

Bergson, 1859-1941 *

A great philosopher is one who creates new concepts: these concepts both beyond the dualities of ordinary thinking and give things a new truth, a new cast, a special cutting. The name of Bergson remains committed to the concepts of *duration of memory*, of *élan vital*, of *intuition*. His influence and genius to evaluate how such concepts have emerged, were used, entered and remained in the philosophical world. Of the *immediate data* the original concept of time was formed; in *Matter and Memory*, a memory concept; in *Creative Evolution* that of life force. The report of the three related concepts must indicate the development and progress of Bergson's philosophy. What is this report?

First, however, we only propose to study the intuition, not because it is the essence, but because it may tell us about the nature of Bergsonian problems. It is not by chance that, speaking of intuition, Bergson shows us how important in the life of the mind, an activity which poses problems and is: there are false even more problems than there are false solutions before there are false solutions to real problems. Now if some intuition is still the heart of the doctrine of a philosopher, one of the original Bergson is in its own doctrine for organizing the same intuition as a true method, method to eliminate false problems, to ask problems with truth, a method that raises them in terms of *duration*. "Questions about the subject and the object, in their distinction and their union, must ask themselves a function of time rather than space." No doubt this is the time that Judge intuition as Bergson recalled several times, but it remains that only intuition can, when she took self-awareness as a method, look for the term in things, appeal to the duration, require time, precisely because it is the time all it is. So if intuition is not a simple pleasure, nor a presentiment, nor simply an emotional approach, we must first determine what its really methodical.

The first character of intuition is that in it and through it something shows up, gives himself, instead of inferred something else and concluded. What is at issue here is already the general orientation of philosophy; because it is not enough to say that philosophy is the origin of science and she was their mother, but now that they are adults and well made, ask why there is still a philosophy, how the science is not enough. But philosophy has never responded in two ways such a question, probably because there are only two possible answers: once said that science gives us knowledge of things, it is in a relationship with them, philosophy can give to compete with science, it can leave things to him, and

only present critically as a reflection on the knowledge we have. Or, on the contrary, philosophy claims to establish, or rather restored,

another relationship with things, so another knowledge, knowledge and relationship that science precisely we hid, she deprived us because it allowed us only to conclude and infer never introduce ourselves, give us the thing in itself. It is in this second way that Bergson is committed repudiating critical philosophies when he shows us in science, and also in the technical activity, in intelligence, in everyday language, in social life and in the practical need, finally and especially in space, as many shapes and relationships between us and the things of their interiority.

But intuition has a second character: so understood it presents itself as a return. The philosophical relationship, in fact, that puts us in things instead of letting us outside, is restored by philosophy rather qu'instaurée, found rather qu'inventée. We are separate things, the immediate data is not given immediately; but we can not be separated by a mere accident, a mediation that would come to us, which concerns only us, requires that in the same things is based movement that distorts them requires that things begin by losing that we end up losing, you have an oversight is based in being. The material is precisely in being what prepares **and accompanies space, intelligence and science.** It is here also that he refuses any right to scientific knowledge, telling us that it does not simply separates us from things and their true nature, but it captures at least one of the two halves being, one of the two sides of the absolute, one of the two movements of nature, **the one where the nature relaxes and begins to outside of the self.** Bergson will go even further, since in certain conditions can unite science to philosophy, that is to say, go with her to a full understanding. Anyway, we can say already that there will not Bergson any distinction of two worlds, one sensible and the other intelligible, but only two movements, or rather even a two-way single movement, such that the movement tends to congeal in its product, in its result that interrupts, the other turned back, who found in the product which results in the movement. Both two-way-they are natural, each in its own way: this one is according to nature, but it may get lost at each rest, each breath; it is against nature, but it is there, it takes in blood pressure. This can be found under this one, that's how it always is found. We find immediately because it takes us back to find it. In philosophy the first time, it is already the second such is the notion of merit. Without doubt, this is the product **that is, in a certain way, and**

movement that is not, that is no more. But it is not in these terms that must be the problem of being. The movement is at every moment, but precisely because it is not composed with moments, because the moments are only its real or virtual stops, its product and the shadow of its product. The being is not composed with presents. Alternatively, therefore, it is the product that is not and movement *was already*. In a not Achilles, the times and the points are not cut. Bergson shows us this in his most difficult book it is not this that is, and the past that is no more, but this is helpful, being is the past, the being was. - we will see that far from suppressing the unpredictable and the contingent, such a thesis founds. A distinction of two worlds, Bergson therefore substituted the distinction between two movements, both directions of a single movement, spirit and matter, two times in the same time, the past and present, that 'he has seen as coexisting precisely because they were in the same period, one under the other and not one after the other. This is both to help us understand the necessary distinction as a time difference, but also to make us understand the different times, the present and the past, as contemporaries of each other, and forming the same world. We'll see how.

Why is it that we find he called immediately? What is immediate? If science is a real knowledge of it, a knowledge of reality, what it loses or simply to lose, is not exactly the thing. What science may lose unless they penetrate philosophy is much the same as the difference of the thing, making his being, making it is this rather than that, this rather than 'something else. Bergson denounces energy which seems to him the wrong issues: **why is there something rather than nothing, why order rather than disorder.** If such problems are false, ill-posed, that's for two reasons. First, because they are to be a generality, something immutable and indifferent can not, on the whole still where it is taken, that distinguish themselves from nothingness, non-being. Second, even if one tries to give a movement to be immutable and established, this movement will be only that of contradiction, order and disorder, being and nothingness, one and many. But in fact, no more than the movement is made up with points in space or moments being can not cope with two conflicting points of view: the stitches are too loose. Being is a bad idea as long as it serves to oppose everything to nothingness, or the same thing in all it is not: in both cases being left deserted things, is no longer an abstraction. Bergson question is not: why something rather than nothing, but why this rather than something else? Why such a voltage duration.

Why this speed over another. Why such a proportion. And why is she such a perception evoke memories, or pick some frequencies, those ones over others. This means that being is the difference, and not the immutable or indifferent, nor the contradiction is only a wrong move. Being is the difference

of the thing, what Bergson often called *shade*. "A empiricism worthy of the name ... size for the object an appropriate concept to the object alone, a concept which we can hardly say that this is still a concept, since it applies only to that thing." "And in a curious text, which Bergson ready Ravaisson intend to oppose intellectual intuition to the general idea as white light to the simple idea of color:" Instead of diluting his thought in general, the philosopher must focus on the individual ... the object of metaphysics is to recapture in individual existences and to follow up the source from which it emanates, the particular radius, giving each of them its own hue, connected by that the universal light." "The immediate is precisely the identity of the thing and its difference, as philosophy is found or" pulled together ". In science and metaphysics, Bergson denounces a common danger: let out the difference, because one sees the thing as a product and a result, because the other designs being as something immutable which served principle. Both claim to be achieving or redial from similarities and oppositions increasingly vast, but the resemblance and opposition are almost always practical classes, not ontological. Hence the insistence of Bergson to show that, under one word in favor of a resemblance, we risk putting very different things, things that differ in nature. Being in fact the side of the difference, or a or multiple. But what is the grade, the difference of the thing, what the difference in sugar piece? This is not simply its difference with something else: we would have only a purely external relationship, we ultimately returning to space. It is not his difference with all that it is not, we would be sent back to a dialectic of contradiction. This is already Plato who did not want you confound otherness with a contradiction; but Bergson otherness not yet enough to be that joins things and is really the being of things. In the Platonic concept of otherness, it substitutes an Aristotelian concept, alteration, to make the substance itself. The being is impaired, . And this is what Bergson called *duration* because all the characters by which he defines as early as the *immediate data* come back to this: the duration is what differs, or which changes its nature, quality, heterogeneity, which differs with itself. The being of the sugar cube will be defined by a period, for a way to last, for some relaxation or tension of duration.

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How did the time this power? The question may arise otherwise: if being is the difference of the thing, that he result for the thing itself? We meet a third character of intuition, deeper than previous ones. Intuition as a method is a method that seeks difference. It presents itself as seeking and finding the differences in nature, "the actual joints." The being is articulated, a false problem is one that does not respect these differences. Bergson likes to quote Plato's text comparing the philosopher good cook who cut according to natural articulations; he

constantly blames science as metaphysics have lost the sense of the different nature, have only retained the degree of differences where there was anything else, to be thus part of a "mixed" evil analysis. One of the most famous passages of Bergson shows that the intensity actually covers differences in kind, that intuition can be found.¹⁷ But we know that science and metaphysics do not even invent their own errors or illusions: something founds-in being. Indeed, as we face products, as long as things we deal with are still the results, we can not grasp the nature of differences for the simple reason that there is none: between two things between two products, there is and there can be only differences of degree, proportion. What differs in kind, it's never one thing, but a trend. The difference in nature is never between two products, between two things, but one and the same thing between two trends that cross in a single product between two trends meet here.¹⁸ So what is pure, it is never the thing, the thing is still a mixed it must separate, only the trend is clear: it is said that the real thing or substance is the trend itself. Intuition appears as a true method of division: it divides the joint into two trends that differ in kind. We recognize the meaning of dualisms dear to Bergson: not only the titles of many of his works, but each chapter, and the announcement that precedes each page show such a dualism. The quantity and quality, intelligence and instinct, geometric order and the vital order, science and metaphysics, the closed and open are the most known figures. We know that ultimately they amount to the always found the material and the length distinction. And matter and duration never distinguished as two things, but two movements, two trends, such as relaxation and contraction. But we must go further: if the theme and the idea of purity are very important in Bergson's philosophy is that the two trends in each case are not clean or are not equally pure. One of the two alone is pure, or *simple*, the other playing the role instead of an impurity that comes compromise or disturb.¹⁹ In the division of joint, there is always a right half, it is that which brings us to the duration. More that there was indeed different nature of the two trends that cut the thing, the same difference of the thing was one of the two trends. And if it rises to the duality of matter and time, it is clear that the term presents the very nature of the difference, so the difference with itself, while the material is only indifferent this is repeated or single degree, which can not change nature. Do not we see at the same time that dualism is a moment already surpassed in Bergson's philosophy? Because if there is a special half in the division, we need this half contains in itself the secret of the other. If the difference is on one side, this side must understand its difference with each other, and somehow the other itself or its possibility. The duration varies with the material, but because it is first that which differs in itself

and with itself, so that the material from which it differs is still time. As long as we stick to dualism, the thing is at the meeting point of two movements: the length, which has no degrees by itself, meet the material as a contrary movement, as a barrier, some impurity that the quarrel, which interrupted his momentum, which gives it such a degree here, there some other.²⁰ But more deeply, it is obvious that the time could degrees, because it is what differs with you, so that everything is entirely defined in duration, including the material itself. In an even dualistic perspective, time and matter as opposed what differs in nature and which has only degrees; but more profoundly, there are degrees of difference itself, matter is only the lowest, the same point where the difference precisely *is not anymore a difference of degree*.²¹ While it is true that intelligence is the side of the object based on the material to which it relates, remains that we can not define it in itself by showing how it lasts, it dominates its purpose. And if it is finally set the matter itself, it will no longer suffice to present it as an obstacle and as an impurity, it will always show how it lasts, it whose vibration still occupies several moments. So everything is completely defined on the right side by a certain time, a certain degree of duration itself.

A joint consists of two trends, one of which is the length, single and indivisible; but at the same time duration differs in two directions, the other is the matter. The space is divided in terms and duration, but the duration is different in contraction and relaxation, relaxation is the principle of the matter. So if dualism is surpassed toward monism, monism gives us a new dualism, this time mastered, dominated. For it is not in the same way that the joint breaks down and that simply differs. Also the method of intuition she has a fourth and final character: it does not just follow the natural joints for cutting things, it goes back the "facts lines", the lines of differentiation, to find simply as a probability convergence;²² Differentiation is the power of what is simple, indivisible, what lasts. It is here that we see under what aspect the same time is a *élan vital*. Bergson in biology, especially in the evolution of species, the mark of a process essential to life, precisely to differentiation as producing real differences, a process that he will seek the concept and philosophical consequences. The admirable pages he has written in the *creative Evolution* and in *two sources* we show such activity of life, leading to the plant and the animal, or the instinct and intelligence, or the various forms of the same instinct. It seems to Bergson that differentiation is the mode of what is true, or is actualized. A virtuality that is realized at the same time which is different, that is to say giving divergent series, lines of evolution, species. "The essence of a tendency is to grow shaped wreath, creating the only

Because of its growth diverging directions. "The life force will be the same length as it is updated, as it differs. Reaching the difference as it passes the act. Also the differentiation not just she has a strength of the material, but more profoundly a force that the length carries with it: the dichotomy is the law of life. And what Bergson criticizes the mechanism and teleology in biology, like the dialectic philosophy is always different views compose the movement as a relationship between the current terms, instead of seeing the realization a Virtual. But if differentiation is so original and irreducible mode in which a potentiality is realized and if the life force is **the duration that differs, now the same period is virtuality. The *creative Evolution* brings to *immediate data* deepening as the necessary extension. For from the *immediate data* the length was as the virtual or the subjective, because it was less that does not let that divide which changes its nature in dividing. Understand that the virtual is not present, but is nevertheless a mode of being, much more is somehow being himself: neither the length nor life, nor the movement are current, but in which all news, all reality is different and includes, takes its root. If realized, it is always the act of a whole that does not become any real integer at the same time in the same place or in the same thing, so it produces species that differ in nature, and that it is itself the difference in nature between species it produces. Bergson constantly said that the length was the change in the nature, quality. "Between light and darkness, between colors, between shades, the difference is absolute. The transition from one to the other is also an absolutely real phenomenon.**"

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We would like as two extreme duration and the life force, the virtual and implementation. It is also necessary that the time is already élan vital, because it is the essence of the Virtual happen; so it takes a third aspect which shows him in some way through the previous two. It is precisely in this third aspect that the duration is called *memory*.

For all its characters, in fact, time is a memory, because it prolongs the past into the present, "is that this clearly includes the image constantly growing from the past, or rather he shows by his continual change of **quality of the increasing burden being dragged behind you as you get older more »**. Let us remember that memory is always presented by Bergson in two ways: memory-memory and memory-contraction, and the second is the essential. Why these two figures, which will give the store a completely new philosophical status? The first refers us to a relic of the past. But among all the theories of Bergson, is perhaps the deepest and least understood that the past survives in itself. Because this is the same survival time, time itself is memory. Bergson shows us that memory is not the representation of something that was; the past is that in which we place ourselves to *immediately* to remember. The past did not survive

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psychologically or physiologically in the brain, because it has not ceased to be, it only ceased to be useful, it is, it survives in itself. And this being in itself the past is that the immediate consequence of a good *position* the problem: as if the past had to wait no longer, if it were not immediately and now it had happened, " *past* in general, "it could never become what he is, he would never be *this* past. The past is the ensoi, the unconscious or just as Bergson says, the *virtual*.³⁰ But in what sense is it virtual? This is where we meet the second figure from memory. The past is not *after* he was present, he *coexists with itself as present*. If you think about it, it is clear that the philosophical problems of the past in its very notion just what he is stuck between two somehow present: the present that was present and the current against which it is now past. The harm of psychology, asking the wrong *problem*, is to have chosen the second date, therefore to have looked past from something current, and finally to have more or less put in the brain. But in fact "memory does not at all consist in a regression from the present to the past"³¹. What Bergson shows us is that, if the past is not past while he is present, not only will never be formed, but it can not be reconstituted more from a subsequent date. So in what sense the past coexists with itself like this: the duration is only coexistence itself, this self-coexistence with itself. While the past and the present must be thought of as two extreme degrees-coexisting in duration, degrees distinguishable by its relaxed state, the other by his state of contraction. A famous metaphor tells us that at every level of the cone, there is all our past, but to different degrees: this is only the most contracted degree of the past. "The same psychic life would be repeated any number of times, the successive stages of memory, and the same act of the mind could play many different levels "; "It is as if our memories were repeated any number of times in these thousands and thousands of possible reductions of our past life"³²; everything is energy change, tension, and nothing else. At each level there is everything, but coexists with everything, that is to say with other degrees. We see, finally *what* is virtual: they are coexisting degrees themselves and as such.³³ It is right to set the time as a succession, but it is wrong to insist upon it, it is real estate because it is actually that virtual coexistence. About intuition, Bergson wrote: "The only way we're talking overcomes idealism as well as realism, to affirm the existence of objects inferior and superior to us, though nevertheless in a certain sense interiors us to coexist together without difficulty". "And if we seek indeed passing *Matter and Memory* at *Creative Evolution* we see that the coexisting degrees are both making the time something virtual, and so that the duration yet refreshes every moment because they draw so many plans and levels that determine all possible differentiation lines. In short, divergent series actually born in duration,

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coexisting virtual degrees. Between intelligence and instinct, there is a difference in kind, because they are after two series that diverge; but this difference in kind, expressed she finally if two degrees that coexist in duration, two different degrees of relaxation or contraction? Thus everything, every being is everything, but everything that is done to a particular degree. The time may have seemed in the early works of Bergson, especially a psychological reality; but that is only psychological *our*

duration, that is to say a degree definite. "If instead of pretending to analyze the duration (that is to say, basically, synthesize with concepts), we first moved in it by an effort of intuition, one has the feeling some *voltage* definite, the same determination appears as a choice between an infinity of possible durations. Therefore, we see many times as you like, all very different from each other ...". "That's why Bergsonism secret is probably in *Matter and Memory*,

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Bergson says elsewhere that his work was to reflect on this, that not everything is given. That everything is not cheap, it's reality time. But what does such a reality? Both assume that given a movement that invents or creates, and that this movement should not be designed in the image of the given. What Bergson critical in the idea of *possible*, is that it presents a simple decal of the product, then projected or rather *rétrojeté* on the movement of production, the invention³⁷. But the virtual is not the same thing as possible: the reality of time, it is ultimately an affirmation of virtuality come true, and who realize is invented. Because if everything is not given, the rest is all virtual. Remember that the vital impulse is finished: the whole is what is done in cash, not his any more than they are at frame one another; both each corresponding to a degree at all, and differs in kind with others, so that the whole itself looks the same time as the different nature in reality, and as the coexistence of degrees in 'mind.

If the past coexists with itself as present, if this is the most contracted degree of the past coexist, that it even now, because he is the precise point where the past launches forward, is defined as which changes its nature, always new, life everlasting³⁸. It includes a lyrical theme runs through all the work of Bergson a real song in honor of the new, the unpredictable, the invention of freedom. There is not a renunciation of philosophy, but a deep and original attempt to find the proper domain of philosophy, to achieve the thing itself beyond the range of possible causes and purposes. Finality, causality, chance are always related to the thing once done, and always assume that "everything" is given. When Bergson criticizes these notions, when he speaks of indeterminacy, it does not invite us to abandon the reasons, but to join the real reason of the thing in the making, philosophical reason which is not determination but difference . The whole movement of Bergson's thought, *Matter and Memory*, under the triple form of the difference in nature of

coexisting degrees of difference and differentiation. Bergson first shows us that there is a difference in kind between the past and the present, between memory and perception, between time and matter: the psychologists and philosophers have been wrong to leave in all cases a misread mixed. He shows us then it is still not enough to speak of a difference in nature between matter and length, between the present and the past, since the whole point is just to know *what is* a different nature: it shows that the same term is this difference, it is the nature of the difference, so she understands matter as the lowest degree, his most relaxed degree, as a *past infinitely expanded*, and understands itself as contracting *present a very narrow, tight*. Finally, it shows that if the degrees coexist in duration, the duration is at every moment what is different, it is different in the past and present, or if preferred, that this splits into two directions, one towards the past, the other toward the future. These three times correspond throughout the work the concepts of time, memory and life force. The project found in Bergson, the joining things breaking with critical philosophies, was not absolutely new, even in France, since it defines a general design philosophy, and several aspects involved in English empiricism. But the method was profoundly new, and the three key concepts that gave it meaning.

* in Merleau-Ponty, ed. *Famous philosophers*, Paris, Editions d'Art Lucien Mazenod, 1956, p. 292-299. The following year, Deleuze publish for PUF, a collection of selected texts Bergson, entitled *Memory and life*. [Some references notes were specified. Pagination refers to the current edition of each book Bergson PUF, coll. Quadrige ".]

1. *Thought and moving* II.
2. *Matter and Memory* I p. 74.
3. *Creative Evolution* III.
4. *PM* II.
5. *PM* VI.
6. *MM* III.
7. *EC* III
8. *PM* VI.
9. *PM* VII.
10. *EC* IV.
11. *EC* II.
12. *MM* III.
13. *PM* VI, p. 196-197.
14. *PM* IX, p. 259-260.
15. *PM* II.
16. *PM* V *MM* IV.
17. *Essay on the immediate data of consciousness* I.
18. *EC* II.
19. *MM* I.
20. *EC* III.
21. *MM* IV, *PM* VI.
22. *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* III; *Spiritual Energy* I.

- 23. *EC* II p. 100.
- 24. *DI* II.
- 25. *MM* IV, p. 219.
- 26. *PM* VI, p. 201.
- 27. *MM* I.
- 28. *MM* III.
- 29. *ES* V.
- 30. *MM* III.
- 31. *MM* IV, p. 269.
- 32. *MM* II p. 115 III p. 188.
- 33. *MM* III.
- 34. *PM* VI, p. 206-207.
- 35. *PM* VI, p. 208.
- 36. *EC* IV.
- 37. *PM* III.
- 38. *PM* VI.