 S. Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), p. 190.
2 S. Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters* (London: Verso, 1996), p. 75.

but a lack, an empty place'.[3] Along these same lines, Žižek speaks of 'the monstrous noumenal Thing,' an abyss that threatens to swallow up the subject that fails to maintain an appropriate degree of distance from it.[4]

In fact, this sort of descriptive language is regularly employed with regard to the theme of subjectivity as negativity: Žižek refers to Descartes' *Cogito* as a 'monster,'[5] and he repeatedly cites the young Hegel's macabre image of the subject as a dark and ominous night in which the body appears in a state of gruesome, butchered fragmentation.[6] Additionally, it should be observed, in the paragraph of the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* from which Žižek extracts the phrase 'tarrying with the negative,' Hegel associates this negativity with death, with 'devastation' and 'utter dismemberment'.[7] Could this Hegelian connotation of negativity hold the key to illuminating Žižek's otherwise strange and perplexing characterizations of the Cartesian-Kantian subject (and, by implication, the Lacanian 'barred S') as a horribly monstrous, spectral 'creature from the abyss,' as a traumatic lack or terrifying emptiness, the 'thing from inner space?'[8] Could it be that the void skirted around by Kant is rendered disturbing by virtue of being, behind the concealing layers of philosophical-epistemological abstraction—Kant does not speak of the unimaginable subject-in-itself as anything more tangible than an ineffable, unknowable noumenon—an emblem or avatar of ontological finitude (specifically as the mortality inextricably intertwined with the individual's corporeal condition)? Is this the hidden link between epistemological and ontological finitude—Žižek credits Kant with being the most groundbreaking philosopher of finitude, in an ontological as well as the more familiar epistemological sense[9]—testified to by what Žižek analytically identifies as Kant's 'obsessional neurotic' desperation to, as it

3 Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, p. 193.
4 S. Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso, 1997), p. 237.
5 S. Žižek, 'Introduction: Cogito as Shibboleth,' *Cogito and the Unconscious*, ed. S. Žižek (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 7.
6 S. Kay, *Žižek: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), p. 23.
7 G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), §32 / pp. 18-19.
8 S. Žižek, 'The Thing from Inner Space,' *Sexuation*, ed. R. Salecl (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 231, pp. 239-240.
9 S. Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999), p. 158.
S. Žižek, *For they know not what they do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (London: Verso, 2002), p. 217.

were, avoid the void? Is this awful nothingness somehow related to the absence of annihilation? Speaking of the Hegelian 'night of the world,' Žižek claims that death itself stands for this 'self-withdrawal, the absolute contraction of subjectivity, the severing of its links with 'reality'.[10] What if the inverse is (also) true? What if the negativity of Cartesian-Kantian-Hegelian subjectivity (as the monstrous *Cogito*, the horrible void of the Thing, and the terrifying abyss of nocturnal dismemberment) is a symptomatic ideality-as-idealization derived from and conditioned by a contingent-yet-*apriori* material foundation (what, in psychoanalysis, would be designated as a violent 'reaction formation'[11])? Is the subject-as-negativity a response to its corporeal *Grund*, to a primordially chaotic and discordant Real that produces its own negation immanently out of itself? Are Žižek's otherwise inexplicably odd choices of adjectives here indicative of just such a link, namely, of a thinly concealed umbilical cord tethering the (pseudo-)immateriality of the modern subject to a dark base rendered obscure through a forceful disavowal/abjection?

Before attempting to answer these pressing questions, a few relevant observations ought to be put forward here. In his crucial metapsychological paper 'On Narcissism: An Introduction' (1914), Freud draws a distinction between 'ego-libido' (i.e., narcissistically invested libido) and 'object-libido' (i.e., anaclitically invested libido), these two forms of libidinal cathexis being related to each other in a zero sum balance.[12] According to Freud, the underlying barrier blocking the movement from ego-libido to object-libido, from narcissistic to anaclitic investment—neurotics are reluctant to surrender a quota of ego-libido to an extraneous love-object, whereas psychotics have withdrawn all of their libido from the reality of the external world and deposited it within themselves—is directly related to human beings' embodied condition (Žižek likewise describes perversion, the avoidance of reproductively oriented heterosexual-genital intercourse, as being a defense against 'the Real of human finitude' *à la* the couple of death and sexuality[13]). More specifically, what the individual is averse to in anaclitic sexual relations is the vague intimation of his/her finitude, of the mortality inherent in the

10 Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, p. 154.
11 J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. D. Nicholson Smith (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1973), pp 376-377.
12 *SE* 14: p. 76.
13 S. Žižek, *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime: On David Lynch's Lost Highway* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), p. 36.

condition of embodiment itself—'the link between sex and death, sex and the death of the individual, is fundamental'.[14] The individual rebels against being reduced to a mere 'link in the chain,' against being, as Freud (following Weismann) puts it, a 'mortal vehicle of a (possibly) immortal substance'[15] (contemporary biology continues to support the assertion of this connection between sexuality and death—rather than appearing simultaneously with the advent of life, the mortal individual organism doesn't come into being until the evolutionary advent of sexual reproduction[16]).

Lacan furthers this Freudian line of thought *vis-à-vis* his portrayal of the libido in the myth of the lamella (a myth that Žižek cites repeatedly). Sexuality is depicted as a frightening monster-parasite that aggressively grafts itself onto the being of the individual and drives it towards death.[17] In the same seminar in which the lamella is invoked (the eleventh seminar), Lacan also sketches a logic of two intersecting lacks, a Real lack (introduced by the fact of sexual reproduction) and a Symbolic lack (introduced by the subject's alienating mediation in the defiles of the signifying big Other). The Real lack is nothing other than the individual's 'loss' of immortality due to its sexual-material nature as a living being subjected to the cycles of generation and corruption, albeit as a loss of something never possessed except in primary narcissism and/or unconscious fantasy (in other words, a Hegelian 'loss of a loss'). Symbolic lack serves, in a way, as a defensive displacement of this more foundational lack in the Real.[18] Not only are psychoanalytic

14 J. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, 1964*, ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. A. Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1977), p. 150.

15 *SE* 14: p. 78.

16 W.C. Clark, *Sex and the Origins of Death* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. xi, 54, 62-63.

17 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI*, pp. 177, 197-198, 199.
J. Lacan, 'Position of the Unconscious,' trans. B. Fink, *Reading Seminar XI: Lacan's Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. R. Feldstein, B. Fink, and M. Jaanus (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 275-276.
J.-A. Miller, 'Lacanian Biology and the Event of the Body,' trans. B.P. Fulks, *Lacanian Ink*, no. 18, Spring 2001, p. 29.

18 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI*, pp. 204-205.
J.-A. Miller, 'Paradigms of *Jouissance*,' trans. J. Jauregui, *Lacanian Ink*, no. 17, Fall 2000, p. 26.
P. Verhaeghe, 'Causation and Destitution of a Pre-ontological Non-entity: On the Lacanian Subject,' *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, ed. D. Nobus (New York: Other Press, 1998), p. 168.

psychopathologies painful struggles with both of these lacks, but, 'It is this double lack that determines the ever-insistent gap between the real and the symbolico-imaginary, and thus the constitution of the subject'.[19] One possible manifestation of the neurotic rebellion against this fundamental feature of the corporeal condition is a strong feeling of disgust in the face of all things fleshly, of everything whose palpable attraction and tangible-yet-fleeting beauty smacks of a transience evoking the inexorable inevitability of death (an attitude that Freud comments upon in his short 1916 piece 'On Transience'[20]).

How can one not be struck by Žižek's repeated expressions of just this sort of nausea? He confesses that, 'I always felt a deep sympathy for Monty Python, whose excessive humour also signals an underlying stance of profound disgust with life'.[21] Time and again, in text after text, Žižek finds occasions for dwelling upon these powerful feelings of deep-seated revulsion, feelings that sustain an aesthetic omnipresent in his oeuvre: the Real (the Lacanian register with which Žižek is overwhelmingly concerned) is associated with an obscene mass of raw, palpitating slime[22]; behind the calm, banal façade of reality (as the soothing, smoothing layers of idealizing Imaginary-Symbolic coating placed over a disturbing, unsettling materiality) lies 'the horror of the Real' as 'putrefied flesh,' as 'the disgusting substance of life'[23] and the 'ugliness' of *jouissance*[24]; human existence is tolerable only if a 'proper distance,' a 'disidentification,' is maintained by the subject in relation to this fleshly Real, a holding of the body at arm's length necessary for subjectivity to

19 P. Verhaeghe, 'The Collapse of the Function of the Father and Its Effect on Gender Roles,' *Sexuation*, ed. R. Salecl (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 147.

20 *SE* 14: p. 305.

21 S. Žižek, 'Preface: Burning the Bridges,' *The Žižek Reader*, ed. E. Wright and E. Wright (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 1999), p. viii.

22 S. Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 116.
S. Žižek, *On Belief* (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 81-82.
S. Žižek, 'The Lamella of David Lynch,' *Reading Seminar XI*, p. 208.
S. Žižek, 'I do not order my dreams,' *Opera's Second Death* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 152.

23 S. Žižek, 'The Abyss of Freedom,' *The Abyss of Freedom/Ages of the World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 22-23.
Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, p. 66.

24 Žižek, 'The Abyss of Freedom,' p. 24.

sustain itself as such[25]; pursuing (sexual) pleasure too far must result, through a Hegelian/Moebius-like twisting around into the opposite, in disgust, in pleasure becoming deeply unpleasurable through an excessive proximity to the object whose desirability is sustained solely at a safe distance.[26]

If Žižek is correct that Kant is, in a certain sense, an obsessional neurotic compulsively forestalling a confrontation with a *Ding an sich*, with a 'Thing' that might very well be intimately related to the subject's ownmost mortality as the concrete expression of its embodied ontological finitude, then one could all too easily make the clichéd remark that, 'It takes one to know one'. In many instances, Žižek performs the very 'pathologies' he diagnoses in others, effectively mirroring the explicit as well as implicit conceptual structures discerned in whatever material is at stake. In the present case under consideration, his ability to detect the traces of an 'obsessional' dynamic (a dynamic so subtle as to be almost imperceptible, yet writ large once one 'looks awry' in the appropriate fashion) at work within the very surface organization of Kant's incredibly abstract and ornate philosophical apparatus is perhaps tied to his awareness of this obsessional trajectory in his own theoretical productions. However, isn't this strategy of reading Žižek's engagement with Kant (and with the modern philosophical vision of subjectivity in general) in danger of quickly degenerating into vulgar psycho-biographical speculation, into, for instance, a crude *ad hominem* thesis that Žižek is driven to embrace this particular conception of the negativity of the subject by obsessional neurotic difficulties with fleshly finitude? Nothing of this sort is involved here.

The prominence, in Žižek's rhetoric, of a morbid fascination with the mortal Real-made-flesh is indicative of something more than just a personal, idiosyncratic fixation. Instead, this motif is directly revelatory at the impersonal, philosophical level. The family of affects, a set that includes disgust, horror, and revulsion, so frequently spoken of by Žižek (and which he imputes to, among others, Kant) is an index of the effective existence of subjectivity proper. One of Lacan's central claims, in his tenth seminar on anxiety (1962-1963), is that 'anxiety is not without its object'—and this contrary to the standard Freudian/Heideggerian

25 Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, p. 267.
26 Žižek, 'I do not order my dreams,' pp. 144-145.
Žižek, 'Foreword to the Second Edition,' *For they know not what they do*, p. lxxiii.

distinction between fear and anxiety, according to which the latter lacks a definite point of attachment while the former is directly linked with some manner of determinate content.[27] A similar claim apropos of subjectivity merits advancement: horrified revulsion is not without its subject. That is to say, if psychoanalysis is indeed correct to maintain that the subject ontogenetically emerges through and comes to constitute itself by a sort of radical, primordial gesture of negating rejection (whether as Freud's primal/primary repression *qua* original *Verwerfung* or *Verneinung*, Lacan's 'cut' of symbolic castration, and/or Julia Kristeva's abjection[28]), then feelings of revulsion towards the corporeal substratum of the mortal body are essentially indicative of the presence of a form of subjectivity resistant to being collapsed back into its material foundation.

Part One: 'I or he or it, the thing... that dies'—Death and the Euthanasia of Reason

In his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, Kant observes, in the opening section 'On the Cognitive Faculty,' that the cognizing subject cannot actively cancel out or negate its own existence as subject. In other words, statements like 'I am not' or 'I do not exist' are manifest contradictions (here, Kant merely spells out a further consequence of Descartes' central insight that the 'I' as *res cogitans* is incapable of calling its own being into doubt at the moment in which it engages in the activity of doubting). And, Kant mentions this impossibility while discussing the topic of death (a discussion later echoed by both Freud and Heidegger[29]). Identifying 'life' as the necessary precondition for experience itself—this indication is not without its internally subversive significance for the critical framework—he explains that:

> Nobody can experience his own death (since it requires life in order to experience); he can only observe it in others. Whether death is painful cannot be judged from the rattling in the throat

27 J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre X: L'angoisse, 1962-1963*, unpublished typescript, session of January 9th, 1963, March 6th, 1963.
28 J. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. L.S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 2, 3-4, 5, 11.
29 M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1962), pp. 281-282, 282-283.

> or the convulsions of the dying person, this seems rather to be a mere mechanical reaction of the vital power, and perhaps it is a gentle sensation of the gradual release from all suffering. The natural fear of death, entertained even by the most unhappy, or the most wise, is therefore not a fear of dying, but rather... a fear of having died (that is, of being dead). This is a thought the victim of death expects to entertain after dying, because he thinks of his corpse as himself, though it no longer is, and he thinks of it as lying in a dismal grave, or somewhere else. This deception cannot be removed because it is inherent in the nature of thinking as a way of speaking to oneself and of oneself. The thought, I am not, cannot exist at all; because if I am not, then it cannot occur to me that I am not. I may indeed say that I am not well, and so forth, and negate similar predicates of myself (as happens with all *verba*); but to negate the subject itself when speaking in the first person (thereby destroying itself) is a contradiction.[30]

As is common knowledge, the term 'experience' has, for Kant, a precise technical meaning, a meaning already operative in the pre-critical *Anthropology* (particularly in the section of the first book entitled 'On Sensibility in Contrast to the Understanding'[31]). Experience is composed of two 'roots,' namely, the passive, receptive faculty of perceiving (i.e., 'intuition') and the active, organizing faculty of conceiving (i.e., 'understanding').[32] Thus, the impossibility of experiencing one's own death can immediately be rendered with greater specificity. In the above passage, Kant is a little careless when he asserts that the thought of negating the presence of the first-person thinker 'cannot exist at all'. Rather, although a speaker, for example, can proclaim that 'I am not'—this can be expressed as an articulated judgment, as a discursive statement—this enunciation is inherently incapable of taking on the slightest degree of experiential sense, since no sensible intuition could ever furnish the

30 I. Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. V.L. Dowdell (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), pp. 55-56.
31 Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, pp. 24-25, 26.
32 I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1965), B146-B147/p. 161-162, B161/p. 171, B218-B219/pp. 208-209. I. Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. P. Carus, rev. J.W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1977), pp. 43-44, 58-59.

enunciator with a concrete, perceptual correlate of this peculiar idea. In short, in terms of perceptual experience, nothing leads the cognizing subject to believe in the possibility of its own non-existence, of the removal of the seemingly indelible stain of its own self-presence through the annihilating cancellation of its 'being-in-the-world'. Thus, one could conclude, subjectivity is compelled, at the level of intuition, to (unconsciously) assert: 'I am immortal' (or, 'I am non-mortal'). As Freud states it, 'in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality'.[33] Similarly, Žižek refers to the young Schelling's 'Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism' (1795), wherein Schelling emphasizes the irreducibility of the subject's *Dasein* as prohibiting its direct relation to its own absence— 'We can never get rid of our selves'.[34]

And yet, of course, human individuals are all too aware, in a very conscious manner, of their own mortality, of the fact that they could die at any moment and that death is an unavoidable inevitability. Concerning 'Freud's notion that the unconscious knows of no death,' Žižek asks, 'what if, at its most radical, 'consciousness' *is* the awareness of one's finitude and mortality?'[35] If experience, as grounded in intuition, fails to provide any credible evidence for the possibility of the non-existence of the 'I'—although the Kantian faculty of intuition might be typically viewed as being a predominantly conscious function, in terms of mortal finitude, its implications remain somewhere below the threshold of explicit cognitive thematization—the subject is left in the position of entertaining an 'intellectual acceptance of the repressed,' of 'I know full well that I am mortal, but nonetheless...'.[36] Both Freud and Lacan directly address this phenomenon with reference to the elementary, stereotypical textbook syllogism: 'All men are mortal. Socrates is a man. Therefore, Socrates is mortal'. Speaking of this syllogism's major/universal premise, Freud observes that, 'no human being really grasps it'.[37] Lacan mentions

33 *SE* 14: p. 289.
34 F.W.J. von Schelling, 'Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism,' *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays (1794-1796)*, trans. F. Marti (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1980), pp. 181-182.
35 S. Žižek, '*Da Capo senza Fine*,' *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London: Verso, 2000), p. 256.
36 Žižek, '*Da Capo senza Fine*,' p. 256.
37 *SE* 17: p. 242.

this syllogism several times.[38] Žižek likewise asserts that psychoanalysis has an important qualification to add regarding 'the most notorious case of universal judgment: 'All men are mortal':

> In its implicit libidinal-symbolic economy, such a judgment always excludes *me*—that is, the absolute singularity of the speaker *qua* subject of enunciation. It is easy to ascertain, from the observer's safe distance, that 'everybody' is mortal; however, this very statement involves the exception of its subject of enunciation—as Lacan puts it, in the unconscious, nobody truly believes that *he* is mortal; this knowledge is disavowed, we are dealing with a fetishistic splitting: 'I know very well that I am mortal, but still…'.[39]

From a Lacanian perspective, the universal claim 'All men are mortal' is akin to the proposition grounding masculine-phallic sexuation, namely, 'All masculine subjects are "castrated".' For Lacan, the sexuated position of the masculine subject, as illuminated by Freud's myth of the primal horde in *Totem and Taboo*, is structured by both the universal 'law of castration' ($\forall x \phi x$) governing 'phallic *jouissance*' as well as the posited exception to this law, that is, the uncastrated 'primal father' ($\exists x \neg \phi x$).[40] Interestingly enough, Freud, in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, contends that the fear of death, due to its inability to take on an experiential referent, is ultimately derived, ontogenetically, from the fear of castration—for him, castration and mortality are tightly tangled together in the psyche.[41] Along related lines regarding the absence of *Vorstellungen* for material-temporal finitude, Lacan often identifies death

38 J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre IX: L'identification, 1961-1962*, unpublished typescript, session of May 23rd, 1962.
J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XVII: L'envers de la psychanalyse, 1969-1970*, ed. J.-A. Miller (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1991), pp. 142-143.
J. Lacan, '*Radiophonie*,' *Autres écrits*, ed. J.-A. Miller (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2001), p. 405.
J. Lacan, '*Le rêve d'Aristote*,' unpublished typescript.
39 Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, p. 164.
40 J. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore, 1972-1973*, ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. B. Fink (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998), p. 79.
41 *SE* 20: pp. 129-130.

as something Real[42]: death is the 'quintessential unnameable'[43]; the signifiers of the symbolic order have nothing to say about sexual reproduction and individual mortal finitude, silently leaving the subject in ignorance about this most pressing of concerns[44]; although language enables making reference to it, death remains irreducibly unrepresentable and unknowable[45]; death is an unthinkable impossibility[46]… and so on. Like Freud, Lacan contends that the phallus at stake in castration proper functions as a substitutive stand-in for a death with which one cannot have the slightest experiential acquaintance.[47]

So, in what does the similarity of these two universals ('All men are mortal' and 'All men are castrated') reside? 'All men are mortal' is, for the subject condemned to first-person consciousness (Lacan also refers to this condemnation to the prison-house of conscious cognition[48]), a universal ($\forall x \phi x$) with a correlative exception ($\exists x \neg \phi x$), an internal exclusion puncturing the encompassing 'All'. This hole in the universal is the 'I' as constitutively incapable of subsuming itself, except indirectly, under the jurisdiction of the mandatory law of '*le maître absolu*'. As Lacan puts it in '*L'étourdit*,' the subject's very existence itself, its ineliminable *Dasein*, is a 'denial' of the universal proposition concerning human mortality, its universality suspended in remaining, for one exceptional case, an infinitely deferred possibility completely lacking the convincing heft of actuality.[49] In reality, all subjects are 'symbolically

42 J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XXI: Les non-dupes errent, 1973-1974*, unpublished typescript, session of December 18th, 1973.
43 J. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954-1955*, ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. S. Tomaselli (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1988), p. 211.
44 J. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses, 1955-1956*, ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. R. Grigg (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993), pp. 179-180.
45 J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XXII: R.S.I., 1974-1975*, unpublished typescript, session of April 8th, 1975.
46 J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XXIII: Le sinthome, 1975-1976*, unpublished typescript, session of March 16th, 1976.
47 J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre V: Les formations de l'inconscient, 1957-1958*, ed. J.-A. Miller (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1998), p. 465.
48 J. Lacan, 'Responses to Students of Philosophy Concerning the Object of Psychoanalysis,' trans. J. Mehlman, *Television/A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment*, ed. J. Copjec (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1990), p. 107.
49 J. Lacan, '*L'étourdit*,' *Autres écrits*, p. 451.

castrated,' deprived of access to a mythical 'absolute enjoyment' beyond the Law; and yet, in fantasy, there always exists 'the One' who is the exception to this rule, who enjoys an unfettered, immediate relation with the 'Real Thing' of full, undiluted *jouissance*. Likewise, in reality, all individual human beings are mortal creatures, each destined to die in an indefinite future *à venir*; and yet, in fantasy, in an unconscious ignorant of both negation as well as time[50] (and, hence, of death too), there always exists 'the One' who is immortal, magically exempt from the cycles of generation and corruption. Further justification for drawing a connection between 'All men are mortal' and 'All men are castrated' is easily found in Lacan's teachings: not only does the matrix of the big Other of the symbolic order generate and sustain a permanent non-rapport between living beings 'sexuated' on the basis of its terms, but—Lacan himself hints at this link—the negativity of language (*à la* its ability to incarnate non-being through, for example, the future tense) also simultaneously introduces the *parlêtre* to its own mortality.[51]

Lacan notes that the sole means by which the individual grasps the intuitively unverifiable fact of his/her mortality is *vis-à-vis* the indirect mediation of the signifiers of the symbolic order.[52] Put differently, one's ownmost mortal finitude is, in Kant's terms, a regulative idea of pure reason devoid of constitutive sense. In 'Sex and the Euthanasia of Reason,' an essay to which Žižek frequently refers, Joan Copjec advances the thesis that the antinomies of pure reason in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* depict the antagonistic structure of sexuation as later delineated by Lacan in the twentieth seminar. Despite the absence of explicit references to such matters as sexuality or gender identity in the first *Critique*, Copjec maintains that Kant initiates an unprecedented exploration, albeit in a subliminatorily displaced way, into the 'logic of sexuation,' the deadlock of sexed being.[53] Especially as regards the first of Kant's four antinomies, couldn't the same move be made here apropos of the topic of the individual's ontological-material finitude? Shouldn't Copjec's essay be

50 *SE* 14: pp. 186-187.

51 J. Lacan, '*Introduction au commentaire de Jean Hyppolite sur la «Verneinung» de Freud*,' *Écrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966), pp. 379-380.
J. Lacan, '*...ou pire: Compte rendu du Séminaire 1971-1972*,' *Autres écrits*, p. 549.

52 Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XVII*, p. 142.

53 J. Copjec, 'Sex and the Euthanasia of Reason,' *Supposing the Subject*, ed. J. Copjec (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 24-25, 25-26, 27-28. Kay, *Žižek*, pp. 88-89.

complemented by a piece whose appropriate title would be 'Death and the Euthanasia of Reason?'

In the first antinomy (as a contradiction plaguing the 'cosmological idea'), reason, proceeding on the basis of the understanding's concepts of cause and effect, posits that the universe (*qua* the 'All' of reality that Kant calls 'the world') has a determinate spatio-temporal point of origin (whether this is dubbed the Aristotelian 'prime mover' or the 'big bang' of modern astrophysics). Despite the impossibility of the finite epistemological agent ever achieving an experience of this origin as such —the 'pure forms of intuition' constrain the subject to cognize all phenomena as themselves embedded within an open-ended spatio-temporal continuum—reason nonetheless confidently advances the thesis that, 'The world has a beginning in time, and is also limited as regards space'. Intuition, contrary to reason, is compelled to posit the antithesis that, 'The world has no beginning, and no limits in space; it is infinite as regards both time and space'.[54] Why? For Kant, time and space, as pure forms of intuition, are conditions of possibility for the occurrence of any and every possible experience. Hence, one cannot intuit an originary limit-point to the spatio-temporal universe, since such a hypothetical experience would involve intuiting a state prior to (i.e., outside time) and/or external to (i.e., outside space) temporally and spatially mediated reality (this would also apply to the notion of a cataclysmic end to the universe). Such an intuition is, according to Kant, impossible, given the conclusion of the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' that time and space are necessary possibility conditions for the occurrence of any intuited experience whatsoever.[55] And yet, reason, in its compulsive extension of the concepts of the understanding beyond the limits of possible experience, foists upon the mind the conviction that the universe must, for instance, originate in the moment of a primordial *Ur*-Cause. In extrapolating from the sequential chains of causes and effects, reason is convinced that the universe of reality must be finite, although intuition never allows for this finitude to be grasped as either an actual or a potential experience. If the term 'I' is substituted for 'world,' then couldn't it be proposed, from the perspective of psychoanalysis, that at least one facet of Kant's first antinomy entails a defensively projected working-through of the problem of subjective finitude? Doesn't Kant, in the *Anthropology*, concede that life is a contingent-yet-*apriori* condition

54 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A426-A427/B454-B455/p. 396.

55 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A517/B545/p. 455.

of possibility for experience? Isn't birth the concrete origin of idealist subjectivity's world, and death its final, concluding moment? As André Green elegantly expresses it, '*L'origine des mondes, de la vie, de l'homme, se profile loin derrière un mystère plus personnel: celui des origines du questionneur lui-même*'.[56]

As in a standard Kantian antinomy, the mortal psyche contains two diametrically-opposed judgments: 'My lived existence is finite' ('I was born at a certain point in datable time, and I will die at an indefinite-yet-inevitable time in the future—in short, my lived existence has a temporal beginning and is of limited duration') and 'My lived existence is infinite' ('I cannot step outside of my own first-person experiential position, and, therefore, 'I' am incapable of non-existence—in short, my lived existence has neither a temporal beginning nor is of limited duration'). Of course, the latter judgment appears to sane rational reflection as ridiculous. Nonetheless, given the status of finitude as delineated by, among others, Kant, Freud, and Lacan, such an antagonistic deadlock must be operative due to the gap that subsists between the faculties of reason and intuition. This is merely the logical extension of the implications of the third-person cosmological antinomy to what could be called the first-person 'psychical antinomy'. There is no strict difference-in-kind between the two; the same rift runs through the 'I' as well as through the universe as a (non-) whole. The antinomy between finite limitation and the unlimited infinite is reflected within both the macrocosm and the microcosm.

The split within the structure of the subject that Žižek credits Kant with having discovered is that between the phenomenal and noumenal dimensions of subjectivity, namely, between the subject as it appears to itself in an experiential fashion (i.e., through conceptual and spatio-temporal mediation) and the subject as it exists/subsists 'in itself'.[57] The subject *an sich* that makes experience possible cannot itself fall, as a discrete experiential, representational element, within the frame of the field it opens up and sustains (a point already grasped by Descartes in his second meditation[58]). Hence, Kant famously speaks of 'this *I* or *he* or *it*

56 A. Green, '*L'originaire dans la psychanalyse*,' *La diachronie en psychanalyse* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2000), p. 58.

57 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B156/pp. 194-195.
A. Zupancic, 'Philosophers' Blind Man's Buff,' *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*, ed. R. Salecl and S. Žižek (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 52-53.

58 R. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. D.A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1993), p. 20.

(the thing) that thinks'.[59] The noumenal subject is just as much of a permanently shrouded mystery as things-in-themselves.[60] The entire thrust of the first *Critique* (particularly the 'Dialectic of Pure Reason') is to establish the epistemological grounds for forbidding any and every philosophical reference to the noumenal realm beyond the familiar limits of possible experience. The conclusion Kant draws from the antinomies is that the rational irreconcilability between theses and their parallel antitheses means that the ostensible external referents under irresolvable dispute (for instance, the [non-]All of the cosmos) cannot be objects of legitimate philosophical inquiry. Kant assumes that things as they really are in and of themselves must be devoid of contradiction, given the supposed self-consistency of the fabric of pure, unmediated, extra-ideational being. Since the attempt to assign ideas like that of a (finite or infinite?) universe an ontological status produces indissoluble contradictions, these ideas are devoid of any constitutive value; they are relegated to a mere auxiliary-regulative role, serving the interest of reason in achieving a unified, coherent epistemological systematicity. Hence, the grand whole of the cosmos must, in Kant's view, remain forever inaccessible, being yet another void in relation to necessarily limited human cognition.

As just seen, the psychical antinomy entails similar consequences at a microcosmic level. In addition to being unable to phenomenally and introspectively know itself as a 'thinking thing,' the subject is also unable to reflectively cognize itself as a finite being. Its ownmost ontological finitude, arising from the brute Real as both temporality and corporeality —there are justifications for viewing time itself, in its restless negativity, as belonging to the dimension of the Real in Lacanian theory[61]—can only be encountered as an antinomic deadlock. Therefore, such finitude must also be considered a noumenal, *an sich* feature of 'this *I* or *he* or *it* (the thing)... that dies'. The subject is inherently barred from any form of phenomenal self-acquaintance in which it would know itself as finite in

59 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A346/B404/p. 385.

60 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A350-A351/p. 389.

61 B. Baas, *De la chose à l'objet: Jacques Lacan et la traversée de la phénoménologie* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), p. 249.
D. Poissonnier, *La pulsion de mort: De Freud à Lacan* (Paris: Points Hors Ligne, 1998), p. 204.
M. Safouan, '*Du réel dans la psychanalyse*,' *Dix conférences de psychanalyse* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2001), pp. 12-13.

the ontological-material sense. The nothingness fled from, the void that Kant allegedly labors so hard to avoid, is nothing other than the very absence of the subject itself, the negation of the insurmountable 'transcendental illusion' of its apparent immortality.

Part Two: Avoiding the Void—The Temporal Loop of the Fundamental Fantasy

According to Žižek's heterodox juxtaposition of Kant and Lacan, the psychoanalytic notion of fantasy has direct relevance to this splitting of subjectivity between, on the one hand, the noumenal subject of (unconscious) enunciation, and, on the other hand, the phenomenal subject of utterances (*qua* determinate signifier-predicates). Although, as Lacan might phrase it, the subject in the Real[62] (i.e., the *an sich Es*) is forever out of reach of introspective self-consciousness' grasp, the repeated attempts by reflective activity to 'catch its own tail' generates a by-product, namely, fantasies as responses to this irreducible self-opacity:

> If... one bears in mind the fact that, according to Lacan, the ego is an *object*, a substantial 'res,' one can easily grasp the ultimate sense of Kant's transcendental turn: it desubstantializes the subject (which, with Descartes, still remained '*res* cogitans,' i.e., a substantial 'piece of reality')—*and it is this very desubstantialization which opens up the empty space (the 'blank surface') onto which fantasies are projected, where monsters emerge.* To put it in Kantian terms: because of the inaccessibility of the Thing in itself, there is always a gaping hole in (constituted, phenomenal) reality, reality is never 'all,' its circle is never closed, and this void of the inaccessible Thing is filled out with phantasmagorias through which the transphenomenal Thing enters the stage of phenomenal presence —in short, prior to the Kantian turn, there can be no black hulk at the background of the stage.[63]

62 Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XVII*, pp. 118-119.
63 S. Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom!: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 136.

Elsewhere, Žižek draws out the consequences of this, maintaining that every mediated identity, all signifier-predicates appended to the original nothingness of subjectivity in its raw negativity, are 'supplements' aiming to 'fill out this void'.[64] Thus, the entire range of significations and images proposed by the subject to itself in response to the question of self-identity ('Who or what am I?') falls under the heading of transcendental illusion. That is to say, these fantasmatic productions striving to seal this crack in reality are fictitious semblances. And yet, they are the inevitable results of a structurally determined dynamic rooted in subjectivity's internal division —'The subject is this emergence which, just before, as subject, was nothing, but which, having scarcely appeared, solidifies into a signifier'.[65]

What's more, Žižek, in *The Ticklish Subject*, provocatively suggests that the supposedly inaccessible dimension of subjectivity in Kant, that presumed *an sich* kernel (access to which is barred by phenomenal-reflective mediation), isn't the noumenal Real, but, rather, what psychoanalysis designates as the 'fundamental fantasy'.[66] In other words, the horrible abyss of the Thing-void that Kant seeks to avoid is precisely this fantasmatic core of the subject's very being as subject, the hidden nucleus of its identity-structure. Furthermore, the fundamental fantasy, in analytic metapsychology, is directly related to the finite condition of the psyche. Consequently, Žižek's subsequent insinuation, also in *The Ticklish Subject*, regarding a link between the finitude of Kantian subjectivity and mortality is far from being a careless, accidental *non sequitur*.[67]

What is the fundamental fantasy? Perhaps the clearest definition of it is to be found in the 1964 article 'Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality,' written by two of Lacan's most prominent students, Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis. Therein, Laplanche and Pontalis maintain that the ultimate vanishing point on the horizon of all psychical fantasies is the enigma of 'the origin of the subject himself'.[68] In other words, fundamental fantasies, apart from whatever recurrent motifs are to be found in the particular fantasies of diverse individuals—Freud's tendency

64 Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, p. 144.
65 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI*, p. 199.
66 Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, pp. 59-60.
67 Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, pp. 163-164.
68 J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, 'Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality,' *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. V. Burgin, J. Donald, and C. Kaplan (New York: Methuen, 1986), p. 19.

is to search for universal contents in his analysands' fantasies (i.e., the primal scene, castration, seduction, etc.)—these various fantasies share a lowest common structural/functional denominator. They invariably attempt to answer, through the fictions of personal myths, inquiries into matters of origins: Where do 'I' come from? Why, and for what desires, am 'I' here? What is the reason or purpose for sexuality? The obsession with origins is the defining feature of fundamental fantasies.[69] These troubling, burning enigmas can arise only for an essentially finite being, for a mortal creature born (or, as Heidegger would say, 'thrown') into a world not of its own making. And, fantasies are the sole possible answers to these absolutely central origin-questions because finite subjectivity is intrinsically unable to construct, in the usual fashion, knowledge of its mortal finitude—'*Le fantasme naît là où le savoir fait défaut*'.[70] As Kant would express it, transcendental illusions are born there where the rift of a necessary incompleteness within the fabric of knowledge is encountered.

Similarly, Alenka Zupancic furnishes a rigorous definition of the Kantian transcendental illusion decisively distinguishing it from any sort of contingent, empirical distortion (i.e., a false representation of some object 'out there' in reality). Instead of being the misrepresentation of an underlying substratum:

> Transcendental illusion is the name for something that appears where there should be nothing. It is not the illusion of something, it is not a false or distorted representation of a real object. Behind this illusion there is no real object; there is only nothing, the lack of an object. The illusion consists of 'something' in the place of 'nothing,' it involves deception by the simple fact that it is, that it appears.[71]

Or, as she similarly phrases it, 'this illusion is *an object in the place of the lack of an object*'.[72] The fantasy that fills the void visible in the fault line between thesis and antithesis in the psychical antinomy is a transcendental illusion in precisely this sense: the nothingness unavoidably entailed by the subject's finitude (i.e., the absence of subjectivity itself) is inevitably

69 Laplanche and Pontalis, 'Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality,' p. 27.
70 Green, '*L'originaire dans la psychanalyse*,' p. 59.
71 A. Zupancic, 'On Love as Comedy,' *Lacanian Ink*, no. 20, Spring 2002, p. 69.
72 A. Zupancic, *Ethics of the Real: Kant, Lacan* (London: Verso, 2000), p. 66. A. Zupancic, *Esthétique du désir, éthique de la jouissance* (Paris: Théetète éditions, 2002), pp. 68-69.

occluded by a fantasy *qua* transcendental illusion, wherein, literally, something appears 'in the place of "nothing".' The stubbornly persistent presence of the fantasy-gaze, of the subject-as-spectator witnessing the staged scene of his/her finitude, is itself the very illusion per se —'Transcendental illusion has to do not with the content of an 'image' but with its very existence—it deceives on the level of being'.[73] In an earlier text, Zupancic explicitly couples this Kantian notion of illusion with the subject-gaze of the fundamental fantasy—'The anteriority of the gaze in relation to consciousness is seen as something that could be suspended and synchronized with this consciousness by means of *staging* —in the present or in the future, the hypothetical point of the successful encounter of the gaze and the consciousness—of their mutual recognition. It is apparent that the 'original fantasy' is always the fantasy of the origins'.[74] She continues— 'For what is at stake here is precisely their subjectivation, their emergence *qua* pure subjects. It is the observer who could be said to be reduced to a "mere object", to the (impossible) pure gaze witnessing the subject's own coming into being'.[75]

The fantasmatic illusion identified by Žižek and Zupancic relies, to a large extent, upon a manipulation of the categories of necessity and contingency. Apropos of death, as Freud notes, the typical obsession with the always-specific causes of death—those witnessing the departures of others (this being the sole path of indirect phenomenal acquaintance with mortality) tend to fixate upon the accidental, circumstantial factors leading to demise—serves to deflect attention away from the ultimate inevitability of death.[76] Succinctly put, in confronting death, psychical defense mechanisms attempt to treat a necessity as if it were a contingency. Apropos of birth, the inverse occurs: a contingency is treated as if it were a necessity. Once thrown into the condition of this particular human life and its attendant form of subjectivity, the contingent occurrence of this particular 'throw' thereafter becomes, for the being thus thrown, an enigmatic origin to which it can relate solely through the necessity of its own unsurpassable presence as subject, as, so to speak, an indelible 'I'. Bataille eloquently describes the sense of contingency attached to the being of the 'I':

73 Zupancic, *Ethics of the Real*, p. 67.
74 Zupancic, 'Philosophers' Blind Man's Buff,' pp. 47-48.
75 Zupancic, 'Philosophers' Blind Man's Buff,' p. 48.
76 *SE* 14: p. 290.

> If I envisaged my coming into the world—linked to the birth then to the union of a man and a woman, and even, at the moment of their union... a single chance decided the possibility of this *self* which I am: in the end, the mad improbability of the sole being without whom, *for me*, nothing would be, becomes evident. Were there the smallest difference in the continuity of which I am the end point: instead of *me* eager to be me, there would be with respect *to me* only nothingness, as if I were dead.[77]

Bataille adds— 'This infinite improbability from which I come is beneath me like a void'.[78] This 'improbability' is tied up with sexual reproduction. And, Jean-Claude Milner observes, sexuality indeed opens up a sublime plane of infinite contingency for beings whose very existence is intertwined with it.[79] However, as clearly stipulated by Zupancic, the exclusively fantasmatic relation of the subject with its own contingent-yet-*apriori* causal ground partially forecloses this improbable point of origin as contingent per se. The necessary presence of the *Cogito*-like subject-as-gaze, of the spectator there to witness in fantasy the moment of its own conception *ex nihilo*, tends to downplay or conceal the utterly contingent nature of the occurrence of this now-unknowable moment. That is to say, the necessary form of fantasy is at odds with the contingent content depicted within the diegetic reality of the materialized fantasy itself.

In a short essay with the curious title 'Kant as a Theoretician of Vampirism,' Žižek applies certain critical-epistemological distinctions to precisely such matters of life and death. He appeals to the difference between an 'infinite judgment' and a 'negative judgment': the former type of judgment merely denies the attribution of a predicate-term to a subject-term (leaving the nature of the subject infinitely/indeterminately open by declining to substitute determinate predicates in place of the suspended predicate), whereas the latter type of judgment actively attributes a predicate-term (albeit a negative one) to a subject-term. In other words, an infinite judgment states that 'S is not P,' whereas a negative judgment states that 'S is not-P' (or, 'S is non-P'). The crucial difference, from a

77 G. Bataille, *Inner Experience*, trans. L.A. Boldt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), p. 69.
78 Bataille, *Inner Experience*, p. 69.
79 J.-C. Milner, *L'oeuvre claire: Lacan, la science, la philosophie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1995), pp. 68-69.

Kantian perspective, is that the negative judgment assumes that the epistemic agency making the judgment does so on the basis of some sort of direct and immediate familiarity with the subject-term, a familiarity enabling the confident, positive assertion that this subject-term indeed possesses the predicate-term attributed to it. The infinite judgment avoids this assumption and thus refrains from offering itself as an assessment of the actually possessed attributes of the subject-term in question. According to Žižek, this is highly relevant to the topic of mortality:

> Herein lies... the difference between 'is not mortal' and 'is not-mortal'; what we have in the first case is a simple negation, whereas in the second case, *a nonpredicate is affirmed.* The only 'legitimate' definition of the *noumenon* is that it is 'not an object of our sensible intuition,' i.e., a wholly negative definition which excludes it from the phenomenal domain; this judgment is 'infinite' since it does not imply any conclusions as to where, in the infinite space of what remains outside the phenomenal domain, the *noumenon* is located. What Kant calls 'transcendental illusion' ultimately consists in the very (mis) reading of infinite judgment as negative judgment.[80]

As Žižek reminds readers in this piece, Kant himself, in the section of the first *Critique* discussing his table of judgments, opts to illustrate this distinction between infinite and negative judgments using the subject-term 'soul' and the predicate-term 'mortal'.[81] Like Lacan, Kant highlights an 'undead' domain '*entre-deux-morts*'— 'Kant was undoubtedly the first philosopher who, in his notion of 'transcendental illusion,' implicitly outlined a *theory* of the structural necessity of ghosts: 'ghosts' ('undead' entities in general) are apparitions which are constructed in order to fill in this gap between necessity and impossibility which is constitutive of the human condition'.[82] As with the psychical antinomy, in trying to conceive of itself as either mortal or immortal, the subject instead encounters an indeterminate void gaping in the gap between two irreconcilably antithetical positions. In short, the necessity of ontological-material finitude is, on one level, an impossibility for the epistemologically finite

80 S. Žižek, 'Kant as a Theoretician of Vampirism,' *Lacanian Ink*, no. 8, Spring 1994, p. 27.
81 Žižek, 'Kant as a Theoretician of Vampirism,' p. 26. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A71-A73/B97-B98/p. 108.
82 Žižek, '*Da Capo senza Fine*,' p. 235.

subject; in the divide between this necessity and its impossibility, specters proliferate, undead ghosts, as transcendental illusions, uncontrollably multiply. The illusion of which Žižek speaks is the result of covering over the void by imagining that the phenomenal impossibility of consciously cognizing one's own absence is equivalent to an affirmation of one's eternal presence. In the terms of Lacan's matheme of the fantasy ($ ◊ *a*), the $ of 'not mortal' is misleadingly made equivalent to the hypostatized *a* of immortal *qua* 'not-mortal' (i.e., the irreducible presence of the subject-as-gaze in fantasies regarding its own birth and/or death). Indeed, concerning the relation between $ and *a*, one of Žižek's several definitions of the Lacanian *objet petit a* is that it's the 'phantasmatic 'stuff of the I'' filling out the empty frame of the *sujet barré*.[83] Stuart Schneiderman provides a succinct explanation of the error involved here—'immortal simply means not mortal and 'not mortal' does not always mean living forever or eternally. Not mortal is also a characteristic of the dead. Only the living are mortal'.[84]

Lacan's scattered commentaries on the topic of mortal finitude refer to the structurally determined inevitability of just this sort of transcendental illusion, whereby the infinite judgment is treated as a negative one. In the third seminar, he notes in passing that, 'The question of death and the question of birth are as it happens the two ultimate questions that have precisely no solution in the signifier. This is what gives neurotics their existential value'.[85] In this same seminar, he introduces, in order to explain the genesis of psychosis, the concept of 'foreclosure' (i.e., a 'beyond' of repression—a signifier is simply missing from the unconscious, rather than being prohibited from entering consciousness).[86] With the psychoses, as resulting from foreclosure (more specifically, from the radical absence of *le Nom-du-Père*), that which is missing in the Symbolic returns in the Real (typically, for psychotics, in the form of delusions and hallucinations).[87] Lacan highlights a hole in the symbolic order regulating the subject's understanding of his/her ownmost mortal

83 S. Žižek, 'In His Bold Gaze My Ruin Is Writ Large,' *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)*, ed. S. Žižek (London: Verso, 1992), p. 262.

84 S. Schneiderman, *Jacques Lacan: The Death of an Intellectual Hero* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 76.

85 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III*, p. 190.

86 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III*, p. 321.

87 Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III*, pp. 81, 190-191.

finitude; no signifiers respond to queries related to the individual's birth and death.[88] So, is this specific lack at the level of the Symbolic a catalyst for the emergence of undead specters as a fantasmatic 'return in the Real?'

Several years later, in the sixth seminar, Lacan briefly alludes to a notion he refers to as 'inverse foreclosure' (no further references to this notion are to be found in *le Séminaire*)— 'The one unbearable dimension of possible human experience is not the experience of one's own death, which no one has, but the experience of the death of another'.[89] Lacan continues:

> Where is the gap, the hole that results from this loss and that calls forth mourning on the part of the subject? It is a hole in the real, by means of which the subject enters into a relationship that is the inverse of what I have set forth in earlier seminars under the name of *Verwerfung* [repudiation, foreclosure]. Just as what is rejected from the symbolic register reappears in the real, in the same way the hole in the real that results from loss, sets the signifier in motion. This hole provides the place for the projection of the missing signifier...[90]

Lacan proceeds to describe the mourning rituals of cultural groups as manifestations of the manner in which the Symbolic big Other fabricates meaningful contents expressly for the purpose of plugging the 'hole in the Real' opened up by death.[91] With inverse foreclosure, that which is missing in the Real returns in the Symbolic.[92] Much later, Lacan, in the twenty-second seminar, declares that, '*Le noumène conçu par opposition au phénomène, il est strictement impossible de ne pas faire surgir à son propos... la métaphore du trou*'.[93] Lacan then immediately asserts that,

88 E. Ragland, *Essays on the Pleasures of Death: From Freud to Lacan* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 102.

89 J. Lacan, 'Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in *Hamlet*,' ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. J. Hulbert, *Literature and Psychoanalysis—The Question of Reading: Otherwise*, *Yale French Studies*, no. 55/56, 1977, p. 37.

90 Lacan, 'Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in *Hamlet*,' pp. 37-38.

91 Lacan, 'Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in *Hamlet*,' pp. 38-39. S. Žižek, *The Fright of Real Tears: Krzysztof Kieslowski between Theory and Post-Theory* (London: British Film Institute, 2001), p. 100.

92 J.P. Muller, 'Psychosis and Mourning in Lacan's *Hamlet*,' *New Literary History*, vol. 12, no. 1, Autumn 1980, pp. 147, 156.

93 Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XXII*, session of March 18th, 1975.

'*Le noumène n'est rien d'autre que le trou*'.[94] Thus, especially considering the prior Žižek-inspired articulation of the psychical antinomy plaguing Kantian-Lacanian subjectivity, one could argue that the same hole is at issue in both the third and sixth seminars (i.e., the hole as death) as well as the twenty-second seminar (i.e., the hole as noumenon). On this account, the enigma of mortal finitude, as part of the unknowable Real-essence of subjectivity itself, functions like an abyssal vortex, generating a proliferation of significations to compensate for and conceal the eternal, irremediable absence of any firm signification whatsoever (akin to Freud's dream examples, wherein castration, as the absence of the phallus, is masked behind its opposite, namely, a thriving plethora of phallic symbols[95]). Elsewhere, in the thirteenth seminar, Lacan even claims that the subject itself is, ultimately and essentially, a 'hole in the Real'.[96]

Žižek maintains that one of the distinguishing features of consciousness, as distinct from the unconscious, is an awareness of the fact of mortality. However, although the unconscious is indeed ignorant of death (as a consequence of its ignorance of time and negation[97]), this foreclosed finitude is not without its repercussions. Death, for example, cannot be repressed in the standard sense of the term. Since repression involves the barring of an ideational representation (a Freudian *Vorstellung*) from the sphere of conscious cognizance, one's own death, as utterly lacking any correlative psychical inscription due to its absolute exclusion from the ontogenetic history of the living individual, is not 'something' that could be subjected to defense mechanisms suited for use against *Vorstellungen*. This non-existent hole, as Lacan describes it, is, in a way, foreclosed rather than repressed. But, whatever is dragged into associative proximity with this hole for instance, sexuality and/or traumatic experiences) succumbs to vicissitudes such as repression. The repression of finitude occurs by proxy. Birth and death, as those emblems of mortality for which, Lacan alleges, there is 'no solution in the signifier,' are indicative of what could be dubbed a 'fundamental foreclosure'. Whereas foreclosure, according to its standard Lacanian definition, generally refers to a factor in the pathogenesis of the psychoses linked to the accidental contingencies of the individual's personal history, adequate

94 Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XXII*, session of March 18th, 1975.
95 *SE* 5: p. 357.
96 J. Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XIII: L'objet de la psychanalyse, 1965-1966*, unpublished typescript, session of December 15th, 1965.
97 *SE* 14: p. 296.

representational mediators for ontological-material finitude would be intrinsically missing/lacking in any and every unconscious. Thus, this finitude would be fundamentally foreclosed as a necessary point of absence within the psyche. One of the symptoms (or, in a stronger Lacanian sense, *sinthomes*) of this constitutive void, the very void arguably avoided by the split Kantian subject, is the fundamental fantasy.

The significant contributions of Otto Rank to an understanding of the place of mortality in psychical life are quite useful in the present context. Due to Freud's withering criticisms of his 1924 book *The Trauma of Birth*,[98] Rank has undeservingly fallen into relative obscurity. One of his suggestions is that the Oedipus complex should be viewed as a symptom of the underlying tension that Freud discerns between ego-libido and object-libido. This complex is centered on the child's fantasies of usurping the place of the paternal figure and thereby securing amorous fusion with the maternal figure. Rank interprets this as expressing the individual's desire to attain an impossible *causa sui* status (with both Norman O. Brown and Ernest Becker fruitfully developing these connections between the fantasies of a '*causa sui* project,' the Oedipal family drama, and the individual struggle against mortality[99]). That is to say, by replacing the father *qua* progenitor, the child, in coupling with the mother, seeks to beget him/her-self, to be his/her own progenitor (this also helps to explain the asymmetry of the Oedipus complex as regards both genders—girls are just as much committed to the *causa sui* project as boys, and, hence, are likewise just as interested in coupling with the mother).[100] Rank points to the biblical myth of Eve being created from Adam's rib as expressing the same theme: instead of accepting the finite condition of being created creatures ('born of woman'), human beings reverse the natural order of things. More specifically, the woman-mother (Eve) does not give birth to the self (Adam); rather, the self is portrayed as the origin-source of the woman-mother.[101] Not only does Rank aptly perceive the Oedipus complex as involving problems concerning mortal finitude as well as sexuality—he also uncovers a retroactive temporality

98 *SE* 20: pp. 93-94, 135-136.
99 N.O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), pp. 127-128. E. Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1973), p. 107.
100 O. Rank, *Beyond Psychology* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1958), pp. 124-125.
101 Rank, *Beyond Psychology*, p. 116.

structuring Oedipal fantasies, a temporality upon which Žižek lays great emphasis.

Žižek repeatedly returns to the topic of the fundamental fantasy. He dwells mainly upon the odd sort of temporality exhibited by such fantasies. Typical fundamental fantasies stage scenarios in which the fantasizing individual is (ostensibly) absent from the fantasized scene. The epitome of a 'fantasy of origins' (as discussed by Laplanche, Pontalis, and Green, among others) would be, of course, an individual's imaginings about his/her own conception and birth:

> The basic paradox of the psychoanalytic notion of fantasy consists in a kind of time loop—the 'original fantasy' is always the fantasy of the origins—that is to say, the elementary skeleton of the fantasy-scene is for the subject to be present as a pure gaze before its own conceptionor, more precisely, at the very act of its own conception. The Lacanian formula of fantasy ($ ◊ *a*) denotes such a paradoxical conjunction of the subject and the object *qua* this impossible gaze: the 'object' of fantasy is not the fantasy-scene itself, its content (the parental coitus, for example), but the impossible gaze witnessing it.[102]

Žižek adds—'The basic temporal paradox of the fantasy consists precisely in this 'nonsensical' temporal short circuit whereby the subject *qua* pure gaze so to speak *precedes itself* and witnesses its own origin'.[103] Later, he characterizes 'the elementary matrix of fantasy' as 'a pure gaze present at the act of his own conception'.[104] This 'elementary matrix' is then identified as an answer to 'the enigma of the Other's desire' (for instance, to the question, 'What am I for my parents, for their desire?').[105] In fantasmatically witnessing the necessarily mythical moment of conception, the individual covers over his/her non-existence, retroactively inserting him/her-self (*qua* subject-as-gaze) into this gap, this point of creation *ex nihilo*, in the narrative fabric of ontogenetic experience. Žižek treats the other pole of finitude, death, in an identical fashion:

102 Žižek, *For they know not what they do*, p. 197.
103 Žižek, *For they know not what they do*, p. 197.
104 Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, p. 120.
105 Žižek, 'The Abyss of Freedom,' p. 80. S. Žižek, ' "I Hear You with My Eyes"; or, The Invisible Master,' *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*, p. 117.

> ...when one indulges in fantasies about one's own death, one always imagines oneself as miraculously surviving it and being present at one's own funeral in the guise of a pure gaze which observes the universe from which one is already absent, relishing the imagined pathetic reactions of relatives, and so on. We are thereby again at the fundamental time-loop of the fantasy....[106]

He contends that the fantasy-phenomenon of 'seeing oneself looking,' of reducing one's subjectivity to this disembodied 'pure gaze,' is a representational stand-in for death.[107] Socrates, in the *Phaedo* dialogue, contends that death is nothing more than the moment at which the ethereal, indestructible soul finally achieves a complete separation from the corruptible matter of the body (assuming, of course, that the soul in question has led a philosophical life, ignoring the demands of the flesh by living 'in a state as close to death as possible').[108] In Žižekian terms, death, insofar as it forms an object of (unconscious) fantasy, would be nothing more than the complete separation of the gaze from the body. Furthermore, Žižek pinpoints this juncture wherein gaze and body are severed as a paradigmatic manifestation of the *Cogito* itself:

> *Cogito* designates this very point at which the 'I' loses its support in the symbolic network... and thus, in a sense which is far from metaphorical, ceases to exist. And the crucial point is that this pure *cogito* corresponds perfectly to the fantasy-gaze: in it, I found myself reduced to a nonexistent gaze, i.e., after losing all my effective predicates, I am nothing but a gaze paradoxically entitled to observe the world in which I do not exist (like, say, the fantasy of parental coitus where I am reduced to a gaze which observes my own conception, prior to my actual existence, or the fantasy of witnessing my own funeral).[109]

106 Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, p. 22.
107 Žižek, ' "I Hear You with My Eyes",' p. 94.
108 Plato, *Phaedo*, in *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo*, trans. G.M.A. Grube, rev. J.M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002), lines 67b-67e/p. 104.
109 S. Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 64.

As Žižek subsequently argues, 'the temporal loop which defines the structure of a fantasy' is the phenomenon whereby 'prior to his very being, the subject is miraculously present as a pure gaze observing his own nonexistence'.[110] The irreducible presence of this 'pure gaze' in those fundamental fantasies veiling the void stretching out beyond birth and death (as the two ends of finite being) is thus, ultimately, to be identified with the *Cogito* (a conception of subjectivity, on Žižek's account, 'raised to its Notion' by Kant).

Conclusion

Whereas Descartes conjures up a maliciously deceptive deity in order to achieve this isolation of pure subjectivity by putting the body's being into doubt (thereby reducing the indubitable 'I' to the activity of a mental 'gaze' cognitively perceiving), Žižek elegantly demonstrates that such extreme hypothetical/fictitious devices are not required to achieve this distinction between the gaze of *res cogitans* and the inert, innerworldly being of *res extensa*. The fundamental fantasies uncovered by psychoanalysis, in which the spectator-subject persists despite its supposed absence within the reality framed by the fantasy, directly depict this *Cogito*, this disembodied-yet-seemingly-ineliminable presence divorced from any and every determinate, substantial attribute.

Is this also to suggest that such subjectivity is fantasmatic? Does this entail that the *Cogito* is something symptomatic in the strict analytic sense, namely, an essentially defensive device whose emergence is catalyzed by an underlying conflict or antagonism? Certain remarks made by Žižek hint at an affirmative answer to these questions:

> The ultimate gap that gives rise to suture is ontological, a crack that cuts through reality itself: the 'whole' of reality cannot be perceived/accepted as reality, so the price we have to pay for 'normally' situating ourselves within reality is that something should be foreclosed from it: this void of primordial repression has to be filled in—'sutured'—by the spectral fantasy.[111]

110 Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, p. 19.
111 Žižek, *The Fright of Real Tears*, p. 71.

This crack, this necessary lack of full closure haunting the domain of manifest, concrete reality, is, for Žižek, nothing other than the subject itself. Furthermore, what makes such subjectivity finite is not only the epistemological dimension of its limitations—as per Kant, its experiential reality is always incomplete, and this incompleteness is illusorily eclipsed by the regulative ideas of pure reason[112]—but, at the same time, its ownmost ontological-material condition (a condition directly related to its epistemological limitations). A facet of epistemological finitude, as the unknowable limits beyond all possible experience marked off by birth and death, mirrors ontological-material finitude itself. This is precisely what Heidegger is driving at when, in 'Division Two, Section One' of *Being and Time* ('Dasein's Possibility of Being-a-Whole, and Being-Towards-Death'), he maintains that the impossibility of *Dasein* reflectively seizing itself as a complete and self-sufficient object (i.e., as a whole) is not due merely to 'any imperfection of our *cognitive powers*'.[113] Instead, this epistemological deadlock is an epiphenomenal manifestation of the fundamental fact of death: in death, as the ever-so-transitory moment at which *Dasein* becomes a discrete whole, this being loses the 'there' (*Da*) of its very being (*Sein*), its possibility for grasping itself in the fullness of its completely exhausted presence.[114] Žižek's delineation of the relation between fantasy and finitude add two further Freudian-Lacanian points here: one, these gaps/voids in the fabric of reality are akin to black holes, exerting a powerful force of attraction[115]; and, two, the pure gaze of the *Cogito*-like subject is precisely what gets drawn into these vortices, effectively serving to plug them up and thereby establish a false sense of reality's unsurpassable, unruffled plentitude (a feeling of plentitude isolated by Freud, in the first chapter of *Civilization and Its Discontents*, during his discussion of the 'oceanic feeling' as a person's sense of not being able to 'fall out of this world'[116]). If and when this fantasy-frame collapses—one way of understanding what Lacan means by the 'subjective destitution' that results from 'traversing the fantasy,' given Žižek's elaborations, is as the sudden failure of subjectivity-as-gaze to adequately seal the rifts in reality arising from its finitude—the subject is confronted with 'the raw Real of the life-substance: life becomes

112 Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, pp. 110-111.
113 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 280.
114 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 281.
115 Žižek, *The Fright of Real Tears*, p. 169.
116 *SE* 21: pp. 64-65.

disgusting when the fantasy that mediates our access to it disintegrates, so that we are directly confronted with the Real'.[117] As Freud and Lacan themselves indicate, when the subject's being is tinged with traces of vital mortality, the neurotic reaction is to recoil in horror from this 'life-substance,' to flee from this Real into a subjectivity whose very status is shaped by the trajectory of this flight itself.

Hence, the *Cogito* simultaneously serves two defensive functions: it establishes a distance from both sexuality (*à la* Descartes' notorious detachment of the 'I' from its body) as well as mortality (for the modern subject, its own non-existence is, strictly speaking, foreclosed as impossibly unthinkable). This is not to say, following the dominant anti-Cartesianism of today, that this sort of subjectivity does not really exist, that it is an untenable denial of a deeper mind-body unity. Instead, the essential idea here is that subjectivity, in its effective existence, is the most profound symptom of the human condition (the *sinthome par excellence*), a violent reaction formation precipitated by and setting itself up against the corporeal condition. Zupancic's motif of 'the Real of an illusion"[118] is especially apt here: from a strictly materialistic standpoint, the fleeting negativity of the subject might well be treated as an illusory epiphenomenon in relation to the hard base of a substantial foundation; and yet, this illusion itself, once generated out of the Real, becomes something efficacious, operating as a '*proton pseudos*' (as a 'lie' that becomes a very tangible self-fulfilling prophecy) inscribing its apparently ephemeral existence into this same bedrock of the Real and generating perturbations therein. In this light, the infamous division between *res cogitans* and *res extensa* is symptomatic of a prior split, an underlying antagonistic discordance, within the material substratum of (libidinal) being itself.

117 Žižek, *The Fright of Real Tears*, p. 169.

118 A. Zupancic, *Das Reale einer Illusion: Kant und Lacan*, trans. R. Ansén (Baden-Baden: Suhrkamp, 2001), pp. 141-142. A. Zupancic, *The Shortest Shadow: Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Two* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), forthcoming.

Pli 15 (2004), 229-232

Architectural Philosophy.

Andrew Benjamin, *Architectural Philosophy: Repetition, Function, Alterity* (London: Athlone, 2000).

JAMES WILLIAMS

Shaking with fury you turn to your neighbour. Like you, he has been easing himself into the world of the living over a strong coffee and the local paper. There's a certain empathy between you: a sharing of morning rhythms, likes and dislikes. Maybe there's an opportunity for friendship here – maybe more.

But you are alone. The same article on the concrete monstrosity about to be visited on the borough, has him smiling as he considers the new lines and their effect on the old. And yet: despite this appalling lack of good taste, you still have much in common. Both readers have absorbed without question the spatial presuppositions of the new plans, descriptions and images. Priority has been given to questions of visual beauty, of functionality and of economics - based on ancient modes of representing buildings and deciding on their merits. What will the building look like? How does it occupy space? How does it relate to its neighbours? What forms of economic change does it imply? What will it be like to live in? How can its cost be justified?

Andrew Benjamin has set himself the difficult task of returning to these hidden presuppositions and of submitting them to new philosophical ideas developed around his important ontological concept of 'anoriginal heterogeneity'. Put simply, the term denies that there is a firm, unquestionable, basis for our understanding of the essence and meaning of existence. Instead, being (or existence) is a necessarily plural state. We cannot say that buildings must exist in space (whether they are at a planning stage or already occupying a given ground). We cannot say that

the experience of buildings must necessarily bend to successions in time (*we go through the entry, up the lift, across the junction*). Instead, building and philosophy impose spatial presuppositions on a prior open series of differential variations. These cannot be legitimately thought of as spatial or as subjected to a timely order.

Thus, the latest developments in philosophies of difference (perhaps most familiar to us through the works of Heidegger, Derrida and Deleuze) are thought alongside building and buildings. Thereby, Benjamin deepens our sense of the intricacy and extension of this philosophical revolution whilst allowing it to set new ways of thinking in architecture: 'The presence of anoriginal ontological difference entails the primacy of difference (difference as differential) over the Same. The differential yields a conception of difference that is comprised of incompatible values. Identity, in this instance, becomes the belonging together of the ontologically different.' (p. 115)

It is important not to move on too quickly from this commitment to difference. In the rigorous fourth chapter of the book, Benjamin develops it, through a careful reading of Leibniz, into a critical response to Kant's solidifying of the most pervasive presuppositions regarding time and space into an unquestionable philosophical and, subliminally, architectural ground: 'the [sic] Kantian conception of the understanding needs to be reworked in terms of tradition where tradition is understood as the determination in advance. The determination becomes the rule. This attempt to rework the understanding will yield an approach to building experience.' (p. 124) [The missing capital and erratic punctuation in this passage are symptomatic of Athlone's awful standards of copy-editing, editing and production. Benjamin's ideas have taken careful preparation, but were Athlone/Continuum restaurateurs, they would happily serve unwashed salad.]

From the ontological commitment to difference and from Benjamin's demanding philosophical approach, it would be easy to conclude that, though his work puts forward a profound and powerful reading of the history of the relation between philosophy and theoretical understandings of space, it does not provide for applicable programmes or clear values. This would be a mistake. Benjamin takes great care not to provide set theses or judgements that could grow into a new orthodoxy, bound, once again to cover an anoriginal plurality. However, his work champions the

relations between building and thinking as set out, for example, by architects such as Eisenman, Reiser and Umemoto.

A strong commitment to holism in architecture and to the requirement to seek out originality without breaking with the past or repeating it comes out in these discussions. Benjamin's work is a welcome break with historical eclecticism and with brutal modernism. In their place comes the most demanding of invitations: to build and to think without fixing the past or the future; to do so with genuine originality, free of oppositions; to create works that remain in process and becoming through all their spatial and epochal relations: 'Rather than yielding a future that is beyond the present, the future is given as an already insistent possibility within and as part of the present. To the extent that this future is sustained, architecture itself remains incomplete.' (p. 102)

The work also rises to the challenge of providing careful differential syntheses with the history of philosophy, notably with Descartes – these syntheses resist the twin errors of marking the tradition as simply wrong or as something to repeat uncritically and unconditionally. Benjamin eschews the temptation to simply blame and cordon off past philosophies. For example, in his discussion of Descartes' turn away from the body and from domesticity, he notes their presence within a metaphysics posited on their destruction: 'The policing of the domestic is fundamental both to maintaining the possibility of the successful enactment of a metaphysics of destruction and because, as with the body, it is the domain which while not falling under the sway of philosophy's rule has to be ruled.' (p. 179)

In an age dominated by an ever-more irrational and destructive decisiveness, allied to the most venal capitalism, Benjamin's refusal to either preserve the past in empty representations or foreclose on it in the name of illusory novelty, is to be welcomed – none the more so than in his demanding call for a resistance to continuity and universalism in constructing a holocaust memorial that still does not amount to an opposition to the universal, to representation through naming and to the return of myth: 'The project of memory in being held open demands a formal architectural presence that becomes instantiation of the incomplete.' (p. 200)

This stress on the formal side of building and thinking is Benjamin's most important architectural principle. A building's relation to ontological plurality cannot take place through content or function alone, since these are too strongly committed to the many different guises of representation

and identity. It is not what a building says or does but how it maintains an open transforming series of relations articulated through its form *as it says and does*. So the challenge for architecture is to release the potential of form for openness in its relations (openness to alterity), whilst not breaking with the requirements of function: 'Alterity cannot be understood except in relation to the interplay of form and function.' (p. 11)

Arguments in planning today tend to centre on 'look' and 'function' where the hardest task seems to be how to balance the economic role of function with the aesthetic demands of look. Attention is focused on questions of sympathetic aesthetic and functional relations (overshadowing, crowding, destroying and clogging are to be avoided) and on questions of economic need (development and inclusiveness are encouraged). Benjamin adds new and more demanding questions regarding form: How are we to disrupt the conservatism of sympathy and the narrowness of need, through forms that resist the priority of readily identified values of taste and of mechanistic solutions to functional problems?

The demanding nature of Benjamin's work, in its own style and concepts, and in the work that it defends and invites, is my only cause to fear for it. Compared to a more ironic pragmatism, few of its forms and ideas extend into prosaic and everyday strata. Perhaps this is because this everyday is too botched, fragmented and sodden with representation and forgetting. My sense is, though, that it deserves Benjamin's insights as much as the high ethical and architectural culture touched on through the book. Is the exclusivity of the demand essential to the nature of its differential ontology?

Pli 15 (2004), 233-234

Nietzsche's Philosophy.

Eugen Fink, *Nietzsche's Philosophy,* trans. G. Richter (London & New York: Continuum Books, 2003).

KEITH ANSELL PEARSON

Fink's book on Nietzsche was first published in Germany in 1962 and now receives a welcome and overdue English translation in this text published by Continuum. I read it as a graduate in Berlin two decades ago and profited from it immensely. Fink (1905-75) was a close associate of both Husserl and Heidegger and taught at Freiburg University after the war until 1971. His introduction to Nietzsche, however, demonstrates his intellectual independence and contains many unique features such as his preoccupation with the sense of the 'earth' in Nietzsche's thinking and his own preoccupation with the concept of 'world'. It is a superior kind of introduction - Fink's overriding philosophical commitment is to thinking, to questioning and to problematizing - which offers a highly exacting and riveting reading of all the essential elements of Nietzsche's thinking, including the will to power, eternal return, nihilism, genealogy, ontology, etc. On account of the rigorous and profound character of its thinking, Fink's text ranks alongside the other major and seminal readings of Nietzsche produced in the last century, such as those by Deleuze, Heidegger, Klossowski, and Karl Lowith.

The text is divided into five main chapters which trace the actual development of Nietzsche's thinking. The first chapter is on the metaphysics of art and the artist we find in The Birth of Tragedy (1872); it also contains a reading of the Untimely Meditations (1873-5) and of the posthumously published essay 'Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense' (1873; this is an essay Nietzsche said he deliberately withdrew from publication). Chapter two is entitled 'Nietzsche's enlightenment' and deals

with the psychological and (non- and anti-) philosophical investigations of the three texts of his so-called middle-period, Human, All too Human, Daybreak, and The Gay Science (1878-82). Chapter three provides a superb reading of Thus Spoke Zarathustra (1883-5) with special attention paid to the thought-experiment of eternal return. It is here that Fink shows himself to be an especially perspicacious reader of Nietzsche and his reading of eternal return is on a par with those produced by Lowith, Heidegger, and Deleuze (he perhaps comes closest to the latter in reading eternal return as doctrine of repetition and difference, though key Heideggerean motifs inform his encounter with it). Chapter Four concentrates attention on the later texts such as Beyond Good and Evil (1886) and The Genealogy of Morals (1887), and the last texts such as Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ. It is also in this chapter that Fink deals with the non-work of The Will to Power, focusing on the problem of nihilism. The final chapter, chapter five, is entitled 'Nietzsche's relationship to Metaphysics as Imprisonment and Liberation' and clearly shows the influence of Heidegger's fundamental questioning of Nietzsche on his appreciation of Nietzsche's philosophical significance. The ontic-ontological distinction is repeatedly put to work in the text and the question of being runs as a refrain throughout it. However, Fink is no pale imitator, or slavish devotee, of Heidegger and his study succeeds in illuminating the most abstruse and enigmatic aspects of Nietzsche's thinking. It grapples with his complex philosophical legacy in a productive and instructive fashion and it makes a major contribution to the task of thinking through Nietzsche's complex relation to metaphysics and ontology. There is no doubt that Fink's scholarly appreciation of Nietzsche's intellectual beginnings and development has been superceded by the advances made in recent scholarship in the field of Nietzsche-studies and Nietzsche-Forschung; what is more difficult to surpass, however, is the rigour and profundity of a genuine philosophical mind.

Call for Papers

Pli invites submissions for its next volume (Volume 16, Summer 2004), which will be devoted to the topic of Gilles Deleuze's aesthetics of force, affect and sensation. We would particularly welcome contributions that deal directly with Deleuze's treatment of specific arts such as painting, music, cinema and literature.

Submissions, preferably no longer than 8,000 words, should be sent in the form of a single hard copy, plus a copy on disk as an RTF file. The deadline for submissions is 1st June 2004. Please refer to the 'Notes for Contributors' in this volume (also on the *Pli* website). Include an e-mail address if possible for future correspondence.

Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy,
Department of Philosophy
University of Warwick
Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK

For further information e-mail:

pli_journal@hotmail.com

Visit www.warwick.ac.uk/philosophy/pli_journal